
Documents 1618B

Aftermath of the Japanese embassy and Japan's self-imposed seclusion

B1. Discourse of Doctor Don Juan Cevicos (cont'd)

Source: RAH ms. 9/3657 (see Doc. 1609B2).

[Cevicos quotes loosely from the letter written by Fr. Sotelo before his martyrdom at Omura in 1624]

[The Date Maru commandeered by Governor Fajardo]

[Fr. Sotelo says] “That in New Spain (that is in the port of Acapulco, says Cevicos) he [Sotelo] found a galleon that Masamune had sent from Japan, in order for Fr. Sotelo and the Japanese to make their voyage from there to Japan. That, on account of the Governor, who was at that time on the way from Spain to the Philippines, was lacking ships to take his soldiers, he asked for this one that had come from Japan and he was given it with much pleasure, that Fr. Sotelo and the Japanese embarked in it to go from the Philippines to Japan, which navigation is short, and that they arrived at the Philippines in the year of 1618.”

...
“That, having arrived at the Philippines in the said year of 1618, and while waiting for suitable weather to make the voyage to Japan, when the opportunity came to embark, they were prevented from doing so by Dutch pirates who had enclosed the port with their galleons and were infesting the Philippine Islands. So, neither this year nor the following one of 1619 was he able to make the voyage.”¹

“That, even in the year of 1620 when he wished to make the voyage to Japan, letters arrived from Macao from Father Diego Valente of the Society of Jesus addressed to the Governor and the Archbishop of Manila, in which he advised them that he was already consecrated Bishop of Japan, and that he was asking them with much insistence,

1 Ed. note: Since Governor Fajardo bought the **Date Maru**, and the Japanese ambassador with his retinue travelled independently home aboard a Japanese trading ship, which he did in 1619 (see Doc. 1620A). However, Hasekura may not have reached Sendai until 1620.

not to allow Fr. Sotelo to go to Japan... and [he says] thus that year too, neither I nor my lay companion sailed for Japan; I was detained.”

“That, since he was not allowed to make the voyage, he despatched some religious of his Order to Japan, and he sent word to Masamune to procure his passage to Japan, and that, after his companion had related how benignly and magnificently they had been received by his Holiness, and by his Majesty, and the honors and favors that had been done to them, he rejoiced very much, and received the religious with great happiness, giving them lodging at his Court, and taking care of their upkeep, in view of their need to hide and conceal themselves as a result of the edict that the Emperor had made against Christians, and mainly against the religious. In spite of it, however, the religious as well as the Christians lived in his kingdom quietly and peacefully. And that, the following year [1621], he sent two soldiers to Manila, so that they would bring Fr. Sotelo to Japan. They, in accordance with their instruction and with great diligence, prepared a ship and supplies to take him to Japan. However, when I was making haste to embark, I was detained, made prisoner, and prevented from doing so.”

“That the soldiers, seeing what was going on, returned to Japan. And that, after he saw that it was not possible for him to embark for that Kingdom, he departed from there, taking the opportunity of accompanying the Bishop of Nueva Segovia, who was on his way from Manila to the Province of Cagayan, where his bishopric was located, with whose favor he built a frigate in the Province of Pangasinan (which is along the way between Manila and Cagayan) in order to make his voyage to Japan, taking along as a company a Japanese religious, his companion, and four other Japanese priests. This came to the knowledge of the Governor of the Philippines, because those [i.e. the Jesuits] who wished to prevent the voyage had let him know, so that, when he was to make sail, the Governor issued orders, threatening the sailors who might go aboard it with the penalty of death, and having them all brought back to Manila; hence, his voyage was frustrated [in 1621].”

“That, in view of his voyage having been frustrated, he was forced to follow the lord Bishop as far as Nueva Segovia, in the said Province of Cagayan, where he has his see. He begged assistance from him, showing him the letters he was carrying to Japan, as Legate from the Holy See. He granted it to him, publishing a censure against those who would prevent his voyage. However, the lord Bishop, fearing that the Governor of the Philippines would take this badly, arranged it in such a way that Father Sotelo, and his Japanese religious companion, embarked in civilian clothes aboard a ship of Chinese gentiles that was about to leave for Japan [in 1622], under the pretence that they were both servants of the said lord Bishop.”

...

[The junk reached Nagasaki. Sotelo was captured by the local *daimyo* and later, when the *shogun* heard about it, he was transferred to a jail in Omura, in 1623. On page 10 of Cevicos' printed pamphlet, it is said that Sotelo learned through letters that Felipe Hasekura, the Japanese Ambassador, had died within one year of his return to Japan, ca. 1620(?). Sotelo himself suffered martyrdom at Omura, on 25 August 1624].

B2. Extract from the Jesuit Papers

Sources: RAH Jesuit Papers Tomes 112 & 114 (ref. Schütter, p. 43); the new number for Tome 112 is RAH ms. 9/3685.

Report from Japan for the period 1618-1629.

[Tome 112, fol. 215v, copy on fol. 232]¹

While the lucky martyrs were surviving as usual throughout [ca. 1619], there were two (Christians) who kneeled before Baal and backed down miserably for fear of tortures. The same thing happened to a Japanese layman who had been in Spain and Rome (he became an apostate). This man used to say that when he was in Madrid, he learned that certain religious were persuading the King to conquer Japan, but our [Jesuit] Fathers convinced him otherwise. He adds that, even though it is true that our religion is the true one, it is too bad that our intention is by this means to amass the things [necessary] to conquer Japan. With this and other lies this apostate has done a very great harm to Christianity.

The Governors or Lords of Japan are so convinced of this that they said that one of the main reasons to keep the [Protestant] Dutch in Japan is for their greater security and so that they would give them advice. They [the Dutch] have even put this in practice [by telling them] that they should conquer the Philippines in order not to have the Spanish so near them.

On the other hand, it is said that it is planned in Japan to pick up from those kingdoms all the Europeans, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, and English, and if this is carried out, it will not be possible for any of our Fathers to stay there, given that they now pass unnoticed among the Europeans, dressed either as Spaniards or Portuguese; this they would no longer be able to do if they are [all] thrown out of Japan.

...

[This tome contains other documents of interest about Japan, e.g.

Fol. 266-266v: Transcript of a letter from Fr. Gerónimo de Angeles of the Society of Jesus, about a voyage that he made in Japan from the Kingdom of Masamune on the eastern seaboard, as far as Yezo [Hokkaido]. Dated Maçumay [i.e. Matsumae in Hokkaido], year of 1618].²

1 Ed. note: The text appears to have been copied from the 1618-19 annual Jesuit letter, which also appears on folios 228-236 of the same Tome 112 (dated Manila, 14 June 1620). See Doc. 1620B.

2 Ed. note: See also Doc. 1621A.