

The Great Martyrdom in Edo 1623: Its causes, Course, Consequences

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(An article from Francis Britto's *All about Francis Xavier*)

In the midst of the seething traffic of the metropolis, Tokyo, on the main road joining the capital with Yokohama, lies a plot of land that is especially sacred to Tokyo's Catholics. In the Tamachi (田町) quarter not far from the Fuda-no-tsuji (札ノ辻) car-stop, is a small Buddhist temple called Chifukuji (智福寺). It stands directly on the spot where more than 300 years ago, on December 4, 1623, 50 Christians suffered martyrdom by fire. Among the martyrs were the leading missionaries and Christians of the Edo mission, so that the event practically spelled the end for this once so flourishing mission. The consequences, moreover, were reaching even farther. As was intended by the government, it touched off another countrywide persecution and signaled the beginning of the systematic policy of extermination under the third Tokugawa Shōgun, Iemitsu (徳川家光, Shōgun 1623-1651). For this reason much attention has been given this event not only in the reports of the missionaries, but also in the works of contemporary Japanese and in the chronicles of the Dutch traders. Our aim in this present study will be, with the help of all these primary sources, to offer a synoptic exposition of the causes, course and consequences of this great martyrdom so pregnant with meaning for the Church of Japan.

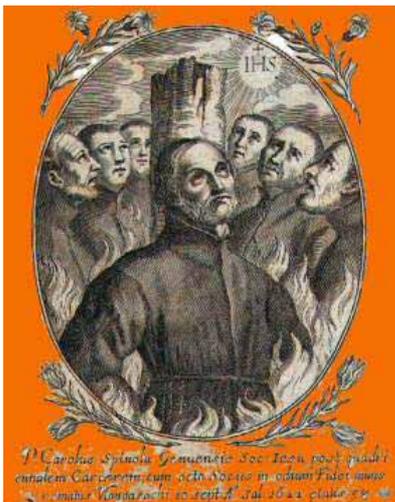
The Principal Persons Concerned

Fr. Jerome de Angelis, S.J., who had already led an adventurous life, was without doubt one of the outstanding personalities and great pioneers of the early Jesuit mission in Japan.¹ He came from Enna in Sicily, where he had been born in 1568. He entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 18 and, while still a scholastic,

¹ According to the biographical notice in the report of the martyrdom in the Annual Letter for 1624. An English translation of this Annual Letter is to be found in a book published at Douai in 1630: *The Palme of Christian Fortitude, or the glorious combats of Christians in Japonia*. Besides the Annual Letter, cf. especially: Francisco Crespo, S.J., *Relaçion de Los Martyres que este Año passado de 1624 han padecido Martyrio por nuestra S. Fé, en la Corte del Emperador de Japon* (Madrid 1625); Leon Pagés, *Histoire de la Religion Chrétienne au Japon*, Vol. I. (Paris 1901). The account of the voyage to Japan is described at length in the numerous biographies of B1. Charles Spinola, S. J.

volunteered for the “Indies,” i.e., the missions in the Far East. His request was fulfilled sooner than he had expected. Even before his ordination to the priesthood, he was sent to India to complete his theological studies in the college at Goa.

In December, 1595, he boarded a ship at Genoa and sailed to Lisbon, together with Fr. Charles Spinola. Here they had to wait till the following April for the departure of the fleet to India. Besides Fr. Spinola, there were three other Japan-bound Jesuits aboard. The first few weeks of the trip passed without incident. On June 26 they



1 Charles Spinola

crossed the Equator and soon were bearing down on the Cape of Good Hope, when suddenly they ran into a terrible storm that tore the rudder from the ship. The captain wanted to turn back to Portugal, but the crew had its will, so they made for South America which lay much nearer. Fresh storms, lack of provisions, outbreak of contagious diseases, and finally an impenetrable fog brought the passengers close to death on more than one occasion. Nevertheless, they finally reached a safe haven in San Salvador.

By December, the ship was in good enough repair to continue her voyage. Before long, however, they ran into another storm that forced them to put in to Porto Rico. Then, at the end of August, 1597, on their return trip to Portugal, they encountered an English ship near the Azores. After a running battle of two hours, the Portuguese had to surrender and the Jesuits were dragged off to England as prisoners. There they were held for a month in the captain’s custody, mistaken for enemy Spaniards. Finally, after a good deal of trouble, they regained their freedom, boarded a German vessel and returned to Lisbon, arriving there in January, 1598.

They intended to accompany the next India fleet to the land of their original destination, but were ordered to remain in Portugal to await more definite instructions from the Jesuit General in Rome. Instructions came: not only approbation of the new departure, but, for de Angelis, permission to be ordained a priest. Thus he was ordained there in Lisbon, and in the following spring, March 1599, Fr. Spinola and he embarked once more for the East. This time they reached India without mishap. On June 30, 1600, they landed in Malacca, whence, after a week’s rest, they sailed on toward Macao, which at that time was the headquarters of the Jesuit missions in the Far East. They remained in Macao for more than a year to study the Japanese language and prepare themselves directly for their missionary labors. In 1602, they finally landed in Japan, the land of their longing.

De Angelis pursued his language studies for still another year, until he was assigned to work at the residence in Fushimi (伏見 south of Kyōto) in 1603. He passed eight years in this first field of labor. Here he experienced his first missionary successes; here, too, by his contact with the educated circles of this ancient center of culture, he

gained that deep understanding of Japanese manners and customs and that gracious skill in dealing with the people for which he was especially renowned.

Then he was chosen by his Superiors to found a new residence in Sumpu (駿府), the present-day Shizuoka (静岡). When Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川家康) retired from the Shōgunate in 1605, he elected to take up his residence in Sumpu, the capital of the Province of Suruga (駿河), keeping the reins of government in his hands even while in “retirement.” Thus for a while Sumpu was second in political importance and influence only to Edo (江戸), the residence of the reigning Shōgun Hidetada (徳川秀忠). For the work of the Jesuit mission as well—that work which had everywhere experienced a fresh prosperity during the opening years of the Tokugawa Shōgunate but which was becoming endangered by Ieyasu’s increasingly suspicious and stiffening attitude—Sumpu had to be the scene of important activity. The Franciscans had opened a mission in Edo in 1599. From there the Friars, among them P. Luis Sotelo, who was noted for his diplomatic tact, made frequent visits to Sumpu. Here they finally established a residence.

The Jesuits from Osaka or Fushimi used to visit this city on their annual tour of the missions, and here they could record a rich apostolic harvest. Fr. de Angelis, for example, on his visit to Suruga in 1611, heard 1200 confessions and baptized 270 adults. The Christians begged him again to set up a permanent residence in Suruga, and a delegation accompanied him back to Fushimi in order to intercede with his Superiors and promise the necessary funds for the building and maintenance of a residence. Fr. De Angelis was immediately charged with the establishment of this station, and so he set out for Sumpu in the company of one Brother. It was an assignment of great responsibility, which required a man of sound judgment and experience combined with graciousness and tact.

From Sumpu Fr. de Angelis tried to press on to Edo to found a mission in the new capital. By 1613 all the hindrances had been overcome, when on the very day that the land for the new mission was to be purchased, persecution broke out anew against the Edo Christians. So he had to abandon the project and return to Sumpu. In the following February, the universal proscription of Christianity was proclaimed. This destroyed the flourishing work of the mission at one blow; after a decade of hard struggle, the Japanese Church was to be all but completely crushed. De Angelis himself was called back to Nagasaki by his Superiors, and from there he was to go to Macao with the other banished missionaries. However, he received permission at the last moment to remain behind incognito.

Soon he received a new assignment in a vast field. In 1614, 71 Christians, most of whom were of noble birth, had been banished from central Japan to exile in the North. There, in that still unsettled country, along with other Christian refugees, they had begun a new life of great hardship as settlers and farmers. With apostolic zeal, they had also won many of the inhabitants to Christianity and laid the groundwork for a new mission. However, they were cut off from all priestly ministry of the missionaries. Again and again they begged for priests and catechists. Especially in 1615, when a disastrous crop failure plunged the whole North into a dire famine, they pleaded with the Nagasaki

Fathers in a moving letter to send them both material and spiritual assistance.² At this news the Nagasaki Christians made a generous collection of money and provisions, and Fr. de Angelis was commissioned to deliver them to the North.



2 Map of Japan

It was a risky journey. Besides the ordinary hardships of travel through this rough and sparsely settled country, it was beset with dangers resulting from the decree of proscription, which forced Fr. de Angelis to travel incognito and in disguise. In a letter which he wrote at the time, he himself gives a vivid description of the rigors of this trip through the snow-capped, icy mountains of northeast Japan.³ He visited all the scattered settlements of Christians, pressed on into the most distant valleys to the colliers and miners, and even crossed over to the northernmost island, Ezo (蝦夷)—the Hokkaidō (北海道) of today—which he was the first European to visit and of which he was the first to give a detailed account.⁴

He remained in the North the following year and began the systematic establishment of the mission. When, a few years later, four more Jesuits arrived in this district—Fathers James Carvalho, John Matthew Adami and Martin Shikimi (式見),

² Cf. Pagés, *Histoire*, Annexe Nr. 28, 35.—For the following exposition of the apostolate in northern Japan, cf. also H. Cieslik, *Gotō Juan, Ein Beitrag zur Missionsgeschichte Nordjapans* (*Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, Vol. IX, 1953, Nr. 3-4).

³ For a Fragment of his letter see Pagés, Annexe Nr. 36.

⁴ This report is also found as an appendix to the Annual Letter for 1621. Concerning his various journeys to Ezo cf. G. Huber O.F.M., *Ezo Kirishitan-shi* (蝦夷切支丹史) (Sapporo, no date given; discussion in *Mon. Nipp.* IV, p. 320).

with a Coadjutor Brother—Fr. de Angelis was named District Superior. He divided the territory among the Fathers in such a way that, even with their limited personnel, they managed to minister to all the communities at least once every year. Besides the five Jesuits, the two Franciscan Fathers, Francis Galvez and Francis Barajas, were working in that same region at the time.

In 1620, when Date Masamune (伊達政宗) suddenly abandoned his policy of tolerance and published a general prohibition of Christianity in his province, de Angelis was active in Sendai (仙台). There he wanted to give himself up and openly acknowledge his faith so as to give the Christians an example of courage and a sense of martyrdom. However, the Christians prized the life of their priest and shepherd, and so constrained him to keep himself hidden.



3 Date Masamune

In 1621 he was ordered by his Superiors to leave his arduous but fruitful field of labor in the North and repair to Edo.⁵ There, after various trials and with great expense, he managed to find a house, where he spent the next two years in disguise. From Edo he made missionary excursions into the provinces of Izu and Kai. Because of the hardships and strain of this undercover activity, he suffered so much that he became emaciated almost beyond recognition.

The faithful companion of Fr. de Angelis through all these years of hardship and travel was the Japanese Simon Empo (遠甫).⁶ Born in 1580 at Nozu (野津) in the Province of Higo (肥後), he was brought by his parents to a Buddhist temple while still a child and was educated there by a bonze. When his teacher later embraced Christianity and was baptized, the sixteen years old pupil followed his example. Two years later he became a student in the college of the Jesuits and thereafter dedicated his whole life to the service of the mission. The Jesuits had in almost all their houses a group of lay helpers called *Dōjuku* (同宿), who not only took care of the diverse ordinary duties of house and chapel but were also entrusted with the work of preaching and catechizing. Simon chose this as his lifework. At the outbreak of the universal persecution in 1613, he shared the lot of exile with the priests and faithful, being banished to the Philippine Islands. However he succeeded in returning to Japan the following year. It is uncertain whether he accompanied Fr. de Angelis to the North immediately in 1615 or went with the missionary group that arrived in the area later. This was probably in 1617, since his biography mentions that

⁵ In the short biographical notice in the Annual Letter for 1624 the year 1621 is given; however, the Letter for 1622 had already reported that he and Fr. John Adami twice visited Echigo and Sado, and that he had in that same year gone to Ezo with Carvalho.

⁶ Some wish to read Endō (遠藤).—The biographical notices are given in the Annual Letter for 1624. In the *Synopsis Historiae S.J.* (Louvain 1950, p. 720), 1575 is given as the date of his birth. However, it must be 1580, since he was 43 years old at his death.

he spent the last six years of his life in the provinces of Oshū and Kantō. Shortly before his death, he was received into the Society of Jesus by Fr. de Angelis, so that it was as a Jesuit that he suffered martyrdom.

The Franciscan Fr. Francis Galvez had an equally adventurous career.⁷ He was born in 1574 or 1575 in Utiel, in the Spanish province of Valencia, the son of Thomas Galvez and Mariana Pellicer. As a youth, he decided to follow the priestly vocation. After finishing his philosophical studies, he was ordained deacon by the Archbishop of Valencia and was granted a benefice in the same city. Nonetheless he entered the Franciscan monastery St. Juan de la Rivera (probably in 1599) and made his profession on May 9, 1600. The following year he was assigned to the mission in the Philippines and sailed with the fleet of Juan Gutierrez de Garibai. He first landed in Mexico, where he remained until 1609. In that year he embarked again for the Philippines, where he was stationed in the monastery of Dilao. At that time there were many Japanese immigrants in the vicinity of Balete, which lay within the jurisdiction of Dilao. The mission among these Japanese was the first work entrusted to the young missionary. He set to his new task with fervent zeal and learned the Japanese language in a remarkably short time.

In 1612 he was sent to Japan. There he devoted the next two years to a mastery of the language; in this time he translated a “Life of the Saints” in three volumes, a catechism, and several other religious books from Spanish into Japanese. Unfortunately these works were lost in the storm of the persecution.

At the outbreak of the universal persecution in 1614, he was banished along with most of his brother Franciscans and had to sail back to the Philippines. But his desire for the Japanese mission—so it was with all the exiled missionaries—left him no peace. So he set sail for Malacca in 1616 with the fleet of Juan de Silva, in the capacity of ship’s chaplain; his hope was that he might find his way from there back to Japan via Macao. In Malacca he blackened his skin and had himself hired as a Negro sailor. Thus he made his way to Macao, where he presented his credentials at the Franciscan monastery and was welcomed as their guest for a year. In 1617, he finally accomplished his designs and secretly reentered Japan. At first, it would seem, he remained in Nagasaki.

⁷ For his biography, cf. Diego de San Francisco, *Relacion Verdadera Y Breve de la Persecucion, y Martirios que padecieron por la confession de nuestra Santa Fee Catholica en Iapon* (Manila 1625), cap. XIX; Lorenzo Perez, O.F.M. *Martires del Japon el en ano de 1623* (Archivo Ibero Americano, Num. LVIII, Julio-Agosto 1923, P. 336 ss.); Perez has worked over almost all the material pertaining to this martyrdom.— Regarding the date of Fr. Galvez’ birth as well as that of his second landing in Japan (1617 or 1618), there is some uncertainty; even Pagés contradicts himself in many places (pp. 374, 300, 458, 558); Martinez, O.F.M., *Compendio historico de la Provincia de San Gregorio* (Madrid 1756), says that Galvez was 48 years old when he died, in the 23rd year of his religious profession (Lib. III, p. 206); according to that he was born in 1576.

On August 12, 1618, Fr. James Pardo de San Francisco, O. F. M., landed at Nagasaki with two other Franciscans. On his voyage he had encountered Fr. Louis Sotelo, who was on his way back from his voyage as Date Masamune's ambassador to Europe. Fr. Sotelo was being held in the Philippines by the Spanish governor, who was unwilling to allow him to return to Japan until he was given assurances of safe entry. To obtain these, he sent gifts and letters with Fr. Pardo for Date at Sendai. Fr. Pardo entrusted Fr. Galvez with the presentation of these gifts. On October 9, he received a solemn welcome in the great hall of the Date castle and presented the letter and the gifts

(15 candles and a flask of wine).⁸ It is not known whether or not Date gave permission for Sotelo's return at the time.⁹ But at any rate, he gave Fr. Galvez a friendly welcome and his permission to remain and preach in Sendai and throughout his territory. This marked the reopening of the Franciscan mission in the North, which had been begun in 1611 by Fr. Sotelo but had been interrupted in 1613 when the latter sailed as ambassador to Europe.

In 1620, he was followed to the North by Fr. Francis Barajas, to whom he had handed over his former field of work, the territory of Oshū (奥州), when he himself moved to Dewa (出羽). In Dewa, too, Fr. Galvez met with great apostolic success; in one year, 1621, he baptized 1000 souls.

Two years later, in 1623, he was again called away, this time to take the place of the ailing Fr. James de la Cruz in the important mission of Edo. This was to be his last field of labor. Here he spent most of his time among the lepers in the colony in Asakusa (浅草), working with Hara Mondo, who was also to be his companion in martyrdom.



4 Luis Sotelo

John Hara Mondo-no-suke Tanenobu (原主人助胤信) was a descendant of the noble line of Hara (原) from the Province of Shimōsa (下総, now Chiba-ken), a branch of the family of Chiba (千葉), which traces its lineage back to Kammu Tennō (桓武天皇, 782-805). They derived their family name from the town of Hara in the district of Sōsa (匝嵯, Chiba-ken), which for centuries belonged to their domain. Later they branched off into numerous collateral lines, such as the Haras of Kai (甲斐), Kyūshū, etc. Hara Mondo came from the line which resided in Usui (臼井, Chiba-ken) and which was related by blood to the Chibas, and was numbered among the latter's most important vassals. For some time during the sixteenth century the Haras were stronger

⁸ *Date Masamune-kei Denki-shiryō* (伊達政宗卿伝記資料), Sendai, 1938, p. 902.

⁹ Sotelo succeeded in secretly returning to Japan in 1622 but was forthwith arrested and on August 25, 1624, together with Michad Carvalho, S.J., Peter Vasquez, O.P., Louis Sasada, O.F.M., and Louis Baba, suffered martyrdom.

and more important than their feudal lords, a fact expressed in the proverb: “Chiba commands a thousand knights, Hara ten thousand” (千葉は千騎、原は万騎の大將).¹⁰ The father of our Hara Mondo, Hara Shikibu-no-shōyu Tanenari (原式部少輔胤成)¹¹, was lord of the castle of Usui, which at that time had an income of 60,000 *koku*. In 1590, when Toyotomi Hideyoshi attacked the Hōjō (北条) family, who were the lords of the Kantō area, Hara fought on the side of Hōjō and sent 8,000 men to the fortress of Odawara (小田原). When the fortress fell after a siege of several months, Hara Tanenari ended his life by *hara-kiri* in Edo, June 18, 1591.

After the fall of the Hōjō family, Tokugawa Ieyasu became the master of the Provinces of Kantō and transferred his residence to Edo. Adroit diplomat that he was, he aimed at winning over the established nobles by friendly means and inducing them to become his devoted vassals. For this reason he welcomed them into his service. The young Kichimaru (吉丸), as Hara Mondo was called in his youth, was chosen to be Ieyasu’s page-in-ordinary. Gone, of course, was the former power and glory of the Haras. Had Tanenari fought on the side of Hideyoshi and Ieyasu at Odawara, the Haras would have numbered among the great daimyōs; as it turned out, however, they remained for generations small officials in the service of the Tokugawas. (The Castle Tega branch of the family; for example, was summoned to Edo by Tokugawa Hidetada and throughout the entire Tokugawa period served there in the capacity of city commissioners or military officials, with an income of 200 *koku*.)

Very little is known of Hara’s early youth. In the Tokugawa annals, an anecdote is related concerning the young page at the time of the construction of the castle of Fushimi (1593), which is evidence enough that he was already in the service of Ieyasu at that time.¹² Later reports tell of how he was extraordinarily tall in stature and outstanding for bravery. According to several European sources, he was the first cousin (*primo hermano*) of one of the Shōgun’s wives, named Bokochisama.¹³ Concerning his conversion we know only that he was baptized by Fr. Morejón, S.J., in Osaka in 1600, as the Father later testified during the process of information in Manila. He was christened John. At the age of twenty, he had already joined the Third Order of St. Francis, although he could not wear the habit during his period of service at court.

On New Year’s Day, 1603, when Ieyasu reorganized his bodyguard into troops of 30 men each, Hara Mondo was put in command of a troop, thus remaining always in

¹⁰ Concerning the Haras cf. A. Ota, *Seishi-kakei-daijiten* (太田亮著、姓氏家系大辞典) under Hara; T. Hara, *Kahuretaru Edo no Kirishitan-iseki* (原胤昭著、隠れた江戸の吉利支丹遺蹟), Tokyo, 1929.

¹¹ So in most of the sources. Hara following another family line gives Gyōbu-no-shōyu Tanenori (刑部少輔胤義).

¹² *Tokugawa-jikki, Tōshōgu-gojikki* (徳川実紀東照宮御実紀), Supplement 6. According to this, Perez is wrong in his opinion that Hara remained in the employ of the Toyotomi until 1600 (Perez, *loc. cit.*, p. 357).

¹³ Perez, p. 358 ss. There, too, the sources for most of the following facts.

close personal contact with the Shōgun.¹⁴ His income, at least for later years, was 3,000 ducats (*koku?*).

In Ieyasu's bodyguard and among the pages and court ladies were to be found a number of other Christians, who formed the core of the new mission of Sumpu. Noteworthy among them was Ogasawara Gonnojō (小笠原権之丞), a member of Our Lady's Sodality and the one chiefly responsible for the founding of the Jesuit settlement there.

At that period of his life, Hara Mondo seems not to have been particularly fervent. In the Annual Letter of the Jesuits, his name does not appear, not even on the list of the nobles banished in 1612. In fact, according to Japanese sources and the account of Fr. Sotelo, O. F. M., his unchristian conduct was a common scandal and was partly responsible for Ieyasu's aversion for the Christian religion. These sources indicate that, probably as early as 1611, he had a clandestine affair with a court lady, the younger sister of a certain Nojiri Hikotarō (野尻彦太郎); Sotelo notes that he had "seduced a court lady, an egregious crime and one hitherto unknown in Japan" (*saco una dema de palacio, gravissimo delito y nunca sucedido en Japon*). This outrage, along with the San Felipe Affair and the Daihachi scandal (cf. *infra*), appears to Sotelo as one of the causes for the outbreak of the universal Christian persecution.¹⁵

A further motive for open opposition to the Christians in his personal service came to Ieyasu in the form of the intrigues of the Christian secretary of Honda Masazumi (本多正純), named Paul Okamoto Daihachi (岡本大八). These intrigues led to the condemnation of Arima Harunobu (有馬晴信) and the public execution of Daihachi and his son on the 18th of the 3rd month (April 18).¹⁶

¹⁴ Taihei—nempyō (泰平年表), cited by Hara, p. 25.

¹⁵ Martinez (*Compendio*, III, p. 144) sets 1611 as the date for this event. Also according to the account of Sotelo (*Relaçion de Fr. Luis Sotelo sobre las causas de la persecucion del 1614*, which he composed in Manila in 1621 before his return to Japan, at the request of the historian, Fr. Antonio de la Llave), the event must have taken place in 1611 or 1612. For Sotelo had already left Japan in October 1613, that is to say, before the promulgation of the universal proscription of Christianity. The Japanese sources, which all go back to the Tōdai-ki (富代記) connect this event with his second arrest in 1615; this would imply that this love affair was going on even before his banishment.— Without wishing to exonerate Hara, attention must be called to the need for caution in the use of the sources. The earliest Japanese sources and the governmental decree of 1612 make no mention of the affair; only later sources mention it in connection with his second arrest in 1615, and these disagree with one another as to the date and other details so much that it is impossible to judge where the truth lies. One fact is certain: that Hara was guilty of some intimate relations with a court lady and that this was given as grounds for his arrest. We do not know whether Sotelo had any other evidence for his account or based it on court gossip. If this scandal had played such an important rôle in the promulgation of the anti-Christian decree, it certainly would have been given more attention in other Japanese and European sources (like the Daihachi scandal, for instance).

¹⁶ On this point cf. *Dai Nihon-shiryō* (大日本史料) Series 12, Vol. 9, p. 558 ss. Pagés, p. 207; Steichen, *The Christian Daimyos* (Tokyo 1904), p. 268, 279.

Even before the execution of Daihachi, on the 11th of the 3rd month (April 11), Ieyasu issued a stern prohibition of Christianity for the nobles of his own court.¹⁷ The pages and members of his bodyguard had to be divided into groups of ten and the individuals closely examined as to their religious adherence. Then the Christians were given the choice of apostatizing or being outlawed. Eighteen of them were found to be Christians; of these, four weakened and abandoned their faith, among them Sakakibara Kahyōe (榊原加兵衛), who had been baptized together with his eight years old son and some of his followers just two months previously. Hara Mondo, Ogasawara Gonnojō, the falconer Suga Kuhyōe (須賀久兵衛) and the others remained steadfast in their faith, and so were driven from the guard and banished. A similar investigation of the court ladies took place; three of them were handled particularly roughly.¹⁸

After his banishment, Hara Mondo had his head shaved according to the Japanese custom and retired to Iwatsuki (岩槻) in the Province of Musashi (武蔵) (according to the *Tōdai-ki*), which belonged to the suzerainty of Kōriki Sakon-no-tayū (高力左近大夫), who at that time held the office of a commissioner of Suruga and was well known to Hara. According to other sources (*Sumpu-ki*) he would seem to have kept himself hidden with Oka Echizen-no-kami (岡越前守).¹⁹

In the autumn of 1615, Hara Mondo was once more arrested. The sources disagree as to the time and circumstances of this arrest, so that it is impossible to ascertain the details. According to the *Tōdai-ki*, he had had the clandestine affair with the sister of Nojiri Hikotarō even earlier and would seem to have continued it after his dismissal. In any case, it became public in 1615 and both of them, together with Nojiri Hikotarō, were apprehended. As a result, on the 23rd of the 9th month (November 14), Hara Mondo had the tendons of his hands and feet cut and a cross branded upon his forehead, and the court lady was executed. A few days later, on the 29th of the same month (November 20), the Christian Seian (清安) likewise had hands and feet severed and a cross branded upon his head for having converted two fellow prisoners to Christ. The *Sumpu-ki* mentions nothing about the love affair but simply reports that on the 13th of the 9th month (November 4), Hara Mondo received the afore-mentioned penalty for his Christian faith at the sentence of Bugyō Hikosaka Kuhyōe Mitsumasa (彦坂九兵衛光正).

¹⁷ This date is given in the *Keichō-nikki* (慶長日記). There it is also noted that already in the 2nd month a decree forbidding Christianity was published. The *Tokugawa-jikki* puts this event on the 21st of the 3rd month. Yet in the *Dai Nihon-shiryō* (p. 561) extracts from the decree and notices of banishment are found beginning from the 17th of the 3rd month.

¹⁸ Cf. Annual Letter for 1612; Pagés, p. 227-230. The corresponding Japanese sources are in *Dai Nihon-shiryō*, 12-9, p. 558 ss. Here are also to be found the names of the 14 exiles, among them Sakakibara, who despite his apostasy did not escape banishment.

¹⁹ The corresponding sources in *Dai Nihon-shiryō*, *loc. cit.* Hara supposes that he stayed with the Aibaras (粟飯原), who were distant relatives on his mother's side. The Aibaras were apparently Christians, since several of their tombstones from that period were not of the usual Buddhist form and bore their ordinary names along with their posthumous names (which was also not in accord with Buddhist tradition). See Hara, p. 27 ff.

Fr. Sebastian de San Pedro, O.F.M., gives still another version. According to his account, there were in the prison of Suruga several Christians, five of whom had already spent a year and a half there. They were among those Christians who had been arrested on Holy Thursday 1614 (March 27). A warrant for Hara Mondo's arrest had been published, charging him with unlawful hunting. When the forest wardens encountered him, they did not recognize him at first; his appearance had changed so within two years. When they said that they were searching for Hara Mondo because he was a Christian, he announced his identity, voluntarily surrendered his two swords and gave himself up.²⁰ At Ieyasu's order, therefore, Hara Mondo and the other five Christians had their hands, feet and noses mutilated, and their foreheads branded with a cross. Three of them succumbed under the torture; Hara Mondo and the other two survivors fled to the mountains, where they eked out a hard life among the lepers.²¹ Afterwards Hara made his way to Edo, and there remained hidden in the Franciscan leper home until the time of his martyrdom.²² Even if in his earlier years he had, like Okamoto Daihachi, done serious harm to the cause of Christianity by his scandalous conduct, his guilt was to be atoned for through long years of suffering and finally by his painful martyrdom.

Outbreak of the Persecution

The year 1623 wrought a great change in the internal development of Japan and, in connection therewith, also brought the opening of the war of extermination against the Christian religion. On the 27th of the 7th month (August 23), Hidetada retired from the Shōgunate and his son, Iemitsu, was solemnly appointed his successor by the Emperor on the 6th of the 8th month (August 21). Iemitsu, the eldest son of Hidetada, had manifested such a weak character and shy nature as a boy that they had considered disinheriting him. However, thanks to the skill of his distinguished tutors and the influence of his devoted counselors, during his period of regency he

²⁰ Perez, p. 360.

²¹ In the various sources there are some contradictions as to the date and the persons punished by mutilation. There was certainly such a punishment meted out in 1614, before Ieyasu departed for Osaka. And this can only have been his departure for the Osaka campaign on the 11th of the 10th month (Nov. 12). In Delplace's Catalogue of Martyrs, the date is given as March 28 which is quite likely an error, since between the date of arrest (March 27) and the day of punishment some time must have elapsed, for they converted several of their fellow prisoners. The mutilation of Hara and the other five must have taken place toward the end of 1615, since the other five Christians had spent one and a half years in prison already. Even the Japanese sources agree as to the year, but not as to the exact day. Pagés gives November 1.

²² Hara (l.c. p.32) gives a report on Hara Mondo's probable missionary activity and tries to associate him with the legendary En-no-gyōja (役行者). When he explains this name as a corruption of João, Joan (obviously he had in mind the French form, Jean, which is found in Pagés etc.), his supposition is groundless. En-no-gyōja seems to be rather the mythical figure of the En-no-Otsunu (役小角), the founder of the Shūgendō (修験道) (701). On this question, cf. Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion* (London, 1930), p. 81, 139; Gundert, *Japanische Religions-geschichte* (Tokyō, 1935), p. 37.

displayed, along with the taciturnity that remained a lifelong characteristic, such resolution and energy that all were amazed and began to look upon him as precisely the one called to bring the Tokugawa regime to its final development.



5 Ieyasu

To these natural qualities was added the fact that he was the first one to be born to the Shōgunate. His grandfather, Ieyasu, who through patient waiting and skillful diplomatic maneuvering had worked himself up from one of the ordinary feudal lords to the position of first man in the realm, could nonetheless never hide the fact that he was by birth of the same rank as the other daimyōs. He could hardly expect that the Shimazus, the Mōris, Maedas or Dates would quietly retire to the rank of Tokugawa vassals. Moreover, since the politico-military power of the Tokugawa was by no means unshakable in the early years, Ieyasu was clever enough to proceed cautiously and to win over the daimyōs to his side through friendly overtures. In any case, his retirement in 1605 was a purely political move; for all practical purposes he still kept the reins of power in his own hands, Hidetada being placed in the foreground to take the responsibility.

At Ieyasu's death, however, Hidetada acted with resolute energy and showed that he had no intentions of swerving from the path set by his father. He gave the feudal lords ample proof of the might of the Tokugawa regime when he banished the widely influential Fukushima Masanori 福島正則 (1619) and the ancient Tokugawa vassal, Honda Masazumi 本多正純 (1622), and took other drastic measures. Still he had been of the same rank as the others in his youth, and so had to be wary on many points. To insure the lasting establishment of the regime, he followed the example of his father, retiring from the Shōgunate so as to cover his own responsibility and still hold the political reins.

Iemitsu, on the other hand, was born heir to the Shōgun, and hence could lay aside all personal considerations and act as supreme lord right from the beginning. At his entrance into office, he made it publicly known to the assembled daimyōs that he was born Shōgun and, therefore, did not wish to treat them any longer as equals. He immediately abrogated the various privileges of the Tozama-daimyōs, so that these stepped down to the rank of the other Tokugawa vassals. No one dared raise an objection. Another circumstance in Iemitsu's favor was the fact that the old generation of formerly great daimyōs, such as the Date, Mōri, etc., had by this time died off, and the memories of the olden days tended to die with them. For these reasons the Tokugawa regime was able to reach its final stage of evolution under the third Shōgun: all, from the Emperor to the last samurai and the simplest citizen, were ruthlessly subjected to the regime.²³

One could not expect that great changes would be made in the legislation concerning Christianity. On the contrary, Iemitsu, who had a deep veneration for his

²³ Cf. S. Mikami, *Edo-jidai-shi* (三上参次著, 江戸時代史), Tokyo, 1943, Vol. I.

grandfather, Ieyasu, and is supposed to have often seen him in his dreams, remained faithful to the Tokugawa policy on this point as well. The anti-Christian legislation was brought to a close under his regime: both in his foreign policy, by which he completely sealed the country against all outside influence, and in his internal policy, by which, through the creation of the Office of the Inquisition (*Shūmon-aratame-yaku* 宗門改役) in Edo and the systematic investigation and control of the religious affiliation of the people, he carried through the methodical extermination of the forbidden religion.

The missionaries at first had really great hopes for a change in the governmental attitude toward religion. Iemitsu, in his youth so hesitant and weak, had hitherto given no signs of hostility to Christianity. In fact, he had been on friendly terms with the Fathers in Sumpu. Moreover, there had been a let-down in the persecution in recent years, so that there were grounds for hoping that the change of regime would lead to the suspension of the decree of proscription.

But the hopes of the missionaries were not to be fulfilled. Soon after his accession to the Shōgunate Iemitsu gave notice that he had no intentions of changing the anti-Christian laws. Moreover, he refused to be satisfied with a merely mechanical restatement of the old prohibition. He took advantage of the arrest of the two Fathers and Hara Mondo to set an example for the whole realm and to make a sharp psychological impression on the still recalcitrant daimyōs. Success proved the efficacy of his policy. The Annual Letter of the Jesuits for the year 1624 opens with a survey of the situation and says, in résumé:

Although the Shōgun of Edo, the lord of Japan, transferred his power and government to his son and was himself elevated in dignity,²⁴ there was still no change in our Christian affairs, as we had hoped, for the son succeeded not only to his father's high office, but also to his hatred and cruelty toward Christians. As a matter of fact, in this one year more blood flowed than hitherto: between December 1623 and the following November, 165 Christians suffered martyrdom for Christ. Among them were eight religious: Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits; the others were layfolk: men, women and children, as we shall relate later on. This persecution began at Edo, where the Shōgun has his residence, and took on such proportions that there was not a single Christian who did not in some degree or other bear the marks of its fury. Many were put to death, many cast into prison, many more driven into exile. Others retired into hiding; others again abandoned their homes rather than run the risk of apostasy in the pagan community. Many, however, remained in their difficult situation, manifesting steadfast courage and readiness to bear every manner of torture for their faith, and these have encouraged the weak. It is impossible to describe the terror inspired by the severity of the persecution in various localities, especially since day after day new officials arrive whose sole duty, at the order of the Shōgun, is to break the spirit of the Christians

²⁴ New title: On the 27th of the 2nd month, when Iemitsu was nominated Shōgun, Hidetada received from the Emperor the title Dai-gosho (大御所)—the Shōgun was called Gosho (御所)—and on the 13th of the 9th month was named Dajō-daijin (太政大臣). In addition, he bore from now on the title of a retired Shōgun: Kubō (公方).

by threats and torture. For this reason their chief care is to spy upon the missionaries and prevent all intercourse with the Japanese. This situation has rendered fruitful work practically impossible, so that we and our helpers could baptize only a few thousands. Nevertheless, we hope that this country, sown with the seed of so many martyrs, will in the years to follow render an abundant harvest.²⁵

Iemitsu returned to Edo on the 24th of the 8th intercalary month (October 18). As was mentioned above, he had refused to promulgate the old anti-Christian laws as they stood, since he wanted to adopt more efficacious measures. Whether or not he gave oral directives to the board of officials (the *Rōjū* 老中) or the governor of Edo is uncertain. We learn from the Annual Letter, however, that pecuniary rewards were offered for the betrayal of Christians. Moreover, the outbreak of the persecution coincided with Iemitsu's return to Edo, since Fr. Morejón reports that the persecution opened in the middle of October.²⁶

Hara Mondo had a servant who had grown up in the Hara home and had the full confidence of his master. He had even become a Christian himself and, so the evidence points, remained in his master's service even after the latter's mutilation and banishment.²⁷ However, sloth and gambling soon brought him into financial straits. Hence, enticed by the rewards for denouncing Christians, he decided to betray the hiding place of his master and the Fathers, declaring that his lord, Hara Mondo, was still a zealous Christian and that the Fathers were defying the Shōgun's decree by gathering the Christians together and propagating Christian doctrine. In addition, he drew up a list of the leading Christians and the principal members of the Third Order of St. Francis, denouncing them to the governor of Edo (North District), Yonezu Kambyōe (米津勤兵衛).²⁸ The governor immediately arrested a number of them and tried to extort further

²⁵ Annual Letter 1624.

²⁶ Morejón. S. J., *Información de los Martires del Japon*, quoted by Perez, p. 343.

²⁷ According to Diego de San Francisco, *Relación verdadera* (p. 49), he merely feigned Christianity (*fingido Cristiano*).—Crespo, *Relación de los Martyres*, asserts that the accuser was a bonze who had become a Christian in the hope of thus enriching himself quickly and easily. When he found himself disappointed in these hopes, he hastened to the governor of Edo while the Shōgun was still away and notified him that about 10,000 (!) Christians and two priests were active in Edo. If steps were immediately taken against them, both the governor and he would receive rich rewards. When the governor advised him to wait until the Shōgun's return, the bonze left for Kyōto in anger, and there made his depositions, whereupon he was awarded 1000 ducats. However, this whole account seems improbable. Apart from the fact that Crespo's work contains other inaccuracies (v.g., the date of the martyrdom, 1624, the number of Christians in Edo, etc.), it is altogether unlikely that at this time a bonze would become a Christian in order to find wealth. Neither the official yearly report of the Jesuits nor the account by the Franciscan Diego de San Francisco know anything about this bonze, but are agreed that the informer was a servant of Hara Mondo.

²⁸ The Annual Letter reads: Ad laenoquidam Cambioie (in English: Ieno-quida Camioie) Iendi Gubernatorein adit. This can only be Yonezu (also pronounced Yonekizu) Kambyōe Tamasa (米津勤兵衛田政), who was appointed *Bugyō* of the Kantō District in 1604 and had held the office of *Machi-bugyō* of North Edo since 1612 a position which he kept until his death in

information on the state of Christianity in Edo. Finally someone revealed under torture the hideout of Fr. de Angelis.

However, the priest got wind of the menacing danger in time and changed his hiding place. When the police could not find the Jesuit, they urged the master of the house to betray his whereabouts. He acknowledged that he was a Christian himself but refused to betray the Father. When pressure was put on him, however, he finally promised to see that the priest would surrender himself to the *Bugyō*. This satisfied the police.

When de Angelis heard of it, he resolved to give himself up on the morrow, lest other Christians be put in danger on his account. Just as formerly in Sendai, the Christians again constrained him to keep hidden, this time, however, without success. Thereupon, some wanted to accompany him and die with him, but this he forbade. Among these was Simon Empo, his companion of many years, whom he now planned to leave behind as the support of the community. Simon pleaded so earnestly to be allowed to remain with him, however, that he finally gave in. That night he went to the Christians who had been accused of harboring him and exhorted them to stand fast in their faith. The following morning he presented himself and Simon to the magistrate, who, after an initial examination, threw them into prison.

Father Galvez was at that time in Kamakura (鎌倉), keeping himself hidden in the house of the secretary of the Third Order Hilary Magozaemon (孫左衛門), and secretly ministering to the Christians of that area. His whereabouts were known to the informers. So the *Machi-bugyō* sent pursuivants to Kamakura to apprehend the Father and his host. The latter, warned in time, arranged for a boat to carry the priest and his companions to safety. The man he gave to be their guide, however, took panic and fled, taking with him the money they had paid him. As a result, Galvez and his two followers, John, the sacristan (*Kambō* 看坊) and former porter of the monastery at Nagasaki, and Peter, the catechist (*Dōjuku*), were all captured on the beach. Hilary and his wife were also seized, and their goods, plus the books and church articles found in their home, were confiscated. He had been a wealthy and respected gentleman. Friends tried to persuade him to apostatize at least exteriorly, but he refused. He remained firm and distributed his property among his servants and inferiors. His wife insisted on wearing her finest holiday dress to prison: she knew of no greater honor and happiness than to suffer prison, chains and death for Christ.²⁹ All the prisoners were

1624. He is the same Kambyōe who began to oppress the Christians of Edo in 1614. Cf. Diego de San Francisco, *Relaçion verdadera*, p. 12.

²⁹ That this description of the conduct of the Christians is no baroque literary embellishment but a statement of fact can be proved from hostile documents as well. The regulations for the office of Investigator on the Board of Inquisition noted: There are also persons who, when they are brought before the Magistrate to answer to the accusations, dress their finest, show the Magistrate the utmost courtesy and reverence, and even spare their accuser any insult or disdain. The reason is to be found in their teaching that when the time comes for their going home to Heaven, they will be summoned before the *Bugyō*. They bear no grudge even toward their informer; for they believe that they cannot reach Heaven if they look upon him as an enemy. (*Kirishito-ki*. Cf. Voss-Cieslik, *Kirishito-ki und Sayō-yoroku*, Tokyo, 1940, p. 62).

transported to Edo and cast into the city prison after a preliminary hearing. There they met Fr. de Angelis and the other Christians who had been imprisoned several days before. The two priests heard each other's confession and prepared themselves for martyrdom, encouraging the others to do likewise.

While Fr. Francis was being taken prisoner in Kamakura, the storm of persecution in Edo began to rage beyond measure. The police broke down the doors of homes, forced their way in and dragged the Christians off to the governor, who immediately ordered them to prison. Soon there were 50 of them imprisoned. Their children were guarded day and night by armed soldiers, their possessions confiscated for the realm (i.e., for the Shōgun). It cannot be imagined what a blow that was for Christianity here. In one place informers were at every door; elsewhere, the heathens shut the Christians out and refused to dwell with them. Poursuivants and accusers increased in numbers daily. Even those in hiding could never feel safe; and those who were weak in their faith trembled between two fears, the voice of conscience, and the accusation of the informer. They had qualms of conscience for having yielded too much to their oppressors. There was not a street left unscoured by those on the watch for Christians. At last those came to be envied who were already in jail; so all-pervading was the feeling of threat, dread and insecurity. Many were forced to pass their nights in the open fields, since no one was willing or dared to give them lodging. Even the public inns refused to take them in: as soon as a guest appeared, he was questioned about his religion; if he announced himself a Christian, he was at once turned out amid insults. Finally all the citizens of Edo were ordered to inscribe their names on a public list, noting the Law (i.e., the religion) that they embraced and to whose temple they belonged.³⁰ But even apart from such steps, there was such a great difference in morals between Christian and non-Christian that it was impossible to conceal their religion. Hence many felt themselves forced to go to Kami (上).³¹ They were reduced to such want that they had to sell their clothing to keep their families nourished on the journey. They preferred to endure all sorts of hardships rather than relinquish their faith. With them went many others who, after suffering shipwreck in their faith, were seized with remorse and willingly made the 10 to 12 days trip in order to find reconciliation with God in the sacrament of penance. There too came those who before had been tepid and wavering and who now made open profession of their Christian faith.

³⁰ From this we learn that the lists concerning religious affiliation, which had been introduced in Nagasaki in 1614, were drawn up in Edo for the first time in 1623. The latter, moreover, was only a passing measure. The order to introduce these lists generally and to renew them yearly dates from the time of the Shimabara Rebellion, when the control of the Christians became systematically organized. The so-called Law of 15 Articles, which is supposed to have been issued by Ieyasu as early as 1614 and includes this proscription, is considered by Japanese historians (Tsuji; Ebisawa et al.) to be a forgery of later date. (For the text of this article, cf. Cieslik, *Das Christenverbot in Japan unter dem Tokugawa-Regime*, in *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, Vol. VI, 4).

³¹ Kami-gata (上方), the Provinces around Kyōto in central Japan, in contradistinction to the southern Provinces, especially Kyūshū, which were called Shimo-gata (下方).

The Martyrdom

The city prison where the arrested Christians were held was at that time located in Kodemma-chō (小傳馬町, now Chūō-ku, Tokyo), whither it had been moved in the Keichō era. It was under the jurisdiction of the City Governor (*Machi-bugyō* 町奉行), although delinquents from other jurisdictions, such as that of the *Jisha-bugyō* (寺社奉行) and *Kanjō-bugyō* (勘定奉行), were also imprisoned there. The prison for Christians in Kobinata (小日向, *Kirishitan-yashiki* 切支丹屋敷) was built only in 1640. The commandants of the city prison (*Rōya-bugyō* 牢屋奉行) were the Ishide (石出), who held this as a hereditary office since the beginning of the Tokugawa regime. They had under their command 50 police of officials (*Dōshin* 同心) and 30 servants, with emergency reinforcements from among the City Governor's men. The prison covered a plot of ground 2,600 *tsubo* in area³² upon which the various prison buildings and official residences were constructed. There were six different divisions: (1) the *Agari-zashiki* (揚座敷), for samurais with incomes of less than 500 *koku*; (2) the *Agariya* (揚屋), for the lowest class of samurais; (3) the *Dairō* (大牢), for ordinary citizens; (4) the *Mushuku-rō* (無宿牢), for vagabonds and homeless persons; (5) *Hyakushō-rō* (百姓牢), for peasants; (6) the *Onna-rō* 女牢, for women. These different divisions were built only gradually in the course of the 17th century, the *Agari-zashiki*, for example, being built in 1683. At first there were only two main divisions: one building for lesser samurai and the main prison (*Honrō* 本牢) for the people, of which Ishide Tatewaki (石出帯刀) notes in his memorial for 1725 :

Until 43 years ago, when the *Agari-zashiki* was erected in the 3rd year Tenna (1683), the main prison consisted of one building with mud walls on three sides and an iron grill in front. Since this was a great torment for the prisoners, grillwork was put up on all four sides at the time of the construction of the *Agari-zashiki*.³³

So it was practically a sty, in which the prisoners were penned. Naturally there was extremely little in the line of sanitary conveniences. It is revealing enough that the *Rōya-bugyō* of that time, a man one would hardly accuse of softness of heart, described the situation as a torment for the prisoners. We even have an eyewitness for the prison conditions of that time in the person of the Franciscan James de San Francisco, who was thrown into this very prison on Holy Thursday, 1615, and languished there for more than a year. At that period it was the most primitive of wooden structures, later replaced by a building of clay. From his detailed account we will cite only a few extracts, which will, however, offer an insight into the state of those imprisoned there at that time:

They took us to a place with four prisons, or rather one prison with four separate rooms. Next to this prison there was a sort of stable (*jaula*), the wallboards of which were so closely fitted together that absolutely no light shone through. This dungeon had only one small opening, through which food could be reached to us;

³² One *tsubo* = 36 square feet.

³³ Quoted in *Dai-Nihon chimei-jisho* (大日本地名辞書), p. 2888

one small pan could fit through it. Practically no light broke in, so that we could scarcely see one another. Our prison was 10 meters long and 4 meters wide, and very low. It was enclosed within a larger prison so that no one could speak to us from the outside. Our guard consisted of the warden and 24 men, who kept shouting day and night to prove they were awake.

Before they threw us into this jail, they changed our clothes once more to see if there were any objects they might steal from us. They took away even the rosaries, which we carried around our necks; they couldn't take mine, however, as I gripped it fast in my hand until the warden ordered me to let it go.

Through the door, which was so narrow that they had to force us through, they brought us into the dungeon, where there were already 153 prisoners with hardly room to squat. The newcomers were given the worst places, though one of the Christian samurai imprisoned there commanded them to give the Father the best place—which was, to be sure, only 60 centimeters long and 30 centimeters wide. The hovel was divided in two by a heavy beam that ran across the middle from end to end. In each part the prisoners squatted in three rows in such a way that the first and third rows faced each other, and the second row sat in the middle. This second row was the worst, for when those of the first or third rows got tired of squatting they stretched their legs over the middle row and pressed them down, especially if the latter were sick or weak. However, even in this way, those of the first and third rows could not stretch out well, so narrow was the room. If anyone wanted to sleep, he had to lean against his neighbor. Since they were unable to move for such a long time, they were like men robbed of the use of their limbs.

They had no clothing except a small loincloth. The priest was given a light, slightly longer dress, but the heat was so intense that it was usually impossible to wear it, and so he remained like the others. For a year and a half, he cut neither hair nor nails; for no instrument was allowed into the cell, lest one kill either himself or another.

Nor was any medicine allowed, for fear that there might be some poison extracted wherewith one might put an end to the terrible suffering by suicide. Even in the winter, they felt no cold, as so many men were herded together into such a tiny space. The place crawled with vermin; for lack of light the prisoners could not kill them, so they increased terribly.

The stench was terrible. For there were many sick who could not move and so had to take care of their needs right where they were; and nobody cleaned the place. The sick man's neighbor had to put up with not only the stench but the mess. Sometimes in desperation, they would knock the invalid's head against the heavy beam and kill him, or if they could not kill the other, they committed suicide. Sometimes, more than 30 got nothing to eat and died of hunger, for since they couldn't move because of their illness, others took their food away. "Since you can't move to go to the latrine, it's better you don't eat," said their neighbors, and so fared the sick. Although many died, the total still remained the same, since new prisoners were continually cast in. The thirst, too, was unbearable, for they

received only a bit of water twice a day and the heat was so intense that this was immediately sweated out. Many, consequently, died of thirst.

Whenever any fighting or tumult broke out, the guards climbed atop the prison and poured liquid manure or the like upon them. The prisoners became filthy beyond recognition. Then if they cursed the guards, these would become enraged and withheld the water ration for days on end, so that everyone suffered horribly from thirst.

What was most unbearable was the corpses, for they could be removed only with the permission of the warden. Because he was often slow in granting it, the bodies sometimes lay around for 7 or 8 days. The heat was so intense that they began to corrupt after 7 hours and the stench was hideous...³⁴

Fr. de Angelis and his host Leo Takeya, who seems to have belonged to the lower rank of samurai and was known to the *Machi-bugyō*, were separated from the others and kept under guard in the police officials' quarters, which probably corresponded to the later *Agari-zashiki* prison. Consequently they were relatively free and could receive frequent visitors. When Fr. Galvez was arrested a few days later, they had the consolation of giving each other sacramental absolution³⁵ and mutual encouragement. However, Fr. Galvez was soon sent to the common jail in the rear. When word came of the arrest of Fr. de Angelis, his brother Jesuits in Kyōto despatched some Father or Brother (the name is not known) to Edo to visit him. The Christians, too, took all possible steps to visit those in prison and to get help to them. In the Annual Letter, for instance, there is an account of a samurai from the North, who had been baptized by Fr. de Angelis and who was just riding back home from Miyako when the news reached him of the Father's arrest. He immediately did all he could, even risking his life, to pay him a visit together with his son.



6 Jerome de Angelis

The Fathers used the time of awaiting the sentence not merely in preparing themselves for martyrdom but in apostolic efforts among their fellow prisoners, a large number of whom they were able to convert to the Christian faith. The Annual Letter gives the following account of this activity:

In accordance with Japanese usage, there is at the entrance of the prison a special house for the guards. A double wooden door separated this from the common jail, which is about 20 feet away. Fr. de Angelis was put in this house by a special concession, because he was a foreigner and because Leo, the Father's host, was a friend of the governor. Both were shackled with ankle-chains.

³⁴ *Relaçion verdadera*, p. 13 ss.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

The others were kept in the interior part. All suffered a great deal from the darkness of the place, the overcrowdedness and other discomforts. For food, they had only a bit of rice cooked in water with salt.³⁶ The zeal of Simon especially reaped an abundant harvest, for he preached Christ day and night so that 40 heathen, who had been condemned for other crimes, were won to Christ. He hoped, were ten more days of life granted him, to bring the others, too, to embrace this religion which was then the object of such hatred and abhorrence. While he worked among the heathen this way, he in no wise neglected the Christians, but aroused in them the courage to meet death. The results of his activity were evident in the great joy that all manifested on the day of martyrdom. Fr. Jerome as well was lacking neither in zeal nor courage but only in opportunity, since but eight heathens were shut up in the same room with him; these he instructed in the Faith and baptized. And since he was seldom permitted to mingle with the other prisoners and console them, he undertook another charitable work and despite the weight of his chains managed to construct a sort of mat out of paper, so that he was able to be of at least some material help to those whom could not minister to spiritually. It was in this work that he was discovered by one of Ours whom the Superior from Kami (Kyōto) had sent to visit the prison. He had tied his chains about his neck with a cord so as to be the freer in his charitable occupation. At first many friends came to visit them allowed in under the pretext of visiting Leo. But when the governor got wind of it, he became afraid of possible untoward consequences, so he had Leo thrust into the rear jail. (De Angelis) spoke with the guards and other visitors only about heavenly matters instructing all in the Faith and exhorting them to seek the things of God alone and lay no worth on the rest. He also heard the confessions of the Christians, who seemed to be overflowing with joy; all except one, who ceaselessly lamented his sin of betraying the names and whereabouts of the others. His remorse was so bitter that his tears, which flowed all night and even during the day, left visible traces in his cheeks.³⁷

The arrest of the Fathers and Christians took place shortly before or after the return of the new Shōgun from Kyōto (October 18). Naturally the *Machi-bugyō* could not proceed on his own in such an important matter. But even Iemitsu hesitated and postponed decision until the return of the *Kubō* (公方), i. e., the retired Shōgun. Hidetada arrived in Edo on the 7th of the 9th month (October 30). When the matter was laid before him, he transferred the decision (at least outwardly) to the new Shōgun, who (as was mentioned above) used the occasion to set an example for the whole country. So all 50 were sentenced to death by fire. The prisoners, who had been awaiting the death sentence and had disposed themselves for martyrdom, welcomed the news with exceeding joy. Only one weakened.

There was a month's wait till the execution. Whether it was because it took so long to decide the sentence or because such a long time was allowed them even after the announcement of the death sentence is not clear. Probably some time was allowed between sentence and execution, since extraordinary preparations were necessary for such a mass execution; besides, a sentence was not usually carried into effect

³⁶ According to the Prison Regulations, they were to be fed twice a day, in the morning and evening, with Japanese soup (汁 *shiru*) and vegetables for fare.

³⁷ Annual Letter 1624.

immediately, but carefully planned so that the execution did not fall on certain religious holidays or feast days of the Shōgun's family.³⁸ Finally the day was set: the 13th of the 10th month (December 4), according to the sun calendar. Both Japanese and European sources agree on the date.

At this time, there were as usual in Edo very many daimyōs from the various provinces. It was precisely upon them that the mass execution was intended to make an impression. Probably that was also the reason for holding the ordeal not on the execution grounds of Asakusa as in 1615, but on the busiest highway in the country, the Tōkaidō (東海道), just outside the gates of the city on an open spot with a wooded hill for a backdrop, a place beloved by excursionists for its beautiful view of the sea.³⁹ As was to be expected, onlookers came in great numbers to see the gruesome spectacle, among them many knights and nobles. Hence it is not strange that this martyrdom became one of the most widely known in Japan and found mention in numerous chronicles. Nonetheless, the Japanese sources are quite brief in their accounts. The *Tokugawa-jikki*, e.g., relates under date of the 13th of the 10th month:

Partisans of the Christian religion were arrested and sentenced to the stake. Among them was Hara Mondo, who had already been banished for a previous crime and for a second crime had his fingers cut, barely coming off with his life. Then, since he professed the Christian religion, he was condemned to death. With him was condemned a certain Matsura Sannosuke, chief of a section of pages, for having sheltered such believers in his house. Twenty-four fellow-culprits (連座) were sentenced at the same time.⁴⁰

Among the European sources, we have at our disposal both the detailed narration of the Jesuit Annual Letter, based on the testimony of eye-witnesses,⁴¹ and the Franciscan account, which likewise goes back to eye-witnesses.⁴² Thanks to these sources, we have an extremely vivid picture of the course of the martyrdom.

It was Japanese custom that the death penalty was supplemented by a preliminary punishment called *hikimawashi* (引廻), a public parade of the condemned through the city streets. In Edo two kinds of *hikimawashi* were practiced: the *Edo-hikimawashi* (江戸引廻 ‘through the whole city’) and the abbreviated *Gokasho-hikimawashi* (五ヶ所引廻 ‘to the five main places’). Only in case of execution by fire or crucifixion was

³⁸ Cf. *Kirishito-ki* (Voss-Cieslik, *Kirishito-ki und Sayō-yoroku*, p. 53).

³⁹ For the site of the execution grounds cf. *infra*.

⁴⁰ The quotation follows the *Zoku Genna-nenroku* (続元和年録); cf. also *Mannen-ki* (万年記), *Tsūkō-ichiran* (通行一覽), *Ryūei-nichiji-ki* (柳營日次記), etc. Here the executions of December 4 and 24 are treated together. Concerning Matsura, cf. *infra*.

⁴¹ The Superior of the Jesuits in the Kami District at that time, Fr. Christopher Ferreira, who simultaneously exercised the functions of Vicar General and pastor of a church, made a thorough investigation and drew up an authenticated report with a view to an eventual process of canonization. For the sources, cf. also Perez, *loc. cit.*, p. 342 ss.

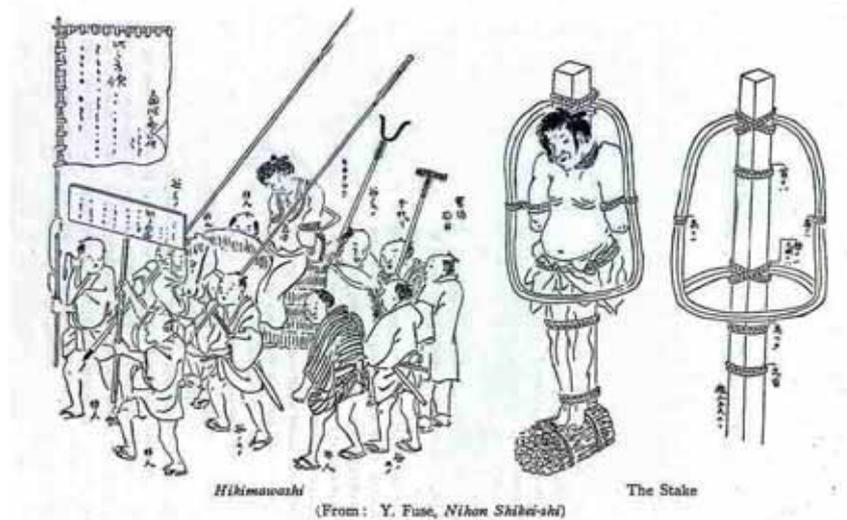
⁴² Cf. especially Diego de San Francisco, *Relaçion verdadera*, cap. XIX, p. 47 ss.; and Perez, *loc. cit.*

the parade shortened, going directly from the city prison to the execution grounds (Asakusa or Suzugamori (鈴森) in Shinagawa). In the present case, therefore, it took the direct way from Kodemma-chō to Fuda-no-tsuji, via Muromachi (室町), Nihonbashi (日本橋), Kyōbashi (京橋), Ginza (銀座), Shimbashi (新橋), Hamamatsu-chō (濱松町), and Mita (三田). The number of condemned was so large that the usual procession order had to be changed. The prisoners were divided into three groups, the “leaders” (the two Fathers and Hara Mondo) being led on horseback, the other Christians following on foot. The death sentence was proclaimed on a placard carried on ahead, and according to the Annual Letter, the “leaders” bore about their shoulders another sign giving their names. The Annual Letter tells the story most clearly:

Early in December, the executioners finally came to carry out the Shōgun’s sentence. They entered the dungeon, went first to Fr. Jerome and unshackled his feet; then they threw a heavy rope about his neck and bound his hands behind his back with it. Fr. Francis and the other Christians were handled in no more human fashion. They bound them all and counted them to lead them out to the place of execution. Fr. Jerome, for all like a captain, was on horseback at the head of the procession; from his shoulders hung a sign with his name inscribed in large letters. Behind him walked Simon Empo, Leo and the others, sixteen in all. In the second group, Fr. Francis led on horseback with his placard and inscription and followed by an equal number of Christians afoot. Hara Mondo brought up the rear of the procession, likewise with an inscribed placard, though his was somewhat smaller, and accompanied by the rest of the Christians. Ahead and behind and on both sides they were surrounded by armed policemen so that no one might approach them. And so through the streets of Edo, this city where our holy Faith had been so afflicted, they paraded as though in triumphal procession with banners unfurled and flying. Outside the city, along the road that runs toward Kami, 50 stakes had already been set up on the place of execution. Three of them, those nearest the city, stood a little apart from the others. All were heaped around with faggots. The firewood was placed in such a way that when it burst into flame the fire would blaze at least one ell away from the stake.⁴³ The crowd of onlookers, who streamed in from all directions, was enormous. The place, which was of no mean dimensions, and the neighboring mountain were filled with spectators, among them many nobles and princes who had assembled in Edo just at that time. One could believe that it had been so arranged by God’s Providence in order to reveal the more widely what power the Christian religion brought to those who embraced it. As soon as they reached the spot, the Christian heroes were all bound to the stakes— except the three who, as we have mentioned, were on horseback and were not permitted to dismount. Those at the stakes lifted their eyes to the Heaven they yearned for, and filled with hope, they begged strength and courage for the last battle. Fr. Jerome, however, began to preach with glowing fervor to show that the Faith of the Christians was the only true belief, that all others were false and empty illusions. Simon Empo did likewise in his burning zeal, not only when he was bound to the stake, but all along the way, urging all passers-by to accept the Faith of Christ and remain steadfast therein. We must not omit mention of the fact that 51 had been sentenced to death by fire and that this number had been led out from the prison, but the last of them was passed over here because he seemed to be

⁴³ This method of arranging the faggots differed from the ordinary method (see cut) and aimed at giving the victim one last opportunity to recant even after the fire was lit.

weakening in his faith on the road and so was held back by the guards at the place of the great battle. The sentence and cause of their dying were written on a huge signboard hung high in full view and ran somewhat as follows: These men are condemned to so severe a punishment because they are Christians.⁴⁴



7 Hikimawashi and Stake

Then, when the police applied the torches and the faggots caught fire, the flames blazed aloft on all sides while the happy souls called aloud upon the holy names of Jesus and Mary. Words cannot tell what constant and invincible spirit they showed amid such torment. There was not a one that complained, or moaned, or even betrayed in his face the slightest sign of pain. The onlookers were so deeply impressed by the sight of such amazing constancy that even the heathen murmured that such courage was more than natural, for it was normal for condemned criminals to experience pain at the loss of at least something. The Fathers were watching it all from horseback, but with unbroken spirit so that by God's grace their courage might not sink, for that is what the judges had hoped and for that reason had delayed their execution: that the horrible burning might shake their purpose. But far from letting themselves be terrified by so frightening a death, they became all the more enthused. Not only they, but also two of the spectators, a man and a woman, who when the fire was at its height ran of their own free will to the place of the judges and shouted for all to hear that they too were Christians and followers of the same Way as those who were already in the flames. However, they were not cast immediately into the fire, as aflame with a heavenly ardor they had desired, but at the order of the authorities were bound and thrown into prison. There they were kept in chains and made all who saw them wonder at the power of the divine Law in the hearts of men and at the heaven-sent strength given those whose only desire on earth is to follow God, the supreme Lawgiver.

⁴⁴ The exact Japanese text has not come down to us. In Bernardino de Avila Girón's *Relación del Reino de Nippon* are to be found the texts of two such placards in the account of the martyrs of Edo in 1613 (*Archivo Ibero Americano*, No. 119, pp. 388 and 390).

When the fires had died out, and so too the lives of all, the others were made to dismount and were bound to the stakes. To the first, that nearest the city, Hara Mondo; to the second, Fr. Jerome; to the last, Fr. Galvez. As soon as the fire was kindled, these brave crusaders of Christ greeted one another and shouted mutual encouragement. And Fr. Jerome reminded Hara Mondo how short-lived the pain would be in comparison with the eternity of glory awaiting them. As the fire flared up and began to enwrap them, these servants of God could be seen through the flames braving the first onslaught of the blaze with surpassing valor. Fr. Jerome could be seen first turning toward the city praying for it briefly, then turning where the flames, fanned by the wind, attacked him the most fiercely, partly to show that he did not fear it, partly to say some last words to the folk who stood there in greater numbers. He remained always the same, ever erect and exhorting the crowds with great zeal, until he succumbed to the might of the fire and rendered his spirit back to his Creator, falling to his knees as he died. As to John (Hara Mondo), what was particularly striking and a sign of great spirit was that as a flame raged upon him with particular force, he put his arms about it as though it were something cherished. He stood unmoved the whole time until he fell forwards together with the stake and lay outstretched upon the ground. But Fr. Francis, who was the last to remain alive, remained standing upright even in death, leaning on the stake from which he had not shrunk even amid the most excruciating torments. Thus ended the terrible tragedy. We cannot describe the varied feelings the people carried back from this spectacle of blood. Some felt one way, others another. But all voices and minds agreed on one point: no praise could match the bravery and noble constancy of the martyrs. And they extolled above all Fr. Jerome, who, their leader as he was in life, so in the face of death outstripped them all in spirit.

The bodies, which were all more or less consumed by the flames, remained lying in the open field guarded by soldiers through the next three days. But as soon as the guard was lifted, the Christians carried off the bodies of the two Fathers. They intended to do the same for the rest as well, had not news of their deed leaked out and a still stronger watch been set.

The day which shed such glory on the Christians was December 4, 1623. The following day, on an elevated spot before a vast throng of people an official ceremony took place in which the main informer was given a reward and the populace informed by the authorities that in the future anyone else who gave information on this same crime would receive a similar reward. The payment the betrayer received was the fine house of one of those executed, plus 30 pieces of gold worth about 1500 *scudi*. Thus the informer got his reward, but amid such universal loathing that even the heathens cursed and execrated him.⁴⁵

Of the 50 martyrs, the names of only 37 have come down to us. The Annual Letter lists them in the order in which they were stationed at the place of execution, “just as those coming from the city saw them.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The Dutch report is in substantial agreement. Cf. *infra*.

⁴⁶ All these Christians, as well as those of the two subsequent executions, were members of the Third Order of St. Francis. There is in the Vatican Library a letter from the Edo members of the Third Order addressed to the Pope under date of 1613; it was delivered by Fr. Sotelo on

1. John Hara Mondo (原主人)
2. Fr. Jerome de Angelis, S.J.
3. Fr. Francis Galvez, O.F.M.
4. Leo Takeya Gonshichi (竹屋権七), Fr. de Angelis' host⁴⁷
5. Hanzaburō Kashiya (柏谷半三郎)
6. John Chōzaemon (長左衛門), Fr. Galvez' catechist⁴⁸
7. Simon Empo, S.J. (遠甫)
8. Peter Kisaburō (喜三郎), catechist.
9. John Matazaemon (又左衛門)
10. Michael Kizaemon (喜左衛門)
11. Laurence Kashichi (嘉七)
12. Matthias Yazaemon (彌左衛門)⁴⁹
13. Laurence Kakuzaemon (角左衛門)
14. Matthias Kizaemon (喜左衛門)
15. Thomas Yosaku (與作)
16. Peter Santarō (三太郎)
17. Peter Sazaemon (佐左衛門)
18. Matthias Sekiemon (關右衛門)
19. Ignatius Chōemon (猪右衛門)
20. Simon Muan (夢庵)
21. Denis Ioccunu⁵⁰
22. Issac
23. Bonaventure Kyudayū (久太夫)
24. John Sinkurō (新九郎)
25. Hilary Magozaemon (孫左衛門), Fr. Galvez' host
26. Francis Kizaemon (喜左衛門)
27. Sashimonoya Shinshichirō (指物屋新七郎)⁵¹

the occasion of his embassy. There were several martyrs among the signatories (73 men and 44 women): Ignatius Chōemon, Bonaventura Kyūdayū, Francis Kahyōe, Peter Genzaemon, and Matthias Bun'emon. The letter is published in *Dai Nihon-shiryō*, Series 12, Vol. 12, pp. 319-323. The Japanese names of only these five martyrs can so far be unmistakably identified; the others still remain guesswork.

⁴⁷ Anesaki gives Takeya Ginsuke (*A Concordance to the History of Kirishitan Missions*, Tokyo 1930, p. 46); the Annual Letter clearly gives Gonshichi (Gonsichi). Takeya probably belonged to the old noble family of the Takeyas (竹屋), who resided in Musashi and held various court offices.

⁴⁸ Or: Shōzaemon (小左衛門/床左衛門?) Anesaki offers as an additional possibility: Odawara Sanzaemon or Sōzaemon (小田原小左衛門) in the aforementioned letter from the members of the Third Order (Anesaki, *loc. cit.*).

⁴⁹ Anesaki gives as a possibility: Matthias Sone Yosanzaemon (そね與三左衛門) from the foregoing letter.

⁵⁰ Unidentifiable. Pagés gives in his place: Laurence Doi (土井); in place of the following: N. Isai.

28. John Chōzaemon (長左衛門)
29. Roman Gon'emon (権右衛門)
30. Emmanuel Buemon (武右衛門)
31. Peter Kiemon (喜右衛門)
32. Kizaburō (喜三郎)
33. Peter Chōemon (長右衛門)
34. Andrew Risuke (理助 /利助?)
35. Raphael Kichizaemon (吉左衛門)
36. Kishichi (喜七)⁵²
37. Anthony.

The Ensuing Martyrdoms

In the wake of the mass execution of December 4, a fresh hunt for Christians began. Some of the relatives of those already put to death were still languishing in prison, especially their wives and children, as well as the two Christians who had so publicly professed their faith at the scene of the great martyrdom. To make a sharper impression on the people, however, and to scare them away from giving aid or sympathy to the Christians, 13 heathens were condemned to death with them on the score of having sheltered Christians in their homes. Among these was a member of the Shōgun's bodyguard, Matsura Sannosuke (松浦三之助), who is given especial prominence in Japanese annals.

Matsura owned a house in the city, which he inherited from his father and used to lease. Christians had kept themselves in hiding there. Although Matsura himself was unaware of it, still he was arrested as the responsible landlord and sentenced to crucifixion. Even the rather sober annals remark that the onlookers could not restrain their tears at the sight.⁵³

This unwonted severity makes it clear what the regime intended by these mass executions. Simple decrees were often treated as dead letters by many feudal princes, who still maintained their independence, and some times even resisted the Tokugawas; for them, an unmistakable example had to be set.

The order for execution came on December 25. Of the 37 condemned, only 24 were Christians, the rest heathen. Of the Christians, 6 were burnt, 17 beheaded, and 2 crucified; of the heathen, 2 were burnt, 2 beheaded, the rest crucified. The place of execution is not recorded, but was probably the same as for the previous execution since the Japanese accounts do not clearly distinguish the two events.

⁵¹ *Sashimonoya* indicates his profession: carpenter, woodworker. Anesaki writes his name Jinkichi (甚吉).

⁵² Pagés gives Kyūkichi, whereas Anesaki calls him Kyūshichi.

⁵³ *Sokkyo-hen* (Ms.), Book IV. Quoted from the *Kōjō zoku-nenroku* (江城続年録).

Particularly remarkable was the valiant constancy of Mary Takeya, the mother of Leo Takeya Gohshichi, who had given Fr. de Angelis refuge in her home. The governor tried all means to break her resolution, employing every stratagem the devil could suggest. At one time, he offered her a life of luxury and ease; at another, he held before her eyes the prospect of the most hideous of deaths. Again, he painted an exaggerated picture of the shame and dishonor she was about to bring upon her husband and her children, who had great esteem and influence at the court. But Mary gayly rejected these suggestions, answering that death, however cruel, was an enticement rather than an abhorrence since it was the door to eternal salvation. And as for disgrace, it would be for her a more sublime honor and glory than she could win in a lifetime. So let him cease and speak of these things no longer. The attacks upon her resolve then increased in number and ferocity, but in vain. And so she was condemned along with the others. On the appointed day of execution the indomitable Mary rode ahead, bound and on horseback, with ever more serene and joyful mien and a constancy that moved the beholders to admiration. Behind her went four Christian women⁵⁴, whose names have not yet been discovered, and Francis Kahyōe (加兵衛). He was the one mentioned above, who, together with one of the four women, was present the day the 50 Christians embattled for heaven and had cried aloud to the judge that he too was a Christian. Eighteen children followed behind them, all but two of them Christians and all too young to have learnt to fear death. They went laughing and gleefully joking in childlike fashion, carrying the toys and knickknacks that are children's delight. The sight stirred tears in pagan as well as Christian eyes.

Immediately on their arrival at the place of ordeal, the storm vented its full rage upon these innocents in such cruel and barbaric fashion that one cannot hear of it without a shudder. Some were beheaded, others slashed from head to navel, others sawn asunder, while others finally were hung up by one foot and torn limb from limb. After this bloodbath, which had been perpetrated before the eyes of the Christian women with the intention of striking fear into their hearts, 11 others were bound to crosses. Among them were two Christians, Peter Genzaemon (源左衛門)⁵⁵ and Matthias Bun'emon 文右衛門. The death sentence inscribed on a tablet indicated that they had been condemned for having leased their houses to Christians or had given security to others who rented homes to them,⁵⁶ as the two Christians had done. Pierced with lances, they died with the holy names of Jesus and Mary upon their lips. At the beginning of the day's ordeal, Matthias seemed on the point of weakening, but as they left the prison, he publicly made an official profession of his faith. He said that he was a Christian and for this reason was going to his death, and he bade all to make this his true mind known to the lord (Shōgun) and those who ruled in his name. He repeated this declaration as he hung upon the cross. When these eleven had died, the heads of the martyred children were hung from their hands. Meanwhile the six

⁵⁴ Anesaki rightly maintains that Rufina, the wife of Leo Takeya (cf. the letter of the Third Order), was among them. According to Perez, the wife of Hilary Magozaemon was too (*loc. cit.* p. 351).

⁵⁵ The Third Order letter says he was a carpenter 大工.

⁵⁶ When arranging the contract for lease (as in the case of other contracts such as those concerning loans, appointments, exchanges), the tenant had to provide some security.

Christians who were sentenced to the flames were commending themselves to God, praying aloud the Litany of the Saints and other prayers. The barbarous scene enacted before their eyes did not daunt them. In fact, Francis even turned preacher, encouraging them to bear all bravely. Then, facing the crowds, he spoke with ardent zeal about the Christian Faith, which alone could bring salvation.

The spectators were astounded that their purpose remained so unshaken even as the flames blazed around them and that even amid such torment they seemed to find nothing else to do but call upon Jesus and Mary, not betraying a sign of anguish until they rendered their souls to God. As was customary, the death sentence announced on the placard ran as follows: "These were condemned because they are Christians." In the same way, a sign over the heads of the two heathens who were separated from the others indicated that the reason for their condemnation was that in defiance of the law they had sheltered Hara Mondo.⁵⁷

These cruel mass executions did not fail of their intended effect. That even a young page, the son of a distinguished officer (his father was one of the Shōgun's private secretaries (御右筆)), who was not even aware of the Christians hiding in his house, should have been mercilessly condemned as a criminal, must have cast fear into all the heathens and discouraged those who inwardly sympathized with the Christians from proffering any further help. Hence another group of Christians were arrested shortly thereafter, and after six months imprisonment, sent to the stake on the eastern execution grounds (probably Asakusa), June 10, 1624.

Among the non-Christians who were put to death on December 24 was a certain page who had stood high in the sovereign's favor, but who was condemned for having leased his house to Christians. The execution of this youth spread such terror among the heathen that they hastened to denounce many Christian acquaintances to the governor. Among those denounced was the wife of Laurence, whom the police had overlooked when they arrested her husband. Twenty in all were imprisoned and the constancy of most put to the test, without avail. Finally, on June 10, after six months incarceration, ten men and six women were burnt to death on the eastern outskirts of the city. They met their fate bravely, and over the head of each hung the sentence: "Because they were Christians." Unfavorable circumstances have hindered the gathering of more detailed information, outside of the fact that one of the prisoners succumbed to the hardships of the dungeon and that the total of those who died for Christ was 18.⁵⁸

The new wave of persecution broke not only over Edo but over the other parts of the country. Except for Nagasaki and the neighboring territory, the situation had been relatively calm these last years. But for the single year following this martyrdom, 1624, Cardin lists no less than 222 in his Martyrology, and from missionary reports we

⁵⁷ Annual Letter 1624.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Perez, *Martires del Japon en el año de 1624* (*Archivo Iberico Americano*, No. 61, Jan.—Feb. 1924, p. 12) gives June 12 as the date of the execution and numbers 10 men and seven women martyrs.

know that this number falls far short of the real total.⁵⁹ The main factor was that now those daimyōs who had so far withheld from open persecution could no longer resist the moral pressure of the central government. This was especially true of Date Masamune (伊達政宗) in Sendai and Asano Nagaakira (浅野長晟) in Hiroshima.

Date Masamune had been one of the most powerful Tozama-daimyōs, i.e., one of those who had not been allied with the Tokugawas from the beginning. Under the first two Shōguns, he had been able to maintain a broad independence; he was even able, though it was with the consent of the regime, to send an embassy to Europe. However, one of Iemitsu's first measures was, as we have mentioned above, to abrogate all the privileges of the Tozama-daimyōs and reduce them to the rank of ordinary Tokugawa vassals. Next to the aging Mōri Terumoto (毛利輝元), Date was certainly the most important of these, and the harsh words of the new Shōgun during his initial audience must have struck him hard. Still, he dared not object but declared to Iemitsu in the name of all that they would act in perfect harmony with the Shōgun.

Date was still in Edo at the time of the execution of the 50 Christians and had firsthand experience of the direction set by the government. Nonetheless, it seems that he still hesitated to inaugurate an all-out persecution in accord with the anti-Christian decree. True he had already exerted some pressure on the Christians and tried to induce them to apostatize, but no real persecution had taken place. So the Shōgun himself now began to put moral pressure on Date. On the 7th of the 12th month (January 26, 1624) Date received an invitation to the Shōgun's palace. In an intimate conversation after dinner, Iemitsu broached the subject of the proscription of Christianity and expressed the wish that Date might proceed with more decision in his own province. Thus there was no further escape for Date. If he wanted to retain the Shōgun's favor, he had to fall into line. Actually the very next day he dispatched a special courier to his deputies in Sendai with the following message:

By mandate of His Highness. Yesterday morning, the 7th of the month, we were invited to tea in Ni-no-maru and all without exception complied. There, in a personal conversation, the Shōgun revealed his will to us. Even in Edo, there may be Christians and just recently many have been prosecuted. Since there are doubtless such in Ōshū as well, a search must be undertaken. As this is an order of His Highness, we are sending Itō Yahyōe (伊藤彌兵衛) thither. Details will be given on arrival.

The 8th of the 12th month.

With our respects,
Furuuchi Iga-no-kami
Furuuchi Shuzen-no-kami
Nakajima Kemmotsu-no-suke

⁵⁹ Cardin, *Catalogus Regularium Et Secularium Qui in Iapponiae Regnis... Ab Ethnicis In odium Christianae Fidei Sub quattuor Tyrannis violenta morte sublatis sunt*. (Rome 1646.) Otis Cary writes: "In that same year (1623) between four and five hundred persons were put to death in the immediate possessions of the Tokugawa family." (*A History of Christianity in Japan*, Part I, p. 207). However, Cary gives no source for this statement.

That was in reality the signal for the ensuing persecution which led to the banishment of Gotō Juan (後藤壽庵) and the great martyrdom of Sendai. It was there that Fr. Carvalho, S.J., and six Christians were put to death by freezing on February 22, 1624, after several other Christians had succumbed to the hardships of the persecution or been executed.⁶⁰

The regime was well aware that Christianity had experienced significant growth in the northern provinces these last years, partly through the influx of refugees who settled there, but especially through the zealous apostolic activities of the missionaries and Christians. The Christian refugees in that region had lived in relative security, since as foreigners they did not come under the jurisdiction of the provincial governors. Of course, the regime could not and would not idly watch the proscribed religion take root and grow strong in any part of the kingdom. So, along with Date Masamune, Satake Yoshinobu (佐竹義宣), who as lord of Akita (秋田; 205,000 *koku*) ranked after Date as most important daimyō in the North, must have felt the goad of the regime. He, too, was in Edo at the time of the great martyrdom. In the spring of the next year, he decreed that an investigation of Christianity be undertaken in his province:

While the Shōgun was raging against the Christians in 1623, Yoshinobu Satakedono, lord of the realm of Dewa, was residing in his palace. When he beheld with his own eyes what was going on, he too began to fear the Shōgun and soon sent to the deputies in his principal towns the order to institute a search for Christians in his province and to prosecute those who were discovered. The deputies obeyed; indeed so zealously that more than 200, mostly of the nobility, were arrested and thrown into prison.⁶¹

In any case, it appears that it was at a hint from the regime that Satake first issued this decree. The Japanese sources support this contention. On the 18th of the 1st month (March 7, 1624), he sent his deputy Umezu Noritada (梅津憲忠) a note with the order to conduct a thorough investigation in his territory and to imprison all Christians, even apostates. The problem then arose of how to treat the immigrant Christians, who were not subject to the local authorities. Satake sought counsel from the regime and was instructed by the Rōjū Doi Ōi-no-kami (土井大炊頭) that all Christians were to be prosecuted without distinction; the apostates, however, were not to be condemned; on the contrary, every effort should be made to induce all to apostatize. These instructions marked a significant change in anti-Christian policy under Iemitsu: Not martyrs, but apostates. This was the principle directing the refined organization of the persecution during the next decades.

In the spring, Satake received the Shōgun's permission to return to his own province, so he arrived in Kubota (now Akita) on the 1st of the 5th month (June 16). Shortly

⁶⁰ On the outbreak and course of this persecution cf. H. Cieslik, *Gotō Juan (Neue zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft, IX, 1953, Nr. 3-4)*.

⁶¹ Annual Letter 1624.

afterwards the trial of the arrested Christians was held and resulted in the mass executions of July 18 and 26.⁶²

In Aizu (曾津) lived the young Gamō Tadasato (蒲生忠郷), grandson of the famous Christian daimyō Gamō Ujisato (氏郷). In Aizu, too, Fr. Matthew Adami, S. J., had begun to work at that time and had baptized about 360 persons. But when Tadasato, either on his own initiative or under pressure from the regime (it is not certain which), gave the order to proceed against the Christians in the spring of 1624, many were exiled or imprisoned and a large number of the neophytes weakened and fell into apostasy. The Father himself escaped only with great difficulty. Nevertheless, years later “numerous Christians” were still to be found in those parts.⁶³

Likewise in Osaka and the provinces of central Japan, a new persecution broke out lasting four months and leading to the banishment of many Christians. There were still eight Jesuits in that region, six priests and two Brothers, who stood by the oppressed Christians and immediately on the outbreak of the persecution visited the surrounding provinces. In Okayama (岡山) the decree for temple certificates was carried through for the first time: every person must belong to a definite Buddhist sect and possess a bonze’s certificate to prove it.⁶⁴

Another province soon to feel the results of the great martyrdom of Edo was Aki (安藝) in western Japan, with Hiroshima (廣島) as its capital. Apart from a brief persecution on the occasion of the general anti-Christian decree of 1614, the Christians of Aki had lived more or less in peace. Even the banishment of Fukushima Masanori (福島正則) and the accession of Asano Nagaakira (淺野長晟) to power in 1619 left the mission situation essentially unchanged. For that reason Hiroshima became the hub of the missionary activity for all the provinces of Chūgoku (中國); it was from this base that the indefatigable Fr. Porro, S. J., set out on his annual visitation of all the communities scattered throughout that wide area. Besides, from 1619 on all the provinces received regular visitations by the Franciscan Fr. Francis de San Andrés, who resided in Osaka.

At the time of the Edo martyrdom, Asano was at home in his own province, so that he did not directly witness that mass execution. Whether or not he, like Date and Satake, had received an express command to investigate the state of Christianity in his domain is not certain, but may be inferred. In any case, he was given a detailed report by his representative in Edo. This alone can explain the sudden and unexpected decree of banishment against the Christians issued the following year, 1624. Only a month before, Fr. Porro had visited the Christian communities, preached, and administered the sacraments. He discovered no sign of persecution. The decree of banishment, in the midst of an icy winter, struck with lightning rapidity. Asano apparently did not want to

⁶² Cf. Annual Letter 1624; Kanno Ginosuke, *Ōu Kirishitan-shi* (菅野義之助著, 奥羽切支丹史), Morioka, 1950, p. 235 ss.

⁶³ Annual Letter 1624.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

begin a bloody persecution but was content to drive the Christians into exile, although, of course, many died from the rigors of winter on the way. However in February and March, several were martyred, among them the young samurai Francis Tōyama Jintarō (遠山甚太郎). This practically tolled the death knell for the once flourishing mission, for Fr. Porro went to northern Japan two years later, and Fr. Francis de San Andrés was likewise summoned to the North in 1626. This left the provinces of Chūgoku orphaned.⁶⁵

In Kyūshū it was principally Matsura Takanobu (松浦隆信), lord of Hirado (平戸), who courted Iemitsu's favor. His mother, a daughter of Omura Sumitada (大村純忠), had been a Christian, and he himself had been baptized as a youth. To strengthen his position, he naturally had to lay aside all reverence for Christianity. Besides, he noted that in October 1623 a Spanish legation to the Shōgun had been dismissed and sent home, and that shortly thereafter all foreigners except the Protestant English and Dutch had been forbidden to trade or even stop off in Hirado. This change in foreign policy may have influenced Matsura's decision. The Annual Letter is very curt in its account of the outbreak of the persecution:

Matsura Hizen-dono, Lord of the region of Hirado, was apparently hunting for the Shōgun's favor and the security of his position, for he began to howl with the wolves and even manifested personal hostility toward the Christians.

However, he had received the signal from Edo, as we learn from the Dutch report:

The Brother of the Lord of Firando named Ginterrodom (*Gentarō* 源太郎), who resided as a Hostage and Agent for his brother in Jedo, immediately sent news of this hither, so that when these tidings came at the end of January, being still their New Year's feast, the Lord caused a strict search for all Christians to be made here and in all other places under his suzerainty, and those who would not recant were executed forthwith. Here in Firando there were a great many Christians, by reason of its being but a small place, yet not more than six or seven and thirty were killed, the remainder all recanting...⁶⁶

It is not certain whether Gentarō sent this warning to his brother on his own initiative or at a hint from the regime. Perhaps more light will be shed on the question when the Matsura archives are made public. In any case, a general persecution soon opened in Hirado, which lasted more than two months and claimed 38 victims.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Annual Letter 1624; Perez, *Martires del Japon en el año de 1624*; H. Cieslik, *Die Mission von Hiroshima im 17. Jahrhundert (Archivum Historicum S. J. 1953)*.

⁶⁶ History of the Martyrs who have been killed, or endured fearful and insufferable torments, for the sake of the Roman Catholic Religion in Jappan, written by Reyer Gysbertsz. This account of the persecutions from 1622-1629 was first published in Amsterdam in 1637, under the title *De tyrannije ende Wreedtheden der Jappanen* and was subsequently printed as an Appendix in almost all editions of Caron's *Beschryvinge*. Cf. C. R. Boxer, *A true Description of the Mighty Kingdoms of Japan & Siam* by Francois Caron & Joost Shouten, reprinted from the English edition of 1663 (London 1935).

⁶⁷ Annual Letter 1624.

Gotō (五島), Amakusa (天草) and Bungo (豊後) also had their martyrs. Nabeshima (鍋島), foremost daimyō of Hizen (肥前), was one of those resident in Edo at the time of the great martyrdom; he, too, immediately notified his deputies in the province to take measures to suppress Christianity. No death sentences were issued, however, as they satisfied themselves with confiscating the Christians' goods, cutting off their ears and noses, and driving them from the land. In Ōmura (大村) the missionaries who had been in prison since 1622 or 1623 (Fr. Peter Velasquez, O.P., Fr. Louis Sotelo, O.F.M., Fr. Louis Sasada, O.F.M., and Louis Baba) were condemned to the stake on August 25, 1624.

Despite the close supervision over Nagasaki, which was directly subject to the Shōgunate, it still remained the center of missionary activity in Kyūshū. Even in 1624 the seven Jesuits and eight catechists visited almost all of Kyūshū on several journeys. The governor of Nagasaki was Hasegawa Gonroku (長谷川権六), called by the Annual Letter “a persecutor and apostate”. No one exhibited more clearly than he the new direction taken in the anti-Christian movement: Apostates, not martyrs. Precisely in 1624 he began a systematic indoctrination. On the one hand, commerce with foreign countries was restricted still further, that with the Philippines entirely stopped, and travel and business abroad permitted only to non-Christians. Then he deliberately began to work for the “conversion” of the once entirely Christian city. Only those who remained obstinate were to be put to death; apostates were to be spared. This and the following year saw the planned construction of Shintō and Buddhist shrines and temples, so that Hasegawa came to be considered the founder of Buddhist Nagasaki and at a later period was almost apotheosized as a pre-eminent benefactor of the city.⁶⁸

To sum up, it may be said that Iemitsu, who had purposed to set an example for the entire country by the mass execution in his capital, had indeed accomplished his aim. In the spring and summer of the following year, a new wave of persecution spread, affecting Christians especially in the districts which had thus far been spared bloodshed. Then another year of peace ensued; for 1625, the missionary reports mention only seven martyrs.

At the same time, we find already the germ of the later policy: Apostates, not martyrs. To that end the capital penalty took the gruesome and frightful form of burning, until this was superseded 10 years later by the even more hideous death by suspension in the pit. The lives of those who apostatized were spared. In addition, a positive policy was initiated of turning the folk from Christianity by the reinvigoration of Buddhism, the erection of temples in Christian sections, and the organized control of religious life by the civil and temple authorities. This method was given its final organizational form in the establishment in 1640 of a Central Authority for the Supervision of the Prohibition of Christianity, set up and for many years directed by Inoue Chikugo-no-kami (井上筑後守).⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Tsūkō-ichiran* (通行一覽), Book 193.

⁶⁹ Cf. Cieslik, *Das Christenverbot in Japan unter dem Tokuwawa-Regime* (*Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 1950/51).

The Site of the Martyrdom

Concerning the exact site of the martyrdom, the European sources have no precise data. According to the Annual Letter, it took place before the gates of the city along the road to “Kami”, i.e., the Tōkaidō. The place was cut off from behind by a hill, which was crowded with onlookers, while on the other side of the road lay the sea. Since the crowd of spectators was immense and included many nobles, the spot could not have been far from the city.

In Edo at that time there were two places of execution, one in Asakusa and one in Suzugamori, lying along the Tōkaidō just south of Shinagawa.⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, there were Christians executed in Suzugamori also during the Kan’ei Period; for instance, in 1640 seventy Christians were there hung head downwards into the sea in such wise that the incoming tide all but drowned them and their faces became distorted by the blood pressure, the salt water, and the fierce torments, until they died at the end of eight days.⁷¹

The Dutch account likewise speaks for Suzugamori. This, however, is not an eye-witness account, but a secondhand report of the account which they heard in Hirado and hence is not exempt from many inaccuracies:

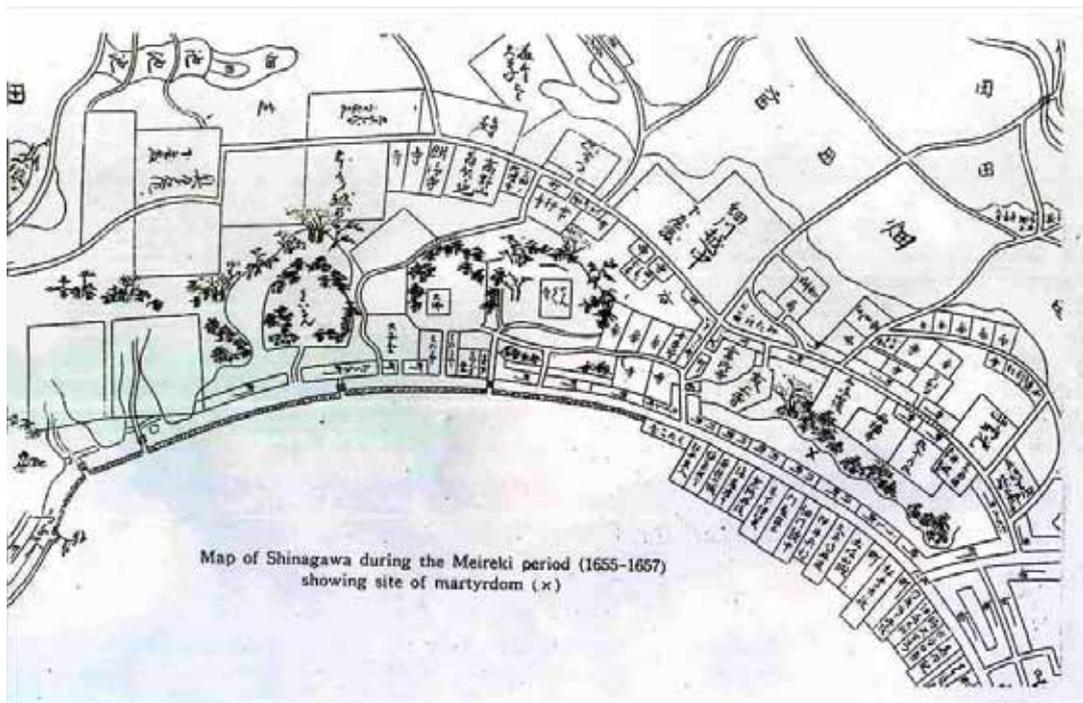
With the foregoing, the persecution seemed to be stopped until in January 1624 a Priest was taken in Jedo, together with his host and all his family besides about 127 or 128 other persons, who were all burnt together at a place called Suniagouw (Shinagawa) about a mile from Jedo, since His Majesty was greatly incensed that any Christians, and particularly Priests, should have been found at the place where he resided; he in whose house the Priest was caught was a very rich man, and was betrayed by a renegade Christian, who feigned to be still a true believer, and begged for alms, which were granted him, whereby he acquired knowledge of the whole business which he imparted unto the Magistrate, receiving as a reward the man’s house and all his goods, with an express order that nobody should reproach him for the same, nor give him disparaging words, on pain of heavy punishment, so as to induce others to act in the same way.⁷²

Since the writer, Reyer Gysbertsz, was not in Edo at the time but got news of the execution in Hirado, he may merely have supposed that the event took place at the customary execution grounds in Suzugamori, south of Shinagawa.

⁷⁰ Today: Ōi Suzugamori-machi (大井鈴ヶ森町). The execution grounds were situated where the electric train Keihin-kyūkō (京濱急行) crosses over the Tokyo-Yokohama road.

⁷¹ Cf. *Tsūkō-ichiran*, Book 194; *Bumon-ju* (武門拾遺) (the latter quoted in Y. Fuse, *Nihon Shikei-shi* (布施彌平治著, 日本死刑史), p. 196.

⁷² Reyer Gysbertsz, *loc. cit.*; Montanus, *Gedenkwaardige Gesantschappen Der Oost-Indische Maatschappij in’t Vereenigde Nederland, Aan De Kaisaren van Japan* (Amsterdam 1669), gives the Annual Letter of the Jesuits as the source of his information (p. 234).



8 Map of Shinagawa in 1655

The Japanese sources are not so detailed; however, they are in several places quite definite in indicating Shiba (芝) as the site of the execution: “On the 13th of the 10th month Christians were burnt to death in Shiba.”⁷³ Executions of Christians at Shiba were reported for later years as well. Thus in 1638 at Shiba-guchi (柴口), 32 Christians were suspended in the sea, six persons who had sheltered Christians were crucified, and 14 wives and children of Christians beheaded, and this on the very spot where “50 Christians had earlier been burnt in Shiba-guchi.”⁷⁴ Again, the Franciscan Francis Magoemon (孫右衛門, de Barajas), who was arrested in Sendai in 1638, and Bernard Ichizaemon (市左衛門, Bernard de San Jose?), who was imprisoned in Yamagata in 1639, were burnt at the stake in Shiba.⁷⁵

Since there are no known execution grounds in Shiba, one must suppose that an exception was made for the case of the Christians, who were put to death as near to the city as possible in order to make a deeper impression upon the people. The spot is specified as Shiba-guchi, i.e., the entrance to Shiba. That can only be in the vicinity of Fuda-no-tsuji, for there were found the old city limits of Edo; there too was the place where the tablets hung with official notices and the city ordinances.

⁷³ So Tsūkō-ichiran, Book 194; *Sokkyo-hen*, Book IV. Both works cite various chronicles as sources: *Mannen-ki* (万年記); *Genna-kan'ei-nikki* (元和寛永日記); *Kan'ei-shōsetsu* (寛永小説), etc.

⁷⁴ *Tsūkō-ichiran*, Book 194; mentioned as source: *Keichō Kambun-kan-ki* (慶長寛文間記).

⁷⁵ *Kirishito-ki* (Voss-Cieslik, *Kirishito-ki und Sayō-yoroku* p 79).

Unfortunately, the ancient maps of the city of Edo did not yet indicate the district of Fuda-no-tsuji. The maps of both the Keichō and the Kan'ei periods end at Zōjōji (澗上寺) on the western side. The city map drawn up in the Meireki Period (1655-1657), i.e., 30 years after the martyrdom, is the oldest known map which indicates this district. The city had by that time grown considerably, and both sides of the Tōkaidō were lined with houses and residences of samurais. The only open space is a fairly long stretch of land lying along the road west of Fuda-no-tsuji, closed in from the back by a wooded hill (*see map*). If we were to suppose that this is the site where so many Christians were executed, it is very easy to understand why it remained vacant of homes even for a long time afterwards: the people had an understandable repugnance for execution and burial grounds.

At present this spot is occupied by a small Buddhist temple of the Jōdo sect, Chifuku-ji (智福寺) by name. After patient research, T. Hara discovered in the temple chronicles the remark that the temple had been erected on what had previously been an execution ground.⁷⁶ This temple had been founded in 1625 by the Bonze Ikku-shōnin (一空上人, †1654) in Sakurada-Motomachi (櫻田元町), but had to be moved later on when that site was requisitioned by the government. The temple chronicle reports:

When this district was requisitioned by the government, he (Ikku) looked here and there for a place to transfer the temple. At that time there lived a man named Kian (喜安), who led the life of a hermit in the neighborhood of Shinagawa and used to visit the bonze daily in order to hear the Law and to pray. When he heard of the problem of finding a temple site, he suggested: “There is a place, quite close to here, Tamachi (田町), in Kami-Takanawa (上高輪), under the suzerainty of Azabu (麻布) in Shiba. Because this spot is the place where executions had taken place, it cannot be used for any other purpose. Were a Buddhist temple to be erected there, the temple gongs to resound, sūtras and prayers to be recited and obsequies for the dead to be held in that place, it would help to save even the punished criminals from the Sea of Suffering.”⁷⁷

This page in the history of the temple is a copy dating from 1865. Even though some problems relative to the time of the temple transference are still to be solved,⁷⁸ the fact remains that there was a firm tradition about a place for execution in Fuda-no-tsuji even before the foreign account of the martyrdom became once more known in Japan. Isomi rightfully calls attention to the fact that the temple chronicle does not use the ordinary word for execution grounds (*oshioki-ba* 御仕置場, occasionally *keijo* 刑所), but a general circumlocution, “place where executions have

⁷⁶ Hara, *loc. cit.*, p. 44 ss.

⁷⁷ Cf. T. Isomi, *Edo Shinagawa no junkyō-chi* (磯見辰典著, 江戸品川の殉教地), *Katorikku Shimbun* Dec. 12, 1952.

⁷⁸ Ikku died in 1654. Yet the Chifuku-ji is not yet indicated on the map of Edo dating from the following Meireki Period; so it must have been transferred thither at a later date.

been held (刑罰の虞).” This suggests that it was not an ordinary place of execution but that executions had been held there once or twice in earlier days.⁷⁹

Thus it may well be concluded that the site of the martyrdom is to be found before the gates of the city, at the entrance to Shiba in the district now known as Fuda-no-tsuji; or, even more precisely, on the grounds of the Chifuku-ji Temple. The topography also corresponds well with the descriptions found in the European sources. In the first decades of the 17th century, this site, with its wooded hill in the background and its view overlooking the sea, was a favorite excursion point. However, the middle of that century found it already occupied with houses, while the hill behind was mainly reserved for the more sumptuous residences of daimyōs. Only the area between Fuda-no-tsuji and the Hachiman shrine remained for a longer time free of buildings, quite likely for the reason indicated above. Because of numerous landslides, mentioned in the temple chronicles, and other structural changes, the topography of the region has been considerably altered, and it may be conjectured that formerly the open field between the hill and the street was more extended than it is now.

Already shortly after the martyrdom, reports and eyewitness accounts began to be collected with a view to introducing the process of canonization. But just as for the other Japanese martyrs, this process soon came to a standstill because of the closing up of the country and the cessation of missionary work. It was not until the reopening of the country that the process was resumed, and then only in part, for doubts in many individual cases made a clear-cut juridical investigation impossible, so only the more important priests, religious, and lay people were chosen out of the large number martyred. Of those martyred on December 4, only the two Fathers, Jerome de Angelis and Francis Galvez, along with Brother Simon Empo, were among the 205 Japanese martyrs beatified by Pope Pius IX on July 7, 1867.



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9. Fr. Cieslik

Suggested citation: Cieslik, Hubert. (2010). “The Great Martyrdom in Edo 1623: Its causes, Course, Consequences.” In Francis Britto’s *All About Francis Xavier*. Retrieved from <http://pweb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/britto/xavier>

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⁷⁹ Isomi, *loc. cit.*