

## The Keicho Embassy to Europe

It was four hundred years ago in 1609 when Iyeyasu Tokugawa, who had established his supremacy over regional lords and set up his Shogunate government in Yedo (the present-day Tokyo) in 1603, showed interest in trade with New Spain (the present-day Mexico), that Masamune Date, the lord of Sendai Clan in North-East Japan, decided to send a diplomatic mission to Rome. Then, he entrusted the duty to his vassal, Tsunenaga Rokuyemon Hasekura and asked a Spanish Franciscan Father, Luis Sotelo to accompany the envoy. On the 28th of October 1613 or the 15th of September (lunar calendar) in the 18th year of the Keicho Imperial Era, a party of some 180 members left Tsukinoura Harbour on board Date Maru or San Juan Bautista, a large 500-ton galleon built by order of Masamune himself. This was the start of a long journey, called in later centuries The Keicho Embassy to Europe, that spent two years to reach Rome and another 5 years to return to Japan.

The ship took three months to Acapulco on the Pacific coast of New Spain. The party was welcomed by Viceroy Luis de Velasco and, on the 10th of June 1614, Tsunenaga and his retinue of 31 members embarked at San Juan de Ulua on the Gulf of Mexico for Europe on a Spanish ship. In Madrid, although the embassy was cordially received by King Felipe III, they heard a bad news that at home in Japan an edict against Christianity had been issued on the 1st February 1614, three months after their departure, by the Tokugawa government who were afraid of the growing influence of the Catholicism in the country, although the visit of Iberians itself was yet to be forbidden (until 1624 and 1639 for the Spanish and the Portuguese, respectively). In such a circumstance, Tsunenaga received his baptism on the 17th of February 1615 with the king in attendance, given a Christian name, Don Filippo Francesco. The embassy proceeded to Italy and on the 25th of October 1615 they were enthusiastically received in Rome as recorded in Scipiane Amati's book, *Historia del Regno Di Voxu del Giappone Dell' Antichita, Nobilita, E Valore del Suo Re Idate Masamune*. 1615 (reprinted 2009 by Kessinger Publ.), and other documents. Tsunenaga had an audience with Pope Paulus V and submitted Masamune's letter. Although the Pope agreed to despatch missionaries as requested, he left the approval of direct trade between New Spain and Japan to the King of Spain. Before Tsunenaga left Rome in January 1616, he was honoured by the Roman Senate with the title of Roman Citizen and raised to the peerage. On his way back, Tsunenaga remained in Madrid for 15 months in a wish to get agreement for the trade but it was not fulfilled for the reason that his lord was not representing whole Japan. Via New Spain, he took San Juan Bautista to Manila but, surrendering the ship to the Spanish who were short of vessels to confront the Dutch power, returned to Nagasaki on an available ship in early September 1620. Before his return to Sendai in October, Masamune banned Christianity in his territory in accordance with the policy of the central government and executed some number of padres and their followers.

Although Tsunenaga is recorded to have died of a disease two years later and his tomb does exist in the family's graveyard in Kwaumyouji Temple in Sendai, myself would prefer to believe in a tradition that he had survived in recluse until 84. In fact, I saw two more graves with his name inscribed in the suburb of the city, one in the Hasekura Memorial Park in Oosato town, and the other in Empukuji Temple in Kawasaki town. While some theory assumes that Tsunenaga became a Christian because it would be convenient for performing his mission (e.g., a novel by Shusaku Endo, *Samurai*, Shincho-sha 1980 / English translation by Van C. Gessel, Harper & Row 1982), his posture praying in front of a crucifix (overleaf portrait) looks extremely realistic to my eyes. Masamune himself must have been strongly sympathetic to the religion as he wrote in his letter to the Pope, "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 . . .", although he eventually obeyed the decision of the Tokugawa.

Tsunenaga's souvenirs to his lord as well as his own belongings were kept uncared in a storehouse of Sendai Clan and discovered after the Meiji Restoration (1868) in seriously damaged conditions. The collection now held in The Sendai City Museum as national treasure includes, besides the portrait of Tsunenaga, an oil portrait of Paulus V, the Roman Citizenship Certificate on parchment, a vestment, a bronze crucifix, a wooden cross, a bronze medal, wooden and bone rosaries, etc. In Rome, there remain the set of gilded letters of Masamune written in Latin and Japanese (in Vatican) as well as a portrait of Tsunenaga in full Japanese attire (by Claude Deruet, in Borghese Gallery) and a painting of Tsunenaga and Sotelo conversing surrounded by other embassy members (Quirinal Palace), although I have had no chance to see them..

In San Juan Bautista Park in Ishinomaki, one can see a full-scale replica of the ship built in 1993 by gathering 40 shipwrights and spending two years of time. For myself, it was quite interesting to see the interior of a galleon for the first time. Tsukinoura located on the southern part of Sanriku rias coastline was a quiet small bay where nothing was impressive but oyster rafts seen in dreary sea water. (For further reading on the subject, I would suggest: *Pictorial Record of National Treasure: Material related to the Keicho Mission to Europe*, Sendai City Museum 2003, Takashi Gono, *Hasekura Tsunenaga*, Yoshikawa-Kobunkan Publ. 2003 and <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasekura\\_Tsunenaga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasekura_Tsunenaga)> Amen!

## 慶長遣欧使節(和譯)

地域大名の上に覇権を確立し1603年に江戸に幕府を開いた徳川家康がニュースペイン(現在のメキシコ)との交易に関心を示した400年前の1609年、東北日本の仙臺藩主伊達政宗はローマに使節を送ることを決め、配下の支倉六右衛門常長に其の役を任じ、江戸にゐたスペイン人のフランシスコ會神父ルイス・ソテロに案内役を託しました。1613年10月28日(慶長18年9月15日)、180餘名の一行は正宗自身の命によって建造された500トンの大型ガレオン船伊達丸、別名サン・ファン・パウチスタ號に乗船し、月の浦港から出帆しました。これは後世に慶長遣欧使節と稱せられたローマへの往路に2年、歸路に5年を費やした長旅の出發でありました。

船は3ヶ月を要してニュー・スペイン太平洋岸のアカプルコに着きました。一行は副王ルイス・デ・ヴェラスコの歓迎を受け、1614年6月10日、常長と部下の31名はメキシコ灣岸サン・ファン・デ・ウルーアからスペイン船で欧州に向ひました。マドリッドで彼らは國王フェリペ3世に鄭重に迎へられました。本國では、彼らが發つた3ヵ月後の1614年2月1日、國內で増大するカトリック教の影響を恐れた徳川政府が、イベリア人の到來自體を禁止するには至らないものの(スペイン人には1624年、ポルトガル人には1639年に禁止)、キリスト教禁の令を布いたといふ悪い報せを聞きました。斯様な状況下、常長は1615年2月17日に國王臨席のもとに洗禮を受け、ドン・フィリポ・フランセスコの洗禮名を與へられました。使節團はイタリアに向ひ、シピオネ・アマティの著作「日本奥州王国の歴史:古さ、気高さ及び伊達政宗公の人柄」(Scipione Amati, *Historia del Regno Di Voxu del Giappone Dell' Antichita, Nobilita, E Valore del Suo Re Idate Masamune* (1615/2009 Kessinger Publ. より再版)ほかの文書に記録されたやうに、1615年10月29日、熱烈な歓迎を受けてローマに入りました。常長は法王パウルス5世に謁見し、正宗の親書を獻じました。法王は要請された布教團の派遣には同意しましたが、ニュースペインと日本との間の直接交易認可の可否はスペイン王に任せました。1616年1月にローマを去る前、常長はローマ市議會よりローマ市民の稱號を受けると共に貴族に叙せられるといふ榮譽に浴しました。歸途、常長は交易への同意を取付けたいと願ってマドリッドに15ヶ月間も逗留しましたが、彼の願ひは彼の主が全日本を代表する者でないといふ理由で叶へられませんでした。ニュースペインを経由して彼はサン・ファン・パウチスタ號に乗ってマニラに着きました。オランダ勢力に對抗するのに船舶の不足してゐたスペインに同船を譲渡し、便船で1620年2月初に長崎に歸着しました。10月に彼が仙臺に歸還する前に、正宗は中央政府の政策に倣って領内でのキリスト教を禁じ、若干名の伴天連と信者を處刑しました。

常長は2年後に病死したと記録され、現に仙台市内光明寺の一族の墓地に彼の墓碑が存在しますが、私自身は、彼は隠遁して84歳まで生きたといふ傳承を信じたいと思ひます。事實、彼の名を刻んだ墓が郊外の別の2箇所、大郷町の支倉メモリアルパークと川崎町の圓福寺にもありました。一説に常長がキリスト教に歸依したのは己の任務遂行のために便利であらうと思はれた故とありますが(例へば、遠藤周作の小説「侍」、新潮社 1980 / Van C. Gessellによる英譯 *Samurai*, Harper & Row 1982)、彼がクルシフィックス(十字架を背負ふイエス像)の前で祈る姿(表面の油彩肖像畫)は極めて迫眞的に私の目に映ります。正宗自身法王への親書に「さんふらんすこ(サン・フランシスコ)の御もんは(門派)の伴天連ふらいるいすそてろ(フライ・ルイス・ソテロ)、たつと(貴)きてうす(デウス)之御法をひろ(廣)めニ御越之時、我等所へ御見舞被成候、其口より、きりしたん之様子、何れもてうすの御法之事を取わけ申し候、其付しあん(思案)仕候程、しゅせう(殊勝)なる御事、まことの御定めのみち(道)を奉存候、それにしたかつ(従)て、きりしたんニ成度乍存、今のうちハ難去さしあわ(指合)せ申子細御座候而...」と記したやうにカトリックに強く心を寄せてゐた、究極的には徳川の決定に従つたと考へられます。

常長の主への土産品と彼自身の所持品は省られることなく仙臺藩の藏に収められ、明治維新(1868)後に酷く損傷された状態で発見されました。現在仙台市博物館に國寶として所藏されてゐるコレクションには、上記常長の肖像畫のほか、パウルス5世の油彩肖像畫、羊皮紙に書かれたローマ市民証、法衣、ブロンズ製のクルシフィックス、木製の十字架、ブロンズ製のメダイ、木製及び骨製のロザリオなどがあります。ローマには、私自身未だ伺ふ機會を得ておませんが、ラテン語及び日本語で書かれ金箔の鏤められた正宗の一対の書状(ヴァティカン所藏)のほか、和装で正装した常長の肖像畫(クロード・デルエ畫、ボルゲーゼ美術館所藏)や常長とソテロが他の使節團メンバーに圍まれて會話する繪畫(キリナーレ宮所藏)が残つてゐるさうです。

石巻のサンファンパウチスタパークでは、40人の船大工を集め、2年を費やして1993年に復元された船の實物模型を見ることが出来ます。私自身にとってはガレオン船の内部を観るのは初めてで、大變興味深かったです。三陸リアス海岸南部に位置する月の浦は、静かな小さな入江で、牡蠣筏が寥々たる海水の中に見える以外、印象的なものは何もありませんでした。(主題について詳しく讀まれたい向きには、仙台市博物館図録、国宝慶長遣欧使節関係資料、五野井隆史「支倉常長」吉川弘文館2003、仙台市博物館2003及び<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasekura\\_Tsunenaga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasekura_Tsunenaga)>をお薦めしたいと存じます。)