

Alexandra Curvelo /  
Angelo Cattaneo (eds.)

Interactions Between Rivals:  
The Christian Mission  
and Buddhist Sects in Japan  
(c.1549-c.1647)

passagem

Estudos em Ciências Culturais  
Studies in Cultural Sciences  
Kulturwissenschaftliche Studien

Ed. Marflia dos Santos Lopes & Peter Hanenberg



PETER LANG

This volume presents comprehensive research on how southern European Catholics and the Japanese confronted each other, interacted and mutually experienced religious otherness in early modern times.

In their highly variable and asymmetric relations, during which the political-military elites of Japan at times not only favoured, but also opposed and strictly controlled the European presence, missionaries – particularly the Jesuits – tried to negotiate this power balance with their interlocutors.

This collection of essays analyses religious and cultural interactions between the Christian missions and the Buddhist sects through processes of cooperation, acceptance, confrontation and rejection, dialogue and imposition, which led to the creation of new relational spaces and identities.

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PASSAGEM  
ESTUDOS EM CIÊNCIAS CULTURAIS  
STUDIES IN CULTURAL SCIENCES  
KULTURWISSENSCHAFTLICHE STUDIEN

Herausgegeben von  
Peter Hanenberg und Marília dos Santos Lopes

BAND 17

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Die Qualität der in dieser Reihe  
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by external referees.

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## **Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available online at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

## **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.



This book results from the Research Project *Interactions Between Rivals. The Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c.1549-c.1647)*. Both the research and the publication were funded by

Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT)  
(Ref. PTDC/HIS-HIS/118404/2010).

This publication was sustained also by the PIMo COST Action (CA18140) supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

ISSN 1861-583X

ISBN 978-3-631-66716-3 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-653-06266-3 (E-PDF)

E-ISBN 978-3-631-70254-3 (EPUB)

DOI 10.3726/b18727



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Peter Lang – Berlin · Bern · Bruxelles · New York · Oxford · Warszawa · Wien  
This publication has been peer reviewed.  
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Ana Fernandes PINTO and Linda Zampol D'ORTIA

## The Project Data Collection

In terms of philosophical conceptualization, as well as representations of divinities Buddhism in Japan acquired its own specific forms that distinguished it from its mainland variants, including sects and schools that developed specific beliefs and practices over the centuries. It was with some of these schools that the missionaries working under the Portuguese *Padroado* created acquaintances and exchanges.

Jesuit missionaries living in Japan, more than any other missionary presence in the country, produced a vast corpus of written and visual sources. Through the lens of these men, we can find precious information about the political, religious, social, and cultural aspects of Japanese society. The assemblage of this data was essential for the elaboration of a localized missionary strategy and explains why the Jesuits focused so much on local religious practices.

One of the Project's outputs was the construction of a Data Collection that is available in Open Access (see below). The information contained in the Data Collection is assembled mainly from Jesuit sources. This is due to the fact that the Society of Jesus was the most enduring missionary presence in early-modern Japan, and it is facilitated by the Jesuits' habit of keeping regular correspondence with their brethren, and their superiors in Europe. Due to the limitations imposed by the project timeframe, priority was given to collecting information pertaining to the official (that is, public) discourse on Buddhism articulated by the Society. This was elaborated with the specific aim to inform about Japanese practices and traditions, to be later publicized in print. The Data Collection also includes sources written by missionaries of different religious orders. A limited number of Mendicant sources are included to showcase the type of knowledge that these other missionary orders had available: Marcelo de Ribadeneira's *Historia de las islas del Archipiélago Filipino y Reinos de la Gran China, Tartaria, Cochinchina, Malaca, Siam, Cambodge y Japón* (Barcelona, 1601); and Jacinto Orfanell's *Historia ecclesiastica de los sucessos de la cristiandad de Iapon* (Madrid, 1632).

The main sources of information considered are *Historia de Japam*<sup>1</sup> and the collection of Jesuit letters *Cartas que os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Iesus escreverão dos Reynos de Iapão & China...* (Évora, Manuel de Lyra, 1598).<sup>2</sup> The

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1 Fróis, *Historia de Japam*. 5 Vols. José Wicki, S.J. (Ed.). Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional, 1976–1984.

2 *Cartas que os Padres e Irmãos da Companhia de Jesus escreveram dos Reynos de Japão & China aos da mesma Companhia da India & Europa desde anno de 1549 até o de 1580*. 2 Vols. Em Évora por Manoel de Lyra, Anno de MDXCVIII [1598].

former was written by the veteran missionary Luís Fróis from 1584 to 1594 on the orders of Jesuit General Claudio Acquaviva. The *Cartas* collection is composed of two volumes, printed in Évora in 1598, summing up 213 letters sent from Japan from 1549 to 1589. These two works, while differing in form and genre, give a chronological perspective of the history of the Mission, providing a portrait of the main actors and their missionary work, and richly contextualizing their interactions with local Buddhist authorities. The data collected from these texts were then integrated with information from *Documentos de Japón*,<sup>3</sup> two volumes which compile all the extant manuscripts regarding Japan from 1549 to 1562. After 1589, information on the official discourse of the latter years of the Mission was collected instead from the printed editions of the so-called annual letters. With the arrival of Visitor Alessandro Valignano in 1579, the epistolary output of the Mission had begun to be regulated through the institution of a single letter for the whole enterprise, that would be written every year and would be acceptable for printing in Europe. This decision was taken with various aims: collecting and organizing the information for the upper echelons of the Society, promoting the education of the public, and – should the occasion arise – future missionaries, and edifying the readers.

The Data Collection comprises a total of 1013 entries and 230,000 transcribed words approximately. However, this tool amounts to more than a mechanical transcription of the sources. Its organization considers the nature of the documentation and aims at handling the information with a research-oriented utilization in mind. The most significant excerpts were chosen from each documental source, each classified and described following the Data Collection fields. Every entry is identified by a number and is associated with information that links to its source:

- (i) Document's date;
- (ii) Document's place of writing;
- (iii) Document's title;
- (iv) Bibliographic reference.

Every record transcribed also accommodates five research-oriented fields:

- (i) Agents;
- (ii) Subject matters;
- (iii) Content;
- (iv) Document's language;
- (v) Location of the episode;
- (vi) Year of the episode.

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3 *Documentos del Japón*. 2 Vols. (vol. 1: 1547–1557; vol. 2: 1558–1562). Juan Ruiz de Medina (Ed.). Roma: Instituto Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, 1990–1995.

The entry for subject matters identifies its broad themes: Buddhist practices, Buddhist doctrine, visual culture, etc. The content field describes in more detail the elements present in the entry: funerary rituals, orations, paintings, festivals, mount Hiei, etc. For both, a reference guide of the available keywords is associated with the Data Collection. The field regarding agents identifies the missionaries, *daimyō* or Japanese monks involved in the action described.

The uses of this Data Collection are numerous, as it can be a valuable tool, unique of its kind, in the research of early-modern Japanese Buddhist forms, the Jesuit way of proceeding in the Japanese Mission, and their interactions and relations through time. The analysis of the data according to specific subject matters and contents allows the evolution of the first European discourse on Buddhism, the changes in their interactions with monks and Japanese authorities, and an understanding of Japanese Buddhist practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

You can access the Project Data Collection through an URL and QR Code:  
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To cite the Data Collection: Data Collection of the Research Project *Interactions Between Rivals. The Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c.1549–c.1647)*, edited by Ana Fernandes Pinto and Linda Zampol D’Ortia.

Link to the Data Collection: <https://cham.fch.unl.pt/buddhism/>

