
Document 1609F

Japan's early attempts to establish commercial relations with Mexico, by Naojiro MURAKAMI

Source: Chapter with the above title, in Stephen & Bolton's book: The Pacific Ocean in History (1917), pp. 467-480.

It is only ten years since the steamers of the Tōyō Kisen Kaisha began to run between the ports of Japan and Mexico [i.e. since about 1910], but attempts to open the same route were made more than 300 years ago by one of the greatest statesmen of Japan.¹

At that time, Japan was carrying on an active foreign commerce, and the *Daimyōs* vied with each other in inviting foreign vessels—Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese—to their own ports. This was, however, limited to Kuyshu, and the *Daimyōs* of the northern provinces had no share in the lucrative commerce.

In December 1598, Fray Gerónimo de Jesús of the Franciscan Order, who came from Manila in May of the same year and was secretly ministering to the Christians in the Province of Ise, was found out and taken to the presence of Iyeyasu, then newly intrusted with the government of the country during the minority of Hideyori, heir of Hideyoshi, and destined to be the founder of the Tokugawa family of *Shōguns*. Iyeyasu wished to seize this opportunity for the development of the resources of his own provinces, and in the course of conversation with Fray Gerónimo expressed his intention of giving up the menacing attitude of Japan taken in the time of Hideyoshi towards the Philippine Islands, and of being friendly to the missionaries. He told the friar that the Spanish ships from Luzon Island would be welcome to the ports of his provinces of Kwantō and that he would also like to establish commercial relations with New Spain. In order to prepare for it, he wished to build ships after Spanish models and he desired the Philippine government to send some ship-carpenters and also pilots and sailors to teach navigation. Fray Gerónimo accordingly wrote a letter to the Governor of the

¹ Ed. note: In April 1902, AGI provided this author with an index of documents relating to Japan, of which 34 were transcribed for him.

Philippine Islands, informing him of the desire of Iyeyasu and begging him to send merchant ships to Kwantô and also to give all the necessary help for opening commerce between Japan and New Spain, as it would be conducive to the propagation of Christianity in Japan. This letter was taken in 1599 by a messenger of Iyeyasu, Gioyemon by name, a native of Sakai.¹

In those days the Philippine Islands were continually harassed by Japanese pirates, and since Hideyoshi sent an embassy in 1592 to demand subjection of the Islands to Japan, the government of Manila was always in fear of a Japanese invasion. The confiscation of the ship **San Felipe** in 1597 and the subsequent crucifixion of Spanish missionaries almost threatened a rupture between the two countries. The promise of Iyeyasu to stop all hostilities and to promote friendly relations with the Islands was, therefore, heartily welcomed by the Philippine government.² No immediate steps, however, were taken in response to the letter of Fray Gerónimo.

Iyeyasu was then busily occupied in preparing for the great struggle, which ended in the victory of Sekigahara, but after establishing his authority over the whole of Japan, he again turned his attention to the matter. In October 1601, he wrote a letter to Governor Tello, informing him that according to the latter's request he had caught and punished the Japanese pirates who ravaged the Islands in the previous years and diminished the number of licences to be given to Japanese junks for going to the Islands, and asking the governor to consider his request concerning the commerce with New Spain. A Franciscan lay brother took this letter to Manila, with another from the governor of Nagasaki. Antonio de Morga mentions the arrival at Manila in 1602 of a certain Chiquiro sent by Iyeyasu. Fray Gerónimo is also said to have been sent to Manila in the same year.³ These repeated efforts on the part of Iyeyasu caused the Audiencia to decide to send a ship to Kwantô, when in May 1602, the new Governor, Don Pedro de Acuña, arrived at Manila. The news of the arrival of a Dutch ship at Bungo in April 1600,⁴ and of favors shown to the crew by Iyeyasu caused the governor to fear lest the Dutch should open commerce with Japan to the injury of the Spanish interests. Therefore, he agreed to carry out the arrangement already made and sent a small ship to Japan,⁵ in which

- 1 See the letter of Fray Gerónimo addressed to Juan de Santa María, given in the Annex to Léon Pages' *Histoire de la religion chrétienne au Japon*. See also document entitled: "Sobre el estado de las Islas Philipinas con el Japón, 1600 años," in AGI 68-1-32.
- 2 See the letter from Governor Don Francisco Tello to the King of Spain dated June 1601, in Padre Colin's *Labor evangélica*, vol. 2, p. 339.
- 3 See B&R 15: 251-258. Ed. note: This is the translation of chapter 7 of Morga's *Sucesos*.
- 4 The *Liefde*, the only remaining ship of the fleet of five ships which had sailed from the Texel in June 1598, to come to the South Sea by way of the Strait of Magellan was greatly damaged by storms and forced to change its course for Japan and arrived at a port of Bungo on 19 April 1600. The ship was ordered to go to Sakai and thence to Uruga. Captain Quaeckerneck and crew, 18 in all, were kindly treated; some of them took part in the Battle of Sekigahara and with their large guns helped the army of Iyeyasu to gain victory over the enemy.
- 5 Ed. note: It was named **Santiago El Menor** [St. James the Less] (see B&R 15: 256).

the Franciscan brother was sent back with his letter and presents for Iyeyasu. In his letter to the latter, dated 1 June 1602, the governor said that although his predecessor had already written to the viceroy of New Spain to report to the king of Spain about the desire of Iyeyasu, he was going to do so again, and about a month later he wrote to the king¹ asking him to assent to the requests of Iyeyasu, as it would bring many advantages, among which he enumerated the opening of new fields for the missionaries, liberation of their coasts from pirates, freedom of the Spanish ships sailing on the Pacific Ocean to take refuge in Japanese ports and ejection of the Dutch from Japan. He, however, believed that the Japanese would very soon give up the voyage as they were not good navigators and the merchandise they could send would not bring much profit.

Although the ship from Manila did not come to Kwantô, but entered the port of Usuki in Bungo, Iyeyasu was very much pleased with the Governor's message and presents, and the Franciscan friars were shown many favors. In 1603, Governor Acuña sent another ship² to Japan, but neither this nor that of the following year arrived in Kwantô; they entered the ports of Kyushu, whence envoys were sent to the court of Iyeyasu. In December 1604, Father Diego Bermeo of the Franciscan Order had to write to the Governor, begging him to send a ship next year to Kwantô, as otherwise all Franciscan missionaries would be banished from the country.³ But it was only since 1608 that the annual ships from the Philippine Islands regularly came to Uraga. Thus, after waiting for almost 10 years, Iyeyasu realized one of his wishes, but nothing was done as regards the other request—the establishment of commerce with New Spain. The death of Fray Gerónimo in 1602 had deprived the cause of its chief promoter.

An event, however, happened in 1609, which unexpectedly led to the opening of the desired commerce, I mean the shipwreck of the **San Francisco**. The ship left Cavite for Acapulco in July of that year, ex-Governor Don Rodrigo de Vivero on board. It met violent storms on the way and was so damaged that it was decided to put into Japan for repairs. As the knowledge of Japan was very imperfect, the ship was stranded on the 30th of September, in the night, on the coast of Kazusa, about three miles from the village of Iwada, when it was thought they were sailing in the open sea north of Japan. All believed that they were lost on an unknown island, when at daybreak a Japanese passenger on board learned from some farmers in the field that they were in Japan. They were taken to Iwada, a poor fishing village with about 300 houses. A notice was sent to the *Daimyô* of the place, who lived in the castle of Odaki, about 10 miles distant, and thence to the *Shogun's* Court. When the *Daimyô* of Odaki knew that the ex-Governor of Luzon, by which name the Philippine Islands were known in Japan, was among the shipwrecked, he visited him and provided for all his present needs. Don Rodrigo was then invited to the courts of Yedo and Sumpu [sic]. During the interview,

- 1 Letter from Governor Acuña to the King, dated [Cavite] 11 July 1602, in AGI 67-6-19. Ed. note: The text of this letter is given, in Spanish, in the author's footnote.
- 2 Ed. note: Morga (B&R 16: 29-30) says that it was again the **Santiago El Menor**, with Fathers Diego de Bermeo, Alonso de Madre de Diós, and Luis Sotelo aboard.
- 3 See Padre Colin's work, vol. 2, p. 341.

Iyeyasu spoke of his desire to trade with New Spain, and tried to gain Don Rodrigo over to his idea. In Fray Luis Sotelo, who acted as interpreter on this occasion, was found a worthy successor of Fray Gerónimo. He came to Japan in 1603 and was engaged in missionary work in the Franciscan Church at Asakusa in Yedo. He burned with zeal for the conversion of the Japanese and the glory of his order. When the Dutch got permission, in September 1609, to establish a factory at Hirado, he thought that any further delay would be fatal to the cause of the Franciscan Mission. He, therefore, did all he could to make the ex-Governor understand that it was to the interest of Spain and the Church to let Iyeyasu have what he desired. Don Rodrigo was convinced of the truth of Sotelo's views and decided to accept the offer of Iyeyasu and take passage in a Japanese ship and to use all his influence to bring about regular trade with New Spain. The ship was of 120 tons and built a few years before by William Adams, who came to Japan in 1600 as chief pilot of the *Liefde*, and became a favorite of Iyeyasu. It was named **San Buenaventura** and left Uraga on 1 August 1610, arriving in safety at Acapulco at the end of October. This ship took the first Japanese merchants to New Spain and also an envoy from Iyeyasu to the court at Madrid. Father Sotelo was first nominated for the mission, but, as he became ill, Father Alonso Muñoz was sent.

When Don Rodrigo arrived at Mexico, an expedition for the discovery of the Gold and Silver Islands was just going to start. For some years back there were rumors about some islands in the Pacific Ocean, enormously rich in gold and silver, to which a Portuguese vessel was driven by the wind.¹ Philip III gave orders to the viceroy to send out vessels of discovery either from New Spain or the Philippine Islands. As the islands were said to be in the vicinity of Japan, it was decided to send the expedition first to Japan [rather the Philippines], where they were to build a ship, store provisions, and thence sail to the islands. Sebastián Vizcaíno, commander of the expedition, well known in the history of California, was appointed ambassador to Japan in order to return thanks to Iyeyasu for the kindness shown towards the unfortunate crew of the **San Francisco**. Vizcaíno left Mexico on 7 March 1611, embarked at Acapulco in a ship, also called **San Francisco**, and set sail on the 22nd of the same month. The ship arrived at Uraga on 10 July 1611. The Japanese who went to Mexico in 1610, 23 in all, returned in the same ship with cloths, velvets, wines, etc.; the money advanced by Iyeyasu to Don Rodrigo and the value of the Japanese ship were also invested in Mexican goods.

The ambassador was first received at Yedo by Hidetada and then at Sumpu by Iyeyasu, to whom the letter of thanks from the viceroy was presented with his gifts, among which were the portraits of the king and queen of Spain. After delivering his messages Vizcaíno asked and received permission from Iyeyasu for surveying the eastern coast of Japan, in order to find safe anchoring places for Spanish ships. He also got permission to build a ship, but on inquiry he found the charges exorbitant and accepted Hidetada's offer to build one at his own expense on condition that the general should lend him ship-carpenters and then take in the ship some Japanese merchants to New

1 Ed. note: See my HM 2: 530-536.

Spain. He then went overland to Sendai, where he saw Masamune Date, the most powerful of the *Daimyōs* of the northern provinces, and then surveyed the coast of his provinces of Oshu, starting from Shiogama and proceeding as far north as Kombaku, during the course of which he found many good ports. He then returned to Sendai and the survey was continued along the coast to Uraga, and thence to Osaka, and four copies of the map of the survey were made at Kyōto, one for Iyeyasu, another for Hidetada, and the remaining copies for the king of Spain. The map would be of great interest, but so far it has not been found either in Japan or in Spain.

The general then took leave of Iyeyasu and Hidetada,¹ and, as he found the ship built by Hidetada² unfit for his purposes, sailed in the old ship on 16 September 1612. On the 25th of September, the ship arrived at the place where the Gold and Silver Islands were located on the chart, but no island could be found. The search was continued until the 14th of October, since which day violent storms frequently arose and so damaged the ship that the general was obliged to make for Uraga, where he arrived on the 7th of November. He immediately reported to Iyeyasu the need he was in and asked for his help, but after trying in vain for five months to get access to his presence, the general found that there was no hope of getting any help from the government. This attitude of the Japanese government seems to have been partly due to ill feeling caused by the discovery of the true object of the mission.³ The uncompromising attitude of the Spanish ambassador in the negotiations concerning the etiquette to be observed on his reception at the courts was another cause of displeasure. The survey of the coast was also represented by the Dutch as preliminary to an invasion of Japan by Spanish forces, but Iyeyasu did not believe it. He had been prepared for such a survey by Fray Gerónimo. The general then tried to borrow money from some Spaniards at Nagasaki, thereby to build a ship, but in this he also failed. In his report he says that all this was due to the intrigues of some Franciscan fathers, specially Father Sotelo. From the news he received from Mexico, Sotelo understood that there were many difficulties to the success of Father Muñoz' mission, and wished by going himself to persuade the viceroy and the Spanish government to agree to the opening of Mexican ports to Japan. As the general did not allow him to go in his ship, Father Sotelo started for Mexico in the ship of Hidetada, but the ship sank just outside the port of Uraga. He was very intimate with Masamune, lord of Oshu, and knew that the latter wished to trade with New Spain.

1 Their letters to the Viceroy of Mexico are given in the *Ikoku Nikki Shō*, pp. 50-64.

2 Ed. note: It had been named the **San Sebastián** by the Spanish.

3 It is true that Sebastián Vizcaíno told Iyeyasu about the voyage of discovery and proposed to take some Japanese with him; but this was only after he had found out that the ex-Shogun had heard all about it from the Dutch. Although Iyeyasu is reported to have said that he had no objection to the Spaniards' undertaking the discovery, as he would claim the Islands if they were within the Japanese territory, and if not, he had no reason to complain, yet it is quite natural that he should resent the attempt to deceive him. Ed. note: It was Adams, not the Dutch, who told Iyeyasu about the exploration project he had heard about while building the San Sebastián with Portuguese and Spanish workers. He was jealous of the surveys made by Vizcaíno and wanted Iyeyasu to use English ships instead, as he said in his 4th letter of 1613 (see Doc. 1609D3).

He, therefore, advised the *Daimyô* to build a ship for taking Sebastián Vizcaíno and his crew to Mexico and to send by the ship an embassy to Europe in order to make a commercial treaty with the king of Spain, and to ask the Pope to send Franciscan friars from Mexico.

Masamune first came to entertain the idea of opening his ports to foreign commerce when he was informed of the discovery of many good ports in his own provinces. He intimated his wishes to the general, but the latter knew that the viceroy was not favorable to opening ports to Japan and did not give any definite answer. Now that no other means could be found for returning to Mexico, Vizcaíno was glad to accept Masamune's proposal and engaged to build a ship for him and bring it to Mexico.

The ship sailed from the port of Tsukinoura¹ on the 27 October 1613 with Masamune's ambassadors, Rokuyemon HASEKURA and Father Sotelo, and suite, with a large number of Japanese merchants and sailors on board. A large quantity of goods was freighted by merchants of Sendai and Yedo. The ship arrived at Acapulco on 25 January 1614, and the embassy proceeded to Mexico.

We must now return to Father Muñoz, whom we left at Mexico, at his arrival there in November 1610. He crossed over to Spain in the fleet of 1611, and arriving at Madrid in December, presented to the king the letters² from Iyeyasu and Hidetada with their presents. The Council of the Indies was ordered to consider what answer was to be sent to Japan.

While Don Rodrigo was still in Japan, a ship from Macao was destroyed at Nagasaki. The commander of the ship was commandant of Macao, when the crew of a Japanese vessel from Arima were killed for rising against the authorities. On his arrival at Nagasaki, the general was summoned to appear before the Governor of Nagasaki and explain the reason for the measures he had taken. As he did not obey the summons and tried to get away, the ship was attacked by numerous Japanese boats. During the fight, the powder magazine took fire and the ship was sunk with all the crew on 6 January 1610. This caused great consternation in Macao. The prosperity of the city was almost entirely due to the commerce with Japan, and its cessation meant desolation to the whole community. The municipal authorities therefore resolved to take measures for preventing such a great disaster, and in doing so were heartily supported by the Jesuits.

The Jesuits came to Japan soon after the Portuguese trade was opened and in 1584 were given the privilege of preaching in the country. They were angry with the Franciscans for coming to the country in disregard of the bull of Pope Gregory XIII, and for managing to get in 1600 a new bull from Clement VIII, which permitted all orders to

1 This port is mentioned in Vizcaíno's report. It was found to be well sheltered and the name of San Felipe was given to it. The village contains at present only a few fishermen's houses. There is a spot called "Namban-goya" (the hut of the "Southern Barbarians", which was the name for the Portuguese and the Spaniards at that time). This is supposed to be the site of the yards where Masamune's ship was built.

2 The original letters are kept in AGI. See the *Dai Nippon Shiryô*, Part XII, vol. 7, pp. 215, 216.

enter Japan, although on condition that they did so via Macao. They repeatedly appealed to the Archbishop of Manila and to the king of Spain against the unlawful entrance of the Franciscans and other mendicant orders, but these continued to increase in number and in influence. In the destruction of the Portuguese ship they saw, or pretended to see, the hand of their enemies. They affirmed that the Japanese government took such a daring step because it was assured by the Franciscans that the Philippine commerce would make up for the loss of the Portuguese trade, and joined with the municipal authorities in requesting the authorities of Manila not to send any more ships and missionaries in order that Japan should make amendment for the damages done to the Portuguese and again welcome the ships from Macao. The Bishop of China undertook the negotiations in person and got the municipal Council of Manila to decide in favor of the request. Petitions were then sent to the king asking him to suppress the trade of the Philippine Islands with Japan and not to permit Japan to open commerce with New Spain. The papers¹ were sent to the Council of Portugal and the reports were in favor of the petition, but the Council of the Indies reported to the king in May 1612 that it was advisable to open commerce with Japan via Mexico.² The interests of the Spanish colonies were always placed above those of Portugal and her colonies.

In the end of that year, however, a letter³ came from the Audiencia of Manila asking the king not to listen to the representations of Don Rodrigo and Father Muñoz, as Japanese commerce with New Spain would be injurious to the interests of Spain. It was alleged that there was no fear of any invasion of the Islands by the Japanese so long as they were not taught navigation; but if Japanese vessels were allowed to come to New Spain, the Japanese would very soon become a menace to the Spanish dominions in America, just as they were to the Philippine Islands. The true reason, however, for the opposition of the Philippine government was their desire to keep up their own trade with Japan, which, it was feared, would suffer greatly from competition with New Spain. As the Japanese commerce grew in importance the Islands came to depend upon it for the supply of silver, provisions, ammunition and materials for shipbuilding, in exchange for which they exported goods from China and Spain at good profit.⁴

On receiving this letter the Council of the Indies decided to reconsider its report and to wait for further news from the Philippines; but as Father Muñoz continually importuned them for an answer, it was decided, in June 1613,⁵ to send a letter to Iyeyasu

- 1 The "Consultas del Consejo de Portugal" of 4 & 29 January 1612, with accompanying papers from Macao, are in AGI 67-6-4.
- 2 See the "Consulta del Consejo de Indias" of 18 May 1612 in AGI 67-6-4. This and most of the documents referred to in the following pages are given in the *Dai Nippon Shiryô*, Part XII, vol. 12.
- 3 This letter is dated 16 July 1611 (AGI 68-4-12).
- 4 The Islands actually suffered very much when Japan was closed to the Spaniards in 1624, and the governors were repeatedly instructed to look for an opportunity to re-establish commercial relations with Japan.
- 5 See the "Consultas del Consejo de Indias" of 10 and 14 June 1613 in AGI 67-6-4.

promising him to send one vessel yearly from New Spain if the latter protected the Spaniards and allowed the missionaries to work for the conversion of his subjects. Father Muñoz was intrusted with the letter¹ and some presents in return for those sent from Japan, but on account of illness Fray Diego de Santa Catalina was substituted, who went to Mexico with two other Franciscan friars. While they were still in Mexico, the embassy from Masamune arrived at the city.

As we have already seen, the attempt of the Jesuits to break the intercourse of Japan with the Philippine Islands failed, but they consoled themselves with the success of an embassy sent by the viceroy of Goa in 1611 to re-establish the commerce of Macao with Japan, thereby assuring the maintenance of their own order. They, however, got alarmed when they learned that Father Sotelo was going with an embassy from Masamune to Europe. They owed their own predominant influence in Japan largely to the success of an embassy from the Christian *Daimyōs* of Kyushu which visited Europe under their guidance at the end of the 16th century. If the Franciscans succeeded in their embassy, they were sure to get ascendancy in Japan. So the Jesuits set themselves to hindering and discrediting the embassy. They could not prevent its leaving Japan, but their efforts, together with that of Sebastián Vizcaíno, who bore ill will towards Father Sotelo, succeeded so far as to induce the viceroy of New Spain to doubt the sincerity of Masamune and distrust Father Sotelo. The viceroy reported to the king the opinions he had formed about the embassy and decided in the first place to detain Fray Diego for another year, and to ask the king for new instructions about the envoys, as Iyeyasu was persecuting Christians contrary to his promise.

The viceroy, however, dissimulated his feelings towards the ambassadors [of Masamune] and treated them well and gave them passage to Spain on the fleet of 1614. The embassy arrived at San Lúcar de Barrameda at the beginning of October 1614, and went via Seville to Madrid. There Fathers Sotelo and Muñoz succeeded in persuading the government to send Fray Diego to Japan in the ship of Masamune, which had been detained at Acapulco by the viceroy, pending the orders of the king whether to send them direct to Japan or by way of the Philippine Islands. The letter to Iyeyasu was, however, revised, the clause about sending a ship from New Spain every year being omitted.²

The Franciscan friars left Acapulco in April 1615 [aboard the **Date Maru**] and arrived at Uruga on 15 August. Iyeyasu was then engaged in the final siege of Osaka, which ended in the complete defeat and death of Hideyori.³ The envoys had, therefore, to wait for more than two months before they were received by Iyeyasu. They then went to Yedo to see Hidetada, but could not get access to the court, and were finally ordered to leave Japan with the presents from the king of Spain. This was in accordance with

1 A draft of the letter, dated 20 June 1613, is preserved in AGI 87-5-2.

2 AGI 87- 5-2. The draft of a letter addressed to Hidetada is in the same volume.

3 Ed. note: This event, the death of the heir of Hideyoshi, marked the true beginning of the Tokugawa Shogunate that lasted until the restoration of the traditional emperor in the 19th century.

the new policy adopted by Hidetada towards foreign commerce and Christianity. All missionaries were to be sent away and the preaching of Christianity was to be strictly forbidden. The foreign merchants who had been hitherto allowed to trade in the interior were ordered to do their business only in a few open ports—Uraga, Nagasaki, and Hirado. The death of Iyeyasu in July 1616 marks the end of Japan's open commerce with foreign countries. The Spanish envoys were, in disregard of the orders of the viceroy which forbade the Japanese to come again to New Spain and ordered the Spanish who came in the Japanese ship to return by way of the Philippine Islands, forced to take passage [back to Acapulco] in the ship of Masamune, which went out in September 1616 on her second voyage for New Spain, where she was to meet the embassy from Masamune on its way [back] from Europe.

We have already seen that the Jesuits did all in their power to discredit the embassy, but it was to no avail and the ambassadors were enthusiastically welcomed all over Spain. They were received in audience by King Philip III and were sent at his expense to Rome, where Pope Paul V received them with fatherly tenderness and granted them almost everything they asked for. He promised to use his influence with Philip III to create a new bishopric of Northern Japan in Oshu, the province of Masamune, nominating Father Sotelo to the office, and to establish commercial relations between Japan and New Spain. The Senate of Rome made Hasekura a patrician and presented the chief members of the embassy with the citizenship of Rome. The embassy was entertained on their way back to Spain by the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Doge of Genoa. But when the ambassadors returned to Spain, they found a decided change in the attitude of the government. It was chiefly due to the persecution of Christians in Japan, and although they refused to return before the object of the embassy was attained, they were obliged to leave for Mexico in July 1617. On arriving at Mexico, they learned that their ship was waiting at Acapulco, but this time they were told to return by way of the Philippine Islands, for which they set sail in April 1618 in company with the fleet of Don Alonso Fajardo, the new governor of the Islands. Soon after their arrival at Manila, the Islands were threatened with an attack by the Dutch. The governor therefore asked the Japanese ambassador to sell his ship and equipped her for the coming fight. Hasekura and his suite took passage in a junk and arrived at Sendai in August 1620, after a long absence of 7 years.¹

1 The embassy of Masamune to Europe is one of the most interesting episodes of Japanese history, but nothing about it was known in Japan before the attention of Ambassador Iwakura and his suite was drawn to it in 1873 when they visited Venice. Later investigations by Italian and Japanese scholars have brought to light an immense amount of material preserved in the archives of Italy, Spain, and Japan. All the materials hitherto discovered are given in the *Dai Nippon Shiryô*, Part XII, Vol. 12, which volume is devoted entirely to that embassy.

The repeated attempts of Japan to bring the countries on the opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean into close commercial relations thus ended in failure. During the years of her seclusion even the fact that such attempts were ever made came to be forgotten, and the idea was first realized after a lapse of almost two centuries and a half, when the United States induced Japan to open the country, almost against her will.¹

¹ Ed. note: Ambassador Hasekura is said to have returned to Sendai, apostatized and died ca. 1620. As for Father Sotelo, who had stayed behind in Manila in 1618 when the junk sailed for Japan, he went back to Japan before 1622, the year in which he was imprisoned for preaching against the prohibition. He was confined for two years at Omura, during which time he wrote several works in Spanish and Japanese. Finally, he was burned at the stake at Omura on 25 August 1624.