

Pulling the Spanish out of the ‘Christian Century’: Re-evaluating Spanish–Japanese relations during the seventeenth century

Thomas W. Barker
(University of Kansas)

Abstract: *This article re-evaluates Spanish–Japanese relations during the seventeenth century by showing how previous scholarship regarding Spanish and Portuguese policies towards Japan has incorrectly applied the same conclusions to both groups. Instead Spanish policies were aimed at protecting the Pacific trade, which included the maintaining of Manila, rather than trade with the Japanese and the propagation of the Christian faith in Japan that has been associated with Portuguese policies. Spanish–Japanese interactions during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be divided into three periods, each with a specific theme. This article focuses on the period between 1609–1616, which was the height of Spanish–Japanese relations, and demonstrates how officials who were in Spain, the Americas and Manila influenced the policies adopted by the Spanish.*

Scholars have used the term ‘Christian Century’ to denote the period of Japanese history that began with the arrival of Portuguese merchants and Catholic missionaries in Japan in 1543 and ended with their eventual expulsion in 1640.¹ This term is used to emphasise the introduction, proselytising and prohibition of Christianity, and the trade maintained by the Portuguese with Japan. However, part of this periodisation also denotes the involvement of the Spanish who were based in Manila. In examining Portuguese and Spanish relations with Japan, there is a tendency to combine the two into a singular Iberian experience where conclusions have been universally applied to both. There appears to be three main reasons for this. First, there is a lack of scholarship on Spanish–Japanese relations due to the small number of interactions between them in comparison to the Portuguese and other Europeans. Second, the notion exists that there were several similarities between the Spanish and Portuguese because of the unification of the kingdoms under the Hapsburg monarchy from 1580 to 1640, and the proselytising efforts of

the various Catholic orders, specifically the Jesuits, Franciscans, Augustinians and Dominicans. Last, contemporary scholarship largely continues to cite seminal secondary works, particularly those by C. R. Boxer, which have perpetuated the idea of Spanish and Portuguese similarities.²

While the Portuguese wanted to maintain their relationship with the Japanese during the ‘Christian Century’, the Spanish pursued different policies that fluctuated depending upon whether or not they felt the Japanese could support their legitimacy in maintaining control of Manila. Ronald Toby argues that the Tokugawa bakufu used its diplomatic relationships to enhance its own authority and legitimacy and that the Catholic expulsion was in essence a choice of security and legitimacy for the Tokugawa regime over unrestricted trade.³ This asserts that the Japanese chose to end relations with the Portuguese and the Spanish because the evangelising of the Catholic orders jeopardised the Tokugawa bakufu’s authority. However, placing the Spanish within this ‘Christian Century’ paradigm implies that both Iberian powers wished to be engaged in relations with Japan. But Spanish–Japanese relations are contrary to the implication of what the ‘Christian Century’ has come to mean, namely, that European relations with Japan were implemented to support trade and missionary activities, which eventually ended because the Japanese saw these relations as a threat to their authority. Instead, Spanish–Japanese relations were dictated by terms set forth by both the Spanish and Japanese.

My aim in this article is to re-evaluate Spanish–Japanese relations and argue that the Japanese did not dictate the terms of the relationship, but rather these were based on both Spanish and Japanese policies. Ultimately, the Spanish–Japanese relations were based on the Spanish desire to secure the Pacific trade. Furthermore, the Spanish adopted policies that were set in place by their other regional authorities not in Asia, such as those in New Spain and Castile. By taking a global perspective and considering how Spanish officials influenced their affairs with the Japanese, an examination of Spanish–Japanese relations can

occur which places this relationship outside of the rubric of the ‘Christian Century’, and which frames the interaction within a Japanese context. First I will discuss the historiography of Spanish–Japanese relations to demonstrate why Portuguese and Spanish relations with Japan were not similar. Once these differences have been established I will examine Spanish–Japanese relations at their pinnacle between 1609 and 1616, and demonstrate that the policies of this period were aimed at protecting the Pacific trade, which included the maintaining of Manila, and not trade and the propagation of the Christian faith in Japan. Finally I conclude with a discussion of why there needs to be a move away from the term ‘Christian Century’ Spanish–Japanese relations.

Re-evaluating Spanish and Portuguese relations with the Japanese

Most scholarship has relied upon seminal works written by Boxer, who coined the phrase ‘Christian Century’ sixty years ago.⁴ Boxer is relied upon because he is widely known for the many works he has written regarding Portuguese expansion and Portuguese–Japanese relations. These books continue to be referred to in modern scholarship, but many of the assertions regarding the Spanish are inaccurate.⁵ The most widely accepted assertion is that Spanish authorities combined their economic and religious policies towards Japan, meaning that merchants and religious orders shared a symbiotic relationship.⁶ Boxer states: ‘both Portuguese and Spaniards combined God and Mammon in their religious and economic beliefs’ and that Spanish merchants and friars worked ‘shoulder to shoulder’ in Japan. Though this is correct for Portuguese–Japanese relations, it is incorrect for Spanish–Japanese relations as Spanish officials had different aims than the Portuguese.

Portuguese policies revolved around the mutual relationship that Portuguese merchants and the Jesuits shared. Portuguese merchants and Jesuits arrived toward the end of the warring state period (*sengoku*, 1467–1568). Many daimyo were willing to accept missionaries into their domains, as they hoped that Portuguese merchants would soon follow. The Japanese and Chinese made

substantial profits from this trade with the Portuguese, who acted as the middlemen and facilitated the exchange of Chinese silk for Japanese silver as the Japanese were prohibited from direct trade with China. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Japan was the second largest producer of silver in the world. The growth of precious metal mines was a result of warring daimyo that were trying to increase their resources to fund their military efforts. The majority of this silver went to the Chinese market where it was highly sought after, especially after the single-whip reform was enacted.⁷ Between 1560 and 1640 approximately 10,000 metric tons of Japanese silver ended up in China via the Portuguese who exported around 20 metric tons annually between 1580 and 1600 and 150–200 metric tons annually between 1600 and 1615.⁸ In exchange for silver, Chinese silk was sent back to Japan where, because of arbitrage, a 100 per cent profit could easily be made.⁹ The Portuguese doubled their investment easily, which made the Macao–Japan route one of the most profitable Portuguese routes in Asia.¹⁰ The Jesuits continually made the argument that being involved in trade was important for the mission given that they needed the funds to help support their large number of converts who were poor, and because there had not been an increase in funding for the mission despite several promises.¹¹ While there is some truth to this, according to Michael Cooper the main reason for the symbiotic relationship between the merchants and the Jesuits was due to the latter's fear that the Japanese would no longer tolerate them if the steady stream of Chinese silks to Japan ceased.¹² Alessandro Valignano, the Visitor to the Chinese, Indian and Japanese Jesuit missions and a supporter of the trade activities, complained that the Jesuits in most instances had become nothing more than 'bullion brokers'.¹³

Michael Cooper, George Elison and Huebert Cieslik have written extensively about the symbiotic relationship between Portuguese merchants and the Jesuits, yet they have each applied the same conclusion to the Spanish.¹⁴ However, this was not the case for the Spanish merchants and the friars of the Mendicant orders. While the Portuguese served as the middlemen in transporting Japanese

silver from Japan to China, the Spanish simply relied on their own silver mines in their colonies in the Americas, which proved to be more lucrative. During the last fifteen years Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez have written extensively regarding the importance of Manila's establishment, which they have marked as the 'birth of world trade'.¹⁵ This is because a large majority of the silver discovered in the Americas made its way to China via the Pacific. Flynn and Giráldez have concluded that Manila served 'no other purpose than the silver–silk trade' for the Spanish.¹⁶ The Spanish, just like the Portuguese, made substantial profits from the Chinese demand for silver. The profit margin for sending silks from Manila to the Americas varied by location, but the average profit margin seems to have been between 100 and 300 per cent of the initial investment, with some sources stating that a profit of 400 per cent could be made.¹⁷ An example of this is that in 1620 a person could buy 60.5 kg (1 picul) of raw silk in Manila for 200 pesos and sell it in the Americas for 1,950 pesos.¹⁸ With these huge profits Spanish efforts to establish large plantations and mining operations in the Philippines were abandoned to support this trade. This is why between 1600 and 1640 only 14 Spanish ships made official calls to Japanese ports, compared to 93 Portuguese ships.¹⁹

Because of the profits generated from the Pacific trade with China, few Spanish merchants were interested in trade with Japan, and this forced the Mendicant orders to rely upon the Japanese for funding their activities. Though the friars relied upon Japanese ships as their means of transportation between the islands, the major source of income for the friars was the generosity of the Japanese. Various daimyo and other officials had given gifts of land and money to the Mendicant orders to support their activities. In 1606 Tokugawa Ieyasu gave the Franciscans a tract of land in Uruga and some financing for the construction of a church on that site.²⁰ However, this support was based on the Japanese hope that the friars would bring Spanish merchants to engage in trade, similar to the Jesuits. Ieyasu was said to have been disappointed when no Spanish ships arrived and the Franciscans were worried that they would lose the financing they

were receiving from Ieyasu.²¹ Another example was that several Dominicans had been given land for the construction of a church and permission to proselytise in Satsuma. The hope was that they would bring Spanish ships, even though they said they could not promise that they would come. In 1609 the Dominicans were expelled from the Satsuma domain after no Spanish ships came.²² While various authorities gave grants of land and financing in hope of the arrival of Spanish ships, an additional source of financing was from Japanese converts. The Franciscans were highly admired for their extreme level of poverty. The 'barefoot friars' were able to receive most of their support from peasant communities whom they converted and who proved to be their companions even as martyrs. Juande Medina in *History of the Augustinian Order in the Filipinas Islands* (1630), states that the Mendicant orders were moved to send missionaries to Japan especially during the heights of religious persecution, because the Japanese were willing to provide funds for their support, which also included the building of churches and transportation costs.²³ These communities housed and took care of the friars and provided support for them instead of profits from foreign trade.

Boxer's argument that Spanish merchants and friars of the Mendicant orders were reliant upon each other is questionable. He does not evaluate the role of Manila or the Spanish within a world context and continues to place Spanish–Japanese relations within the context of either the 'Christian Century' or in Japanese terms.²⁴ By not evaluating Spanish authorities in Manila, New Spain and Castile and their policies towards the Japanese, Spanish–Japanese relations have been misunderstood and linked with those of the Portuguese because the Spanish appear to be similar at first glance.

Spanish–Japanese relations: an overview

Spanish–Japanese relations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be divided into three sub-periods, each with a specific theme, that show how Spanish policies toward the Japanese were focussed on protecting the Pacific trade. The first of these began in 1592 when Toyotomi Hideyoshi sent a

threatening letter to Manila requesting that Spanish ships go to Japan to trade.²⁵ The policies of this period reflect the Spanish authorities' views of Japan as a possible threat to Spanish control of Manila. During this period, Spanish authorities issued regulations dictating the amount of goods and the number of Japanese ships coming to Manila. In 1596, the seizing of the *San Felipe* only reinforced these policies. Here, 26 Christians were martyred for their proselytising in Japan, amongst whose ranks was Friar Pedro Baptista Blázquez, the official Spanish representative from Manila in Japan. Antonio De Morga, a Lieutenant Governor-General of Manila, in his report on the conditions in the Philippines stated:

All Japanese coming hither in their vessels would be better sent back to Xapon. Not one should be allowed to settle in this Kingdom... Those already here should be banished to their own country, for they are of no benefit or utility; but, on the contrary, very harmful.²⁶

The authorities in New Spain felt compelled to follow his suggestions and though the Japanese community already established in Manila was not expelled it was isolated and given quarters located outside of the major fortified areas where key institutions and administrations were located.²⁷ This was the reason why Manila Governor-General Fransisco Tello's letter to Philip II, stated that they were constantly prepared for a possible attack by the Japanese.²⁸

The second sub-period began in 1609, when there was a reversal in Spanish policies. More specifically, this period highlights how Tokugawa Ieyasu wanted to gain knowledge regarding mining, ship construction and cartography from the Spanish, while the Spanish hoped to gain a suitable port to help service galleons on their voyage back to the Americas and to stop the growing influence of the Dutch and English in East and Southeast Asia. This is discussed later in more detail.

The last shift in policies ran from 1616 until the eventual end of relations in 1639. Spanish authorities established policies that called for trying to win Japanese favour as an ally against increasing threats from the Dutch and English. Alonso Fajardo de Tença, a Governor–General of Manila during this period, believed that one way to gain the shogun’s favour was to present him with gifts. He stated in his letter to Philip III that gifts were sent to Japan in order to maintain friendship with the Japanese and that this was the manner that the Dutch had used to win their support.²⁹ Another way Spanish authorities in the Philippines and New Spain thought of to gain favour with the Japanese was to restrict the travel of those friars wishing to go to Japan to proselytise. The Japanese had officially banned Christianity in 1614, and Spanish officials believed that the friars were doing more harm than good for the Spanish. Despite Spanish efforts to gain favour with the Japanese, further relations failed and ultimately the Spanish ended relations with the Japanese to protect the Pacific trade. Spanish authorities in Manila tried to make an attempt to establish relations in 1626. A ship was sent to the port of Nagasaki cautiously requesting certain military supplies for Manila. After several days of waiting they were notified that they must return to Manila without trading at all and that it should be known that any ship that comes from the Philippines to Japan will suffer ‘pain of death’ because of the religion which they conveyed.³⁰ However, in 1632 a Japanese ship arrived in Manila wishing to engage in trade and open formal relations with the Spanish. At first these ships were welcomed, but the Spanish started to grow suspicious of Japanese intent as many of these ships carried a large number of Japanese Christians who were fleeing Japan. These Japanese Christians described their persecution and the Japanese hatred for the Spanish. An unknown Spanish official in Manila stated,

This year [1632] they [Japanese] have begun again to send ships to trade and traffic, and asked that our ships should go to Japon. But we are holding back here, because they wish to seize our property, which might be in the vessels and put the Castilians to the sword.³¹

The Spanish had become worried these Japanese ships were only mapping the coast and making notes of Spanish fortification in planning a possible future joint invasion with the Dutch upon Manila.³² The Spanish turned down Japanese requests for direct trade and relations were stagnated. At the end of 1633, the last of these ships would arrive in Manila. In 1639 Iemitsu expelled the Portuguese from Japan. After receiving news of the Portuguese expulsion, Philip IV ordered that any further Spanish interaction with Japan was prohibited.

Though Spanish authorities had promoted policies to try and maintain friendship with Japan, it was the Spanish that ended relations with the Japanese. The Japanese had maintained a policy limiting Spanish interaction with Japan even stating that any more Spanish who came to Japan would be put to death. This reversal in policy and the stories of Christian persecution would have raised concerns for the Spanish and tainted their image of the Japanese.³³ The Spanish authorities in Manila suspected that the Japanese were planning a joint invasion of the city with the Dutch, and concluded that there was no possibility of a Spanish–Japanese alliance against the Dutch and the English. Simply, the Spanish authorities in Manila felt that Japanese relations were not essential to protect the Pacific trade.

In order to further demonstrate the importance of policies established by Spanish authorities the remainder of this article focuses on the period between 1609 and 1616. This period was the height of interaction between the Japanese and Spanish authorities. More importantly it demonstrates that Spanish policies were aimed not at an increase of trade or propagation of the Christian faith, but rather were centered on how to best preserve and increase support for the Pacific trade. It is these policies that distinctly make the Spanish encounter in Japan different and why it cannot be joined with the Portuguese to form a single Iberian experience.

Spanish–Japanese relations, 1609–1616

Beginning in 1600, Japan started to become more politically stable after Tokugawa Ieyasu emerged victorious in the Battle of Sekigahara. Ieyasu was largely interested in gaining technical knowledge from the Spanish that he could not obtain from other European powers. Even though he was living in a time of relative peace, Ieyasu's 'war time' mentality led him to believe that increased knowledge in mining, ship construction and world cartography were all matters that could enhance his political position within Japan and East Asia. It was also during this period that the English and Dutch arrived in East and Southeast Asia leading to a fight for control over trade within these regions. The Spanish started to implement policies that they thought would protect the Pacific trade and allow for peaceful relations with the Japanese. These policies had two particular goals: the establishment of a port in Japan for Spanish ships traveling back to Acapulco; and the removal of the English and Dutch from Asia.

In 1609 Rodrigo de Vivero, who had previously been Governor–General of Manila, became shipwrecked in Japan off the coast of the Kantō region. Previously, Spanish authorities had been cautious of the Japanese because of the actions of Toyotomi Hideyoshi which involved the threat of a possible invasion and the martyrdom of Catholic missionaries in Japan. Upon hearing of the former Governor–General's landing, Ieyasu, whose request for Spanish ships to trade with Japan had been denied for several years, asked to have an audience with him. After meeting with Ieyasu and Tokugawa Hidetada, Vivero presented a document with three requests to Ieyasu. These were, the protection of all friars of the various orders working in Japan, mutual friendship between the Spanish and Japanese, and expulsion of the Dutch from Japan.³⁴ In his reply Ieyasu said he could fulfill them all, but the third request could not be undertaken as a negotiation had already been agreed upon between the Dutch and the Japanese. After spending almost a year in Japan an official agreement was accepted containing the following points:

- 1) Ships from Mexico would be given a port in Japan, chosen by the Spaniards, where residences for the Spanish would be built.
- 2) Friars from the various orders would be able to go anywhere in Japan.
- 3) Ships from the Philippines, on their way to New Spain, could use any Japanese port as needed.
- 4) In case of a Spanish ship needing repairs, materials would be sold to the Spanish at a reasonable price.
- 5) Spanish ambassadors and envoys would be well received in Japan.
- 6) Japanese ships that sailed to Mexico/New Spain would be well received.
- 7) Merchandise brought to Japan for trade would be sold at fair prices.³⁵

This agreement specified that Vivero had to consult with the Spanish monarch and the Viceroy of New Spain for final approval of these clauses and that none of them were a guarantee or a promise.³⁶ Ieyasu seemed to be in agreement with these statements and wanted to establish a trade route that would allow Japanese ships to sail across the Pacific and trade with the Spanish. On 1 August 1610, Vivero left on a ship built by William Adams, the *San Buenaventura*, bound for New Spain. Franciscan Alonso Muñoz was appointed to act as the official representative of Ieyasu and carried the treaty agreement and letters from Ieyasu and Hidetada that were to be taken to the Spanish court and presented to Philip III. In addition to this, 23 Japanese merchants were onboard the *San Buenaventura* to learn what they could about New Spain and future economic ventures.³⁷

Under this agreement, Ieyasu hoped to gain knowledge regarding how to build Western-style ships, better exploit Japanese mines, and create more accurate maps and charts by having Spanish experts come to Japan to teach this

information.³⁸ Vivero was very knowledgeable about mining and in meeting with Japanese officials knew that certain methods utilised by the Spanish in the Americas could be adopted and used by the Japanese. Particularly, the Japanese had hoped to utilise the mercury amalgamation process, which could be used to extract a larger amount of silver. Ieyasu also wished to acquire 50–200 Spanish miners to help teach this process. The next two items that he wished to learn about were similarly related, these being the construction of Western-style ships and world cartography. Prior to the Spanish and Portuguese arrival, the Japanese had very little knowledge of the Pacific. Though Japan is a country that relied heavily upon its seas for food and commerce, the Japanese in the early modern period were greatly reliant upon Chinese and Korean sailors to be able to travel the local seas because they lacked navigators who could do so successfully.³⁹ This meant that the Japanese needed to acquire ship designs and maps that gave details concerning ocean currents and where bodies of land were in order to even consider a trans-oceanic voyage. Ieyasu had Adams construct a Western-style ship and teach the Japanese how to build these themselves. But Adams, who had only a vague idea of the manner to construct these ships, did not impress Ieyasu with his efforts and the Portuguese did not want to share this knowledge either.⁴⁰ The Portuguese merchants, Jesuits and English provided some maps and other information regarding the Indian Ocean and the Chinese coast, but beyond that they did not provide any further data. This left the Spanish as a potential resource to provide technical knowledge.

Vivero aimed at gaining access to a port in Japan that could be used to help the Pacific trade and serve as a hub for further exploration in the Pacific. On the route from Manila to Acapulco ships did not have a place to stop and take on more provisions and fix any damage. This was something of great concern for those invested in Pacific trade. Philip III sent a letter to Pedro Bravo de Acuña, a Governor–General of the Philippines, stating that the Spanish should establish a way station in the port of Monterrei (Monterey) along the California coast for ships to not have to stop at Japan on their return leg. This was due to the

seemingly inhospitable nature of the Japanese towards the Spanish, according to previous reports.⁴¹ However, Vivero and those who heard of the envoy in New Spain realised that this was an opportunity to establish a port in Japan in conjunction with Monterrei. By establishing this way station in Japan, the Spanish hoped that it would allow them to discover the *Rica de Oro ye de Plata* ('Islands of Gold and Silver'), which could further serve as a point to explore the Pacific. For the Spanish, the key was the protection and servicing of the Pacific trade.

Spanish authorities in New Spain were optimistic about the use of a Japanese port to help support the Pacific trade. Luis de Velasco Vizcaíno, Viceroy of New Spain, sent his son Sebastián Vizcaíno as ambassador to Japan. Vizcaíno's mission had three specific aims: to return 4,000 ducats loaned to Vivero for the purchase of provisions for his voyage; to return the 23 Japanese merchants; and to embark on a secret mission to discover the 'Islands of Gold and Silver'.⁴² The last aim was one that had been planned for some time by the Viceroy, and the mission to Japan provided a pretext to navigate and chart the area around Japan without drawing suspicion.

Vizcaíno arrived in Japan in 1611 and a letter was sent to Ieyasu stating he was the ambassador of the Viceroy and wished to return the 4,000 ducats loaned and to pay for the *San Buenaventura* which was not seaworthy for the return trip. When it was time for him to meet Ieyasu and Hidetada there was great controversy when Vizcaíno learned of Japanese court protocol, which he believed to be degrading to a representative of the King of Spain. After he threatened to return to New Spain if Spanish customs were not permitted, the Japanese finally gave in and a formal meeting took place. After this meeting, Vizcaíno gave a list of three requests: the use of a temporary port in order to discover an adequate port for the Spanish fleet and the right to purchase supplies at fair market price; the right to sell Spanish goods in Japan duty free; and permission to build a ship and load it with Japanese goods to take back to New Spain.⁴³ The first request was designed to gain permission to map the

Japanese coastline and surrounding areas to not only find a future port for Spanish ships, but to find staging areas from where the Spanish could also further explore the Pacific and look for the 'Islands of Gold and Silver'. The second and third requests were aimed at trying to see if Japanese markets could perhaps provide goods that would prove to be profitable in the Americas, but the main purpose was to divert a small amount of the Pacific trade to the Japanese market so that the Spanish presence in Japan would be more desirable than the Dutch. These two requests were closely related to a fourth request of the expulsion of the Dutch from Japan, which Ieyasu had turned down.

Spanish animosity and the desire to oust the Dutch from Japan seemed to have done more harm than good. The source of this hostility originally derived from William I of Orange's revolt against Philip II in 1568. However, during the early sixteenth century a war in the Netherlands where the Pro-Calvinist North fought against the Spanish-allied South only reignited animosity. The conflict concluded with a truce that recognised the independent Dutch Republic. The Spanish authorities in New Spain and Castile became annoyed when the Dutch expanded their commercial and colonial interests in the Caribbean and South America. In 1610 the Dutch launched their first assault against Manila in an attempt to seize the city. This assault was part of the reason why Spanish authorities wanted to remove the Dutch from East and Southeast Asia because they were afraid that a continuation of assaults on Manila would further disrupt trade and increase the cost of repairing defensive fortifications, which would lead to a decrease in profits for Spanish merchants. Vizcaíno and members of the Mendicant orders in Japan made numerous attempts to discredit the Dutch and have them expelled. Vizcaíno even went as far as to push the Japanese into having to choose between the Dutch and the Spanish.⁴⁴

While the push to have the Dutch expelled from Japan proved to be more of an annoyance to Ieyasu and Hidetada, both of them also started to be wary of the Spanish once Vizcaíno's intention of searching for the 'Islands of Gold and Silver'

became known. Preparations were made for Vizcaíno's 'return' voyage to New Spain, and letters were collected from Ieyasu and Hidetada addressed to the Viceroy. But his ship had to return to Japan within a month after being severely damaged in a storm and unable to make the trip back to New Spain. Adams learned and informed Ieyasu that the Spanish were actually searching for the 'Islands of Gold and Silver' and that this envoy was a pretext for its discovery. According to Spanish sources, Adams informed Ieyasu that these islands could serve as a staging area for an invasion of Spanish forces and this is why his request for Spanish miners had not been met.⁴⁵ Spanish sources further state that Adams had informed Ieyasu that the Spanish had been able to gain control of the Americas and the Philippines through military force and the Spanish perhaps had similar plans for Japan.⁴⁶

The remainder of Vizcaíno's stay in Japan and his treatment by the Japanese had a direct influence on policies adopted by the Spanish monarch. Vizcaíno made petitions for aid from Ieyasu and Hidetada to help fund another ship that he could use to return to New Spain, however they did not fulfill his request. Ieyasu and Hidetada having learned the real intent of Vizcaíno's voyage denied his request to have an audience with him. After five months in Japan, Vizcaíno was able to gain some help from Date Masamune, a powerful daimyo in the Tōhoku region. Masamune was interested in financing the construction of a ship to perhaps entice Spanish ships and merchants to his domain. He had allowed the Franciscans to preach freely in his domain and provided financial support for their activities. Friar Luis Sotelo impressed upon Masamune that if he was allowed to go to Spain and petition Philip III and the Pope directly, that Spanish merchants would come to his domain because of his support of the order's efforts.⁴⁷ Vizcaíno accepted Masamune's offer and constructed the ship, eventually leaving Japan at the end of the tenth month of 1613. Once the ship was on its way to New Spain, Vizcaíno was forced to give up any power or authority he had to Sotelo, becoming a mere passenger. When Vizcaíno arrived back in New Spain he reported his ill treatment to the Viceroy of New Spain and

in a series of letters to his powerful father, Luis de Velasco Vizcaíno.⁴⁸ The latter sent a letter to the Governor-General of the Philippines, Juan de Silva, stating that the Spanish authorities in Manila needed to be cautious with the Japanese.⁴⁹ Luis de Velasco Vizcaíno was also friends with Antonio de Morga and helped finance the first edition of de Morga's history of the Philippines, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*.⁵⁰ Luis de Velasco Vizcaíno agreed with de Morga's view of limiting interaction with the Japanese and set into place many of the policies that de Morga had recommended when he was Viceroy of New Spain. His son's view of being mistreated by the Japanese as an official ambassador of the Spanish monarch only reinforced the policies that he had put in place before.

In Ieyasu's letter to the Viceroy, he thanked him for the gifts, and made one specific request with which the Spanish agreed to comply. Ieyasu requested that the Spanish should stop sending friars to Japan as Christianity was at odds with Japanese religions.⁵¹ It was at this time that Ieyasu started to apply more pressure on Christianity by closing churches and reclaiming their land. One of the reasons why Ieyasu started to become wary of Christianity is because Adams had informed him that converting people to Christianity was part of the Spanish process of taking over a region. Vivero had in fact presented just such an idea to Spanish officials. His idea was that after Ieyasu's death the friars should lead their converts to revolt against the Japanese government and place Spanish officials in charge.⁵² However, Spanish officials knew that an invasion of Japan would be too difficult as other reports described Japan as well fortified and armed.⁵³ Despite what Spanish leaders thought, they recognised that they needed to comply with the Japanese demand and stop sending friars to Japan. Previous to Vizcaíno's departure from Japan to New Spain, the Province of San Gregorio in the Philippines had issued a recall to Manila of all Franciscans and Spanish subjects not authorised to be in Japan because of increasing persecution. Some chose to stay in Japan because of their zeal.

Vizcaíno's report of his ill treatment and Ieyasu's request for restrictions to be placed on friars going to Japan forced the Viceroy to send a letter to Philip III. This requested further orders from the Spanish court regarding how they should pursue relations with the Japanese. The Council of the Indies debated for some time about what policies should best be adopted regarding Japan. Prior to this Philip III issued an order stating that an annual ship should be sent to Japan in order to promote good relations. However, this was never carried out by Viceroy Diego Fernández de Córdoba, as Vizcaíno arrived shortly after with news of his mission. The monarch ultimately decided to remove the clause of an annual ship and to have the return envoy to Japan express friendship only. The former was no longer needed because there was no desire for the Japanese to learn how to conduct the trans-Pacific voyage or gain other 'secrets' that they had not yet learned.⁵⁴ Thus the Council of the Indies and the Spanish monarch had no intention of fulfilling the original Japanese request for knowledge in mining, ship construction and world cartography. They believed that by restricting friars from going to Japan and allowing Japanese ships to come to Manila for trade were acts of friendship that would alone allow Spanish ships access to a Japanese port on their voyage to the Americas.

Ultimately relations would fail because of the time needed for correspondence to take place between the Spanish court and New Spain, making a return envoy unable to leave until April of 1615. During this period, Ieyasu in the eleventh month of 1614 collected and expelled 96 missionaries from various orders sending them to Macao and Manila.⁵⁵ Franciscan Diego de Santa Catalina led the Spanish embassy and upon his arrival to Japan was met by Ieyasu, but was ill-received. Hidetada refused to meet with the envoy altogether. After the death of Ieyasu in the seventh month of 1616, Catalina had expected more favorable attitudes to the Spanish embassy by Hidetada. However another audience request with Hidetada was turned down, even though permission was given to Catalina to return to New Spain with some Japanese merchandise. Upon Catalina's departure Hidetada would limit foreign trade to the ports of Hirado and

Nagasaki. When Catalina arrived in the Americas, he informed the Viceroy and the Council of the Indies of the ill-fated mission and that Spanish–Japanese relations had broken down and were unsalvageable.

With the Spanish goal of obtaining a port in Japan looking unlikely, authorities in Spain set forth policies to continue maintaining their friendship with the Japanese. Spanish authorities believed that by having the Japanese on good terms they were less likely to invade Manila. The safety of Manila was essential to protecting the Pacific trade, and with the arrival of the Dutch and the English, Spanish authorities became more concerned about an attack against Manila.

Conclusion

Identifying Spanish–Japanese relations within the term ‘Christian Century’ is inaccurate, as all of the implications associated with this term do not apply to the Spanish. As I have argued, Spanish–Japanese relations have largely been misunderstood. Placing the Spanish within the ‘Christian Century’ insinuates that they maintained similar policies as the Portuguese, namely wanting to have relations solely for the purpose of trade and the propagation of the Christian faith. Instead the Spanish were actively engaged throughout this period in establishing policies with the Japanese that they thought would best provide security for Manila and the Pacific trade. Manila was unlike any other Spanish settlement in the empire because all of Spain’s policies focused on the necessity of Manila’s survival to support the Pacific trade. The Spanish in Manila were alone in Asia and did not have a series of way stations or friendly ports like the Dutch, English and Portuguese. Because of this they had to constantly change their allegiances to survive and it is of no surprise that after the 1640s, when all hopes of a Japanese relationship were lost, the Spanish openly traded with the Dutch and the English in Manila, when such activities would once have been heretical throughout the Spanish sphere of influence.⁵⁶

Trying to find a new term to redefine Spanish–Japanese relations is complex. When looking at Spanish policies it is easy to focus on the preservation of the

Pacific trade. However, renaming this period as the 'Pacific Trade Century' is problematic as it places Japanese policies within a Spanish framework. In studying cross-cultural exchanges it is perhaps best to not use terms to define the interaction to avoid potential problems. Because of this, the term 'Christian Century' should not be used to highlight the introduction, proselytising, and prohibition of Christianity in Japan. It does not accurately describe the period, especially in regards to Spanish–Japanese relations. Instead the focus of European–Japanese relations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries needs to take a global approach. This should concentrate on which political, social, cultural and economic conditions enabled foreign cultural elements to cross cultural boundaries.

¹ C. R. Boxer is responsible for coining the phrase 'Christian Century' in his book, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549–1650*, first published in 1951. However Boxer never defines what this term means. George Elison later defined the 'Christian Century' as the period that extends 'from 1549–1639, from the arrival of Saint Francis Xavier to the Tokugawa interdiction of all traffic with Catholic lands... the significance of this *entr'acte* is not the triumph of Christianity but in the effect of its defeat'. George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973, p. 1. The use of the term continues to be maintained in present historiography, as seen in the recent publication of Haruko Nawata Ward's book, *Women Religious Leaders in Japan's Christian Century, 1549-1650*, Ashgate, Burlington, Vermont, 2009. However some scholars have diverged from the use of the term because the basis of Boxer and Elison's argument – that the 'Christian Century' reflects the importance that Christianity had in influencing Japanese political policies – has been over-exaggerated, as noted by Ronald Toby in *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1991, p. 8. Although specialists in the pre- and early modern Japanese field are hesitant and often resistant to use the term 'Christian Century' because of this, the term continues to be used for reasons of simplicity, largely because the political periodisation of Japanese history does not align with the century of Iberian–Japanese relations. More importantly, the desire to move away from the term 'Christian Century' due to its political implications is hindered by the continued reliance of non-specialists upon Boxer and Elison's scholarship in their own research; an example being Henry Kamen who uses the term

‘Christian Century’ based on Boxer and Elison’s definition in his book *How Spain Became a World Power, 1490–1763*, HarperCollins, New York, 2003. Though, I too am hesitant in using the term ‘Christian Century’ in discussing the period, the use of the term does indeed allow for simplicity because of its wide use and the notion that it is referring to European–Japanese relations. It is also important to note that my argument is not whether or not the term ‘Christian Century’ is appropriate in regards to this, but rather to tackle another historiographical problem relating to the term ‘Christian Century’, i.e., should the Spanish be incorporated within this term.

² Two examples of some recent works that continue this are: Henry Kamen, *How Spain Became a World Power*, and Setsuko Matoba, *Jipangu to Nihon: Nichi-O no sugo*, Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, Tokyo, 2007.

³ Ronald Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, p. 96.

⁴ Some examples include: W. Michael Mathes, *Vizcaíno and Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean*, California Historical Society, San Francisco, 1968; John M. Headley, “Spain’s Asian Presence, 1565–1590: Structures and Aspirations”, *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 75, No. 4, 1995, pp. 623–646; Henry Kamen, *How Spain Became a World Power*, Setsuko Matoba, *Jipangu to Nihon*.

⁵ An example of this is from Henry Kamen who states that Spanish–Japanese relations were based on Spanish policies of promoting trade with the Japanese. Henry Kamen, *How Spain Became a World Power*, pp. 217–220.

⁶ C. R. Boxer, “A Note on the Triangular Trade Between Macao, Manila, and Nagasaki, 1580–1640”, *Terrae Incognitae*, Vol. 17, 1985, p. 51; C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, Carcanet Press Limited, Manchester, 1993, p. 156.

⁷ The single-whip reform was a major turning point in the taxation policy of China, replacing a system that had been in place for two thousand years. It consolidated mainly land and labour taxes into a universal payment of silver. However, China could not produce the amount of silver it needed domestically and it relied upon imports. Due to the Chinese prohibiting Japanese ships from docking in China, large sums of silver could not make their way from Japan to China. This allowed the Portuguese to act as middlemen, moving the vast amount of silver to China. Liang Fang-chung, *The Single-Whip Method of Taxation in China*, trans. Wang Yü-ch’uan, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1956, p. 55.

⁸ Kozo Yamamura and Tetsuo Kamiki, “Silver Mines and Sung Coins: A Monetary History of the Medieval and Modern Japan in International Perspective”, in J. F. Richards (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Late Medieval and Early Modern World*, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, 1983, p. 356; Atsushi Kobata, “Production and Trade in Gold, Silver and Copper in Japan”, in Hermann Kellenbenz (ed.), *Precious Metals in the Age of Expansion: Papers of the XIVth Congress of the Historical Sciences*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 1981, p. 273.

⁹ Dennis O. Flynn, “Comparing the Tokugawa Shogunate with Hapsburg Spain: Two Silver-Based Empires in a Global Setting”, in Eddy H.G. Van Cauwenberghe (ed.), *Money, Coins, and Commerce: Essays in the Monetary History of Asia and Europe*, Leuven University Press, Leuven, 1991, pp. 22–24.

¹⁰ James C. Boyjian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia Under the Hapsburgs, 1580-1640*, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1993, p. 64.

¹¹ Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1994, pp. 91–92.

¹² Michael Cooper, “The Mechanics of the Macao-Nagasaki Silk Trade”, *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 1972, pp. 423–424.

¹³ C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, p. 111.

¹⁴ See Michael Cooper, “The Mechanics of the Macao-Nagasaki Silk Trade”, pp. 423–433; George Elison, *Deus Destroyed*; Hubert Cieslik, *Kirishitan*, Tokyodo Shuppan, Tokyo, 1999.

¹⁵ Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, “Born with a ‘Silver Spoon’: The Origin of World Trade in 1571”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 6, 1995, p. 201. The definition of globalisation and the placing of 1571 as the ‘birth of world trade’ has spawned a lot of recent debate among historians. Within this debate the author sides with Flynn and Giráldez’s argument that the establishment of Manila and the Pacific trade did indeed mark the beginning of globalisation. For more about this debate and the defining of the term globalisation refer to, Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, “Born Again: Globalization’s Sixteenth–Century Origins (Asian/Global Versus European Dynamics)”, *Pacific Economic Review*, Vol. 13, 2008, pp. 359–387.

¹⁶ Flynn and Giráldez’s assertion has been that because of the amount of money made from the trade by Spanish authorities and elites, that policies regarding the Philippines were to support the Pacific trade. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, “Arbitrage, China, and World Trade in the Early Modern Period”, *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 38, 1995, p. 436.

¹⁷ Hang-sheng Chuan, “The Chinese Silk Trade with Spanish–America from the Late Ming to the Mid-Ch’ing Period”, in Laurence G. Thompson (ed.), *Studia Asiatica Essays in Asian Studies in Felicitation to the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Professor Ch’en Shou-yi*, Chinese Material Center, San Francisco, 1975, p. 113.

¹⁸ Hang-sheng Chuan, “The Chinese Silk Trade with Spanish–America from the Late Ming to the Mid-Ch’ing Period”, p. 114.

¹⁹ Robert LeRoy Innes, *The Door Ajar: Japan’s Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century*, PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1980, p. 635; Emma Hale Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippines Islands, 1493-1898*, Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, 1903, Vol. 22, p. 96 and Vol. 23, p. 54. Innes comments that it is difficult to estimate the exact number of ships coming to Japan because of the number of diverse sources that often conflict with each other. I

have been able to locate two additional ships in Spanish sources that appear to not be listed in the Nagasaki and other Japanese sources that Innes relies upon.

²⁰ Takahasi Gonoï, *Nihon kirisutokyo shi*, Yoshikawa Kobunka, Tokyo, 1990, pp. 195–197.

²¹ Thomas Uyttenbroeck, *Early Franciscans in Japan*, Committee of the Apostolate, Catholic Church, Himeji, Japan, 1951, p. 44.

²² J. S. Cummins and C. R. Boxer, “The Dominican Mission in Japan (1602–1622) and Lope de Vega”, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, Vol. 33, 1963, pp. 9–10.

²³ Cited in Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 24, pp. 172–173.

²⁴ C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, pp. 301–303.

²⁵ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 8, pp. 260–261.

²⁶ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 10, p. 84

²⁷ The Japanese community in Manila at this time is estimated to have been around 120 to 160 individuals. However, by 1640 this number would increase to around 8,000. Many of those who came to the Philippines and other parts of East and Southeast Asia left Japan because of anti-Christian policies. It is estimated that 100,000 Japanese emigrated to other parts of Asia by 1640. For more information refer to Madalena Ribeiro, “The Japanese Diaspora in the Seventeenth Century: According to Jesuit Sources”, *Bulletin of Portuguese–Japanese Studies*, Vol. 3, 2001, pp. 53–83; Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 10, p. 84.

²⁸ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 10, pp. 170–171. Tello, like most bureaucratic officials, was also an investor in the Pacific trade and wrote letters to the various *audiencias* and monarchs to support policies that would help their investments.

²⁹ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 19, p. 180.

³⁰ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 22, p. 96.

³¹ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 24, p. 230.

³² Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 24, pp. 243–244.

³³ During this period it is estimated that 5,000 Japanese Christians died as martyrs. Kataoka Yaichi, *Nihon Kirishitan junkyo shi*, Jijitsu-shinsha, Tokyo, 1979, p. 455.

³⁴ Arcadio Schwade, “First Diplomatic Mission Between Japan and Mexico”, in Ernesto de la Torre Villar (ed.), *Asian and Colonial Latin America: XXX International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa*, El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico, 1981, p. 210.

³⁵ Naojiri Murakami, *Don Rodrigo nihon kenbunroku: Bisukaino kingintô tanden hôkoku*, Yushodo, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 140–142.

³⁶ Naojiri Murakami, *Don Rodrigo nihon kenbunroku*, pp. 142–144.

³⁷ Naojiri Murakami, *Don Rodrigo nihon kenbunroku*, pp. 123–124.

³⁸ Naojiri Murakami, *Ikoku ôfuku shokanshû: Zôtei ikoku Nikkisho*, Yushodo, Tokyo, 1966, pp. 238–240.

- ³⁹ Marcia Yonemoto, "Maps and Metaphors of the 'Small Eastern Sea' in Tokugawa Japan (1603–1868)", *Geographic Review*, Vol. 89, 1999, p. 172.
- ⁴⁰ Derek Massarella, *A World Elsewhere: Europe's Encounter with Japan in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1990, p. 153.
- ⁴¹ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 14, pp. 185–187.
- ⁴² Naojiri Murakami, *Don Rodrigo nihon kenbunroku*, pp. 120–121; Arcadio Schwade, "First Diplomatic Mission Between Japan and Mexico", p. 105.
- ⁴³ Arcadio Schwade, "First Diplomatic Mission Between Japan and Mexico", pp. 105–106.
- ⁴⁴ Zelia Nuttall, "Earliest Historical Relations Between Mexico and Japan", *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol. 4, 1916, p. 26.
- ⁴⁵ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 32, pp. 32–33.
- ⁴⁶ Spanish authorities blamed these actions for their failed relations with the Japanese. Derek Massarella has argued that Adams' position was not as influential as has been made out to be and that his role in the expulsion and the falling apart of Portuguese and Spanish relations is overly exaggerated in sources. Massarella, *A World Elsewhere*, pp. 71 & 163. However Massarella does not provide any evidence that argues to the contrary and Adams in his own words states, "This yeer the Spaynnards and Portingalles hau evssed me as instrument to gett there liberty in the maner of the Hollandes, but vppon consideration of farther incovenience I hau not sought it for them... the Spaynnards and Porttingall hath bin my bitter ennemis, to death; and now they must seek to me an vnworth wr[et]ch: for the Spaynard as well as the Portingall must haue all their negosshes go through my hand." Thomas Rundall (ed.), *Memorials of the Empire of Japan: In the XVIth and XVIIth Centuries*, Burt Franklin, NewYork, 1963, pp. 42–43.
- ⁴⁷ Arcadio Schwade, "First Diplomatic Mission Between Japan and Mexico", p. 107.
- ⁴⁸ Luis de Velasco Vizcaíno had a great deal on influence on the Spanish court. He had served twice as Viceroy of New Spain (1590–1595 and 1607–1611) and Viceroy of Peru (1596–1604) and eventually was named as president of the Council of the Indies (1611–1617). The Council of the Indies was the most important administrative organ of the Spanish empire, combining legislative, judicial and executive functions.
- ⁴⁹ Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippines Islands*, Vol. 14, p. 78.
- ⁵⁰ W. Michael Mathes, *Vizcaíno and Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean*, pp. 150–151.
- ⁵¹ Naojiri Murakami, *Don Rodrigo nihon kenbunroku*, pp. 155–156.
- ⁵² W. Michael Mathes, *Vizcaíno and Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean*, p. 133.
- ⁵³ W. Michael Mathes, "A Quarter Century of Trans-Pacific Diplomacy: New Spain and Japan, 1592–1617", *Journal of Asian History*, Vol. 24, 1990, p. 11; Maria Fernanda G. de los Arcos, "The Philippines Colonial Elite and the Evangelization of Japan", *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, Vol. 4, 2002, p. 86.
- ⁵⁴ W. Michael Mathes, *Vizcaíno and Spanish Expansion in the Pacific Ocean*, pp. 148–149.

⁵⁵ Takahasi Gonoj, *Nihon kirisutokyo shi*, p. 203.

⁵⁶ For more on this see: Serfain D. Quaison, *English "Country Trade" With the Philippines, 1644–1765*, University of the Philippines Press, Quezon City, 1966; Ruurdje Laarhoven and Elizabeth Pino Wittermans, "From Blockade to Trade: Early Dutch Relations with Manila, 1600–1750", *Philippines Studies*, Vol. 33, 1985, pp. 485–504.