

= Hasekura Tsunenaga =

Hasekura Rokuemon Tsunenaga ( or " Philip Francis Faxicura " , baptized as " Francisco Felipe Faxicura " , in Spain ) ( 1571 ? 1622 ) ( Japanese : ????????, also spelled Faxicura Rocuyemon in period European sources , reflecting the contemporary pronunciation of Japanese ) was a Roman noble of Japanese imperial descent with ancestral ties to Emperor Kanmu and a Japanese samurai and retainer of Date Masamune , the daimyo of Sendai .

In the years 1613 through 1620 , Hasekura headed a diplomatic mission to the Vatican in Rome , traveling through New Spain ( arriving in Acapulco and departing from Veracruz ) and visiting various ports @-@ of @-@ call in Europe . This historic mission is called the Keich? Embassy ( ???? ) , and follows the Tensh? embassy ( ???? ) of 1582 . On the return trip , Hasekura and his companions re @-@ traced their route across Mexico in 1619 , sailing from Acapulco for Manila , and then sailing north to Japan in 1620 . He is conventionally considered the first Japanese ambassador in the Americas and in Europe .

Although Hasekura 's embassy was cordially received in Europe , it happened at a time when Japan was moving toward the suppression of Christianity . European monarchs such as the King of Spain thus refused the trade agreements Hasekura had been seeking . Hasekura returned to Japan in 1620 and died of illness a year later , his embassy seemingly ending with few results in an increasingly isolationist Japan .

Japan 's next embassy to Europe would only occur more than 200 years later , following two centuries of isolation , with the " First Japanese Embassy to Europe " in 1862 .

= = Early life = =

Little is known of the early life of Hasekura Tsunenaga . According to " Date Sejin Kafu ( ?????? ) " , he was of Japanese imperial descent and had ancestral ties with Emperor Kanmu . He was a mid @-@ level noble samurai in the Sendai Domain in northern Japan , who had the opportunity to directly serve the daimyo Date Masamune . He spent his young adulthood at the scenic Kamitate Castle ( ??? ) that was constructed in Hasekura @-@ ward , Kawasaki @-@ city ( ex @-@ Hasekura village ) , Miyagi prefecture by his grand father Tsunemasa ( ?? ) Hasekura . The place of origin of the family name " Hasekura " is the present Hasekura @-@ ward ( ?? ) , Kawasaki @-@ city that had once been Hasekura village ( ??? ) . Hasekura and Date Masamune were of roughly the same age , and it is recorded that several important missions were given to Tsunenaga as his representative .

It is also recorded that Hasekura served as a samurai during the Japanese invasion of Korea under the Taiko Toyotomi Hideyoshi , for six months in 1597 .

In 1612 , Hasekura 's father , Hasekura Tsunenari ( ?? ?? ) , was indicted for corruption , and he was put to death in 1613 . His fief was confiscated , and his son should normally have been executed as well . Date , however , gave him the opportunity to redeem his honour by placing him in charge of the Embassy to Europe , and soon gave him back his territories as well .

= = Background : early contacts between Japan and Spain = =

The Spanish started trans @-@ Pacific voyages between New Spain ( Mexico and present U.S. California ) and the Philippines in 1565 . The famous Manila galleons carried silver from Mexican mines westward to the entrepôt of Manila in the Spanish possession of the Philippines . There , the silver was used to purchase spices and trade goods gathered from throughout Asia , including ( until 1638 ) goods from Japan . The return route of the Manila galleons , first charted by the Spanish navigator Andrés de Urdaneta , took the ships northeast into the Kuroshio Current ( also known as the Japan Current ) off the coast of Japan , and then across the Pacific to the west coast of Mexico , landing eventually in Acapulco .

Spanish ships were periodically shipwrecked on the coasts of Japan due to bad weather , initiating contacts with the country . The Spanish wished to expand the Christian faith in Japan . Efforts to

expand influence in Japan were met by stiff resistance towards the Jesuits , who had started the evangelizing of the country in 1549 , as well as by the opposition of Portuguese and the Dutch who did not wish to see Spain participate in Japanese trade . However , some Japanese , such as Christopher and Cosmas , are known to have crossed the Pacific onboard Spanish galleons as early as 1587 . It is known that gifts were exchanged between the governor of the Philippines and Toyotomi Hideyoshi , who thanks him in a 1597 letter , writing " The black elephant in particular I found most unusual . "

In 1609 , the Spanish Manila galleon San Francisco encountered bad weather on its way from Manila to Acapulco , and was wrecked on the Japanese coast in Chiba , near Tokyo . The sailors were rescued and welcomed , and the ship 's captain , Rodrigo de Vivero , former interim governor of the Philippines , met with the retired shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu . Rodrigo de Vivero drafted a treaty , signed on 29 November 1609 , whereby the Spaniards could establish a factory in eastern Japan , mining specialists would be imported from New Spain , Spanish ships would be allowed to visit Japan in case of necessity , and a Japanese embassy would be sent to the Spanish court .

= = First Japanese expeditions to the Americas = =

= = = 1610 San Buena Ventura = = =

A Franciscan monk named Luis Sotelo , who was proselytizing in the area of what is now modern Tokyo , convinced Tokugawa Ieyasu and his son Tokugawa Hidetada to send him as a representative to New Spain ( Mexico ) on one of their ships , in order to advance the trade treaty . Rodrigo de Vivero offered to sail on the Japanese ship in order to guarantee the safety of their reception in New Spain , but insisted that another Franciscan , named Alonso Muños , be sent instead as the Shogun 's representative . In 1610 , Rodrigo de Vivero , several Spanish sailors , the Franciscan father and 22 Japanese representatives led by the trader Tanaka Shōsuke sailed to Mexico aboard the San Buena Ventura , a ship built by the English adventurer William Adams for the Shogun . Once in New Spain , Alonso Muños met with the Viceroy Luis de Velasco , who agreed to send an ambassador to Japan in the person of the famous explorer Sebastián Vizcaino with the added mission of exploring the " Gold and silver islands " ( " Isla de Plata " ) that were thought to be east of the Japanese isles .

Vizcaino arrived in Japan in 1611 and had many meetings with the Shogun and feudal lords . These encounters were tainted by his poor respect for Japanese customs , the mounting resistance of the Japanese towards Catholic proselytism , and the intrigues of the Dutch against Spanish ambitions . Vizcaino finally left to search for the " Silver island " , during which search he encountered bad weather , forcing him to return to Japan with heavy damage .

= = = 1612 San Sebastian = = =

Without waiting for Vizcaino , another ship ? built in Izu by the Tokugawa shogunate under the minister of the Navy Mukai Shogen , and named San Sebastian ? left for Mexico on 9 September 1612 with Luis Sotelo onboard as well as two representatives of Date Masamune , with the objective of advancing the trade agreement with New Spain . However , the ship foundered a few miles from Uraga , and the expedition had to be abandoned .

= = The 1613 embassy project = =

The Shogun decided to build a new galleon in Japan in order to bring Vizcaino back to New Spain , together with a Japanese embassy accompanied by Luis Sotelo . The galleon , named Date Maru by the Japanese and later San Juan Bautista by the Spanish , took 45 days work in building , with the participation of technical experts from the Bakufu ( the Minister of the Navy Mukai Shogen , an acquaintance of William Adams with whom he built several ships , dispatched his Chief Carpenter ) ,

800 shipwrights , 700 smiths , and 3 @, @ 000 carpenters . The daimyo of Sendai , Date Masamune , was put in charge of the project . He named one of his retainers , Hasekura Tsunenaga ( his fief was rated at around 600 koku ) , to lead the mission :

" The Great Ship left Toshima @-@ Tsukinoura for the Southern Barbarians on 15 September [ Japanese calendar ] , with at its head Hasekura Rokuemon Tsunenaga , and those called Imaizumi Sakan , Matsuki Shusaku , Nishi Kyusuke , Tanaka Taroemon , Naito Hanjuro , Sonohoka Kyuemon , Kuranojo , Tonomo , Kitsunai , Kyuji , as well as several others under Rokuemon , as well as 40 Southern Barbarians , 10 men of Mukai Shogen , and also tradespeople , to a total 180 " ( Records of the Date House , Keich? @-@ Genna ????????? , Gonoï p . 56 ) .

The objective of the Japanese embassy was both to discuss trade agreements with the Spanish crown in Madrid , and to meet with the Pope in Rome . Date Masamune displayed a great will to welcome the Catholic religion in his domain : he invited Luis Sotelo and authorized the propagation of Christianity in 1611 . In his letter to the Pope , brought by Hasekura , he wrote : " I 'll offer my land for a base of your missionary work . Send us as many padres as possible . "

Sotelo , in his own account of the travels , emphasizes the religious dimension of the mission , claiming that the main objective was to spread the Christian faith in northern Japan :

" I was formerly dispatched as ambassador of Idate Masamune , who holds the reins of the kingdom of Oxu [ Japanese : ?? ] ( which is in the Eastern part of Japan ) ? who , while he has not yet been reborn through baptism , has been catechized , and was desirous that the Christian faith should be preached in his kingdom ? together with another noble of his Court , Philippus Franciscus Faxecura Rocuyemon , to the Roman Senate & to the one who at that time was in charge of the Apostolic See , His Holiness Pope Paul V. " ( Luis Sotelo De Ecclesiae Iaponicae Statu Relatio , 1634 ) .

The embassy was probably , at that time , part of a plan to diversify and increase trade with foreign countries , before the participation of Christians in the Osaka rebellion triggered a radical reaction from the Shogunate , with the interdiction of Christianity in the territories it directly controlled , in 1614 .

= = Trans @-@ Pacific voyage = =

Upon completion , the ship left on 28 October 1613 for Acapulco with around 180 people on board , including 10 samurai of the Shogun ( provided by the Minister of the Navy Mukai Shogen Tadakatsu ) , 12 samurai from Sendai , 120 Japanese merchants , sailors , and servants , and around 40 Spaniards and Portuguese , including Sebastian Vizcaino who , in his own words , only had the quality of a passenger .

= = New Spain ( Acapulco ) = =

The ship first reached Cape Mendocino in today 's California , and then continued along the coast to arrive in Acapulco on 25 January 1614 after three months at sea . The Japanese were received with great ceremony , but had to wait in Acapulco until orders were received regarding how to organize the rest of their travels .

Fights erupted between the Japanese and the Spaniards , especially Vizcaino , apparently due to some disputes on the handling of presents from the Japanese ruler . A contemporary journal , written by the historian Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin , a noble Aztec born in Amecameca ( ancient Chalco province ) in 1579 , whose formal name was Domingo Francisco de San Anton Muñon , relates Vizcaino was seriously wounded in the fight :

" Señor Vizcaino is still coming slowly , coming hurt ; the Japanese injured him when they beat and stabbed him in Acapulco , as became known here in Mexico , because of all the things coming along that had been made his responsibility in Japan "

Following these fights , orders were promulgated on 4 and 5 March to bring peace back . The orders explained that :

" The Japanese should not be submitted to attacks in this Land , but they should remit their

weapons until their departure , except for Hasekura Tsunenaga and eight of his retinue ... The Japanese will be free to go where they want , and should be treated properly . They should not be abused in words or actions . They will be free to sell their goods . These orders have been promulgated to the Spanish , the Indians , the Mulattos , the Mestizos , and the Blacks , and those who don 't respect them will be punished " .

= = = New Spain ( Mexico ) = = =

The embassy remained two months in Acapulco and entered Mexico City on 24 March , where it was received with great ceremony . The ultimate mission for the embassy was to go on to Europe . The embassy spent some time in Mexico , and then went to Veracruz to board the fleet of Don Antonio Oquendo .

Chimalpahin gives some account of the visit of Hasekura .

" This is the second time that the Japanese have landed one of their ships on the shore at Acapulco . They are transporting here all things of iron , and writing desks , and some cloth that they are to sell here . " ( Chimalpahin , " Annals of His Time " ) .

" It became known here in Mexico and was said that the reason their ruler the Emperor of Japan sent this said lordly emissary and ambassador here , is to go in Rome to see the Holy Father Paul V , and to give him their obedience concerning the holy church , so that all the Japanese want to become Christians " ( Chimalpahin , " Annals of His Time " ) .

Hasekura was settled in a house next to the Church of San Francisco , and met with the Viceroy . He explained to him that he was also planning to meet King Philip III to offer him peace and to obtain that the Japanese could come to Mexico for trade . On Wednesday 9 April , 20 Japanese were baptized , and 22 more on 20 April by the archbishop in Mexico , don Juan Pérez de la Serna , at the Church of San Francisco . Altogether 63 of them received confirmation on 25 April . Hasekura waited for his travel to Europe to be baptized there :

" But the lordly emissary , the ambassador , did not want to be baptized here ; it was said that he will be baptized later in Spain " ( Chimalpahin , " Annals of His Time " ) .

= = = Departure for Europe = = =

Chimalpahin explains that Hasekura left some of his compatriots behind before leaving for Europe :

" The Ambassador of Japan set out and left for Spain . In going he divided his vassals ; he took a certain number of Japanese , and he left an equal number here as merchants to trade and sell things . " ( Chimalpahin , " Annals of His Time " ) .

The fleet left for Europe on the San Jose on 10 June . Hasekura had to leave the largest parts of the Japanese group behind , who were to wait in Acapulco for the return of the embassy .

Some of them , as well as those from the previous travel of Tanaka Sh?suke , returned to Japan the same year , sailing back with the San Juan Bautista :

" Today , Tuesday the 14th of the month of October of the year 1614 , was when some Japanese set out from Mexico here going home to Japan . ; they lived here in Mexico for four years . Some still remained here ; they earn a living trading and selling here the goods they brought with them from Japan . " ( Chimalpahin , " Annals of His Time " ) .

= = = Cuba = = =

The embassy stopped and changed ships in Havana in Cuba in July 1614 . The embassy stayed in Havana for six days . A bronze statue was erected on 26 April 2001 at the head of Havana Bay .

= = Mission to Europe = =

= = = Spain = = =

The fleet arrived in Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 5 October 1614 .

" The fleet arrived safely finally , after some dangers and storms , to the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 5 October , where the Duke of Medina Sidonia was advised of the arrival . He sent carriages to honor them and accommodate the Ambassador and his gentlemen " ( Scipione Amati " History of the Kingdom of Voxu " ) .

" The Japanese ambassador Hasekura Rokuemon , sent by Joate Masamune , king of Boju , entered Seville on Wednesday , 23 October 1614 . He was accompanied by 30 Japanese with blades , their captain of the guard , and 12 bowmen and halberdiers with painted lances and blades of ceremony . The captain of the guard was Christian and was called Don Thomas , the son of a Japanese martyr " ( Library Capitular Colombina 84 @-@ 7 @-@ 19 Memorias ... , fol.195 ) .

The Japanese embassy met with King Philip III in Madrid on 30 January 1615 . Hasekura remitted to the King a letter from Date Masamune , as well as offer for a treaty . The King responded that he would do what he could to accommodate these requests .

Hasekura was baptized on 17 February by the king 's personal chaplain , and renamed Felipe Francisco Hasekura . The baptism ceremony was to have been conducted by the Archbishop of Toledo , Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas , though he was too ill to actually carry this out , and the Duke of Lerma ? the main administrator of Phillip III 's rule and the de facto ruler of Spain ? was designated as Hasekura 's godfather .

The embassy stayed eight months in Spain before leaving the country for Italy .

= = = France = = =

After traveling across Spain , the embassy sailed on the Mediterranean aboard three Spanish frigates towards Italy . Due to bad weather , they had to stay for a few days in the French harbour of Saint @-@ Tropez , where they were received by the local nobility , and made quite a sensation on the populace .

The visit of the Japanese Embassy is recorded in the city 's chronicles as led by " Philip Francis Faxicura , Ambassador to the Pope , from Date Masamunni , King of Woxu in Japan " .

Many picturesque details of their movements were recorded :

" They never touch food with their fingers , but instead use two small sticks that they hold with three fingers . "

" They blow their noses in soft silky papers the size of a hand , which they never use twice , so that they throw them on the ground after usage , and they were delighted to see our people around them precipitate themselves to pick them up . "

" Their swords cut so well that they can cut a soft paper just by putting it on the edge and by blowing on it . "

( " Relations of Mme de St Tropez " , October 1615 , Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine , Carpentras ) .

The visit of Hasekura Tsunenaga to Saint @-@ Tropez in 1615 is the first recorded instance of France ? Japan relations .

= = = Italy = = =

The Japanese Embassy went on to Italy where they were able to meet with Pope Paul V in Rome in November 1615 , the same year Galileo Galilei was first confronted by the Roman Inquisition regarding his findings against geocentrism . Hasekura remitted to the Pope two gilded letters , one in Japanese and one in Latin , containing a request for a trade treaty between Japan and Mexico and the dispatch of Christian missionaries to Japan . These letters are still visible in the Vatican archives . The Latin letter , probably written by Luis Sotelo for Date Masamune , reads , in part :

Kissing the Holy feet of the Great , Universal , Most Holy Lord of The Entire World , Pope Paul , in profound submission and reverence , I , Idate Masamune , King of W?sh? in the Empire of Japan , suppliantly say :

The Franciscan Padre Luis Sotelo came to our country to spread the faith of God . On that occasion

, I learnt about this faith and desired to become a Christian , but I still haven 't accomplished this desire due to some small issues . However , in order to encourage my subjects to become Christians , I wish that you send missionaries of the Franciscan church . I guarantee that you will be able to build a church and that your missionaries will be protected . I also wish that you select and send a bishop as well . Because of that , I have sent one of my samurai , Hasekura Rokuemon , as my representative to accompany Luis Sotelo across the seas to Rome , to give you a stamp of obedience and to kiss your feet . Further , as our country and Nueva España are neighbouring countries , could you intervene so that we can discuss with the King of Spain , for the benefit of dispatching missionaries across the seas . " Translation of the Latin letter of Date Masamune to the Pope .

The Pope agreed to the dispatch of missionaries , but left the decision for trade to the King of Spain .

The Roman Senate also gave to Hasekura the honorary title of Roman Noble and Roman Citizen , in a document he brought back to Japan , and which is preserved today in Sendai .

Sotelo also described the visit to the Pope , book *De ecclesiae Iaponicae statu relatio* ( published posthumously in 1634 ) :

" When we got there by the aid of God in the Year of Our Salvation 1615 , not only were we kindly received by His Holiness the great Pope , with the Holy College of the Cardinals and a gathering of bishops and nobles , and even the joy and general happiness of the Roman People , but we and three others ( whom the Japanese Christians had specially designated to announce their condition with respect to the Christian religion ) were heard , rested , and just as we were hoping , dispatched as quickly as possible . " ( Sotelo , *De ecclesiae Iaponicae statu relatio* ) .

= = = Rumours of political intrigue = = =

Besides the official description of Hasekura 's visit to Rome , some contemporary communications tend to indicate that political matters were also discussed , and that an alliance with Date Masamune was suggested as a way to establish Christian influence in the whole of Japan :

" The Ambassador strongly insisted that the authority and power of his ruler was superior to that of many European countries " ( Anonymous Roman communication , dated 10 October 1615 )

" The Franciscan Spanish fathers are explaining that the King of the Ambassador [ Hasekura Tsunenaga ] will soon become the supreme ruler of his country , and that , not only will they become Christians and follow the will of the church of Rome , but they will also in turn convert the rest of the population . This is why they are requesting the dispatch of a high ecclesiastic together with the missionaries . Because of this , many people have been doubting the true purpose of the embassy , and are wondering if they are not looking for some other benefit . " ( Letter of the Venetian ambassador , 7 November 1615 ) .

= = = Second visit to Spain = = =

For the second time in Spain , in April 1616 Hasekura met again with the King , who declined to sign a trade agreement , on the ground that the Japanese Embassy did not appear to be an official embassy from the ruler of Japan Tokugawa Ieyasu , who , on the contrary , had promulgated an edict in January 1614 ordering the expulsion of all missionaries from Japan , and started the persecution of the Christian faith in Japan .

The embassy left Sanlúcar de Barrameda for Mexico in June 1616 after a period of two years spent in Europe , but some of the Japanese remained in Spain in a town near Seville ( Coria del Río ) , where their descendants to this day still use the surname Japón .

= = = Western publications on Hasekura 's embassy = = =

The embassy of Hasekura Tsunenaga was the subject of numerous publications throughout Europe . The Italian writer Scipione Amati , who accompanied the embassy in 1615 and 1616 , published in

1615 in Rome a book titled History of the Kingdom of Woxu . This book was also translated into German in 1617 . In 1616 , the French publisher Abraham Savgrain published an account of Hasekura 's visit to Rome : " Récit de l 'entrée solennelle et remarquable faite à Rome , par Dom Philippe Francois Faxicura " ( " Account of the solemn and remarkable entrance in Rome of Dom Philippe Francois Faxicura " ) .

= = = Return to Mexico = = =

Hasekura stayed for 5 months in Mexico on his way back to Japan . The San Juan Bautista was waiting in Acapulco since 1616 , after a second trip across the Pacific from Japan to Mexico . Captained by Yokozawa Sh?gen , she was laden with fine pepper and lacquerware from Kyoto , which were sold on the Mexican market . Following a request by the Spanish king , in order to avoid too much silver leaving to Japan , the Viceroy asked for the proceeds to be spent on Mexican goods , except for an amount of 12 @,@ 000 pesos and 8 @,@ 000 pesos in silver which Hasekura and Yokozawa could bring back with them respectively .

= = = Philippines = = =

In April 1618 , the San Juan Bautista arrived in the Philippines from Mexico , with Hasekura and Luis Sotelo on board . The ship was acquired by the Spanish government there , with the objective of building up defenses against the attacks of the Dutch and the English . In Manila , the archbishop described the deal to the king of Spain in a missive dated 28 July 1619 :

" The Governor was extremely friendly with the Japanese , and provided them with his protection . As they had many expensive things to buy , they decided to lend their ship . The ship was immediately furnished for combat . The Governor eventually bought the ship , because it turned out that it was of excellent and sturdy construction , and available ships were dramatically few . In favour of your Majesty , the price paid was reasonable . " ( Document 243 )

During his stay in the Philippines , Hasekura purchased numerous goods for Date Masamune , and built a ship , as he explained in a letter he wrote to his son . He finally returned to Japan in August 1620 , reaching the harbour of Nagasaki .

= = Return to Japan = =

By the time Hasekura came back , Japan had changed quite drastically : an effort to eradicate Christianity had been under way since 1614 , Tokugawa Ieyasu had died in 1616 and been replaced by his more xenophobic son Tokugawa Hidetada , and Japan was moving towards the " Sakoku " policy of isolation . Because news of these persecutions arrived in Europe during Hasekura 's embassy , European rulers ? especially the King of Spain ? became very reluctant to respond favorably to Hasekura 's trade and missionary proposals .

Hasekura reported his travels to Date Masamune upon his arrival in Sendai . It is recorded that he remitted a portrait of Pope Paul V , a portrait of himself in prayer ( shown above ) , and a set of Ceylonese and Indonesian daggers acquired in the Philippines , all preserved today in the Sendai City Museum . The " Records of the House of Masamune " describe his report in a rather succinct manner , ending with a rather cryptic expression of surprise bordering on the outrage ( " ????? " ) at Hasekura 's discourse :

" Rokuemon went to the country of the Southern Barbarians , he paid his respects to the king Paolo , he stayed there for several years , and now he sailed back from Luzon . He brought paintings of the king of the Southern Barbarians , and a painting of himself , which he remitted . Many of his descriptions of the Southern Barbarian countries , and the meaning of Rokuemon 's declarations were surprising and extraordinary . "

= = = Interdiction of Christianity in Sendai = = =

The direct effect of Hasekura 's return to Sendai was the interdiction of Christianity in the Sendai fief two days later :

" Two days after the return of Rokuemon to Sendai , a three @-@ point edict against the Christian was promulgated : first , that all Christians were ordered to abandon their faith , in accordance with the rule of the Shogun , and for those who did not , they would be exiled if they were nobles , and killed if they were citizens , peasants or servants . Second , that a reward would be given for the denunciation of hidden Christians . Third that propagators of the Christian faith should leave the Sendai fief , or else , abandon their religion " ( November 1620 letter of father Angelis , Japan @-@ China archives of the Jesuits in Rome , quoted in Gonoï 's " Hasekura Tsunenaga " , p231 )

What Hasekura said or did to bring about such a result is unknown . As later events tend to indicate that he and his descendants remained faithful Christians , Hasekura may have made an enthusiastic ? and to a certain extent , disturbing ? account of the greatness and might of Western countries and the Christian religion . He may also have encouraged an alliance between the Church and Date Masamune to take over the country ( an idea advertized by the Franciscans while in Rome ) , which , in 1620 Japan , would have been a totally unrealistic proposition . Lastly , hopes of trade with Spain evaporated when Hasekura communicated that the Spanish King would not enter an agreement as long as persecutions were occurring in the rest of the country .

Date Masamune , heretofore very tolerant of Christianity for his desire to destroy Bakufu and He was aiming at governing the whole country , in spite of the Bakufu 's prohibition in the land it directly controlled , thus suddenly chose to distance himself from the Western faith . The first executions of Christians started 40 days later . The anti @-@ Christian measures taken by Date Masumune were however comparatively mild , and Japanese and Western Christians repeatedly claimed that he only took them to appease the Shogun :

" Date Masumune , out of fear of the Shogun , ordered the persecution of Christianity in his territory , and created several martyrs . " ( Letter of 17 prominent Japanese Christians from Sendai , to the Pope , 29 September 1621 ) .

One month after Hasekura 's return , Date Masamune wrote a letter to the Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada , in which he makes a very clear effort to evade responsibility for the embassy , explaining in detail how it was organized with the approval , and even the collaboration , of the Shogun :

" When I sent a ship to the Southern Barbarian countries several years ago , upon the advice of Mukai Shogen , I also dispatched the Southern Barbarian named Sotelo , who had resided for several years in Edo . At that time , your highness also gave messages for the Southern Barbarians , as well as presents , such as folding screens and sets of armour . " ( 18 October 1620 , quoted in Gonoï , p . 234 ) .

Spain was by far the most threatening power for Japan at that time ( with a colony and an army in the nearby Philippines ) . Hasekura 's eyewitness accounts of Spanish power and colonial methods in Nueva España ( Mexico ) may have precipitated the Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada 's decision to sever trade relations with Spain in 1623 , and diplomatic relations in 1624 , although other events such as the smuggling of Spanish priests into Japan and a failed Spanish embassy also contributed to the decision .

= = = Death = = =

What became of Hasekura is unknown and accounts of his last years are numerous . Contemporary Christian commentators could only rely on hearsay , with some rumours stating that he abandoned Christianity , others that he was martyred for his faith , and others that he practiced Christianity in secret . The fate of his descendants and servants , who were later executed for being Christians , would suggest that Hasekura remained strongly Christian himself , and transmitted his faith to the members of his family .

Sotelo , who returned to Japan but was caught and finally burnt at the stake in 1624 , gave before his execution an account of Hasekura returning to Japan as a hero who propagated the Christian faith :

" My other colleague , the ambassador Philippus Faxecura , after he reached his aforementioned



king ( Date Masamune ) , was greatly honored by him , and sent to his own estate , to rest after such a long and tiring journey , where he made his wife , children , servants , and many other vassals into Christians , and advised other nobles who were his kith and kin to accept the faith , which they indeed did . While he was engaged in these and other pious works , a full year after his return , having provided much instruction and a great example , with much preparation , he piously passed on , leaving for his children by a special inheritance the propagation of the faith in his estate , and the protection of the religious ( i.e. " members of religious orders " ) in that kingdom . The King and all the nobles were greatly saddened by his passing , but especially the Christians and Religious , who knew very well the virtue and religious zeal of this man . This is what I heard by letters from the very Religious who administered the sacraments to him , and who had been present at his death , as well as from others . " ( Luis Sotelo , De ecclesiae Iaponicae statu relatio ) .

Hasekura also did bring back to Japan several Catholic artifacts , but he did not give them to his ruler , and instead kept them in his own estate .

Hasekura Tsunenaga died of illness ( according to Japanese as well as Christian sources ) in 1622 , but the location of his grave is not known for certain . Three graves are claimed as Hasekura 's . The most likely is in the outskirts of Osato town ( ??? ) in Miyagi . Another is visible in the Buddhist temple of Enfukuji ( ????? ) in Miyagi . Another is clearly marked ( along with a memorial to PSotelo ) in the cemetery of in the Kitayama neighborhood at Komyo Temple ( ??? ) .

= = = Execution of his descendants and servants = = =

Hasekura had a son , named Rokuemon Tsuneyori . Two of his son 's servants , Yogoemon ( ????? ) and his wife , were convicted of being Christian but refused to recant their faith under torture ( reverse hanging , called " Tsurushi " , ??? ) and as a result died in August 1637 ( as the lives of Christians were spared if they recanted , these executions indicate that they were steadfast and refused to deny their faith ) . In 1637 , Rokuemon Tsuneyori himself also came under suspicion of Christianity after being denounced by someone from Edo , but escaped questioning because he was the master of the Zen temple of Komyoji ( ??? ) . In 1640 , two other servants of Tsuneyori , Tarozaemon ( ????? , 71 ) , who had followed Hasekura to Rome , and his wife ( 59 ) , were convicted of being Christians , and , also refusing to recant their faith under torture , died . Tsuneyori was held responsible this time and decapitated the same day , at the age of 42 , for having failed to denounce Christians under his roof , although it remained unconfirmed whether he was himself Christian or not . Also , two Christian priests , the Dominican Pedro Vazquez and Joan Bautista Paulo , had given his name under torture . Tsuneyori 's younger brother , Tsunemichi , was convicted as a Christian , but managed to flee and disappear . But Tsunenobu ( ?? ) who is the son of Tsuneyori , who is the grand son of Tsunenaga Hasekura , survived , and then the first to 10th head of Hasekura Family had lived in Osato @-@ city , Miyagi prefecture , furthermore the 11th to the present 13th head of them Tsunetaka Hasekura has lived in Wakabayashi @-@ ward , Sendai @-@ city , Miyagi prefecture . The 13th head actively works in Both Miyagi prefecture and Akita prefecture .

The privileges of the Hasekura family were abolished at this point by the Sendai fief , and their property and belongings seized . It is at this time , in 1640 , that Hasekura 's Christian artifacts were confiscated , and they were kept in custody in Sendai until they were rediscovered at the end of the 19th century .

Altogether , around fifty Christian artifacts were found in Hasekura 's estate in 1640 , such as crosses , rosaries , religious gowns and religious paintings . The artifacts were seized and stored by the Date fief . An inventory was made again in 1840 describing the items as belonging to Hasekura Tsunenaga . Nineteen books were also mentioned in the inventory , but they have been lost since . The artifacts are today preserved in the Sendai City Museum and other museum in Sendai .

= = Re @-@ discovery = =

The very existence of the travels of Hasekura was forgotten in Japan until the reopening of the

country after the Sakoku policy of isolation . In 1873 , a Japanese embassy to Europe ( the Iwakura mission ) headed by Iwakura Tomomi heard for the first time of the travels of Hasekura when shown documents during their visit to Venice in Italy .

= = = Hasekura today = = =

Today , there are statues of Hasekura Tsunenaga in the outskirts of Acapulco in Mexico , at the entrance of Havana Bay in Cuba , in Coria del Río in Spain , in the Church of Civitavecchia in Italy , in Tsukinoura , near Ishinomaki and two in Osato town in Miyagi .

Approximately 700 inhabitants of Coria del Río bear the surname Japón ( originally Hasekura de Japón ) , identifying them as descendants of the members of Hasekura Tsunenaga 's delegation .

A theme park describing the embassy and displaying a replica of the San Juan Bautista was established in the harbour of Ishinomaki , from which Hasekura initially departed on his voyage .

Today there stands a statue of Hasekura in a park in Manila , the Philippines .

Shusaku Endo wrote a 1980 novel , titled The Samurai , a fictitious account relating the travels of Hasekura .

The 1991 film Journey of Honor ( aka Kabuto , aka Shogun Mayeda ) starring Sho Kosugi was loosely based on Hasekura 's expedition and recounts the adventures of a samurai journey from Japan to Spain .

A 2005 animation film produced in Spain and titled Gisaku relates the adventures of a young Japanese samurai named Yohei who visited Spain in the 17th century , in a story loosely taking its inspiration from the travels of Hasekura . Yohei survived in hiding to the present day due to magical powers ( " After centuries of lethargy , he awakes in a World he does not know " ) , and accomplishes many adventures in modern Europe as a superhero .

= = Timeline and itinerary = =