IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE ISLANDS OF THE GODS:
A Reappraisal of Konishi Ryūsa, a Merchant, and of Konishi Yukinaga, a Christian Samurai, in
sixteenth-century Japan

By

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate and re-interpret the historical figures of Konishi Ryūsa (小西隆左) and of his son, Konishi YakurōYukinaga (小西弥九郎行長1558-1600) analyzed through their mercantile background, as a samurai, and as firm Christian believers. Konishi Ryūsa emerges as an atypical character, whose knowledge and appreciation for a foreign credo brought him to be wealthy and well connected. He was the bow from which his sons sprung by projecting their images on the historical screen of Japan’s past. Ryūsa was in effect the sponsor and the cause for Yukinaga’s success in life. Yet, Yukinaga remains a controversial character in Japanese history because nothing much is left than few records. Most of his family documents were destroyed or lost, as Japan was engulfed in civil wars, factional rivalries and destruction. Yukinaga was involved in the territorial unification struggles, as his job was to connect peripheral areas, like the Seto Inland Sea, to the central government represented by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Yukinaga’s father, Ryūsa, also worked for Hideyoshi once he became the ruler of central Japan.

Ryūsa’s acquaintance with the Jesuit Fathers and his consequent adoption of Christianity, a foreign religion, brought to him and to his family spiritual, practical and political advantages. For Ryūsa, the spiritual advantages were less visible as Christianity was still in an early stage, but his contact with the Jesuits opened the way to the Portuguese merchants, enhancing his business relations. His mercantile experience brought him to get acquainted with local political power hubs. His son, Yukinaga reaped the benefits of his father’s position, and being a skilled warrior he raised higher close to Hideyoshi’s power. Yukinaga for his integrity was often described as model for Christian conversion, but remained a samurai in the “Land of the Kami” (神国). He embodied both western cultural expansion and Japanese militaristic ambitions proper of the last stages of the period of the civil wars（戦国時代）.
Hence, this study aims at a re-appraisal of both Konishi Ryūsa, as a merchant and Yukinaga as new types of men, possessing not only technical and military knowledge, but also a commercial know-how. They applied new technology and ideas brought in by the Portuguese and missionaries literally navigating on the monsoon winds. My aim is to focus particularly on their adoption of Christianity, as it was perceived in sixteenth century Japan, and on how they applied it in their lives. Although my research includes Ryūsa as one of the leader of the Christian movement in Kyoto and Nagasaki, my focus will be mainly on Konishi Yukinaga, whose brilliant career as a warrior led him to become a Great Admiral. He used Christianity as a political tool in the Seto Inland Sea area, still a peripheral area ruled by pirates and warlords. It was in this stretch of Sea that important cultural contact between Japan and the rest of the world occurred. From there Japan exercised its domestic and international authority in the attempt to create a new order in East Asia.

Yukinaga’s work in the Seto Inland Sea demonstrated the existence of a power gap between peripheries and the not yet stabilized centrality of the Japanese Government, whose expansionistic aim was to put under control peripheral but strategic areas in order to regulate its domestic and international relations. Although Konishi Yukinaga took part in Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s adoption of an international aggressive diplomatic policy, used by Japan to face western economic expansion in Asia, he embodied the will to negotiate and to mediate at its best. His brilliant character, neglected and perhaps misinterpreted throughout the centuries, is revealed through his work as a mediator, as he was willing to persuade and to compromise in order to reach a situation where there were only winners. It relates perhaps the story of a man whose values lingered between the old and the new, almost as a “renaissance” type of man, for a Japanese renaissance that never took off.
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Dedication

To my son Brian Martin Alessandro,
Who has expressed his doubts on the existence of Japanese Christian Warriors in Medieval Japan
Introduction

At the time of Konishi’s birth, Japan had already experienced contact with Portuguese traders and Jesuit missionaries who sought to convert Asia to Christianity. Portuguese traders had influenced not only the economy by importing luxury products but also the methods of warfare by importing new technology. The missionaries, often arriving on merchant ships, were also part of the European package, and they were the ones offering new sets of ideas that crept slowly but decisively into Japanese society. This, together with an overall improvement in agricultural practices, a growing market economy promoted by lords like Oda Nobunaga (織田信長), the first of the three “unifiers” (1534-1582), who sought to eliminate merchants guilds’ economic monopolies, gave rise to new types of entrepreneurs like the Konishi, who were able to take advantage of certain events to increase their wealth and to benefit from political patronage.

Therefore, the lives of Konishi Ryūsa and Yukinaga span overlapping major historical events, such as the encounter with the Europeans, Japan’s process of territorial unification, and the Korean invasions. The attempt to convert Japan to Christianity and the opening of Japan to Europe coincided with the process of Japanese territorial unification under the aegis of the second “unifier” Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉) (1536-1598). Hideyoshi sought to conquer Ming China through Korea, and in doing so, to exert his hegemonic presence in East Asia. Konishi Yukinaga was involved in both processes directly, as a Christian and as an active warrior during the Korean wars of conquest.

Although Konishi Yukinaga (1558-1600) is a well known historical figure among Japanese and Western Christian scholars, there has yet to be a significant study of his life in the English-speaking scholarly environment. This thesis aims to fill that gap in the literature. Konishi has been studied in relation to Christianity because he was known to be a fervent Christian believer. Less known are his activities as a merchant and a private messenger, roles that make this figure interesting. He was instrumental in linking peripheral areas to the central power. His status
changed as the range of his activities multiplied. Yukinaga was a link between central power and peripheries, and yet neither fit precisely the assumed roles of the merchant or the samurai.

Yukinaga represents the last stage of the "lower commanding the upper" or gekokujo (下克上) phenomena, whose effects trickled down into the mercantile environments. The result was a new class of men with a wider perspective of the world conditioned by economic, political and social changes. The search for new values that could ideologically support these changes was also found in the tenets offered by Christianity. Konishi Yukinaga's adherence to Christianity became an important factor only after his status rose, as he reached the pinnacle of his military career, and just when political gains were turning against the foreign religion, as Christian missionaries were banned by Hideyoshi's 1587 edict.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate to what extent Konishi's mercantile background, military skills, and Christianity shaped his capacity to bridge the gap between the central government policies and the Japanese peripheries in his diplomatic and war-related negotiations. In its discussion of the lives of Konishi Ryūsa and Yukinaga, my thesis focuses particularly on Yukinaga's mercantile background and his rise in status from a merchant to a samurai by taking into consideration Yukinaga's formative years in terms of his military activities and negotiating skills in the area of the Seto Inland Sea.

The argument is presented in three chapters. The first deals mainly with historiographical interpretations of Konishi Yukinaga as seen since the early Tokugawa period (1603-1867) on throughout the centuries, by taking as examples influential authors of Japanese and Western background, up to the most recent interpretations of Endō Shūsaku (遠藤周作) and Sonoda Nobuyuki (園田信行). This chapter deals particularly with Konishi Yukinaga's death, interpreted as a closure for the period of Civil Wars and metaphorically as his historiographical death because, since the Tokugawa period on, history has been re-written from the perspective of the winners.
The second chapter addresses Konishi Yukinaga’s formative period taking into consideration his family, particularly his father Ryūsa (小西隆佐ジョアチ) (also called Jitoku and Joachim) and his elder brother Josei Benito (小西情清ベント), their association with Christianity, and the presence of the Jesuits in Japan. This chapter will also analyze the particular merchant trading networks in relation to the market expansion that took place under Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s rule, taking into consideration not only the effect of foreign Portuguese trade in areas like Kyoto and Sakai but also the importance of mercantile patronage among the warrior lords. It was a case of fortunate patronage that initiated Konishi Yukinaga’s military career after he established himself in the citadel of Okayama, in the region of Bizen, under the aegis of his stepfather Totoya Kurōemon (魚や九郎衛門), also known as Genroku (原六).

The third chapter analyzes Konishi Yukinaga’s military beginnings and rapid successes in the administration of the Shōdojima area and the establishment of trade routes for military procurement purposes, while he worked as a vassal retainer of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was intent on the conquest of Shikoku and later on Kyūshū. In the mid 1580’s Christianity spread mainly among the warrior ranks and Konishi Yukinaga was baptized, although his Sakai’s family was already acquainted with the many Jesuit missionaries who had been preaching in Japan since the arrival of Francisco Xavier in Kagoshima in 1549.

Thus, my interpretation of Konishi Yukinaga and his father Ryūsa emphasizes their contribution to the establishment of Christianity in Kyoto, Sakai, and in the Seto Inland Sea as they both used Christianity as a political tool. Their religiosity was genuine, and it is through their genuine faith that they were able to establish institutions such as hospitals and orphanages that enhanced their local authority and power bases. This also brought to increase in trading relations through their Jesuit connections. Their Christianity cannot be ignored; nor can we overlook the fact that Christianity constituted an ideological threat as it could have undermined Hideyoshi’s
absolutistic power. Here there is the controversy that saw Yukinaga as both a loyal warrior and a Christian believer. He was surely determined to negotiate a compromise that saw Christianity as a unification tool. As Yukinaga established his own domain in the Seto Inland area, important for its sea traffic routes and commerce since ancient times, he was able to link that area by the extension of Hideyoshi’s power into the peripheries. In the Seto, Yukinaga performed the important function to link center and peripheries. Ironically, he represented Hideyoshi’s governance under the sun, and yet he was a Christian, a spiritual outsider in the land of the Kami, hence the best person to be able to negotiate between Japan and foreign countries. He was indeed a mediator in the Islands of the Gods.
Chapter 1. Konishi Yukinaga’s past and recent historiography.

1.1 Konishi Yukinaga’s death

The fury of the battle began early in the foggy morning of the ninth month on the 15th day of the fifth year of Keichō1, when two major coalitions representing the lords of Western and Eastern Japan confronted each other on the high terrain of Sekigahara. The troops of both sides experienced heavy losses. By noon, the Western faction suffered a catastrophic defeat. Three of its generals halted their troops and defected, bought out by the powerful Eastern coalition, causing the fall of the Western armies. The scattered men belonging to the Western troops were retreating en masse still chased, attacked, and killed by the winning side. Many warriors found refuge in the surrounding areas.

A man drenched in his sweat, dirty with blood, and disheveled, carrying another soldier in worse condition, retreated at the periphery of the forest surrounding Mount Ibuchi. He fought hard, and overcome by fatigue and aware of his faction’s defeat, sought refuge in a nearby monastery. Konishi Yukinaga, conscious of his action, knocked at the door and was received by the monks2. Yukinaga spoke straightforward to the abbot of the monastery by saying:

"I am Konishi Yukinaga the central figure in the recent trouble. My failing forces cannot possibly be recouped. I was ill-advised by a no-account Ishida by name, and the crushing defeat I endured was pitiful. If I were to die now, it would be no more than just. But for years I have worshipped the cult of Jesus and in keeping with the Law of the Lord in Heaven, I am loath to kill myself. Your Reverence's kindness I shall not easily forget. Seize me quickly and hand me to the Tokugawa authorities"3.

It is with this vivid account that Miura Baien (1723-1789), a philosopher in the

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1 October 20th, 1600 according to the Gregorian Western Calendar.
2 I will refer from now on to Konishi Yukinaga as "Yukinaga".
3 Miura Baien, Leon Hurvitz, Miura Susumu, “Samidare-sho”. Monumenta Nipponica Vol. 9, 1953; pp 330-356. As Hurvitz notes, the description of this particular event is reported in Mikawa go-fudoki only found in the unrevised edition of the Shuseki Shuran.
Tokugawa period, reported the last days of Konishi Yukinaga. He described, the kindness of the abbot of the monastery who, recognizing the non commoner status of the man, donated to him a clean set of clothing and offered him lodging. Yukinaga’s impressive statement told the warrior’s worth. As expressed in “Samidare-shō,” an anti-Christian polemic written in 1784, Baien is in effect giving us an account of Yukinaga, respected as a warrior, who honored his defeat and his faith by making a decision that few people even at that time would have had the courage to make. He gave himself up to the winning side. In writing such words, Miura Baien, who believed in Confucian ethics as opposed to Christianity, elevates the gesture of the abbot to a degree of generosity proper for highly enlightened monks.

The abbot saw Yukinaga as a losing warrior, as he explained to be as such, who under the misfortune of the moment, as a samurai, had to accept his defeat. It is however, worth noticing the words used by Yukinaga to express his statement in the Tokugawa period of himself, as a Christian and therefore punishable by death, and of Ishida Mitsunari, the leader of the Western Coalition and his military commander. The improbability of Konishi Yukinaga describing Ishida as “man of no-account” in Baien’s text is obvious. The appellative that Miura Baien, as an Edo intellectual, bestowed on Ishida well supported Tokugawa’s religious and political thought.

It is indeed a fact that both Konishi Yukinaga and Ishida Mitsunari belonged to the same faction and were tied not only by bounds of military camaraderie but also shared, if nothing else, the same effective or perceived loyalty for Hideyori (Hideyoshi’s heir). Hideyori’s right to rule was denied to him by the emergence of Tokugawa Ieyasu as the sole power holder in the whole of Japan.

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4 Jennes Joseph, History of the Catholic Church in Japan. Missionary Bulletin n. 8, the Committee of the Apostolate, Tokyo 1959. p.188. Jennes comments on the fact that Baien never came into contact with Christianity directly, as by his time Christians were few and most apostatized during the persecutions of 1614-90’s, or went into hiding. Moreover, due to the lack of priests in Japan, the following generation was not instructed in performing the Christian rituals.
In addition, Yukinaga, as represented by Baien’s word, reflects the ideal image, of a nostalgic, heroic but unwise past, as beheld by people in the Tokugawa era of the samurai world and of their geste, as these could have been acted in a Kabuki Theater. Therefore, Yukinaga, here is the Tokugawa representation of what has been described by Ivan Morris as the “tragic hero”, as the believer of wrong religious tenets, the Christian faith, justly punished with a death sentence due to his unsound beliefs.

This fate indeed is differently worded, as reported here, by Daniello Bartoli (1608-1685), who was an Italian Jesuit. He refers to Yukinaga as Agostino (by his Christian name), describing him as one of the most zealous believers in Christianity in existence in Japan at that time. Daniello continues his description of Yukinaga’s death, tantamount to Jesuit propaganda, at a time when the Jesuit missions in Asia were truly declining. The Jesuit writing for a European audience aimed at persuading people in power to maintain a grip on their missions abroad.

Daniello, based on Carvahlo’s letter, confirms that Yukinaga was one of the leaders of the Western faction against the usurper of Hideyori’s right to rule. Yukinaga, sure of the victory at Sekigahara, wrote to the Jesuit Fathers that if Japan was to be under Hideyori, they would have to work harder to spread their faith everywhere. As Daniello recounts, Yukinaga, in the first hours of the battle, abandoned by his other allies and defeated with few warriors at his disposal, was surrounded by enemies and thought well to take his life and die with dignity as was appropriate for a captain and a nobleman of his rank. But his action was to come to a sudden stop, as his thought of being a Christian prevented him from self immolation. In doing so, his soul would be damned forever. By appearing as a coward and dishonored man in Japanese eyes he felt the dishonor more

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6 Bartoli Daniello in 1660 compiled two volumes regarding the Jesuit Missionary activities in Japan and China.
This sentence does not in effect reflect the historical reality because it was under Hideyoshi’s rule that the Jesuit missionaries were banned and persecuted. But even if the enforcements of the edicts was not enforced, Hideyori in reality did not offer any guarantees that Christianity was going to be a major religion in Japan, unless his regents to be had decided in the Jesuit’s favor.
than death itself, but he had dedicated his life to God and as such he was in reality a very strong
man. Led by his captors to Cainocami (Kuroda Nagamasa), a previous friend turned capturer and
head of the prison, Yukinaga began to pray and Kuroda, believing he was pleading for his life, told
him not to pray as it was not entirely his decision to let him live or not. Yukinaga replied that if he
wanted to free himself he would have had occasion to do so, by killing himself as he had his sword
at hand, and it would have been so much more convenient to kill himself than to become a
prisoner. He accepted whatever destiny God had for him, the sooner the better, even if it was to be
torture and the desecration of his family name. He requested only to have a priest so he could
confess before dying, but his request was denied by Daifusama (Ieyasu Tokugawa).

Daniello reported how the Fathers were forbidden to see Yukinaga, and continues by
describing how Yukinaga, together with Gibunosci (Ishida Mitsunari) and a monk by the name of
Ancocugi (Ankokuji Eikei), were conducted through the streets of Osaka, each one of them on an
old horse, to be shown to the people. Then they were led to Meaco (Miyako – Kyoto) on three carts
and here similarly shown to the populace on well known main roads. This was to be for them a
humiliation procedure, one thousand times more intolerable than death, for they were men of a
certain status. Leading the party was the town crier announcing that these three disgraced persons
were going to be killed because they were “rioters,” “instigators,” and “war leaders against the
Royal Court.” On the first cart there was the Governor Gibunosci, on the second, the monk
Ancocugi, and Agostino (Yukinaga) was on the third.

It is at this point that Daniello Bartoli, with a creative skill of his own, depicts the path of
the three prisoners toward their death. The first two, shown as whining and pale with their heads
on their chests, are met by a group of monks that prayed for both. Then this group tried to go

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8 Ibid. pp. 479-480. I kept the spelling of and changes in the names as reported by Daniello Bartoli to remind the
authorship of the document proposed to the reader.
nearby Yukinaga, who started to recite loudly the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, showing defiance. He was a dignified figure until his end. As he could not receive any of the European Fathers before dying, he was allowed to talk to the leader of the Misericordia Association, founded by the Jesuits in Kyoto. The leader was a Japanese man of proved virtues who recovered his body, once he was decapitated, and put it in his final resting place after a proper funeral.

Daniello, in a typical European literary style, tells that Konishi Yukinaga asked the head of the Misericordia Association to look in his clothes after his death. There he had left a letter for his wife. In this letter, of which only a fragment was found, according to Daniello, Yukinaga, in perfect synchronicity with Daniello’s Christian’s rhetoric, is made to affirm that:

"...although I have suffered and I am actually suffering due to this unthinkable accident; because I have drunk the most bitter cups and suffered the harshest of punishments that were ever given to me; it seems to me that I am going to pay in this life what I should instead pay in the purgatory. The image that you know of, I kept it always with me, and I love it, and in front of it I will recommend [my soul] to God, until the last [breath] of my life. And because I know my sins have been many that led me to this point, now I am going to benefit, I’ll be in God’s hand, the penance, the hardship, that until now I have tolerated; for all this grace that I met in my path I am infinitely grateful to God. Everything that is left is that from now on you do serve his will with all your heart because in the end all the things of this world are worthless.”

Indeed here the projection of Konishi Yukinaga (Agostino)’s character appears under a total religious aspect, almost resembling a crusader of the European Middle Ages, carrying with him in war sacred pictures and relics and hoping for eternal salvation by the grace of God. In essence, Konishi became the Japanese model of an ideal convert to Christianity, according to Jesuit religious parameters, though such a narrow religiously focused lens does not portray his

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9 Ibid pp. 481. The Misericordia Association will be further explained in the Chapter dealing with Konishi’s Christianity and the adoption of this foreign faith in Japan in general.
10 Ibid. pp. 481
full character. Daniello’s ability to write with certain hindsight and a sure dosage of knowledge about Japanese practices and religious methods that render the above mentioned detailed account of Yukinaga’s death rather believable\textsuperscript{11}.

The Jesuits wealth of documentation and studies on Japan as well as their technical and practical approach to its people gave their fruits in one generation. The Japanese, as stated by Alessandro Valignano, the Jesuit vice Provincial for Japan, were the best people to convert due to their obedient disposition and to their high degree of civilization. Christianity was banned to aid a political unification that reached maturity only during the Tokugawa regime\textsuperscript{12}. During the Tokugawa period many Japanese Christians had to apostatize.

Both, Baien’s account and Daniello’s account, portrayed Yukinaga’s character according to their realities. They re-enforced with their interpretation of Yukinaga the socio-political needs of their times. In first place, Baien reinforced the Tokugawa’s Confucian view on governance by considering Yukinaga a rebel against the establishment, by having violated the principle of respecting one’s superior, as he lost against the Tokugawa faction. In second place, Baien’s view of Yukinaga supported the anti-Christians policies, by interpreting the figure of Yukinaga as a believer of a false religion, hence punishable by death.

Indeed neither author had ever known Konishi Yukinaga, but referred to previous Christian and anti-Christian literature, therefore their visions were reduced to bi-dimensional understanding of Konishi Yukinaga according to their own political, social, and religious tenets.

As a matter of fact, as Baien reinforced Tokugawa’s Confucian view and anti-Christian policies,

\textsuperscript{11} The Jesuits became indeed a source of information about Asia as their missions in China and Japan preceded the other Catholic orders of circa forty years. In 1549 Francisco Xavier arrived in Japan accompanied by the sailor Yajirō with the intent to be received by the Japanese Emperor and be permitted to spread his faith to Japan. Unsuccessful, Xavier led the way for others to convert Japan to Christianity. Since then, not without many difficulties, the Jesuits detained a virtual monopoly in proselytizing the Japanese Islands for a period of forty years before other orders could set foot in Japan. It was indeed after Tokugawa Ieyasu that the anti-Christian bans were enforced as Christians were persecuted and the Fathers also tortured and put to death especially under Iemitsu, the third Shōgun, whose international isolationist policies aimed at strengthening his domestic rule.

\textsuperscript{12} Valignano Alessandro, Sumario de las cosas de japon (1583); Adiciones del sumario de Japon (1592), Ed. Alvarez-taladriz. Tomo I, Sophia University Press, Tokyo, 1954. P.186.
so Daniello's account depicted how a Japanese warrior was a model of Christian rectitude and devotion. This was done with the intent of creating a social understanding in Europe of the value the Jesuit missions had and the need to maintain these around the world. Daniello, by depicting Japanese Christians as devotees and worthy to be cultivated in the European manner, allowed the western cultural boundaries to fade once compared to the Japanese high standard of religiosity.

Unfortunately for the Jesuits, their institution was destined to retrench as European politics turned against their expansion abroad and the Tokugawa Government adopted and reinforced Anti-Christian policies in Japan by banishing missionaries and putting to death their followers. This was done with the intent to close the country to foreign religions and to regulate foreign trade.

Konishi Yukinaga, after his death, came to be interpreted by the new regime as a traitor and by the Jesuit Fathers as a martyr, this to appease both the Tokugawa regime in its centralized policies, and the Jesuits in portraying their missions as successful. These two interpretations demonstrate also how such historical character came to be distorted in historiographic terms according to the interest of the writers. The portrait of Yukinaga from these above reported different standpoints reveals that the paucity of documentation about this historical character has indeed left open questions in regards to his identity, personality, religiosity, and life perspectives.

1.2 Konishi Yukinaga's family persecutions in the Tokugawa period

The consequences brought by the defeat of the Western faction at Sekigahara for Konishi Yukinaga were of catastrophic proportion as he lost not only his life but those of his close family members as well. Ikenaga Kō, one of Konishi’s modern biographers, states that Yukinaga's twelve years old son and heir, Konishi Hyogonokami (兵庫守), sought refuge with
one of his father’s comrades and long time friend, Mori Terumoto (毛利輝元), who wanting to assert his changed loyalties, lost no time in presenting Hyogonokami’s head to the de facto ruler of Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu\textsuperscript{13}. Hyogonokami’s mother was a niece of Shimatsu Tadamasa (島津忠正) of Satsuma, but he was raised by a retainer of Konishi Yukinaga, Amano Nimbu (天野任部), in the village of Takeda in Bungo. Yukinaga had also another son, Heiemon (兵衛門), whose mother was the daughter of one of Matsunaga Yamashiro’s Captains, Yūki Yamashiro no Kami. Heiemon was adopted by Ukita Hideie, Yukinaga’s ward, so he died at a later time returning to Hizen province after having served as a samurai in Edo.

Yukinaga’s daughter, Maria, married to Sō Yoshitomo, lord of Tsushima, after Yukinaga’s death, was sent to Nagasaki under the protection of the Jesuit Fathers. Later she was repudiated by her husband and died in 1605 in Nagasaki\textsuperscript{14}. The fates of Yukinaga’s wives and of his brother Josei are not known. His father, Ryūsa, died of illness in 1594 and his mother in 1599, untouched by the events that destroyed Yukinaga.

The destruction of one’s enemy and of his entire family was not an uncommon event at the time, as even Ishida Mitsunari’s family was destroyed and his wife committed suicide. However, such a destruction as not to leave any family records was indeed uncommon. Yukinaga’s lack of documentation related to his house, his defeat and consequent death, aggravated the situation that led to his obliteration from historical records. In this regards, Pasio relates that “Daifusama suppressed the records (memory) of Konishi Yukinaga”\textsuperscript{15}.

Once Yukinaga left with his army for central Japan, even before the Battle of Sekigahara began, his fief was attacked by Katō Kiyomasa’s troops. Kato was Yukinaga’s antagonist and mortal enemy. Yukinaga’s various castles in his domains were guarded by his family member or

\textsuperscript{13} Ikenaga Kō, Chūsei Sakai wo daihyō suru shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga. 1936. p. 258
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. Pp. 248-9.
close associates. One of Konishi Yukinaga’s brothers, Konishi Hayato (小西隼人), also called Yashichirō (弥七郎) defended Uto’s castle, while his retainer, Konishi Mimasaka no Kami Yukishige (小西美作守雪重), was left in charge of Yatsushiro castle. Both were attacked by Katō Kiyomasa’s armies; Uto was burned and Konishi Hayato seeing no hope of winning sent a messenger to Katō’s troops that allowed the people inside to leave unharmed, then Konishi Hayato committed suicide. The castle of Yatsushiro was also lost and Konishi Mimasaka no Kami, a.k.a. Naitō Joan, flew with less than five hundred men to Shimazu’s domain asking asylum.

Although Yukinaga’s families branches, as Ikenaga Kō, one of Yukinaga’s modern biographers reports, survived during the Tokugawa period there is no further documentation related to his direct family. It was now the turn of the Tokugawa Shogunate to re-write almost three more centuries of Japanese history. Consequently, in the midst of political and economic changes, Yukinaga lost not only his own life but the lives of his family, as many of its members were killed as well. The lack of documentation found relating to his house, his defeat, and consequent death aggravated the situation that led to his historical obliteration.

1.3 Yukinaga’s Jesuit Contemporaries: Valignano’s Silence.

Yukinaga’s Western contemporaries like the Jesuit Father Organtino Guecchi Soldi (Italian), Gregorio de Cespedes (Spanish) and others described Yukinaga as a remarkable believer. This characterization is also seen in the propagandistic intention of Father Luis Frois (Portuguese), who with his letters needed to convince the Curia in Rome to sustain morally and financially the Jesuit Mission in Japan as feasible reality. The personality of Yukinaga that transpire from these documents was one of a powerful person devoted to the Christian religion. In 1587, after the anti-Christian ban was issued, only Organtino expressed his perplexity about Yukinaga’s

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16 Ikenaga Kō, Chūsei Sakai wo daihyō suru shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga. 1936. p. 230
reactions. Organtino observed that Yukinga behaved coldly knowing that the Fathers were in danger. But that once he arrived to the harbor of Murotsu and saw the Fathers there, he then expressed his emotions. This episode reveals part of his personality. In addition, it tells that the Fathers close to him were not treated in terms of friendly intimacy. Nevertheless, they lacked nothing under his patronage. Yukinaga, if nothing else was sincerely distraught at the news of the anti-Christian ban and about his friend Takayama Ukon who lost his livelihood. Hideyoshi punished him to give all the Christians a warning.

In 1596, Gregorio de Cespedes was in Shōdojima to convert a population of 1,400 souls. His services were requested by Yukinaga. The friendship between Yukinaga and Cespedes seems to have begun in 1579 in Okayama. In 1593, Cespedes was also sent to Korea, as Yukinaga requested there a Father for the spiritual well-being of his (mostly) Christian troops. Cespedes’ letters on his stay in Korea revealed Yukinaga’s happiness to see him there. Those letters mentions that, while Yukinaga was occupied in his campaigns, he was attended by a cohort of retainers, also Christians, who would work in concert with Yukinaga, to made Cespedes’ visit as comfortable as possible. Indeed, it was this cohort of Christians that surrounded Yukinaga and worked for him, that enhanced Yukinaga’s public aspect as a fervent Christian believer. These men were partly his family members, partly other Christian warriors close to him by alliances or marriage bonds. Even so, not many records are left reporting Yukinaga’s character or related to his everyday life or the life his family may have conducted.

Luis Frois wrote of Yukinaga and his family extensively during their ascendancy to power, portraying this family as an ancient Christian family of Kyoto. But all the commercial deals, transactions and political aspect of their relations were carefully erased. It is known that

Jesuits documents were supervised before being sent to Europe, scrutinized and polished. Only information considered “politically correct” could leave the shores of Japan. It is for this reason that, as Yukinaga was close to power and to the Jesuits; his public and private dealings were not openly mentioned. In 1586, he hosted the Vice provincial Father Coehlo as he negotiated with Arima Harunobu (Don Protasio) in Kuchinotsu, Kyushu. Coehlo was supplying Arima with ammunitons to fight against his local enemies, in exchange for the conversion to Christianity of his domains. Once Coehlo proposed a coalition against Hideyoshi’s invasion Yukinaga opposed the idea, bringing Arima to publicly swear his alliance to Hideyoshi. The only interesting comment that came out of these “negotiations” was the frustration of Yukinaga as Arima was undecided on the matter.

Another mystery that surrounds Yukinaga is the silence of the Jesuit Vice provincial Alessandro Valignano, the most outspoken person in matter of Japanese strategic policies. He knew Yukinaga and yet hardly spoke of him if not in terms of policy making. In his Sumario, one of the most political writing about Japan and Jesuits policies, he recounts of all the major families of influential Christians, and yet there is a huge silence about Konishi Yukinaga. Valignano mentioned Yukinaga in his epistles. He was happy that Yukinaga became lord of Higo in 1588 and protected Christians there. Valignano if nothing else could be considered Yukinaga’s counterpart on the Jesuit front in matter of policy making and strategies. Both men may have diverged in opinion as Yukinaga begun to trade with the Philippines and Valignano did not approve of it because according to the Treaty of Tordesillas, established in 1494, the Spanish, in the Philippines, 

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could not meddle with the Portuguese trade in Japan. The Manila trade could have superseded the Macao trade by taking away the Jesuits’ revenue with which they paid for their stay in Japan. In doing so the Manila trade could have taken away their spiritual monopoly.

Therefore, we have this polished image of the fervent Christian and also a silence that sounds too loud to be ignored. Yukinaga was a Christian but he may not have been in agreement with many of the Fathers’ policies. Nevertheless he knew well how to appease them.

Yukinaga as described by contemporary sources, particularly by the Jesuit Fathers that knew him, was a devote believer. But as these sources were crafty polished to propagate the success of missionary works in Japan, the inconsistencies resulting from Yukinaga’s missions, daily life and work did not surface.

1.4 Konishi Yukinaga as perceived in the early and middle Shōwa (1927-1989) periods.

In 1936 Japan, Ikenaga Kō, an elementary school teacher, discovered in his school backyard the tombstone of the eight descendant of Konishi family in Sakai. This discovery motivated him to learn more about the Konishi family who held a prominent role in the history of his city. Hence, Ikenaga, by perusing various archeological and historical documents, decided to write a book on Konishi Yukinaga and his family. Ikenaga’s main point in re-appraising Konishi Yukinaga reveals the intent to express the importance of Sakai as a Japanese commercial Harbor. Ikenaga emphasizes Yukinaga’s contribution in establishing and organizing sea port traffic areas, such as Murotsu and part of Seto Inland Sea. Ikenaga’s work is astonishing for the amount of its archeological details, although in my opinion it failed to truly establish a connection.

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20 The treaty of Tordesillas established in 1494, after Columbus discovered America, the zone of trading influence covered by the Portuguese and Spanish Fleets. Japan was under Portuguese hegemony, as it should have been the Philippines, but in practice the Philippines fell under Iberian hegemony.

between Konishi Yukinaga and the Seto Inland Sea. Ikenaga explained the importance of the area without expressing Yukinaga’s political duties there, or his economic role.

Ikenaga’s comments that previous historiographers should not have been so harsh by viewing Yukinaga as the person who, by wanting to protect Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s son (Hideyori) interests, in reality speeded up his ruin. Nor shall Yukinaga be compared to Katō Kiyomasa, his competitor, who had closer ties to Hideyoshi. Although, as Ikenaga suggests, Yukinaga did arrive at the same level of military skills; being of merchant origin, he was not as easily recognized by the military and literati ranks, nor was his contribution as seafarer recognized.

In my view Ikenaga’s cultural inheritance from the Meiji period was not totally ignored as Yukinaga’s background is viewed as inferior to Katō Kiyomasa’s one, indeed this was not the case as this thesis in question is going to assert.

Surprisingly enough, Ikenaga’s view of Yukinaga as an excellent Christian came at a time in which Japan’s cabinet imposed strict controls on book publications to forbid the spreading of non traditional views, or views that were contrary to state policies. Among controversial authors, there were Christians arrested for their ideas, as well as Buddhist and Shintō believers critical of the government. In 1936, Japan’s need to create a “national and racial sense of belonging,” as described by Beasley, surpassed the Meiji experience of importing foreign ideas and thoughts. It was time now to construct, as best as it could, one’s “Japanese-ness.”

This view however does not explain the fact that a book promoting an exemplary Christian samurai was not indeed censored. In my opinion, other political and economic major factors played a fundamental role in publishing Ikenaga Kō’s book. First, politically Japan was experiencing a modernization process not void of popular discontent similar to Germany and Italy, where the political leaders used autarchic economic processes (and oligarchic elite turned militaristic) to build strong and competitive states. They had to face economic crises,
industrialization processes, class conflicts from left to right wings, and a fascist hegemonic terror. The emergence of extreme ideologies like fascism was not only a product of domestic struggle, but it was also a response to external forces in the international arena.

The closeness felt by Japan to Germany’s militaristic policy was expressed by signing the Anti Comintern Pact in November 1936. In 1937 the “Marco Polo” Incident, by which Japanese troops entered in full force in Manchuria, escalated in the participation of Japan in the tripartite alliance with Germany and Italy commonly known as “Axis of Evil” on September 1940. This alliance was just the political manifestation of a struggle to succeed domestically and internationally.

In 1931 at the beginning of the Pacific War, Japan required new allies, particularly after the Manchurian Incident, and the estrangement of the Japanese from the League of Nations. Hitler’s Germany likewise became a militaristic state in expansion, and presented itself as the ideal candidate for a Japan that struggled for international recognition and expansion in Manchurian territories. However, Germany’s ideological obsession with racial supremacy may have turned sour for the Japanese if their racial equality was not to be recognized.

Hence, Ikenaga’s book in this politically charged environment rightly affirmed that Japan also had a long Christian tradition, therefore establishing Japan’s equality in religious terms, not forgetting to please the domestic audience by reaffirming also a long militaristic “samurai” tradition of its own. This reinforced the fact that Christians also could be engaged in supporting Japanese militaristic expansion. Ikenaga dealt with these issues, the “uniqueness of Japan” and the “Christian tradition,” and in doing so he also re-evaluated his own city, Sakai, as a commercial port. To be able to prove these points, he used a great deal of archeological findings particularly

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23 Ibid. pp 199.
dear to the period in question, especially to the Germans, to propose in a scientific and modern way not only Konishi Yukinaga’s character but Japan’s traditions also to appease a domestic audience.

Second, while Japanese expansionism in Korea and South East Asia was explained by other authors in terms of Imperial authority and legacy; as in the legendary invasion of the Empress Jingu in a remote past, Ikenaga chose to view Konishi Yukinaga during Hideyoshi’s invasions both in economic and in Christian terms. In economic terms, Yukinaga, as Ikenaga explains, has contributed to the establishment of certain sea traffic routes and city ports in the Seto Inland region. Moreover, Yukinaga’s mercantile background in support of the hegemonic government of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, reflected in similar ways the connection between the Zaibatsu support of national expansion during Ikenaga’s time. Historically speaking, Yukinaga’s figure was revitalized in a commercial and expansionistic context. In effect, it was by 1936 that half of Japan’s exports went to the United States. Japan was also able to economically undermine European production of silk and textiles until the effect of the economic depression and American embargoes had an impact in the 1940’s Economic seaways needed for territorial expansion were important in 1592 as well as in the twentieth century. Ikenaga appealed to national pride and by indirectly portraying a warrior in existence three hundred and seventy years earlier, he was able to justify the current economic and political policies.

Although it is not incorrect to state that Ikenaga failed to analyze the method used by Yukinaga in exploiting these routes, he dealt rather with the uncertainty of his own information regarding the naming and location of various Islands, as well as to explain the economic importance of such areas. Moreover, Yukinaga is shown in all his religious fervor and determination.

24 T.A. Bisson, “Increase of Zaibatsu Predominance in Wartime Japan,” Pacific Affairs, XVIII (March 1945), pp. 55-59. In his article, Bisson states that between 1931 and 1936 under the war expenses the metallurgic, machinery, and chemical industries boomed, while the consumer goods industries increased their production by 33%.
Ikenaga himself defines Yukinaga’s military engagement in Korea as “problematic” to explain. Although he is far from clarifying the nature of these problems, neither he perceives the Korean invasions in terms of a mini Crusade in which Yukinaga was mainly interested in acquiring territories and people to convert to Christianity\textsuperscript{25}. Ikenaga justifies the incursion by adhering to the thought that Yukinaga, under Hideyoshi’s order, fought with all his skill and fervor in Korea.

Interestingly enough, it is Yukinaga’s religious fervor that will be considerably exploited by various authors during his literary revival. Ikenaga’s terminology also indicates an historical legitimization of the invasion calling it “seimin” (conquest of Ming China) instead of “shinryaku” (invasion). The usage of this particular terminology, in light of the Manchurian expansionistic policy that occurred since 1931, does reflect a certain degree of complacency for the ongoing militaristic expansion.

Another interesting interpretation of Konishi Yukinaga by Sekine Bunnosuke, a Christian and the principal of Tokyo Eiwa Commerce College, appeared in 1943 just when Japan started to experience losses in the war front and saw its expansionistic goals halted. Sekine pondered the meaning of Konishi Yukinaga in Japanese history and expressed his view by stating that people are the main element of a country, and people with deep beliefs do not struggle as much when facing death. He continues by expressing that in sixteenth century Japan, Samurai were more concerned about how to die, not how to live, and that was their virtue\textsuperscript{26}. In his own words, Sekine, on one hand, viewed Konishi Yukinaga as a samurai and therefore following the “way of the warriors” unique to Japan, while on the other, expressed the fact that people with profound beliefs, like the Christians, are capable of dying without a second thought: This view represents clearly the trend of his time when Japanese soldiers were asked to die as “Kamikaze” (divine

\textsuperscript{25} Ikenaga Ko, Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga, Tokyo, 1936. Prologue.

\textsuperscript{26} Sekine Bunnosuke, Christian Daimyō Konishi Yukinaga, 1943. pp5-6.
wind) for patriotic purposes.

Authors in different epochs addressed the various attributes and qualities of Konishi Yukinaga according to their perceived ethic and moral values, but the post war period is particularly interesting as Yukinaga is reappraised in a different and more critical optic.

Pre-war and in between wars Japanese authors like Ikenaga Kō and Sekine BunnoSUKE have contributed greatly in the reappraisal of the figure of Konishi Yukinaga, particularly Ikenaga’s work as it provided archeological findings, material proof as evidence for the existence of the Konishi of Kyoto. He also interviewed the descendants of such families, revealing part of history that was otherwise lost.

1.5 Recent biographers and historiographers

Recent biographers and historiographers have studied the figure of Yukinaga under a modern optic. Amongst the more recent works on Konishi Yukinaga’s life there is the famous novelist Endō Shūsako’s book “The Yoke of Iron”, (Tetsu no Kubikase) 「鉄の首枷」. Mr. Endō’s interest in Konishi Yukinaga, as he himself admitted, was in term of religion and power. Yukinaga was in his view a weak believer, maybe not totally convinced in Christianity per se, if compared with the fervor shown by his peer Takayama Ukōn. In fact Yukinaga’s cowardice led him to conduct what Mr. Endō defined as a double standard life using the Japanese term “menjūfukuhai” (面従服背) that literally means to obey and agree apparently on the surface while retaining an opposite view.

Hence, Endō explains Yukinaga’s contradiction as being, on one hand, Yukinaga’s attachment to his military career and to Hideyoshi’s leadership, while on the other hand, Yukinaga’s sense of guilt for his un-expressed Christian religiosity. According to Endō, Yukinaga renounced to his mercantile status to pursue the military career, so to be only nominally a
Christian, as in reality his religiosity did not match his lifestyle. The turning point of his duplicity occurred when in 1587, he hosted Takayama Ukôn in his Island of Shôdojima, after Ukôn was banned with all his family and retainers from his domain in Akashi. In addition, Mr. Endô claims that in the end Yukinaga during the whole Korean invasion did not respect Hideyoshi’s order in negotiating with the Ming envoy. The end of his duplicity occurred at the moment of his death, when he in a letter to his wife and son Yukinaga wrote that the only thing to do was to serve God.

Endô’s perspective is interesting as he, although a Christian was rather critical, and tried to understand Yukinaga’s action not only from within the Christian catholic boundaries, but also from a psychological viewpoint. Endô associated his own experiences, as son of Christian missionaries in China, torn between duty (giri) and passion (ningyô), and the moral dilemma of life in general. In Konishi’s case these dilemma are represented by his faith and the impossibility of coping at a moral level with the demands imposed by his career as a warrior.

Endô perceived Konishi Yukinaga as if the latter willingly renounced his mercantile background to become a warrior, and in doing so he had to compromise at a personal level. Yukinaga was following a line of action used by Oda Nobunaga, and other late medieval warriors, in precedence and that consisted in throwing away whatever was not useful to their needs, wishes and careers. Therefore, in renouncing a mercantile background to enhance his status and to get closer to power, Yukinaga was not perceived as having the religious fervor that the Takayama had. Moreover, the contrast that Endô proposes between Yukinaga’s faith and faithlessness is central to his understanding of this historical personage. Endô used his own introspection and his own life experiences to give life to a non-fictional character that like Endô dealt with religious discrimination and the fact of not belonging by birth to a certain “status”. In Konishi Yukinaga’s case it was the status of a samurai and becoming a foreign presence in a different country.

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27 Endô Shûsaku (March 23rd, 1923-Sept. 29th, 1996) Born in Tokyo by a Catholic family, studied Literature at the University of Lyon in France between 1950 and 1953.
Tanaka Takeo, a professor in Tokyo University who has studied Konishi Yukinaga in relation to Japanese medieval international diplomacy and commerce, rebuked Endō’s view of Yukinaga in several points\(^ {29}\). In response to Endō’s moral view, especially in regards to Yukinaga’s participation in the Korean invasions, Tanaka Takeo, insists that in first place the lack or the presence of God in the making of the Korean invasion was not even taken into consideration by Hideyoshi, the reason being that the Korean invasion was an operation of huge proportions and needed manpower as well as a great quantity of resources. Therefore, Tanaka expresses the idea that the religious aspect came to be considered subsequently.

In second place, Tanaka sustains that Yukinaga’s betrayal of Hideyoshi’s negotiating conditions could not have occurred without the participation of other members of the military elite, and that it is too narrow to consider Yukinaga’s betrayal from a religious standpoint. Furthermore, Tanaka comments that the religiousity of Yukinaga did not in effect constitute all of his being and it should be just taken in consideration for what it was. According to Tanaka, Endō has idealized Konishi Yukinaga’s character and has not used many of the secondary sources available to him\(^ {30}\).

As Tanaka Takeo has worked on Yukinaga’s diplomatic role, Toyoda Takeshi has written about Yukinaga and his family in relation to the economic role of the *entrepôt* city of Sakai\(^ {31}\). Toyoda based his research on the footprints of Ikenaga’s work, but distanced himself by it as Toyoda analyzed and researched Yukinaga and his family from an economic perspective, including the type of business his family was pursuing and the economic power of the guilds of the time. Toyoda’s work per se was related to the study of the various mercantile entrepreneurs that


\(^{29}\)Tanaka Takeo, born in 1923 in Gunma Province, city of Takazaki, professor in Tokyo University, graduated from the same University in 1945 from the Department of Literature and Japanese History.


benefited from local lord’s patronage, in regard to tax and toll fee exemptions exchanged for financial support. Toyoda’s work is relevant as it has brought forward a series of themes from the late medieval society, a society in which Yukinaga lived and that had its complexities. It is the understanding of these complex relations, business practices and power relations that created the background of a man whose skills and capability were certainly not related only to family wealth.

Yukinaga is a difficult historical character to carve out, as one of his most recent biographer, Sonoda Nobuyuki, commented that it is not easy to write about famous historical characters and it is even more difficult to write about someone who has been defeated. Mr. Sonoda relates the difficulties to the fact that Yukinaga in a Japanese contest has been treated as an “heretic”, a “double faced man”, a “defeated man” and “not a warrior” because he did not follow the proper “way of the warrior” or bushidō (武士道). With such premises it is difficult indeed to explain why Yukinaga did climb the social ladder of his time and retained a high social status.

Mr. Sonoda attributes to Yukinaga an uncommon personality that he certainly must have possessed, however for as many biographers and historians have attempted to define Yukinaga’s personality the results have been not often satisfactory. Mr. Sonoda himself expressed the idea that the Konishis due to their skills and abilities were indeed “free” men in a society in which there was less and less personal freedom. This freedom translated into religious freedom for Yukinaga and his family; in fact Mr. Sonoda himself explained to the author of this thesis that he intended to view Yukinaga as a person seeking freedom through religion. In the sixteenth century as many religions were tolerated in Japan, people did not mind to experiment and try different sects as they brought some sort of relief and solace, at spiritual and practical levels, in their lives. Moreover, Mr. Sonoda relates an example of freedom expressed from the esthetic viewpoint of the Tea Ceremony

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of Sen no Rikyū\textsuperscript{33}. Hence, people that were tied to Toyotomi Hideyoshi's government and benefited from their political connections sought a freedom that was, in a purely Japanese tradition, located in their inner souls\textsuperscript{34}.

In addition, Sonoda from a scientific viewpoint is dissecting Yukinaga to study this fascinating character in his entirety, within the limit established by his own society and by the time. Moreover my perspective is in agreement with Mr. Sonoda when he states that, just as Yukinaga cannot be viewed solely as a hero, neither should be viewed as a failure or a victim of the circumstances. As a matter of fact Yukinaga is often described as an authoritative person, therefore his decisions must have been well pondered, even the ones that turned out in hindsight to be rather problematic.

Post modern historiographers and biographers of Konishi Yukinaga have tried to understand this character by placing him into the Japanese social contest of his time, and in doing so they have re-evaluated Yukinaga partially and/or in his entirety.

\textbf{1.6 My own appraisal of Konishi Yukinaga}

The interest sparkled in me by this controversial but very interesting historical character, comes from his mercantile background jointly connected to the fact that Yukinaga was a Christian, a fervent one as told by his contemporaries, and a warrior. These three elements while not in a direct contradiction render his character a multi-faceted one. In addition, the fact that he held enough power to become a lord (\textit{daimyō}) during Japan's territorial unification and at times when Christianity was banned by Toyotomi Hideyoshi made his case an outstanding one, worthy of further investigation.

\textsuperscript{33} Sonoda Nobuyuki's email addressed to the author of this thesis, dated may 13\textsuperscript{th}, 2005.

\textsuperscript{34} This tradition of an inner freedom in the post war days was brought forward particularly by high caliber novelists like Jun'ichirō Tanizaki in his book "In praise of Shadow", in which he claims that is what is dim and unfocused that has a sense of ethereal beauty and mystery (yūgen) from a Japanese perspective, while whatever is bright and in full sight cannot be totally appreciated as it does not intrigue the imagination.
My initial question was, if he was a Christian, why was he not banned as occurred to his friend, Takayama Ukōn, who for being a fervent Christian, and part of Hideyoshi’s warrior elite, was sent in exile. Why did Yukinaga thrive at Hideyoshi’s side? His mercantile background explains it partially. Contrary to Mr. Endō’s interpretation, it is possible to affirm that Yukinaga did not renounce his mercantile background. It was because of it that he was able to work in the military, and to become later on a military strategist, knowledgeable in the use of firearms, and a leader of troops.

Yukinaga cannot be viewed certainly as a hero, nor as a common person and neither did he belong on the lists of Nietzsche’s modern anti-heros. My image of Konishi differs in the interpretation from previous authors as I intended to explore his raise in power from a simple mercantile background, to the prestigious position of Grand Admiral of the Seas, by analyzing what it really meant to be a merchant in sixteenth century Japan. Therefore I explore his mercantile origins and how it was possible while holding a mercantile status to climb to the highest military ranks.

Yukinaga was aided by his father, Ryūsa, a merchant, and it is his father and his father’s entrepreneurial skills that I investigated at first, before going on to view Yukinaga as a warrior, a trusted mediator and as a devoted Christian. In all these three functions the geographical area in which he operated, the Seto Inland Sea, was extremely important as it was a peripheral and elusive area, which he brought under a centralized government’s control.

The Seto was an intense commercial area where domestic and international trade took place. As such it cannot be viewed solely as a periphery but also an area of cultural contact, in which diverse culture co-existed and also met. Therefore, the role of envoy, mediator, and messenger became essential to ensure its control. I am indebted also to Akiko Kunishige’s work, a Japanese scholar, who has written about Yukinaga in his position as a messenger and mediator. But even his
contemporaries like Organtino and Frois wrote that Yukinaga had the qualities to be an excellent negotiator. I intended to emphasize particularly those qualities because I, myself, as Yukinaga, believe in dialogue, in finding points of contact during major crisis that could be averted and overcome by mutual understanding. War becomes then an option only if everything fails. This position seemed to be Yukinaga’s one since he began his career in the Seto area, until he negotiated peace in Korea.

In my view, Yukinaga’s mercantile base gave him the tools to know people, while his faith’s tenets led him to behave as a “protector”, a man whose ethic was not dictated by a code of honor but by Christian morality. Yukinaga in his work as a mediator was influenced by his religious beliefs. He did show that he was able to compromise between his religiosity, as seen in his effort to unify Japan, and his loyalty to Hideyoshi. This was true for the Seto Inland Sea, an area to which he was tied by family connections and by his own military and supervisory experiences, as he tried to make that area his own by using Christianity as a community centered and supporting tool.

The discovery that his own father, Ryūsa, reinforced his power locally by being the leader of a Christian association reveals the importance of Christianity as a tool for governance, governance that he exerted to the Seto Inland Sea and that connected him to the wider world. In fact he dealt in international policy by controlling the Seto area and by promoting Hideyoshi’s policies against pirates, who dwelled there, making official trade and international relations a difficult affair.

Yukinaga was not only a link between eastern and western civilizations by embracing western views and perfecting eastern cultural traits. He was within Japanese society an emerging new man, a representative of new power players, lingering between fluid social statuses and the beginning of a rigid government infrastructure.
Conclusion

The figure of Konishi Yukinaga being a multi-faceted one has been always difficult to interpret. After Konishi Yukinaga’s death various interpretations of this historical character appeared. He was portrayed as a common criminal and a traitor by a Japanese scholar Miura Baien, while his contemporary Jesuit Father Daniello Bartoli saw Yukinaga as a martyr. This fact reflects the range of interpretations Yukinaga posed for posterity. Yukinaga’s successes, rising in status from a mercantile family, tied with bonds of patronage relates the complexity of his life. As a samurai his adoption of a foreign religion kept him in contact with the European Jesuits in Japan at the time. By sheltering the Jesuits he facilitated the conversion of Japan to Christianity, and this was what he also wanted in his domains.

Hence, on one hand, from the Jesuits’ point of view Yukinaga, being a fervent Christian and belonging to the samurai class, became the “symbol” for Jesuit propaganda in Europe. This occurred particularly years after his death, when the Jesuits missions were loosing ground in many Asian countries, such as the Philippines and China. On the other hand, from Miura’s viewpoint, as the Tokugawa regime made Christianity its scapegoat to reinforce its governance, the figure of Yukinaga became idealized as an honorable samurai, justly punished for his false beliefs leading to the crime of treason.

Consequently, the new regime personified by Tokugawa Ieyasu, who felt Yukinaga had personally injured him by not accepting his alliance proposal, obliterated intentionally all records pertaining to Konishi’s family and went as far as to kill most of his family members. The obliteration of records and the consequent rewriting of history from the perspective of the winner, cancelled Yukinaga from history until the Meiji period when a great deal of work was done to put together all documents related to Japan’s past.

It is in the pre war and post war periods that significant work on Konishi Yukinaga appeared from Western and Japanese scholarship. In the West mainly Jesuit Fathers started to be
interested in the Jesuit missions in Japan. They wrote also on Konishi’s family, based on Western historical letters and documentations left by the Jesuits that lived in Japan, such as Luis Frois, Alessandro Valignano, Gaspar Coehlo, Luis de Almeida, Gregorio de Cespedes, Organtino Gnechi Soldi and many more. Although they did not specifically write on Konishi Ryūsa, nor on Yukinaga, the scope of their conversion efforts included men like the Konishis.

In Japan, in the pre-war period, a significant amount of research related to the Konishi family was proposed by Koda Shigetomo, Ikenaga Kō, Sekine Bunnosuke, and others. It was Ikenaga, a school teacher from Sakai whose interest was to rediscover his city glorious past, who brought to the light a huge amount of academic research accompanied by archeological findings. Ikenaga and Sekine both interpreted the figure of Yukinaga as best fitted their historical period. Ikenaga perceived Yukinaga as a Christian samurai whose contribution was to unify Japan and to open the road to the “advance” into China, almost to justify the politics of the then active Japanese-Manchurian government. Sekine instead saw in Yukinaga’s Christianity a fervor that was proper of a patriotic soldier willing to die for his country. And in proposing such a view, he idealized the sacrifice done by the Japanese involved in the war as Kamikaze (divine wind), who would bravely throw themselves on to the enemy vessels as to contribute with their lives to the war effort.

Post-war historiographers, who had an interest in portraying Yukinaga, were committed in studying him in economic terms by studying trade patterns that included the various Konishi families. The most prominent of such historians are Tanaka Takeo and Toyoda Takeshi, who re-apprised the Konishi family in their mercantile environment. Amongst the recent novelist and biographers worthy of mention there is Endō Shūsaku and Sonoda Nobuyuki. The first one has interpreted Konishi Yukinaga according to his own religious experiences by interpreting Yukinaga as a person whose faith was awakened by the sudden banishment of the Christians, and of the Jesuits, from Japanese shores, and by the sporadic persecutions. Certainly the banishment of his
friend, Takayama Ukōn, may have prompted him to take a sudden and drastic decision but
Yukinaga cannot be viewed solely on religious ground. Sonoda perceived Yukinaga as a man in
search of interior freedom, and since he lacked the material freedom being in the service of
Toyotomi Hideyoshi, he eagerly sought it in his religious fervor.

My interpretation of Yukinaga differs from the previous authorship, as I perceived
Yukinaga as a man of action and with a religious vision that influenced his actions. He cleverly
used Christianity as a political tool to subjugate his domains, to create a power base for himself and
least but not last to improve his international relations in commercial and political terms. He tried
in effect to reach a compromise between his religiosity and his loyalty, by being a loyal samurai
who was able through his religious vision to close the gap between central government and his
control of the peripheries.
Chapter II. Konishi Yukinaga's mercantile origin in late medieval Japan.

Konishi Yukinaga was approached by Katō Kiyomasa, a captain of Hideyoshi's cavalry and his fierce competitor, who asked Yukinaga if he had also received a congratulatory banner, as Kiyomasa himself had, from lord Hideyoshi for distinguishing himself in battle. Yukinaga, thoughtful, went out of sight and soon reappeared with a piece of sack, made of paper pulp, showing the insignia of his family shop. Holding it up as he would hold a flag, he replied, “This is my banner!”

Konishi Yukinaga was unconventional and ingenious. This episode vividly demonstrates that he was able to respond quickly to Kiyomasa's scorn and had an uncommon pride in his own mercantile background. This episode took place on the eve of the Korean invasion in 1592. It also reveals that Yukinaga's motivation was the forging of trading relations between China and Japan for which he negotiated peace during the Korean conflicts. He was the only warrior trying to pursue favorable trade conditions on behalf of the Taikō Hideyoshi.

His mercantile background gave him a wider perspective on Japanese society at large and on the outside world known to Japan. He knew that belonging to a privileged rank, being a samurai, meant increased political and social responsibility. However, Yukinaga's mercantile status was a “flexible status” determined by political and economic influences. Merchants could work for the military and often backed up military warlords. Wealthy merchant families like the Konishi contributed to the territorial unification of Japan by backing the political powers to a certain extent. At the same time, merchants using their entrepreneurial skills formed new financial groupings, which benefited from political patronage. These groupings had also ties to other mercantile groups within different sectors of production and services. They created powerful

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[35] Ikenaga Kō, Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga, Tokyo, 1936. This incident is cited by Ikenaga Kō, and in Kato Kiyomasa Den, p. 89. On that occasion, Konishi Yukinaga did receive a fine black stallion, probably more appreciated than the flag Katō was proudly bragging about.
mercantile hubs, often represented by the wholesaler’s merchants. These merchants carved solid
power niches which allowed them to express their cultural/political and religious freedom.

2.1 The status of a merchant in the late medieval period: Konishi Yukinaga’s family.

Konishi Yukinaga, as shown earlier, was an unusual man. He was a great persuader and
negotiator, qualities that run in his family. His father, Konishi Ryūsa (小西隆立) or Jitoku
(寿徳), a hardworking merchant of great ingenuity and compassion, secured a successful future for
his family by skillfully using his mercantile knowledge to align himself with foreign and local
power holders. Yukinaga was a product of the mercantile environment of his time, and his social
status was closely linked to the social and political changes that directly influenced the then
mercantile world. The socio-political changes stimulated the associations of merchants, who
formed groups and guilds to protect their businesses. The merchants who led guilds were usually
wealthy merchants enjoying the patronage of various lords, who, in exchange for financial backing
and information about other domains that the merchants gathered during their travels, bestowed
upon them tax levies and land rights.

Therefore, merchants interfered with/or supported the political power involved in the
military campaign of national territorial unification. As a merchant Yukinaga became an essential
figure in his capacity to manage men and resources. He subjugated these for Toyotomi Hideyoshi,
who became the leader of a centralized government.

By the time Yukinaga was born, Japan consisted of approximately sixty domains of different
sizes, each controlled by feudal lords or daimyō (大名), who tried to overcome each other
militarily by expanding their own territories and influence through a series of carefully planned
alliances. Among these competitors, there were also organized Buddhist temples and the nobility.
Although nobility was a birthright, people with certain skills could reach the status equivalent to
that of the gentry or of the warrior elite. To quote Morejon, a Jesuit missionary: “Poverty doth not
with them [the Japanese] diminishes nobility, nor gentility nor wealth gaine or increase it.”36

During the late medieval period, while the status of the nobility remained unchanged in
poverty or in wealth, there was instead a large-scale interaction between merchants and warriors,
since merchants, craftsmen, and artisans provided financial and human resources for the military
class. The status of semi-continuous local warfare with the rise and fall of local land retainers
contributed to the disruption of the old institutions or the “gates of power.”37 These institutions
were replaced by new emerging forces led by a few capable conquerors like Oda Nobunaga and
Toyotomi Hideyoshi whose emblems were not only “Gates” but entire “Castles” and their
surrounding citadels as well.

The emergence of these new forces was spurred not only by war economies, but by improved
agricultural techniques. These brought a revitalization of local and international trade, with the
expansion of local mercantile networks and a renewed interest in trading with East and South East
Asia. The contact with the European traders brought not only profits but new warfare technology,
ideas, and a different vision of the world much larger than previously conceived. Merchants and
local entrepreneurs gained more rights and power with the patronage of local lords who benefited
in turn by acquiring a variety of military and food supplies for their campaigns; all of these
changes were framed by a new type of emerging ideology and culture which kept the new leaders
in power.

It seems that, while the lords were the seigniorial class, they became tied to the merchants
in such a way as to need their services more often and let them participate in decisional meeting,
often tea ceremonies, regarding the financing of wars. The merchants in turn came to benefit from

36 Morejon Pedro, A Brief Relation of the Persecution Lately Made Against the Catholike Christians in the Kingdom of
Japonia. Translated by WW. Gent, 1619. 23. Morejon Pedro was a Spanish Jesuit who worked as Procurator for the
Japanese mission in Japan led by Alessandro Valignano on their return from Europe in 1590. He escaped from the
Christian persecution in Japan by fleeing to Manila in 1614.
37 The term “Gates of power” refers to Adolphson’s book, based on Kuroda Toshio’s gates (Kenmon) theory.
a larger degree of independence bought through their wealth. The status of a merchant was therefore a “buffer” status between a skilled commoner and a warrior. Hence it was a far more flexible status than is generally thought. Warriors’ patronage of merchants was not in reality something new, as warrior families, to sustain their wealth and finance their wars, had long been engaged in commerce. However, the statuses of men often changed, given the volatile times in a country at war, as the fortunes of men changed upward or downward. This turn of fortune occurred most frequently during Nobunaga and Hideyoshi’s regimes.

In 1573, the paternal uncle of Asai Nagamasa (浅井長政), by the surname of Takegawa (竹川), was defeated in the battle of Kōtani Castle and took asylum with the Toyama (富山) family. His status then changed from warrior to merchant. Again another example is given in 1583 by Frois regarding the lord of Araki as he states:

“Araki, Lord of Tsunokuni, had his kingdom taken away [by Hideyoshi] and roamed around until he arrived in Sakai, where he married the daughter of a merchant and then served Hashiba [Hideyoshi] as a page.”

Yet another example of such turn of fate was Yukinaga, only for him, for the better: he rose successfully from a merchant status to a samurai status. He was a merchant whose background gave him tools to become an excellent warrior; his ties to the mercantile world expanded to influence his military perspectives.

Konishi Yukinaga was born around 1558 in the city of Kyōtō, but the date is rather imprecise. Konishi Yakurō (小西弥九郎), as he was called during his childhood, was in reality

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39 Frois Luis, Avvisi dal Giappone degli anni 1582-84 con alcuni altri della Cina del 1583-84 cavate dalle lettere della Compagnia di Giesù ricevute nel mese di dicembre del 1585 [Advices from Japan of the years 1582-84 with others from China of 1583-84, taken from the letters of the members of the Society of Jesus, received in the month of December 1585] Ed. Francesco Zanetti, Rome. 1586. 120.
Original text: “Araki Signore di Ceunocuni tolto gli il regno peregrino fino ad arrivare a Sakai, dove ha sposato la figlia di un mercante e serve ora Hashiba [Hideyoshi] come un paggio”.
the second son of Konishi Ryūsa, by a possible first wife, or a mistress. He was brought into Ryusa’s family at the age of five or six. At the time, Ryūsa had already one son, Konishi Josei (小西如清), baptized as Bento, who was to be put in charge of the family business when he grew up, as was custom at the time.

Yukinaga had siblings other than Josei, that is, his third brother, Konishi Hayato, (小西隼人) and Tama (珠), his sister, known by also as Catarina, by Wasa, or Magdalena, his father’s new wife. Not much is known about his father, Ryūsa, in his earlier years as a merchant, or of Konishi Yukinaga himself before his twentieth birthday. Yukinaga’s father was in effect born in Sakai, but he later moved his residence to Lower Kyoto, Ubayanagi machi, between 1560 and 1576. It seems that by then Sakai was such a wealthy city that merchants at the beginning of their entrepreneurial careers and with few connections could hardly find a place to stay due to the high rents. Most likely, that Ryūsa left Sakai in search of profitable trade early in his career. It is recorded, however, that Ryūsa and his family moved back to Sakai’s Yadoya and Zaimoku machi between the 1580’s and 1590’s.

Both the *Bizen Gunki* and the *Intoku Taiheiki*, two of the earliest documents in which the names of Konishi Ryūsa and Yakurō (Yukinaga) appear, describe Ryūsa as a merchant from

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41 The date reported in the 「宣組実録」 *Sensō Jitsuroku* [Records of the Sensō Era], is 1555 or around that year. However, other documents like the 「備前軍記」 *Bizen Gunki* [Military History of Bizen], refer to Yukinaga as being twenty years old in 1579, therefore establishing his date of birth around 1558-59. The location of Konishi Yukinaga’s birth, Kyōtō, as reported by the Jesuits, is cited by 松田毅—Matsuda Kiichi in 「小西立佐、行長伝再考」*Konishi Ryūsa, Yukinaga den saikō* [Konishi Ryūsa and Yukinaga’s Story Reconsidered] 495.

42 In the early 1530s, an impoverished Takeno Jōō, not as yet the brilliant tea master that he became, tried unsuccessfully to settle in South Sakai, but had to go to Kyoto. Sen Sōshitsu XV, *The Japanese Way of the Tea: From Its Origins to Sen no Rikyū*. Transl. by V. Dixon Morris: University of Hawaii Press, 1998. 164. Interestingly, Sen reports that Takeno lived in Henomachi, where according to the *Tennojiya kaiki*, another Ryūsa lived and was identified as Yamatoya Ryūsa, often confused with Konishi Ryūsa’s father of Yukinaga.

43 Various documents show different locations for the residence of Konishi Ryūsa. Based on the Sakai Shi Shi, Ryusa (here called Josei, as confused with his elder son) was living in Yadoya Machi, however this is uncertain as it is based on the Konishi families that lived there in the Genroku period and assumed to be Yukinaga’s descendant. Therefore, it may be that Ryūsa did live there originally but, as his influence increased, moved to Zaimoku Machi.
Although there is not sufficient data showing their exact family provenance, Ryūsa and Josei established their own businesses in Kyoto and Sakai. Nothing is known about Yukinaga’s early life, but it is possible to assume that he spent his early life learning his father’s business, dealing with people, and receiving a certain degree of education. It is understood that Ryūsa himself as a merchant had not only the knowledge of his trade, but also of the Chinese writing system which was used in Japan, Korea and China. It is possible that Josei, Yukinaga’s elder brother, may have spent some time in the Jesuit college of Bungo or Arima, since has been confirmed by some of his later correspondence, he could write in Portuguese. However, Yukinaga, being the second son, and raised according to Confucian precepts, may have received an education in Japanese and Chinese classical literature that was considered proper for a merchant of the time. Wealthy merchants could have without doubt acquired an education by purchasing not only expensive texts but also hiring tutors with a higher level of education in the classics. Although, probably in Ryūsa’s early mercantile years hiring a tutor for his sons may have not been an option.

During their early years, both Josei and Yukinaga spent their childhoods often traveling between Kyoto and Sakai with their father.

Konishi Yukinaga’s mercantile status was not as rigid as it permitted samurai to turn into mercantile activities if misfortune would befall on them. But it also allowed a rise in status as occurred to Yukinaga, whose family fortune started in the streets of Kyoto and Sakai.

2.2 Konishi Ryūsa & Co.

Yukinaga’s family mercantile background is worthy of a detailed analysis to establish the connection between the Konishi families of Kyoto and Sakai, and his father’s trade. The Konishi families of Sakai, since the 1530’s, traded in medicinal herbs, saltpeter (used to make gunpowder

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for muskets), tea and tea utensils, rice and millet, and other commercially valuable goods such as silk. According to the Records of the Tenbun Period (天文日記), merchants from Sakai were active in trading with China. In 1538 circa, Konishi Yasaemon (小西弥左衛門) received different types of goods from a commercial ship returning to Sakai from China. He traded goods imported from the continent, but his main activity consisted in producing and selling Sake (rice wine) and bamboo.

Yasaemon benefited from the trading competition between the Ōuchi (大内) and the Hosokawa (細川) families. Around 1550, the Ōuchi Lords lost their trading privileges in the Chinese port of Ningpo, a wealthy trans-shipment city on the Southeast coast of China, and therefore could not maintain the predominance in the Chinese tally trade (Kangō Boeki). This left more room for Sakai merchants, sponsored by the Hosokawa’s, to engage in foreign trade. Since the Chinese were banned to travel officially to foreign countries, Sakai merchants were in need of the goods that in earlier periods were brought to Sakai by the Chinese tally trade, such as spices and dye stuff, for example. Now they had to supply these goods on their own. Therefore, organized groups of merchants were often self-financed or sponsored by the Hosokawa or by temples who also ventured into the foreign seas trade.

In 1540, Konishi Sōsaemon (小西宗左衛門), also called Yatarō (弥太郎), for example, was responsible for gathering a group of ten people affiliated with the Honganji Temple, who crossed the water to trade in China on behalf of the Honganji Temple. All the members were affiliated to the temple. However, Sōsaemon began to be a link between the city of Sakai and the Temple and kept in touch with a monk called Shōnyo (証如) during the revival of the China tally trade.

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45 Konishi Yukinaga was capable of writing in the Chinese style of Kambun. Yukinaga’s signature can be seen in Appendix Ia.
46 The Tally Trade consisted in the trade with Ming China. This trade had a system of tallies that reported the goods to be traded in each port. Each country had a set of tallies according to the number of vessels allowed to trade and whenever the vessel would arrive in the Chinese harbor the tallies would be cross checked and voided to prove that the transaction had occurred.
Konishi Sōaemon returned with diverse types of merchandise and in that occasion informed one of his partners about the danger of crossing to China via the province of Kii (紀伊) because in that location there was another group of merchants that may have intercepted Sōaemon and his partner’s ship and stolen their cargo.48

Sōaemon’s episode shows that the Sakai branch of the Konishi’s family became a patron (danka) of the Honganji Temple (Shinshū Buddhist Sect).49 Because they belonged to the Shinshū Sect Sōaemon’s family may not have been Ryūsa and Yukinaga’s family branch. In this regard, Schurhammer Georg writes of Josei, Yukinaga’s brother, as belonging previously to the Buddhist Hokke Sect, hence he did not belong to the Konishi followers of Shinshū Buddhism.50

Although it may seem irrelevant, this religious divide is important, as some scholars believe that Konishi Ryūsa did not belong to these Konishi families that dealt business-wise with the Honganji Temple. In this regard, Toyoda Takeshi explains that the Honganji was dealing also with Sakai merchants not directly associated with it or dealing on its behalf.51 Therefore, it is probable that father and sons were dealing with the Honganji, but not being directly connected to it as followers of the Shinshū sect. Instead, Ryūsa and Josei possibly started their mercantile careers purchasing goods for the Enryakuji Temple (延暦寺), which had also a strong influence in Kyoto and its surrounding areas. Although temples were sponsoring trade abroad, merchants tended to become private entrepreneurs, and Ryūsa may have belonged to this category. According to Nosaka Toshio, it is also possible that Ryūsa traveled in Korea and China, where he resided for thirteen years, and returned to Japan by 1555. Nosaka affirms that this can be easily understood by

47 Toyoda Takeshi, Chūsei to Shōnin no Kōtsu, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, Tokyo: 1982. 189.
49 Toyoda Takeshi, Chūsei to Shōnin no kōtsu , Yoshikawa Kobunkan, Tokyo: 1982. 337.
51 Toyoda Takeshi 豊田武, Chūsei no Shōnin to Kōtsu 中世の商人と交通 [Trade and Medieval Merchants], Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, Tokyo: 1982. 189.
the name he used, "Jitoku," as it sounds truly Chinese. Unfortunately, there are no Chinese documents that can sustain Nosaka's hypothesis. However, this fact would in effect explain the difficulty in locating his provenance amongst the Konishi families of Kyoto or Sakai and indeed, as there were merchants traveling to China, some resided there, while others only relied on long-haul travels to strike a profitable earning.

In 1548, one of these entrepreneurs, a certain Konishi Kyōzaemon (小西興三衛門), went to China with three ships. He had two vessels of his own and together with Hibiya Sukegorō (日比室助五郎) and another merchant, formed a commercial partnership. The relationship between Konishi Ryūsa and the former Konishi merchants is not clear; however Kyōzaemon may have been indeed Ryūsa himself trading in China. It is after the involvement in the China trade that Ryūsa established his apothecary shop in the city of Sakai. Ikenaga Kō, as well as other authors including Matsuda Kiichi, based on timelines, observed that Yasaemon (弥左衛門), also belonging to the Konishi patrons of the Honganji sect, may well have been Ryūsa’s father.

However, given Ryūsa’s close relationship with the Hibiya family of Sakai, it is quite possible that it was instead Kyōzaemon (Ryūsa) who created a bond between the two mercantile families that lasted a generation. This was a friendship that, during Ryūsa’s lifetime (1533-1594), was to be further cemented by marriage ties and by their shared belief in the Christianity of the

Counter-reformation spread in Asia by the Jesuit missionaries.

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54 Some scholars claim that Yasaemon, also called Yukimasa, is said to have descended from a cadet branch of the noble Fujiwara (藤原) family and exactly from Fujiwara Hidesato (藤原秀信), during the Heian period (794-1185). This claim may not only have been posthumous to Konishi Ryusa and Yukinaga’s rise in power, and therefore not acceptable as historical truth. The Kyushu Lord Ōtomo Sōrin had a similar descending claim.
Konishi Ryūsa's family lineage and his provenance are unknown, but by 1548 he formed a commercial enterprise with two other merchants from Sakai. They engaged in the China trade in search of lucrative business.

### 2.3 Ryūsa's Christian Connection

In 1549, before Christmas time, Francisco Xavier, the first Jesuit to set foot in Japan, arrived in Kagoshima and went on a pilgrimage to Kyoto hoping to be received by the Japanese Emperor. He wished to request a license to propagate Christianity in Japan. However, his trip to the capital was not a happy one, as he dressed in poor clothing and arrived without royal presents. There was no hope for him to be admitted into the presence of the Emperor. Although it seems that Xavier was unsuccessful in pursuing his goal, this trip, by a twist of fate, was to be one of the most fruitful for the evangelization of central Japan to Christianity. In the city of Sakai, he met the wealthy merchant Hibiya Kudō (日比室クドゥ), who gave the foreigner asylum and also an address where he could stay in Kyoto; the address was to be the one of Konishi Ryūsa, whose family was close to the Hibiya of Sakai. The business relationship between Konishi Ryūsa's family and Hibiya Ryōkei, one of the three sons of Kudō, was formally consolidated by the marriage between Konishi Ryūsas's first born, Josei, Yukinaga's elder brother, and Hibiya

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55 It was indeed naive of Xavier to think he could be received by the Emperor, but given his ignorance regarding Japanese customs and given the fact that Xavier may not have perceived the Japanese in the same way as Europeans, he may have thought that an audience was indeed possible. It was his desire to request permission to convert the Japanese to Christianity, without realizing that without connections and lacking an appropriate invitation, as in Europe, it would have been impossible to have an audience with any monarch. But even if he was admitted at Court, he was unaware that neither the Emperor nor the Shōgun were particularly influential, nor could make a political decision of such magnitude on their own.

56 Hibiya Kudo, or Cundo, is described by Frois as “a man of great prudence and authority, held in high consideration in the city of Sakai for his knowledge.” Cundo had four sons, and the smallest one of only thirteen years old in 1562, went to study catechism in Bungo, fief of the Christian Lord Otomo Sōrin, in a college set up by Father Cosme de Torres. Cited in Frois, Historia do Japam. Vol. I. 253-54.

57 According to the Sakai Kagami, the name Josei was actually an honorific title bestowed on a person of a certain influence. It was originally a title belonging to the Buddhist Jōdō Shinshū sect. Therefore, Josei is often confused in various documents with his father Ryūsa, who received in precedence that name by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. While this can lead to some confusion, Jesuit records firmly indicate that Konishi Josei was Yukinaga's elder brother.
Agatha, the youngest of the three daughters of Hibiya Ryōkei. Moreover years later, one of Konishi Yukinaga’s daughters married into Hibiya’s family, as well.\textsuperscript{58}

For Konishi Ryūsa this family connection in Sakai proved to be the beginning of a promising entrepreneurial career, as the Hibiya had some political connection and Jesuit records indicate that Hibiya Ryōkei (previously also called Jaque, an earlier Christian name, and later changed to Diogo or Diego) was working for the judicial or administrative office of his town.

There are controversial reports on the identity of Hibiya Ryōkei. In 1563 Luis de Guzman, a Jesuit Father, reported that Hibiya Ryōkei was also called Sancho, and was a close relative of the Miyoshi, warlords of Sakai. Ryōkei (or Sancho) settled in the fortress of Imori about eight leagues from Sakai and sent his son Vicente to study in the Jesuit college of Bungo. Gaspar Vilela, a Jesuit priest, met Sancho personally and knew the events that took place in his home. Apparently, Sancho caused an uproar, as he was the first warrior of the Miyoshi family to convert to Christianity after the Shōgun Yoshiaki gave the Jesuits permission to preach their faith. Sancho’s conversion disappointed the Buddhist monks who were tied to the Miyoshi politically, and to ease the situation, Sancho left for Sakai with his family in an apparent self-imposed exile.\textsuperscript{59} In this regard, Frois states that Sancho resided in Hibiya Ryōkei’s home, but he is not clear on Sancho’s identity, as it is reported that Sancho was also called Diogo.\textsuperscript{60} Furthermore, Frois tells of Hibiya Ryōkei trading in Kyushu and, during this time, Sancho was also often in Bungo, Kyushu.

Hibiya Ryōkei’s status is interesting as, if indeed he was Sancho (Sangadono), taking refuge in Sakai after his self inflicted political exile, and creating a new life for himself amongst the wealthy merchants of Sakai, Frois does not explicitly reveal Sancho’s change of status.

\textsuperscript{58}松田毅一Matsuda Kiichi, 「南蛮資料の研究」Namban Shiryō no kenkyū, Fuka Shuppan, Tokyo: 1967. 754-755. Frois also mentioned at length the other two daughters of Hibiya Ryokei as Sabina, the elder, and Monica, who was destined to marry an older but wealthy uncle, Hibiya Sōsatsu. She refused the marriage proposal and expressed the wish to become a nun, due to the fact that her uncle was not Christian, and she thought it was an inappropriate relationship. Hibiya Sōsatsu is said to have belonged to the tea ceremony circle and was a naya, warehouse merchant.\textsuperscript{59} Luiz de Guzman, Historia de las misiones que han hecho los religiosos de la compania de Jesus para predicar en China y Japon, [microforms] Alcala de Henares, 1601. Libro sexto. 530.
However, in some of his letters he states that Hibiya Ryōkei (Diogo) was also called Sancho. Frois’ silence on the name change is rather interesting, but it would not be speculation to say that the Father had an interest in viewing the Court or the nobles and other upper class persons on their side. Therefore, Hibiya Ryōkei becoming a merchant was not really worthy of mention, specifically because the Jesuit evangelization policies targeted the upper classes. In addition, the indisposition of the Miyoshi toward their vassals’ conversion, if reported, may have indeed created a displeasing impression at home. At a social level, this event reconfirms that one’s warrior status was not as fixed as it became in the early Tokugawa period.

Ryūsa’s connection with the Hibiya of Sakai brought him in close contact with the Jesuit Fathers and Christianity. Hibiya was in fact a relative of the Miyoshi warlords, who converted and changed his status by becoming a wealthy merchant of Sakai.

2.4 Ryūsa’s political connections and economic expansion

Between 1568 and 1580, Ryūsa increased his involvement as a merchant in the political life of Sakai. He became acquainted with wealthy merchants also in the province of Ōmi (近江), while siding with the Miyoshi warlords, Oda Nobunaga, and later Toyotomi Hideyoshi. This allowed him to become involved both directly and indirectly in the principal political events of the time in central Japan. Although his name does not appear in many documents, Jesuit records indicate that in 1565, both Ryūsa and Ryōkei were in contact with Miyoshi Yoshitsugu’s secretary, a certain Cosme Shōbayashi (小林), who was also a Christian. Frois reports the meeting held in a church between Ryūsa, Ryōkei, and Cosme, together with Thomé (トメ), another

60 Luis Frois, Historia do Japam. Vol II. 115.
61 Thomé’s name appeared for the first time in Frois Historia as Konishi Ygorō Thomé in Sakamoto. The relation between Konishi Ryusa and Thomé is uncertain, but he may have been a relative or a close connection in Sakamoto. Thomé mentioned to the Jesuit Fathers (Gaspar Vilela, Cosmes de Torres and Brother Damian) accompanied by “Diogo” Hibiya Ryōkei, that he was a Christian baptized in Yamaguchi and wanted to help the Fathers in their things because since his lord died (Ouchi Yoshinaga) he was unemployed. However the Fathers did not trust him, as they
Christian, to bid farewell to the Father leaving by boat. Since then, Ryūsa, while working in his trade and having civic responsibilities, willingly took over the responsibility to look after the Jesuit Fathers.

As late as 1569, Konishi Ryūsa and Hibiya (Diogo) Ryōkei were trading between Sakai, Kyoto, and Sakamoto a city located in Ōmi province, where Ryūsa had some trading relations and very close friends. Ryūsa’s acquaintances from Ōmi were many; he was, “familiar” with another prominent Christian warrior, Wada Koremasa (和田惟政), a noble from Ōmi and supporter of Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshiaki, who was favored by Oda Nobunaga. Wada Koremasa, on behalf of Oda Nobunaga, hired Ryūsa, who began to work informally as an informer and delegate while trading between Sakai and Sakamoto in Ōmi. He accompanied the Jesuits in their travels from place to place in order to keep track of their movements and activities. Koremasa was perceived by the Jesuit Frois as being the Vice-King of Kyoto, and Ryūsa was given the order to look after the Jesuits so they could have all they needed while residing there.

In 1568, Nobunaga entered Kyoto to support the Shōgun Yoshiaki and to bring him under his control; he led sixty thousand men into the capital. Shogun Yoshiaki bestowed on Nobunaga various titles to legitimize their informal alliance, but Nobunaga’s refusal of shogunal titles, as seen by Jeroen Lamers, led to his failure to reside in Kyoto. In doing so he was unable to establish his power base and legitimacy right away.

Oda Nobunaga may have planned a maneuver to gain the support of the military and of the nobility, so as not to raise suspicion about his aims. His goals included the centralization of commerce under his direct control, as well as the expansion of his territory and of his political influence. Nobunaga sought to temporarily keep the nobility at bay while creating his own

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independent power base. By capturing the wealth of cities like Sakai and others in the nearby province of Ōmi, Nobunaga grabbed the resources to finance his expansionistic wars, and at the same time reduced hostile power groups like the Buddhist monks who joined an anti-Nobunaga league. But the citizens of Sakai opposed his territorial appropriation.

Nobunaga did not want the full disruption of Sakai’s trade, as he never really aimed at destroying the city’s commercial lifelines. His aim was of a political nature - if he could control Kyoto and Sakai, he was also able to cut the supply of weaponry to the stronghold and citadel of Mt. Hiei, loci of Buddhist political power, and to control the vast trading nodes of central Japan.

Hence, in 1568, Oda Nobunaga ordered the merchants of Sakai to pay an exorbitant “arrow tax” of 20,000 kan or face the consequence of war causing the opposition of the merchants. Schurhammer writes that, in 1568 Ryūsa and his firstborn, Josei, did participate in the barricades to defend Kyoto first and later participated also in making the decision to negotiate peace in Sakai with Oda Nobunaga.

The Sakai merchants were the only ones who at first opposed a certain resistance led by two prominent members of the Egōshū, (会豪商), the self regulatory organ of the city, formed by wealthy merchants operating as an oligarchic group. Perhaps, as Susanne Gay remarks, the most significant trait of the wealthy merchants’ association was that, in the absence of military protection, these wealthy merchants provided the necessary leadership for the city districts’ self-defense. However in Sakai’s case, the Egōshū agreed to pay once they saw that Kyoto was partially burned down, and soon was to be their turn.

Also the Honganji had to pay a levy of 5,000 kan, as well as other commercial cities, particularly the jinainchichi (寺内町) or citadels belonging to monasteries’ compounds. In this

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66 See Appendix I b. The Ehon Taikoki reports the image of such payment.
manner Oda Nobunaga extracted the resources needed to finance his wars. In addition he created Kanamori (金森) and Azuchi’s jōkamachi (安土城下町) two castle towns and by issuing an edict to redirect the passage of major highways to his domains, he was able to control the mercantile traffic. The creation of Jōkamachi projected Nobunaga’s authority and was soon imitated by his fellow retainers in their domains. For example, in 1574, Gamō Ujisato (蒲生氏郷) built a Jōkamachi in Hino, followed by Shibata Kazuie (柴田勝家) in Ōmi, and Kita no Sho (北の庄), ten years later.69

From 1565, Sakamoto was an important commercial centre and that year the local merchants united into guilds in order to overcome the stiff competition from Kyoto merchants. Therefore, Ryūsa and Ryōkei’s commercial partnership brought them to trade in Sakamoto markets. There the economic reforms, implemented by the previous lords of Ōmi, the Rokkaku (六角) family, gave the merchants the opportunity to augment their earnings because the markets were held more frequently and taxes decreased.

In 1568, Oda Nobunaga took control of Sakamoto and, as in any other of his controlled areas, asserted his authority and broke the guilds’ independence. He paid for his military expenses with the city’s revenues, while expanding his territory to include all of central Japan. Sakamoto was also a market place for agricultural and food products, including rice, from the agrarian northern regions. It was, both politically and economically, a place of strategic importance, but already by 1568 it was placed under the control of Mori Yoshinari (毛利良成), who was conducting a cadastral survey on behalf of Oda Nobunaga. The survey was part of Oda’s policies to redistribute land to his allies and to weaken the power basis of wealthy Buddhist institutions and courtiers’ rights in that area.

In Ōmi, near Sakamoto, was located the Enryakuji fortress monastery of Mt. Hiei and, to paraphrase Hirata Toshiharu, the fortress of Mt. Hiei was a recipient of more than one third of the agricultural yield of the entire province of Ōmi.\(^{70}\) In addition, Sakamoto was important politically as the Enryakuji monastery on Mt. Hiei was also the residence of retired Emperors;\(^{71}\) In addition, Sakamoto had been an important site for the production of muskets since 1544, when an eminent monk bought a musket in Sakai and brought it over in Ōmi province. There, the Hosokawa took an interest in it and started to produce muskets in Kunitomo village.\(^{72}\) In Kunitomo were artisans capable of manufacturing muskets in large quantities, as the site had mines from which lead was extracted. The production of muskets required as well the manufacture of gunpowder and other material associated with it. Therefore, Ryūsa’s trade brought him often to that city, as explained below.

In 1569, in the twelfth month, on the seventh day, while traveling to Sakamoto, Ryūsa together with his son, Konishi Josei, accompanied Luis Frois on his way to Kyoto.\(^{73}\) Father Luis Frois recalled on his last visit the absence of one of Ryūsa’s sons, possibly Yukinaga. He also mentioned Ryūsa describing him, according to some scholars, as a generous man but rather poor, having visited him again in 1565 and 1569 for a total of four times and stayed in his home.\(^{74}\) It is difficult to determine if it was Ryūsa’s actual material wealth Frois is referring to, or whether in fact Frois effectively used a European standard of comparison with relation to material wealth, housing, etc. So that, in his opinion, Ryūsa seemed to be poor. Whichever was the case, Ryūsa had,

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\(^{74}\) Luis Frois, *Historia do Japan*, Vol. II, 304. Luis Frois' sentence in effect is rather ambiguous, as in his writings Frois states: “E de sua caza, com ser pobre, me mandou... e outras couzás...”, therefore that “ser pobre” or “was poor” may refer to himself or to Ryūsa’s household resulting in both interpretations: “And from his home, because [he] was poor, sent me ...and other things” or “And from his home, because I was poor, sent me ...and other things.”
to some extent, access to family wealth upon which he built up his business, and which, later on, prospered as opportunities arose and he became politically as well as financially connected.

Ikenaga Kō reports that, by the year Kyōhō 6, approximately 150 years after Konishi Yukinaga’s death, his descendants from collateral family branches were extremely wealthy, as they could afford to pay exorbitant amounts to the anti-Christian registry to maintain their businesses. It is therefore thought that their wealth began at the time of Ryūsa and Yukinaga’s ascension to power, especially during Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s rule, during the Tenshō period (1574-1591).75

However, Ryūsa began then to extend his political connection by running errands, still carrying out his own business between the Jesuits and the local rulers. In 1573, Father Cabral sent Ryūsa to Nobunaga with a golden shield as a gift, requesting safe passage to Kyoto (Father Cabral was by then in Bungo) and Nobunaga returned the courtesy by granting the Jesuits not only their requested permission, but also fifteen hundred pieces of silver.76 It was probably from this time that Ryūsa begun steadily to gain Nobunaga’s confidence. It was Ryūsa who negotiated, with Nobunaga and other members of Sakai the powerful oligarchy, Sakai’s well-being. He later became one of Nobunaga’s close retainers.

In 1581, Hashiba Hideyoshi, as Captain in the army, sent the following letter to Nobunaga:

“Now immediately must send an envoy here to me, do not send a messenger, send your loyal retainer (Konishi) Ryūsa”.

Hideyoshi requested that someone be sent to Aboshi (網干) and Aga (英賀) villages in Kaga (加賀) province to get the spoils of the victory captured by those under Hideyoshi’s order. In that instance, Nobunaga, instead of sending one of his generals, upon Hideyoshi’s request, sent a close retainer, Konishi Ryūsa.77

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75 Ikenaga Ko, Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga, Tokyo: 1936. 84.
76 Ibid. Vol. II. 403.
77 Kuwata Tadachika 桑田忠親, Taikō Shoshin 太閤書信 [The Retired Regent’s Letters]. [Aboshi monjō]. Nihon shuppansha. 1944. p. 35
Konishi Ryusa’s commercial activities, while in the service of Nobunaga, branched out to import and trade a variety of goods. It is more than probable that he expanded his business in importing silk, velvet, *canequim*, and damask, as well as medicinal powder and herbs, to Kyoto and its periphery. He used his connection with Jesuits that traveled and met the Portuguese merchants in the South, as until 1568 the Portuguese were anchoring their ships in Kagoshima’s Fukuda harbor. In this way he increased his business’ network and wealth.

His first son, Josei Bento, did inherit the family business and opened up a branch in Sakai. It is known that during the Bunroku (1592-1596) and Keicho (1596-1615) periods, Konishi Seibee (小西清兵衛)\(^7^8\), also known as Josei, traded with China by importing “white powder” (白粉), known as “Haraya” or “Oshiroi” according to its usage as medicinal or as face powder. This powder, originally made with mercury, had various usages as facial powder, medicine, and as a third component for the production of gunpowder.

Josei learnt the formula and produced it in Sakai, replacing the one made with mercury and imported from China since earlier times at a higher cost, with the one of his own production made, at a lower cost, with lead. The white powder sold by the Konishi family was at the time well known.\(^7^9\) The Sakai Kagami (堺鏡) published in 1684 quotes the following:

“It is said that in various countries there were houses where the white powder was burnt (prepared), from ancient times the white powder produced by the Konishi earned [this family] certain fame. The formula for such a fine quality brand was transmitted from a foreign person called Rokkan.”\(^8^0\)

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*Origina text: “猶々、急度可レ遺ヒ上使一候へ共、上使儀以下可ニ造作之條、立佐着遺候.”
\(^7^8\) 野田只夫Noda Matajiro, *伊勢白粉と軽粉株* 伊勢Harayaza to keifunkabu [The White Powder Guild of Ise and its Investment in Face Powder]. Nihon no rekishi, Vol. 105, 1957 (April), pp. 15-21. In this article, Noda describes Konishi Seibee as Yukinaga’s father, however this may have been his son Josei, given the fact that Ryusa had died of illness by 1594. Konishi Ryūsa was also called Seisaemon (清左衛門).
\(^7^9\) Toyoda Takeshi, *Sakai no hatten [The establishment of Sakai]*, 95-96.
\(^8^0\) 堺鏡 Sakai Kagami [The mirror of Sakai] 武村市兵衛板行 1624. Ed. 古坂地誌研究会 Kosaka Chishin Kenkyūkai, Tokyo, 1972. 204-205. Original text: “諸国に白粉の焼家多といえども當境の小西白粉は古来よ
Another example is reported in the Tamon'in Nikki, a diary kept by the Abbot of the Tamon'in temple in Nara, Eishun (英俊), and Josei's contemporary. With a quotation dated Bunroku five (1596), it stated that he owed some money to Konishi Kichisaemon (小西橘左衛門) for medicine, specifically to the Konishi family dealing in the apothecary business, as they were well known in the realm for their medicinal “white powder”.  

This white powder, as specified by Noda, could be used as a cosmetic, but during this period was known mainly for its curative properties and used to cure venereal diseases, mostly syphilis, which was said to be imported into Japan by the Portuguese traders.  

Syphilis soon enough became a scourge amongst the sailors and prostitutes in city harbors, and it seems that the powder produced by the Konishi was the most effective cure. The Konishi were able to obtain the primary material from the territories of Ise, Isawa, and Izumo. They were involved in the production of this particular powder for its multiple functions. Therefore, it is quite understandable that their economic conditions improved considerably due to the high value of this very remunerative product, especially by producing it as medicine and as a component material for gun-powder.

2.5 The Fluid Networks of the Tea, Barns and Warehouses

Nobunaga's economic policies included, as mentioned above, the reduction of the monopoly of the guilds. McMullin, in this regard, contends that Nobunaga protected the guilds that

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81 Toyoda Takeshi, Sakai no Hakken [The establishment of Sakai], Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1980, p.104.
82 Noda Matajiro, Ise Harayaza to keifunkabu [The White Powder Guild of Ise and its Investment of Face Powder]. Nihon no Rekishi, Vol. 105, 1957 (April), 15-21. Although syphilis had a “return” during the Sengoku period due to the Portuguese trade, there were cases of syphilis recorded since the Heian period (794-1185) in Japan.
83 It is interesting to note that Konishi Kichizaemon (Josei) had in his name the Chinese Character “kichi,” also read as “Tachibana.” It was in fact Tachibama Matasaburō who was the first merchant to import muskets into Sakai and to
were useful to him by supplying warfare equipment and horses.\textsuperscript{84} One of the merchants benefiting from Nobunaga’s patronage was Imai Sōkyū (今井宗久), who supplied Nobunaga with firearms, gunpowder, and expensive and very highly valued tea caddies and utensils. Nobunaga’s obsession in collecting these precious items, gave particular authority to the merchants who became known for their connoisseurship, like Imai. Originally from Ōmi, he was acquainted with Ryūsa. Imai was the son-in-law of Takeno Jōō (武野経俊). This latter was known for having mastered the technique of the Ashikaga Shōgun’s tea ceremonies, and became the teacher of the famous tea master Sen no Rikyū (千利休).\textsuperscript{85} Imai Sōkyū was the third son of the lord of Imai in Takashima district, Ōmi province. He became a merchant, as his fief was inherited by his elder brothers. He began to trade in muskets and gunpowder, and was nicknamed “kusuriya Sōkyū,” a euphemism corresponding in English to “gunpowder Sōkyū.”

An interesting coincidence is that in the city of Sakai, Imai Sōkyū lived in the same alley where allegedly Konishi Ryūsa also took up residence after 1576; South Zaimoku machi. Therefore, it is very well possible that the two men were acquainted with each other at least superficially. It is during this period that Ryūsa began to be included in famous tea parties. Between 1550 and 1576 at least, he and his family lived in Kyoto, but by 1551 Ryūsa was already known amongst tea masters like Tsuda and Imai who benefited from the patronage of Nobunaga.

Tsuda Sokyū’s records indicate that he invited a certain Konishi Yaku, a probable pseudonym used by Ryūsa, given the fact that later on he gave his son a similar name, Yakurō.\textsuperscript{86} However, while this is not so probable, Konishi Yaku may indeed have been Ryusa’s acquaintance.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[85]{Imai Sōkyū (1520-1593) is considered, together with Sen no Rikyū (1522-1591) and Tsuda Sōkyū (?-1591), one of the three tea masters of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1603). He was a member of the merchant business association of Sakai (egōshū).}
\footnotetext[86]{Toyoda Takeshi, \textit{Sakai no hatten.} pp. 104-105. Toyoda Takeshi here is assuming that Konishi Ryusa may have indeed used the pseudonym of Yaku, just because his second son was called Yakurō; although this possibility seems far from reality, it is not totally improbable.}
\end{footnotes}
living in Okayama, Bizen and, as believed by some scholars, Ryūsa’s son in law, Konishi Yaku or Tōtōya Yakūro (魚屋弥九郎). This explanation seems to be more plausible than the previous one. However, it is known that Ryūsa participated and hosted tea ceremonies; therefore, it is normal to think that he had connections with the masters of the time.

Ryūsa and Yukinaga’s participation increased as their fame and political ties strengthen during Toyotomi’s reign. The participation in famous tea ceremonies was not only a matter of fame, but also of prestige and inclusion in the cultural elitarian life of the time. By now, however, as Tsuda Sokyū’s Jikaiki (津田宗及自会記) mentions, Ryūsa was hosting a tea ceremony in Kyoto as early as 1576. This association of Ryūsa with Imai Sōkyu and Tsuda Sōkyu certainly allowed Ryūsa to benefit from the extensive trade network existing from province to province; in fact, both Imai and Tsuda were wholesaler merchants who had privileged ties of patronage with Nobunaga. They were the so-called gōyōshōnin (御用商人), and were active in various guilds that, under Nobunaga, lost their independency as these were transformed in controlled monopolies. To this effect, Imai was put in charge of the salt guild, breaking its monopoly in favor of Nobunaga. The salt guild was apparently one of the two richer guilds, as salt, like timber, was considered environmentally as an irreplaceable element and one extremely important to human survival. Moreover, as salt was used everyday, like rice and salted fishes or salt derivates, it set the currency standard and could be used to barter. But the function of the wholesale merchants (gōyōshōnin) was not limited to finance and commerce respectively. In the vest of moneylenders and traders, for example, they had employees and subcontractors often in related trading businesses and through those were able to exert also governing functions. One of these tasks was

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87 Ibid. Pp. 106-107. According to Toyoda Takeshi, Mr. Scheichen and Mr. Murakami Naojiro believed that the actual Konishi Yaku was indeed Ryūsa’s son in law, an active merchant in Okayama, Bizen.
88 Nishimura Tei, Kirishitan to Sadō. Zenkoku Shobo, Kyoto. 1948. Pp.62-63. Nishimura quoting Kamiya Sōtan Nikki dated the year of Tenshō 15 (1588) reports that Konishi Ryūsa’s tea meetings were appreciated for its decorations. In fact Ryūsa used to decorate the tea room with colored paper made by the famous court poet of the Heian period Fujiwara no Teika.
the collection of taxes that often fell on the local magistrate, *daikan* (代官), or people acting as
magistrate, but belonging to the business community and of commoner status, like the *tedai*
(手代), who were the wholesalers' middlemen.\textsuperscript{90} Imai Sōkyū was appointed by Nobunaga *daikan*
of the domain in which he had monopoly rights. Konishi Ryūsa also arrived to cover that position
once he was in the service of Hideyoshi.

Ryūsa's apothecary business and his associations with Nobunaga's wholesaler's
merchants, like the Imai and Tsuda, allowed him to expand his business into other regions where
new castle towns and business opportunities arose. There are debates on how Ryūsa started to be
interested in Okayama, since castle towns were also developing in closer areas, but presumably he
may have indeed traded for the lords of Sanga and Itami, as well as for Wada Koremasa.\textsuperscript{91}

It was common for a merchant trading in herbs to trade also in other valuable items such as
minerals like saltpeter, as well as tea and tea utensils. Ryūsa continued to expand his trade on his
own all over the Gokinai area.\textsuperscript{92} The Kinai region produced high quality products by then, and
there was a demand for those, but also for products imported by way of Portuguese foreign trade
from China, Europe, and South East Asia. At the same time, semi-finished and raw materials were
being shipped into the Kinai region from outside provinces in bulk and at lower costs. But to think
that the flow of trade, from the peripheries to the centre and vice versa, was traded easily is to
ignore the reality of a war-time society. In order to transport and sell their goods in the final
destination market, merchants often formed partnerships with political affiliations in order to

\textsuperscript{91} Steichen, in his book *kirishitan daimyō*, indicated that Ryūsa was given the title of Lord of Sanga or Saga (三箇) and
became the adoptive son of the Shirai or (白井) Shikai Lord of Kawachi (101). Frois contradicts this point by
affirming that Sancho and his son Mancho, retainers of the Miyoshi at Imori in Kawachi, were of the Shirai family. As
previously mentioned, Sancho may have indeed been Hibiya Ryōkei. In addition, there are no records proving that
Hibiya Ryōkei may have adopted neither Ryūsa nor his son, Yukinaga. But the word Sanga bears another meaning as
well. That Ryūsa was given by Nobunaga the title of Lord of Sanga could have meant that he had commercial rights
over the three harbors of Hakata in Kyushu, Bonotsu in Harima and Anotsu in Ise. But this hypothesis of mine cannot
be proved by historical documents.
\textsuperscript{92} Toyoda Takeshi, *Sakai no Hakken*. Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1980, p.107
receive mercantile benefits and military protection that sometimes also guild associations could provide.

The protection that Ryūsa needed to trade was given to him by his employer and his guild. Since Nobunaga's Genki period (1570-1573), the families that were granted permission by Nobunaga himself to produce white powder, like the Kitabatake (北畠), who were associated with Ise Shrine, and the Takegawa (竹川), in times of hardship became kimono clothing dealers. The reasons for this change were that both the “white powder” guild and the “silk guild” in effect operated under the umbrella of the more powerful “palanquin guild.” The main group of the Palanquin guild, embodied by the Imperial palanquin bearers, was located in the autonomous village of Yase near the Enryakuji of Mt. Hiei, and from there regulated trade for other guilds as well. The merchants could switch line of operation once authorized by their guilds. But these merchants may have had connections and business deals in both industries as well. Another reason for switching from the production of white powder to trading silk, or having both businesses, was that high quality kimono was rather practical.

This change of trade was particularly true for families involved in the production of white powder, such as the Konishi, because as their circumstances changed these families using their savings were able to set up kimono shops. Ryūsa, by dealing with the Portuguese priests, had access to the big ship merchandise and therefore was able to get silk from China and sell it in the interior where new business opportunity arose as new castle towns were built. In addition, kimono made of high quality silk were often used as objects of exchange since antiquity, therefore the appellative “kimono shop” should be read most accurately as “pawn brokers’ shop” or moneylender.

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93 Ibid. p. 16. The Takegawa in particular were from Ōmi province. A member of the Takegawa family and paternal uncle of Asai Nagamasa began to trade in the white powder. It is reported that in 1573, after the defeat of Otani Castle, this uncle's first son, who was a samurai, fled to Toyama and, under the protection of the Toyama Lord, became a merchant.
These moneylenders groups, usually united in guilds, were part of the warehouse and barn business, or nayashū (納屋衆), whose principal remunerative activity was to rent to other merchants their warehouses located on the coast. The warehouse business was useful for the transshipment of goods and horses from region to region and used a series of intermediaries. For example, from the single producers the goods were sent to the producers’ organizations that dealt with the warehouse establishment, which in turn dealt with the wholesalers. The goods were then passed from the latter to the middleman to land in the shop of the retailers and finally to the consumers.  

By using different people and resources, this system often allowed wholesalers’ merchants to have first-hand information on the politics and safety of certain areas. They could become informants by reporting on other domains activities during their travels and, in exchange for such information; they would receive privileges in the form of tax levies. In this regard, as late as 1582, Frois reported to have asked two merchants in Kyushu, both Christians and merchants of “great authority” called Cosimo and Jacopo, the safe road to travel on to Kyoto.

The kimono dealers were according to Kaga Tetsuji, only “half-merchants” because, due to the high value of their merchandise, they had to provide protection for the transported goods, acting therefore as warriors able to defend their possessions and livelihood. In addition, amongst their various duties, they were also secret messengers. Ryūsa may have acted as such a messenger and informant for Nobunaga. At the same time he had established his own relations in the person of Tōtōya Yakurōemon, also called Genroku, living in the citadel of Okayama, which was in full economic development by 1575.

94 Miyamoto Mataji, “Research on Late Medieval Business” in Ohachishū kabushiki kaisha, Kyoto, 1949. p. 45

95 Frois Luis, “Advices from Japan of the years 1582-84 with others from China of 1583-84, taken from the letters of the members of the Society of Jesus in the month of December 1585.” Ed. Francesco Zanetti, Rome. 1586. p. 17

It is not possible to know who these two influential merchants were by not knowing their Japanese names.

96 Kada Tetsuji, “The Distress of the Warriors and Rise of the Merchants” in Ogawa Shoten, Tokyo. p. 227
According to the *Bizen Gunki* (備前軍記) and to the *Okayama Ken Tsuji* (岡山県通使), Genroku was childless and therefore adopted Konishi Ryūsa's second son, Konishi Yakurō Yukinaga around 1574, possibly from Yukinaga's coming of age.⁹⁷ Therefore it is possible to believe that Ryūsa sent his son to work for Yakurōsaemon, or Genroku, while providing for him the ties he needed to expand in his silk and white powder business⁹⁸.

Yukinaga set up his own shop, besides working for his stepfather. He may have acted as a secondary branch for Ryūsa's economic and territorial expansion as a member of Sakai's mercantile elite (*Gōshō*), affiliated with the warehouses (*naya*) merchants, who were stretching their businesses and partnership from Sakai to Kyushu. Hence, the relationship with Genroku was a carefully planned one. Ryūsa may have used Genroku as a partner in his silk trade with the Portuguese, and medicinal trade business between Sakai and Okayama and between Fukuda (Nagasaki) and Sakai. Genroku was the *tedai* (acting magistrate and tax collector) for the wealthy merchant Abe Yoshisada (阿部義定), member of the Fukuoka *Gōshū*. His daughter had married Ukita Naoie's father, lord of Bizen, and gave him two sons, Tadaie (惟家) and Haruie (春家). Once Abe Yoshisada's grandsons were expected to inherit the Ukita's possessions, Abe left Naoie in the care of Genroku. Ukita Naoie, who from an early age had played the fool, revealed his true capacity by the age of sixteenth. This was under the service of Akamatsu Muneshige, who rewarded Naoie with thirty men and three hundred *kanme*.

Sonoda, Konishi Yukinaga's most recent biographer, reveals a striking similarity between Ukita Naoie and Oda Nobunaga's strategy of unification.⁹⁹ By forty-five years of age, Naoie had unified all of Bizen province and, similar to Nobunaga, he accomplished it by playing the fool,

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⁹⁸ *Chūsei ni ikiru* [Living in the Medieval period] Henshū Kokuritsu Rekishi Minzoku Hakubutsukan (Japan), Tokyo. Fukutake Shoten, 1988. Vol. 2, p. 50-51. This region of Bizen on the Interior Sea of Japan was, since the Kamakura period (1186-1333), a site for the dyeing of fabrics with a dye made from the abundant indigo plant, and there was also the cultivation of silk worms. The region indigo plants were providential to foster that kind of activity.
using trickery, using excessive force, manipulating marriage policies and, last but not least, by developing the fast growing castle town of Okayama fortress. Naoie conquered most of the territory in Bizen belonging formerly to his overlord, and despite his rough behavior, was considered to be an extremely intelligent and quick-witted man who knew how to use people and resources to his own advantage.  

**Conclusion**

This chapter explores the mercantile origins of Konishi Yukinaga and what it meant to be a merchant during the Late Medieval period. It examines the figure of his father, Ryūsa, whose original family is not known, and relates how he was able, by trading with China, to establish his apothecary business and become connected with the Miyoshi family of Sakai and later with Oda Nobunaga. Ryūsa’s political connections were possible due to his long-time friendship with the Hibiya family of Sakai, whose wealth allowed them to be part of the association of wealthy merchants (Gōshō) and the self-regulatory and oligarchic organ regulating Sakai. As Sakai came under the influence of Oda Nobunaga, Ryūsa began to work for Wada Koremasa, a retainer of Oda Nobunaga. Ryūsa’s trade and connections brought him often to another commercial centre, the city of Sakamoto, site of the powerful Mt. Hiei Monastery (Enryakuji) and centre for the production of muskets and gunpowder.

The Konishi family began earlier to produce “white powder” that could be used as a cosmetic, as a medicine, or as a third component to produce gunpowder. This type of business led

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100 Hall J. W., *Government and Local Power in Japan 500 to 1700: A study based on Bizen Province*. Princeton University Press, New Jersey. 1966. J. Whitney Hall reports that Nacie himself was a vassal daimyo of the Urakami; fighting to submit other vassals, he conquered militarily a vast territory in 1573, entered Okayama Castle and having by now surpassed his master in luxury, was seen as de facto the leader of Bizen. In 1577, he attacked the Urakami and started a land/ agricultural reorganization of his fief. His innovation mostly belonged to the organization of the military structure with 1400 retainers divided into 10 groups, and of these 10 groups some were posted at the boundaries. Each group had a stipend of 10,000 koku of rice, which was rather innovative, as bushi were by then paid by giving them rights on the land. 291.
Ryūsa to come into contact with the powerful warehouse merchants of which Imai Sōkyū and Tsūda Sōkyū were the major exponents under Nobunaga’s economic and expansionistic rules. Nobunaga restructured the economy of the domain over which he had direct rule. He established a certain degree of market liberalization, abolished toll taxes, and in effect decreased the guilds' power, which was weakened under his control through wealthy merchants using his patronage.

By the 1550’s, Ryūsa began attending the elite circle of the Tea Masters and cleverly carved a position for himself in order to expand his trade. He accomplished this thanks to his political and financial connections from Sakai and Kyoto, all over the Kinai area to Kyushu. Furthermore, his supervision of the Christian fathers in Kyoto and Sakai may be seen also in terms of economic benefits received by trading with the Portuguese merchants. Their intermediaries in Japan were none other than the Jesuits priests. Ryūsa’s mercantile expansion at first focused on the newly constructed castle town of Okayama where, by 1574, his second son, Konishi Yukinaga was establishing his own business dealing in silk and apothecary goods. This took place under the supervision of his stepfather (or brother-in-law), Tōtōya Yakurō, also called Genroku, a tax collector for the wealthy merchant of Fukuoka (Okayama), Abe Yoshisada. Genroku supported the territorial expansion of the lord of Bizen, Ukita Naoie, whose strategies of unifying the territories under his power resembled the strategies used by Oda Nobunaga in the unification of central Japan. He, as well as Oda Nobunaga, was sponsored financially by a member of the Gōshō, the wealthy merchant association of Fukuoka.

It is possible to conclude that the territorial unification of Central Japan and Bizen occurred because the merchants' interests were to expand their businesses and enlarge the radius of their trade.
Chapter III. Piracy and Christianity in the Seto Inland Sea (Seitonaikai); Konishi Yukinaga’s role between territorial unification and religious freedom

Konishi Yukinaga was important, within the framework of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s unification policies, because he was born into a mercantile family that became politically well connected. His father was able to come into contact with many personalities who shaped his society. Yukinaga's consequent advancement in the military ranks, due to naval skills acquired in his youth, and technological know-how in the usage of western firearms, brought him fame as a warrior. There are other factors that certainly contributed to his warrior stature, such as his foreign connections. Yukinaga’s mercantile background gave him access to the rising power of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who used to a great extent mercantile patronage as a tool to finance his expansionistic wars of conquest.

Yukinaga, under Hideyoshi, began his military career as an envoy, a messenger, and a mediator, functions that in medieval Japan were embodied in the figure of the mediator (toritsugu). As a mediator, he became a medium of Hideyoshi’s power extension in the peripheries constituted by territories still belonging to other power groups. In the Seto Inland Sea, these power groups were local pirates who in time came under the patronage of powerful lords.

The importance of the Seto Inland Sea derives from its strategic geographical location from which it was possible to control major trading routes, domestic non allied provinces and to establish international relations with foreign powers. Yukinaga subjugated the Seto Inland Sea, at first by force, with his participation in a series of successful military campaigns. However, in his administered territories, he employed religious conversion to rule. In addition, Yukinaga as a merchant used his extensive mercantile network, his religious affiliation, particularly with the city of Sakai, which was ruled by his own father and his friendship with other Christian lords, to establish and maintain a Christian community in the Islands of Shōdojima, Shiwaku, and in the areas of Amakusa and Shimabara. His work as an envoy and mediator brought him to have
connections with major converted Christian lords like Matsūra Shigenobu, Ōtomo Sōrin (Don Francesco), Ōmura Sumitada (Don Bartolomeo), Arima Harunobu (Don Protasio), and others. Through his stay in the Seto area and his connection to Kyushu, he expanded his network to the lord of Tsushima (Sō Yoshitomo/Yoshitoshi). Furthermore, he became a link for the Jesuits and Portuguese merchants, using the seaways to get into major harbor cities. In this period Jesuit missionaries and Portuguese merchants opened up Japan to European cultural, technological and religious influences that transformed the way in which Japanese came to perceive their world. Yukinaga’s trading endeavors are not known, as not many documents are still extant, but it is possible to reconstruct his vast network by the diaries of persons he knew, like his rival, Katō Kiyomasa, who left us a detailed recollection by which it is possible to understand the extent of Konishi’s entrepreneurial skills and trading network. These events show a less known side or aspect of Konishi’s personal life, bringing to the fore his humanity, and revealing a personality with great acumen, compassion, and strength of character.

The aim of this chapter is also to show why Konishi was located in the Seto, the freedom he gained, and the methods he employed to subjugate the Seto Inland Sea area to Hideyoshi’s power. Its focus is to show how the years between 1579 and 1589 marked an important transitional period in the apotheosis of Konishi Yukinaga as it was during these years of Christian fervor that he rose to power and created a name of his own.

3.1 Konishi Yukinaga’s role in the negotiations between Oda, Ukita, and Mōri

In 1579 the arrival of Oda Nobunaga’s troops into Bizen threatened the domain of Ukita Naoie (宇喜多直家). According to the Bizen Gunki, Naoie had just reached a precarious alliance with his former rival and neighbor, the Mōri. Using the Kobayakawa to carry a message to the Mōri, Ukita Naoie faked a sudden illness so he could plan his next move. He held a meeting in his castle at Okayama announcing the difficult situation to his councilors. One of the elder councilors,
Tōgawa Heiemon (戸川平右衛門), thought that even after any number of battles the situation could not turn in Ukita Naoie’s favor, as it was impossible to determine the outcome. He suggested sending his second son, Magoroku (孫六), as a hostage to the Mōri, to show their good will in maintaining an alliance. At the same time, they sent a messenger to negotiate with Nobunaga.

Ukita and Tōgawa decided to send Adachi Tarōsaemon (足立大郎佐衛門) as messenger to Nobunaga with gifts as tokens of friendship. Once this was decided, they needed someone to deal with Oda’s general, and leader of the incoming army Hideyoshi. It should be preferably someone who knew him. Tōgawa, who was from the city of Sakai and also had a mercantile background, suggested calling for Konishi Yakurō (Yukinaga), the stepson of Okayama’s merchant Tōtōya Yakurō, and son of Konishi Jitoku (Ryūsa) of Sakai. Yukinaga was summoned to the presence of Ukita Naoie. Naoie, as soon as he had the confirmation that indeed Yukinaga knew Oda’s general, Hideyoshi, sent Yukinaga to deal with him. The negotiation process initiated by Naoie with the assistance of his councilors brought to the fore Konishi Yakurō Yukinaga as an envoy to Hashiba Tōkichirō (a.k.a. Toyotomi Hideyoshi). Hideyoshi led Oda Nobunaga’s troops, as the latter sought to expand his territory; however, this territorial expansion threatened both Ukita’s and Mōri’s domains. Ukita Naoie did not want to lose his domain, but he

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102 Tōtōya Yakurō (a.k.a. Genroku), as mentioned in Chapter II, was the tedai, or the leader of the merchant association and tax exactor. He worked for the wholesaler (goyōshōnin) Abe Yoshisada. Genroku, Yukinaga’s stepfather, owned a Kimono shop where Yukinaga worked as an apprentice from 1569, as his father, Ryūsa, imported silk and had his own connections in that area. The Seto Inland Sea (Seitonaikai) was in fact well known since the Kamakura period for its silk worm farms and indigo dye production. Until the Edo period, silk dyed with indigo remained a well known product of that area.

Abe Yoshisada belonged to the Naya (warehouse merchant association) of Fukuoka, but his ties to power were deeper than simple patronage to the Ukita’s family. As a matter of fact, his own daughter married Ukita Naoie’s father, Ukita Ōkiie and had two sons, Tadaie and Haruie. Two years after their births, Ōkiie died of illness and Naoie, by then six years old, was put in the care of an aunt who was a nun. Abe Yoshisada, who had interest in having one of his grandsons take over the domain, asked Genroku to provide the child with whatever he needed. However, Naoie, who appeared to be intelligent until he was seven or eight years old, by ten years of age began to play the fool. He was taken in the household of Urakami Muneshige and successfully became a mediator for the Urakami. At the age of sixteen, Naoie had 30 men under his command and 300 kan. This increased to 3000 koku by the time he conquered the castle of Toishi, where he was born. He proceeded then to conquer most of Bizen, and by the age of forty-five had begun the construction of Okayama Castle and, by default, of its surrounding mercantile citadel. The castle town attracted
found himself sandwiched between the Mōri, Kobayakawa, and Oda. It was therefore important for him to come out unscathed.

Ukita Naoie chose Yukinaga, as the Bizen Gunki states, because "he became a close friend of Hideyoshi since the time he was called 'monkey' in the streets of Sakai". Yukinaga, by 1579, was twenty-one years old. There are no existing portraits of Konishi Yukinaga except for how he was depicted in the Ehon Taikoki (絵本太閤記):

"...At the time, Yakurō was twenty-one years old, very strong, brilliantly resourceful, rather tall and with a fair complexion. He could not be viewed as an ordinary fellow. Lord Izumi no Kami Naoie tested his quick-witted [personality], he [Yakurō] was to be considered a useful person and treated accordingly. This person became an envoy, and was sent in a rush to deal with Hideyoshi..." 

That year, Yukinaga was sent to Hideyoshi to relate Ukita Naoie's intention to submit to Oda Nobunaga. At that time, Hideyoshi was camped at Himeji and welcomed Yukinaga's party. The Ehon Taikōki describes Yukinaga's negotiation as a success. Yukinaga is depicted as a fearless young man, who facing Hideyoshi, presented himself as Lord Ukita Naoie's negotiator. He stated briefly that Ukita Naoie wished to become an ally of Lord Oda Nobunaga and he was sent for this purpose. Yukinaga demonstrated his bravery by convincing Hideyoshi that the solution to serve under Oda was sincere and it was the only choice to settle this matter without bloodshed. Conversely, if there was a battle, the outcome would have been disastrous. Ukita Naoie, by submitting to the advancing Oda's forces, was tipping the balance of his precarious alliance with the Mōri in favour of Oda Nobunaga, who was represented on the field by Hideyoshi. When Hideyoshi accused Naoie of being a turncoat, Yukinaga, laughing heartily, replied that...
Naoie was lord of two provinces, he had men and provisions in quantity, and that if even one arrow were to be shot, so be it. But at the same time, because all sides wanted a victory, Ukita was in reality offering a peace settlement to prevent an uncertain battle outcome.

Furthermore, to prove Naoie’s sincerity, Yukinaga was offering himself and Naoie’s young son, Hachirō (later a.k.a. Ukita Hideie) as hostages. Although Hideyoshi in turn took some time to convince Oda Nobunaga, in the end the negotiation was successful. Ukita retained his domain under Nobunaga, and the Mōri gained several territories in the Seto Inland Sea.

According to M. Steichen, a French Christian historian, Yukinaga worked together with his father, Ryūsa, at the peace negotiation table. Ryūsa, at the time, was on Nobunaga’s side, gaining the supervision of various harbors on the islands located in the Seto Inland Sea region as a reward for his successful negotiations. It is possible that even before the negotiation was concluded, Ryūsa was given the right to trade in one or two ports of the Seto Islands. Therefore, Yukinaga may have worked for his father in that region. At the time, Yukinaga was not in control of those areas as yet for various reasons. In first place, because there was a gap of four years (1579-1582) between the beginning and the conclusion of the Ukita-Oda negotiations, it is unlikely that he gained the supervision of the Seto Islands by 1579, as claimed by Steichen. In second place, other territories came under the Mōri. In reality Yukinaga became a hostage in the service of Hideyoshi and only after 1579 began to establish his military career. However, it is commonly known that the Oda-Ukita peace negotiation constituted the turning point in Yukinaga’s military carrier as he served Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

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104 絵本太閤記 Ehon Taikoki, Tokyo, 1932. Vol. 1 564. Original text: “今の弥九郎この時年二十一、力鬌間で強く、智略衆に秀でて、色白く長髪く、世の常者とは見えず。和泉守直家常常彼が才知を感じ、物の用に立つべき奴なりと陸まじくあらわるるが、この者を使者と成し秀吉が許へ遣わしなば、結句事調ふべしと思ひ”

105 Ibid. pp. 565-566. Please refer to Appendix Ic for an image of Ukita Hideie presented as hostage to Hideyoshi.

106 Steichen M., Les Daimyô Chrétiens, ou un siècle de L’histoire politique et religieuse du Japon 1549-1650. Tokyo 1904. transl. by Yoshida Kogorō. pp. 98-99. Unfortunately, the fact that Konishi Yukinaga had in administration the territories of some islands is not substantiated by any other Japanese contemporary sources; therefore the interpretation of M. Steichen may have been based on events that took place much later.
Steichen reports that Yukinaga was a samurai at the service of the Ukita, but that has not been confirmed in any other documents; what is instead confirmed by more than one Japanese primary source is that Yukinaga (Yakurō) was indeed called to the negotiation table by Tōgawa, a senior councilor in Ukita Naoie’s close circle. Indeed, Yukinaga was by then a merchant and it is his mercantile background that he brought to the negotiation table in order to analyze critically a situation that was going to turn sour on many sides. It was with this accomplishment that Yukinaga entered in the service of Hideyoshi.

3.2 Konishi Yukinaga in the role of a mediator, Toritsugu (取次); exerting Oda Nobunaga and Hideyoshi’s authority to the peripheries

From 1579, Konishi Yukinaga was in the service of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, but it is not clear in what capacity he was employed. In effect, he went to Hideyoshi as a hostage together with Ukita Hachirō, the eight-year-old son of Naoie. It is probable that they were given duties according to their status and practical skills. Ukita Hachirō, by then renamed Hideie, was raised according to his social status and trained as a warrior. Yukinaga followed Hideie; however, between 1579 and 1581, there are no records reporting his activities. Hideyoshi continued in his campaign against Mōri’s naval supremacy.

It is not by fortuity, nor by chance that Yukinaga served in his capability as merchant and warrior. Hideyoshi needed both skills to supply his troops, create patronage bonds and to have more warriors placed in strategic locations. In 1579, Yukinaga’s activities stretched between the province of Bizen and the harbor of Murotsu. As previously mentioned in Chapter II, Yukinaga’s father, Ryūsa, was called in Aboshi on behalf of Nobunaga to attend to Hideyoshi’s order. By then, Hideyoshi was already busy conquering Aboshi Castle. As Aboshi was a coastal

city and a base for pirates under Mōri’s patronage, it is possible that Hideyoshi had planned to
conquer that city including also cutting off the pirates from one of their land supply lines.

That same year, Yukinaga was engaged with Atagi Nobuyasu (安宅信康), the admiral of
Awaji (淡路) Island, in fighting the Mōri fleet in the Seto Inland Sea area\textsuperscript{108}. In addition,
Yukinaga worked together with his father in Murotsu. Both Konishis served Hideyoshi as
merchants and informers by maintaining their commercial network between Harima and Bizen,
and as far as Sakai. According to Matsuda Kiichi and Kawasaki Momota, Frois reports that in 1581
Yukinaga had set up his shop called Harimaya\textsuperscript{109}. But from 1581 Yukinaga was involved in
Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s conquest of Shikoku as a messenger and envoy\textsuperscript{110}. During the same year,
there are references indicating Yukinaga’s multiple roles as informer, navy commander, and
supplier. Whatever his roles were, he had an inclination for a military career and soon enough his
services in Hideyoshi’s army came to be noticed. But Yukinaga’s role as a messenger and envoy
developed indeed during Hideyoshi’s conquest of Shikoku. In 1581, Kuroda Yoshitaka (黒田孝高), a general under Hideyoshi, wrote:

"Present a letter with the details of the proceedings of the situation to Konishi Yakurō... He
can/must report everything regarding the proceeding of this meeting"\textsuperscript{111}.

The above-mentioned record clearly shows that Yukinaga was the repository of messages
to be recorded and/or transmitted to other warriors. It was as an envoy or mediator that in effect he
began his career under Hideyoshi. This does not exclude his continued involvement in business as
a merchant. Given the entrepreneurial character of Yukinaga’s background, fuelled by a wealth of

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid. 238. Antaku Nobuyasu was the son and enemy of Antaku Fuyuyasu, admiral in Awaji. Nobuyasu sided with
Nobunaga at first in 1572 and sided with Hideyoshi later. He participated in the battle of Kitsugawaguchi in 1576-77.
\textsuperscript{109} Kunishige Akiko “Hideyoshi to kokunai tôitsu kahō ni okeru Konishi Yukinaga”. Sakoku Nihon to Kokusai Kōshū,
\textsuperscript{110} (24th day of the 9th month of the 9th year of the Tenshō era).
experience in dealing with townspeople and military folks, he was best suited to be an envoy.

Hideyoshi’s power in the peripheries, especially after Nobunaga’s death, was exercised through trusted people sent as private messengers, envoys able to relate his will and orders to the various local lords. These envoys are the ones who Hideyoshi himself had adopted as stepchildren or who were particularly close to him. In fact, most of his generals at one time or another had worked as envoy and/or mediators. Yamamoto Hirobumi (山本博文), a Japanese historian, described this type of messenger as a characteristic figure of the early state formation policies, as mediators were widely used and already institutionalized by the beginning of the Tokugawa period.112 Hirobumi sustains that the mediators had the authority to deliver messages to the big daimyo houses, in order to have these houses incorporated into a centralized power structure. In this way, their chances to ally may have decreased, given the government control exercised by the mediator. Moreover, the mediator had to communicate orders in a speedy fashion so as to maintain real time control. Clearly, the personality of the mediator had to fit his public functions, as he became part of a bureaucratic governing structure. Still, during Hideyoshi’s time, the mediator, as public figures were not accurately defined. Therefore, Hirobumi’s definition is problematic.

Kuroda Kazuko, another Japanese historian, also indicates that Hideyoshi allocated mediator in various areas within certain peripheral locations to get personally closer to specific daimyos in order to bring these under Hideyoshi’s umbrella and to supervise strategic geo-political areas. She disagrees with Hirobumi that the mediators were only an instrument of influence to control big daimyō houses, as Terazawa Masanari (寺沢正成), Asano Nagamasa (浅野長政), and Ishida Mitsunari (石田三成) did for Hideyoshi. In Kuroda Kazuko’s view, they could, in fact, also deal with minor daimyos as they had the task to represent or report messages from subordinates to

the lord (daimyō). Furthermore, mediators could report lords’ disputes or facilitate their 
resolution. Sakurai Eiji, a Japanese economic historian, gives a more economic connotation to
the figure of the mediator. Indeed, since the Ōnin period (1467-1469), mediators were part of a
complicated money/rice exchange and remittance transfer system (為替手形), where they had the
duty to take rice, used as money (from people remitting certain payments), in exchange for a draft,
that could be endorsed, so that the person receiving it could go to the issuer and ask for the goods.
It was a draft that allowed goods to be in warehouses, while effectively being traded. Hence the
mediator had to have a mercantile background of some sort or be connected to the mercantile
world. This fact gives an economic dimension to the functions performed by Yukinaga, as it
explains why he was specifically chosen for this assignment. In his case, his mercantile
background was surely an asset.

The geographical location of a mediator was also an extremely important factor. In the case
of Yukinaga, his assignment in the Seto Inland Sea was not a mere coincidence, but, as it will be
expressed later, it was instead an effective strategy on Hideyoshi’s part, joining the mercantile
interests to his own to establish his control of the Seto Inland Sea water ways.

The role of the mediator included also supplying materials and provisions needed in the
central areas, and therefore there was a political expansion that corresponded to an economic
appropriation of resources exacted from the peripheries. This information is important as it reveals
the dynamic of subjugating politically peripheral territories to sustain the economic needs of the
central government. Andre Gunner Frank’s development economics theory, on sixteenth century
western expansion in Asia, explains how peripheral (not as yet technologically advanced or
industrialized) areas of the then known world came to be integrated into a “producer-consumer”
structure. Immanuel Wallerstein refers to it as a “world system” that tied economically peripheral

113 Kunishige Akiko “Hideyoshi to kokunai töitsu kahō ni okeru Konishi Yukinaga” Sakoku Nihon to Kokusai Kōshū,
areas to the centre by creating a certain degree of dependency. This in turn caused degrees of underdevelopment by an expropriation of economic surplus. In effect, Frank also states that development of certain regions occurred prior to the relationship of dependency from the centre, as was the case of the Seto Inland Sea in relation to its feudal past.

It was by the Kamakura period (1186-1333) that a great deal of commercial exchange was already taking place, corresponding to an expansion of localized market economies. During the late Sengoku period (1570-1603), the exaction of local economic resources appropriated by the central government tied these regions in a relation of dependency to the centre by effectively impacting their economies. This process can be compared, on a larger scale, to the process of colonization that was initiated by the European empires in sixteenth century Asia. The process of resource extraction to sustain a central government was the drive to expansion and while in Europe it led people to seek new markets abroad, in Japan brought territorial unification. Hence, a parallel can be drawn between the territorial unification of Japan and Western expansion in sixteenth century Asia. Both expansions unified territories that prior to that were politically untied to the centre or to western powers. Indeed, in both cases the economic factor was essential to the advancement of expansionistic policies. Therefore, the main players, except for politicians, were the merchants, who were supporting financially the power-holders. Hence, merchants and able people with a mercantile background came to assume important roles in this type of expansionistic economy, fuelled by war enterprises.

Yukinaga, at that time, was still working between the mercantile and the military world, as he provided goods and information to Hideyoshi’s generals. This fact, as previously mentioned, does not exclude Yukinaga’s participation in Hideyoshi’s campaign of subjugating Shikoku Island.

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and the area of the Seto Inland Sea. Before residing permanently in the Seto Inland Sea area, Yukinaga fought in some relevant land and naval battles.

Yukinaga fought for Hideyoshi, but he also fought to protect his family mercantile interests. The *Ehon Taikōki*, and the *Intoku Taikōki*, shows that in 1581, Yukinaga was engaged in the battle of Tottori and he fought together with Hideyoshi and Kikkawa Hiroie (1561-1625). The same year, fourth month, he was also engaged in the battle of Kaburiyama, fought also by a young Ukita Hideie, just thirteen years old. The battle ended in a victory due to Ukita Hideie’s armies.

Although the *Ehon Taikoki* reports that Katō (Toranosuke) Kiyomasa (加藤虎の助) was the first warrior to charge into the castle once the gate was destroyed, it was most probably Yukinaga who fought side-by-side, with Ukita Hideie gaining the victory. The *Ehon Taikōki* and the family history of the Konishi of Kyoto indeed do not agree on the outcome of this battle as reported by Ikenaga Kō. The following year, 1582, Yukinaga became engaged in the campaign for the conquest of Shikoku Island, when Oda Nobunaga was assassinated. This event determined his participation in the Japanese wars of conquest led by Hideyoshi.

### 3.3 The naval battle of Takamatsu: Yukinaga achieves military recognition

Hideyoshi’s rise to power was significant for Konishi Yukinaga, by then twenty-five years of age, and for his family, as they came to collaborate closely with him. As Hideyoshi continued his wars of conquest, Yukinaga participated in various battles, gaining military experience and refining his military tactics and skills. It was only in the battle of Takamatsu, Tenshō 10, fifth month (1582), that Yukinaga’s military strategy allowed him to come to the fore. In his battles, Hideyoshi employed not only brute force but calculated strategies and cunning tactics in which Yukinaga excelled. Takamatsu was a castle located in a low level fluvial valley, the main gate being accessible only by taking a narrow path, unfeasible for marching troops. The other three
sides were surrounded by a fluvial pond deep enough so that a man on horseback could not reach at the castle walls. In the defense of the castle, there was a general called Shimizu Chōsaemonnojo (清水長佐衛門ノ尉), who was known for his bravery. His two generals, one in charge of the firearms and the other of the cavalry, had a total of seven thousand men. The fortress belonging to Shimizu Muneharu (清水宗治) seemed inexpugnable, but Hideyoshi decided to flood the castle, as the rainy season was approaching. He and his men, in forty-two days, built an embankment four kilometers long by seven meters high, and let the nearby Ashimori (足守) River flood the pond surrounding the castle. Hideyoshi now could use ships to attack. In charge of the naval attack on the north side of the castle were Konishi Yakurō (Yukinaga) and Asano Yajibee (Nagamasa), each leading one big ship loaded with cannons. They started to fire in concert so as to leave no gap between attacks, and the thunder could be heard from far away. The troops of the Mōri backed up Hideyoshi once he asked for reinforcements, and Mōri Terumoto advanced together with Kikkawa Motoharu (吉川元春) and Kobayakawa Takakage (小早川隆景).

Shimizu Muneharu, defeated, was forced to commit suicide with all his retainers. The victorious Mōri, after this demonstration of submission, negotiated their peace with Hideyoshi formally. In this negotiated peace, Kobayakawa used a messenger called Ankokuji Ekei (安国時惠禎), a diplomat monk, who was accompanied by Yukinaga, according to Crasset and Steichen. In fact, after the Mōri negotiated peace with Hideyoshi, they had to swear a pledge of allegiance and in return they received the territories of Bicchū, Bingo, Mimasaka, Hōki, and Inaba. According to Ikenaga Kō, the outcome of this battle favored the rise in status of Yukinaga amongst

116 Ikenaga Kō, Chūsei Sakai wo daihyū suru Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga. Tokyo, 1936. 98.
117 Please refer to the Appendix Id for a visual image of the battle in Ehon Taikōki.
119 Ankokuji Ekei (born in 1538) was the son of Takeda Nobushige, who committed suicide when Ekei was still young. Ekei escaped and was raised by monks. At sixteen years of age, he started to study with the monk Ryūun Eshin (竜運慧心) of Mt. Hiei until he was thirty. At thirty years of age, he was sent to the Tofukuji temple in Kyoto, and then became the Abbot of Ankokuji. By 1568, he served under the army of the Mōri as a soldier and then became a
the warriors, and he came to be recognized as having the same level of skill as Admiral Asano Nagamasa\textsuperscript{120}. Yukinaga, in his youth, learnt his seafaring skills and was trained in the usage of firearms probably to protect his father’s business in Sakai (and possibly abroad), as well as to help in his stepfather’s Kimono business (which were closely related to warriors and protection as revealed in Chapter II).

As a merchant, Yukinaga’s father, Ryūsa, had connections with the Christian lord Ōtomo Sōrin of Bungo, Kyushu, and with the Portuguese and Jesuits in Kyoto. He possibly obtained firearms from his acquaintances. The Italian Jesuit, Father Organtino, stationed in Kyoto, writes that as early as Tenshō 6, 1578, Konishi Yukinaga was in possession of a ship loaded with cannons\textsuperscript{121}. At that time, Yukinaga was still working for his stepfather, possibly transporting goods between Okayama and Sakai. Therefore, if Organtino’s date is correct, his own father Ryūsa, by that date, was already dealing with Kyushu’s Portuguese merchants, from whom he could have obtained such weapons. Yukinaga’s fame as a warrior was achieved mainly through his participation in victorious naval battles.

Yukinaga reached notoriety during the naval battle of Nagashima against the lord of Kuwana, Ryūgawa\textsuperscript{122}. Hideyoshi, on this occasion, also flooded the castle using the waters of the Kiso (木曾) River. Yukinaga’s role was to fire cannon balls from his ship onto the roof of the castle so as to have all the occupants evacuated or killed. The plan was successful, and Hideyoshi gained a victory. Yukinaga, from then on, was posted permanently in the Seto Inland Sea region as envoy and messenger (toritsugu), servicing Hideyoshi who had already envisioned the military conquest of Shikoku Island, domain of the Chōsōkabe (長宗我部) family. Chōsōkabe Motochika was occupied fighting against Miyoshi (Sogō) Nagayasu (三好十河存保), who was defeated.

diplomat working as an envoy in various peace negotiations in Japan. He was also sent as an administrative monk in the Korean peninsula during Hideyoshi’s wars of conquest.
\textsuperscript{120} Ikenaga Kō, Chōsei Sakai wo daihyō suru Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga. Tokyo, 1936. 96-97.
\textsuperscript{121} Hora Tomio, Teppō denrai to sono eikyō. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan. 1991. 233
Chōsōkabe Motochika then sent for Hideyoshi and he replied by sending more than two thousand men led by Sengoku Hidehisa. Sengoku at first cooperated with Motochika, but later conquered his domain. At that time, Konishi Yukinaga joined the troops of Sengoku Hidehisa.

3.4 The Assassination of Oda Nobunaga

In 1582, as soon as the negotiations with the Mōri were concluded, Hideyoshi received communication from Kyoto that Nobunaga had been attacked and killed. Akechi Mizuhide, originally sent as a backup to the troops of Hideyoshi in Bitchū, detoured to Kyoto and instead conjured to kill Oda Nobunaga. Akechi and three of his generals left on the night of June 20th and traveled toward Azuchi Castle, residence of Oda Nobunaga. At that time, Nobunaga was hosting a party that included tea ceremony masters and dealers. At first Akechi attacked and burned the castle. By the time he arrived in the inner quarters there was no one in sight, so he thought this was a good opportunity to loot Oda's fortunes. He did surely have personal grievances against Oda, but he may have been just the executioner of a well-organized plot. The organizers were never identified, although most probably they belonged to the Mōri clan. The

122 Ibid. 98: The Battle of Nagashima was fought the 2nd month of Tenshō 11 (1583).
123 Tenshō 10, sixth month, (1582).
124 Akechi Mitsuhide (1528-1582).
125 Berry Mary Elizabeth, Hideyoshi. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, 1982. 72. In Berry’s book, the actual dates of Akechi Mitsuhide's attack and Hideyoshi’s retaliation occur in the early days of the sixth month (of the lunar calendar). Therefore the dates Frois mentions are according to the western Gregorian calendar.
My Translation: “Akechi refrained from burning it, but went to the highest place in the fortress and began to open treasure boxes and pillage Nobunaga’s treasures that were distributed without reserve. There were, among other things, great quantities of golden coins, marked and distinguished by measures. He distributed such amongst his captains. He sent also to the Dairi and to five monasteries of monks, the main monasteries in Kyoto, seven thousand per monastery, in a way that, all that Nobunaga had accumulated in a span of fifteen to twenty years by wars and fatigue, was dissipated in two to three days.”
mandataries involved in the Honnōji incident, as the Oda killing is known by the name of the temple it occurred in, are still unknown and a matter of debate.

Frois’ epistle, dated 1582, states that after Nobunaga was killed, Akechi tried to establish his control by bribing the Buddhist temples and the nobility in the capital. In this way, he hoped to gain allies and political support. But rioting occurred everywhere after the news of Oda’s death, as some lords tried to take advantage of the unstable political situation to aggrandize their own domains. At the same time, the peasants rioted to safeguard their livelihoods. Akechi did not have the necessary support or manpower to control the volatile situation when Hideyoshi’s allies arrived on the scene to fight against Akechi’s men. One of the first to arrive was Takayama (Justo) Ukōn (高山右近), a Christian warrior, who Akechi wanted on his side. Takayama Ukōn, together with his men and four other Christian captains defeated two hundred men of Akechi’s army. Soon after, Hideyoshi, by returning in a timely fashion to Kyoto with his troops, was able to eliminate Akechi’s captains. Akechi tried to run away, but was injured by an arrow to the chest and was killed on the road by rioting peasants trying to steal his sword. Ukōn, who had originally fought against Akechi, clearly stated his alliance to Hideyoshi. Hideyoshi found himself with a force of 20,000 men recruited as he advanced to face Akechi’s force. Hideyoshi violently purged the rioters. The chaos lasted for only twelve days and Frois, not without a note of humor, mentions that more than a thousand heads were collected in the palace of Nobunaga. The stench could be smelled miles away and lasted for weeks.

Hideyoshi quickly filled the power vacuum by means of military force, as he absorbed Akechi’s warriors and quelled the rebellions. Berry, an American historian, mentions that Hideyoshi gained power in the Kiyosu conference, in which was established as heir to Nobunaga’s

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127 Ibid. 57
128 An interesting point here is that in his epistle, Frois does not mention Konishi Yukinaga as involved then neither with Ukōn nor with Christianity. It may well be that as Konishi Yukinaga operated in Okayama and in the Seto region; Frois had not met him personally by that time.
129 Ibid. 63-64.
throne his grandson Sanbōshi, who was still a child. Although the decision was not unanimous because there were disagreements on who should be the heir, the senior councilors agreed to exercise a joint authority. By the following year, Hideyoshi gained not only military power, but a veil of authority that was unprecedented. He then began to redistribute fiefs and lands to his allies as a reward for their loyalty. It was in 1583 that Hideyoshi eliminated the opposition of Shibata Kazuie, an elder councilor and his major opponent at the Kiyosu conference. Shibata was eliminated in the battle of Shizugatake (賭が岳) and Hideyoshi gained full control of Nobunaga’s realm (Tenka). Hideyoshi retained control by largesse; in effect he rewarded his lords and warriors handsomely.

According to Berry, Hideyoshi did not allow the government to become too centralized, as he gave more autonomy to his lords (daimyo). But such magnanimity was surprising in a man who could have had control over his subordinates regardless. He began to exert this control by means of strategic alliances and by rewarding largely powerful lords like the Tokugawa, Mōri, and others. One could argue that Hideyoshi in reality did not have much choice, as his power of control in the regions held by powerful families, and in areas where other groupings ruled, could be exerted only by various other means. One of these was to use Nobunaga’s construction of his realm or “tenka” as a jurisdictional continuity. Then by supporting decaying nobility, Hideyoshi legitimized his position as the de facto ruler to protect the imperial court and the emperor, all of this while actually seizing the country for himself. Another fact sustaining the theory that Hideyoshi could not stretch his power too far was that, as a method used to reward his subordinates, allowed his retainers to administer his own landholdings as Kurairichi (蔵入地).

In doing so, Hideyoshi benefited from the careful extraction of resources and at the same time

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131 Bernard Susser, “The Structure of the Toyotomi Regime”. Mass and Hauser: the Bakufu in Japanese History. California. Stanford University Press, 1985. 7. Bernard Susser, a Japanese history scholar, sustains that the retainer receiving a Kurairichi was responsible for administering and collecting tax on behalf of Hideyoshi. In addition, the
avoided giving away land he did not possess in sufficient amounts. Hideyoshi continued the policy initiated by Oda Nobunaga to use mercantile patronage, especially amongst the wealthy merchants belonging to the wholesalers’ elite. He made them participants to his own policies of conquests by hosting formal and informal tea ceremonies equivalent to political summits, when financial backing was required. In a few words, Hideyoshi surrounded himself with merchants and warriors because these were men whose interests he could understand fully, to whom he could give a lot, and from whom he could take all he needed, as in the case of the Konishi family.

3.5 Konishi Yukinaga’s rule in the Seto Inland Sea: Shōdojima and Shiwaku

Konishi Yukinaga’s assignment in the Seto Inland Sea was not by chance. Hideyoshi used merchants such as Konishi to administer conquered territories. The cleverness of Hideyoshi in the Seto was to assign merchants to fight against the pirates for his own purposes. At that point in time, Hideyoshi’s interest in conquering the Seto Islands coincided with the interests of merchants who sought to have main waterways free of danger. Hence, Hideyoshi indeed killed two birds with one stone by allying merchants’ interests to his own. In 1580, while Hideyoshi was in Harima fighting against Miki Castle, he also protected merchants from the Kinai area against the Mōri. The wealthy merchants of Hyogo, like the owners of Shojikiya (正直屋), earned Hideyoshi’s trust and he acted as magistrate in their area. Around the same period, Konishi Ryūsa became magistrate of the harbor of Murotsu, in the Seto Inland Sea. Merchants interested in maintaining sea routes free from piracy, aided indeed the unifying policies adopted by Hideyoshi, with minimum of cost on Hideyoshi’s part. The Seto Inland area, being of strategic economic importance, useful to support war economies, and a strategic location for the establishment of international relations, became a targeted area of interest. It was there, in effect more than anywhere else, that it is possible
to understand the extent of Hideyoshi’s real capabilities in unifying Japan. As merchants turned
bureaucrats acted on his behalf, other enemy groups tied to other lords were seen as pirates.
Without doubt, the Seto Inland Sea was an area of piratical activities from earlier times, but it was
mainly an area of trade and exchange at various levels of cooperation and conflicting relations
where merchants and pirates coexisted, being separated only by invisible layers of recognizance.
In reality, merchants and pirates were the two faces of the same coin. The population in the
Seto Inland Sea relied on few land resources available to them; therefore they had to trade also
with people on the coastal areas. With their rights to guard certain seaway passages, asking for safe
passage and fees came with the need to trade and claim rights in certain areas. But it is not
excluded that this practice was also fostered by the patronage of landed-lords who could exact
taxes on pirate bands. In any case, pirates had a negative connotation due to the illegal and illicit
activities they lived off such as by exacting passage tolls, occasionally engaging in assaulting ships
to seize their cargo, extorting protection money, fighting in naval battles, and selling captives as
slaves. On the contrary, their villages consisted of fishermen and working folks, as not all the
pirate communities were involved in fights and illegal activities. Indeed, some bands were
sponsored by the Ashikaga Shōguns (early in the Muromachi period) to act as protection patrol or
keigoshū (警固衆) on their seas. But even in this case, the distinction between authorized bands
and unauthorized bands was minimal because there was no enforcement of government control as
the pirate bands themselves exercised it.
The political landscape of the Seto Inland Sea region during the late medieval period was
fragmented, as pirates bands holding power were scattered between various islands. The
commercial importance of the Seto area derives from its geographic and economic positions in
relation to the Japanese centre of consumptions, the big cities of Kyoto and Osaka. The Seto Inland

132 Hashizume Shigeru, “Oda Seiken no seitoankaikai seikai ken wo megutte.” Sengoku Daimyō kara Shōgun Kenryoku
Sea was an important and busy seaway for commercial exchanges in harbor cities like Hakata, Nagasaki, Hirado, and Sakai. Often it was more convenient for merchants to ship goods rather than carry them on land, for the cost and the danger would be still higher due to the various wars and banditry. The history of piracy in the Seto was not new, as pirates of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese backgrounds were extremely active in East Asia in the late Kamakura and early Sengoku periods. Moreover, some pirates could speak fluent Korean. It is possible to assume that the Chinese language was also spoken in the Seto area, given the various ethnicities of its inhabitants.

During the Sengoku period (1467-1603), various bands of pirates arrogated the rights to dominate the Seto Inland Sea. Among these were the Kōno in Iyo, the Murakami sponsored by Ōuchi and Mōri in Western Honshu, and Ōtomo in Northern Kyushu sponsoring various bands of pirates including the Sakō of Amagaseki. During Oda and Hideyoshi’s time, the Seto Inland Sea was occupied mainly by three of these pirate bands belonging to the Murakami family, who were often in conflict amongst themselves. The three bands were the Noshima Murakami, Kurushima Murakami, and Innojima Murakami. The Innojima Murakami had been under Mōri’s patronage from 1555, while the Noshima Murakami family, led by Murakami Takeyoshi (村上武吉), had been under the patronage of the Mōri from 1574. The naval battle of Kitsugawaguchō (木津川口) took place in the winter of 1574, when the Mōri fought for the Hishiyama Honganji Buddhist establishment against Oda Nobunaga, who set up a blockade to interrupt the food supply to the Honganji Temple. Nobunaga, who sought to conquer Shikoku Island, in that instance was defeated by Mōri’s naval supremacy that comprised the united forces.

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134 In 1420, the Korean envoy Sō Ki Kei (Song Hu-gyong, 宋希暐) returned the Muromachi envoy’s visit. At the time, the coastal areas of Korea were burned and pillaged by pirates, so he was sent to discuss the matter with the Japanese government. He recorded in his diary observations on Japanese lifestyle, but also reported on the lifestyle of people called “pirates” living by abducting people on the Chinese/Korean coasts and bringing them over to Japan to work as fishermen. Tushima by then was a port for the re-sale of Chinese slaves. These Chinese often were used as chattels and if unsold became part of the piratical communities. Sō Ki Kei was reported also to have paid one band of pirates to be taken into the territory of another.
of Murakami Motoyoshi, Takeyoshi’s first son, and of the Innojima Murakami represented by Murakami Yoshimitsu. In 1579, however, the Mōri concluded the negotiated peace with the Ukita, in which Yukinaga took part. Technically, the Mōri and Oda’s factions were at peace, but on the sea they were still fighting for naval supremacy. Murakami Takeyoshi, leader of the Noshima Murakami, under Mōri’s patronage, and later under Hideyoshi’s patronage, continued to exercise control of the Seto Inland Sea area. Even so, Hideyoshi’s conquest of the Eastern Seto area was already underway and Konishi Yukinaga became part of this process.

By 1582, Konishi Yukinaga, as previously mentioned, had indeed the task of providing food supplies to Hideyoshi’s armies. At that time, Yukinaga was in possession of two ships with which he could ply the waters of the Seto Inland Sea. It is certain that he was acting as food and materials (and probably weapons) supplier for Hideyoshi’s army from his base located in the harbor city of Muro. In 1582, Yukinaga supplied the troops with provisions as it reveals this letter written by Hideyoshi as follows:

“In these recent years of hardship for both, Konishi Yakurō (Yukinaga) comes and goes, providing food supplies [for the troops] in this period. Hurry to the harbor of Muro immediately, consult with Yakurō (Yukinaga), request and take the food supplies, as you see two ships, you must return in a hurry, do not be negligent. Ninth month, 11th day. 9th year of Tenshō (1582).”

Yukinaga’s ships most probably belonged to the type called Atake, usually a thirty meters long dreadnought with a turret in the middle, used for the transportation of materials and food. During this year, Yukinaga was also employed as mediator between Kuroda’s army and

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135 Kanaya Masato, Kaizokutachi no Chūisei: Our Medieval Pirates, Yoshikawa Kobunkan, Tokyo, 1998. 55-61. So Kei’s diary mentioned by the author is the Rōjōdō Nihon Kōroku 『老松党日本行録』.
Hideyoshi’s to report events and transmit oral messages of certain relevance. In 1583, Hideyoshi ordered Yukinaga to hurry with a certain expedition of lumber by boat from Himeji for the construction of his castle. In the Seto Inland Sea, the island supplier of timber was, at the time, Futagami, under the control of Noshima Murakami pirates. Also, the area near the Kompira Shrine in Kaga (Inland) had been a producer of high quality timber since antiquity. But by the sixteenth century, the timber located there may have become scarce. In addition, other islands supplied various other products or manpower. The Island of Noshima, famous for being a pirate stronghold, provided skilled seafaring people and salt.

By being in the area, Yukinaga engaged in commercial relations also with merchants and pirates in other areas not directly under his administration. This was not easy in an area where authority was legally or illegally arrogated by rival bands that ruled according to their will. As stated by Peter Shapinsky, Hiburi Island, for example, had from 1576 a bylaw that allowed only ships carrying special permission, obtained from its Harbor Council, to dock on their island. In another instance, the Noshima Murakami, after having conquered Futagami, previously in the hands of the Kurushima Murakami, restricted the movement of products by limiting the distance they could travel, particularly if they were in the services of landed retainers, and this limited particularly temples. Furthermore, these islanders could not participate in protection duties.

The Noshima Murakami, in doing so, arrogated the rights to transport and exchange goods on behalf of the retainers in main markets such as Itsukushima in Kyushu. But pirates could be without patronage and act at leisure or could be politically protected in their activities, or both.

Original text: "近く近を助共候，仍兵糧取二はや小西弥九郎差返候間，早く早く室津～追懲、弥九郎二相談、兵糧請取，舟つめて早くや早く可帰候，不可油断候也。

138 (天正10.12月2日)
Sakurai Eiji, in this regard, mentions a certain Yatarōemon, working as magistrate in a harbor called Kirinoseki, whose grandson joined pirates in the Tango area. Yatarōemon’s lenient behavior toward his relative in the end allowed him to join the pirates as well, probably having as incentive an increased remuneration. Therefore, the divide between pirates (or rather the buccaneers, under patronage) and merchants, or what Amino Yoshihiko, a Japanese historian and ethnologist, defines as the “people of the sea,” was relatively thin. It is in this environment that Yukinaga came to establish his seafaring domain.

Between 1582 and 1583, Yukinaga joined the troops of Sengoku Hidehisa (仙国秀久), a nineteen-year-old warrior, whose duties included the subjugation of piracy, or rather the subjugation of rival pirate bands not as yet under Hideyoshi’s control, in the seitsuikai region. However, it seems that although Yukinaga may have fought under Hidehisa, he was directly sent by Hideyoshi’s order. The Nankai Tsuki Maki juroku (南海通記卷十六) reports as follows:

“Tenshō 11 (1583), spring time, Konishi Yakuro Yukinaga with two war ships with only one hundred men aboard went under the castle of Konishi Hiraga Shibayama. In the main ship, one warrior was standing on the stern waving a fan requesting to talk with the people in the castle. The general of the pirates came out of the castle, crossed Shi no shō and again Mi no shō came out asking from what direction the ships came. The reply was that in Kyoto Hashiba Chikuzen no Kami (Hideyoshi) sent his envoy Konishi Yakuro Yukinaga to deliver a message to the lord of the castle.”

This episode indicates that Konishi Yukinaga became a direct emissary of Hideyoshi in the Seto region and controlled the activities of both allied lords and pirates. Hideyoshi meant to subjugate the various lords, including the pirates under his control, and Yukinaga had this function. In fact, in

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141 Ibid.
142 Sakurai Eiji, Nihon Chusei no Keizai Kōzō. Iwanami Shoten. Tokyo, 1996. 290. In this regard, Sakurai mentions also the fact that piracy came to be almost institutionalized within its own structure by the seventeenth century and these figures in between disappeared as economically they had no more reason to exist.
1582, during the conquest of Chūgoku (中国), one pirate belonging to the group of Ishii Yojibee (石井与次兵衛) in the coastal area of Akashi submitted to Hideyoshi, who granted privileges to Ishii Yojibee and his group if they would fall under Hideyoshi’s rule. Ishii had his stronghold in Akashi (明石), a location on the mainland, but as he was appointed admiral, competed for the conquest of Iwaya Castle on Iwaya Island. The same year, Ikoma Chikamasu (生駒親正) conquered Awaji Island on behalf of Hideyoshi, and the latter asked Ikoma to rule Iwaya, while he assigned Awaji to Sengoku Hidehisa. In this manner, Hideyoshi established indirectly his rule over the Awaji-Iwaya-Akashi (淡路 岩屋 明石) sea traffic and route, which was entrusted to Konishi Yukinaga. Then assigned to Konishi Ryūsa (Yukinaga’s father), the super intendancy of the harbor of Murotsu (室津), and in addition Yukinaga had also the control of Shodojima (小豆島) Island. Already in 1583, both Konishi Ryūsa and Yukinaga had close ties to Hideyoshi, as they were two of the four Christians in his service. The others were Takayama Ukōn, as Hideyoshi’s commander and personal guard, and Hideyoshi’s secretary called Ai Ryōchi (Simon). Frois states that by then Ryūsa was given the title of magistrate of Sakai because of his great dignity, and his supervision of Hideyoshi’s income. Yukinaga was instead captain in his army and navy (armada), but also had different duties. The years between 1583 and 1584 were extremely important for the Konishi family, as their influence and power increased due to their successes in battle and the performance of their duties.

144 Ikoma Chikamasu (1526-1603) was a vassal of Oda Nobunaga. Chikamasu’s daughter married into the Oda family, and after the murder of Oda Nobunaga in 1582, he passed at the service of Hideyoshi, although he had already fought many battles with Hideyoshi previous to Nobunaga’s death. Chikamasu became third mid elder councillor (三中老). In the battle of Sekigahara (1600), he sided with the Western army of Konishi Yukinaga and Ishida Mitsunari. Chikamasu died in 1603.


146 In Portuguese, the word used by Frois was “dignity,” but it can also properly be interpreted as “honesty.”

Ryūsa had already a certain familiarity with the Seto area as he was trading with Ming China and Chosen-Korea in his early years, but also the fact that he was indeed, as mentioned in Chapter II, the adopted son of the lord of Sanga (alias his family friend, Hibiya Ryōkei) cannot be dismissed. In Frois’ epistle of 1583, it is mentioned that Konishi Ryūsa, Yukinaga’s father, was indeed the lord of Sanga, as he was adopted previously by the Shirai family. In another epistle of 1584, Frois specifies that Agostino (Yukinaga’s Christian name), while ruling the seas between Shiwaku Island and Sakai, was tied by contract to the divided fief of Sanga where he stayed with Mancho. However, the title of lord of Sanga, at first conferred to Sancho (alias Hibiya Ryōkei), was transmitted to his elder son, Mancho (or Vicente). This set of relations determined a tight collaboration between the two families even on the seas.

The Sanga (Hibiya) were longtime trading agents of the Ôuchi family, they started trading with China precisely a generation earlier with Ôuchi Yoshitoki (1477-1528). But by 1566 the Hibiya lost an income of three thousands cruzados and being reduced to poverty they had at their disposition just their 2-3 vessels by which they started to transport people and horses from Sanga to Kyoto, Imori, Sakai and Nagasaki. They were helped by the Christians and started to work at the service of the Fathers. They also joined the seafaring security patrols or keigoshū for the Ôuchi family at first and for the Itsukushima lord later, while being also involved in piratical activities.

The Shirai (Hibiya) were certainly familiar with the Seto Inland Sea area and the piratical communities living there. This fact should not be surprising, as merchants indeed had to fend for themselves and had to protect their goods. Therefore, the most convenient way to do so was to

149 Alessandro Valignano. Sumario de la cosas del Japon (1583) y Adiciones del sumario de japon (1592). Ed. Alvarez-Taladriz. Tokyo. 1954. 129; Valignano further relates that Hibiya was trading for the Ôuchi by way of a Honganji monk called Shonyo (previously mentioned in Chapter II of this thesis) in regards to a cargo of precious agate to be exported to China.

Another proof of Sangadono being Vicente is given by Organtino’s letter written in Muro (1587) as he wrote: “...& chegando come digo qui con Sangadono o vehlo Vicente fihlo de Rioquei de Sacay”. My translation: “& advancing as I said here with Sangadono the elder Vicente, son of Ryokei, from Sakai”. 155.
become pirate allies, or choose to be their enemy. The Hibiya family was both, and to a certain
degree this benefited also Ryūsa’s trade from Sakai to Kyushu and increased his prestige by his
dealings with the Portuguese traders and their Jesuit mediators. As a matter of fact, by 1581 Frois
reports that Hibiya Ryōkei fought against Noshima Murakami pirates in front of Sakai Harbor
where he was aided by three hundred of his men carrying matchlocks to protect the arrival of the
Portuguese galleon which carried the Vice Provincial Father Alessandro Valignano. Hibiya aided
Frois’ party, as they were asked a ransom to enter the port; however, his small boat was surrounded
and his negotiations failed when the money offered, one hundred and fifty cruzados, were not
enough for the pirates. At that point, Hibiya gave the signal to his men to attack and he defeated
the pirates.

Due to his close friendship and family ties with the Hibiya, Ryūsa, and his son Yukinaga,
he knew relatively well the Seto Inland Sea area. They may have patrolled and traded in that same
area years earlier. This would also explain how Yukinaga, at an early age, learnt his seafaring
skills. Hence, Hideyoshi’s choice to let Konishi Ryūsa and Yukinaga, father and son, regulate the
sea traffic routes between the coastal province of Harima, Murotsu, and Shōdojima on his behalf
was indeed an economic and practical decision. In doing so, Hideyoshi came to control indirectly a
second route from the province of Harima to the harbor of Murotsu and to Shōdojima until the
harbor of Iki-Hikita. In this way, a route at a time, Hideyoshi began to take away
important traffic sea-ways from the local pirates in the Western area of the Seto Inland Sea.

Between 1582 and 1586, Yukinaga was assigned to the castle of Sogō, as he
belonged to the protection duty band (Keigoshū) that kept the routes free from rival bands from

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152 By 1597, according to the Italian merchant Francesco Carletti in Japan, there were various currencies. The
Portuguese caxa, was made of ten copper coins tight in a string. Ten copper coins were exchanged for one small piece
of silver. Ten pieces of silver were equal to one maes and one hundred pieces of silver to one tael. Eleven taels were
equal to one scudo (equivalent to one golden ducat) or one cruzado. This currency measure can render the idea of how
expensive it was for the Jesuit Fathers to pay the ransom of one hundred and fifty cruzados. In the Sumario, written
by Valignano, Hibiya paid 60,000 caxas or 100 silver ducats. 146.
Sakai to Awaji Island and in the Eastern Seto area. The reason for being posted there was mainly as provision supplier and backup for the Kinai troops of Hideyoshi led by his brother, Hidenaga, and by his nephew, Hidetsugu, engaged in the conquest of Shikoku Island. Yukinaga by then held the position of head administrator (Fudegashira, 笔頭), by which he had to collect provisions from people in villages, ensure they respected the laws of the realm under Hideyoshi, send provisions to the troops, and clear the seaways from rival pirate bands. This latter task he accomplished magnificently, as his ships were equipped with cannons. Steichen reports that Yukinaga fought like a devil, attacking by surprise and striking terror in his enemies by using his heavy artillery\(^{154}\).

In 1584, Konishi Yukinaga intervened as Hideyoshi’s reinforcement navy against his enemy, Saiga Magoichi, attacking the fortress of Kishiwada in Izumi with seventy vessels and destroying the enemy. In this instance, as Frois reports, Yukinaga was leading the fleet with a galleon carrying on board the cannon that Otomo Sōrin, lord of Bungo, Kyushu, purchased from the Jesuits and gave to Oda Nobunaga as gift\(^{155}\). The usage of such weapon gave Yukinaga the leverage he needed in battle. By then, Yukinaga was in charge of protecting the harbor of Osaka and Sakai. In April of the following year 1585, Yukinaga and Ryūsa fought tirelessly together with Hideyoshi against the Buddhist monk establishments of Saiga and Negoro; the Buddhist monks were well skilled in battle and Hideyoshi lost more than a thousand men, but in the end he was victorious. Both Buddhist institutions suffered a catastrophic defeat and their power was greatly diminished. In that campaign, Hideyoshi employed more than seven thousand muskets, two thousand swords, ten thousand golden spears, and a great number of bowmen. Yukinaga served during the naval attack on Saiga\(^{156}\).

It was with this series of victorious battles that Yukinaga’s fame spread and he became appreciated amongst other warriors. His ties with Hideyoshi and his rising power had not always

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been so bright. In fact, during Oda Nobunaga’s reign, after the Araki crisis in which the Christian Takayama Ukōn, by then Araki Murashige’s retainer, was forced to choose between joining Oda Nobunaga’s forces and having his family killed, or remaining with Araki and having the Christian Fathers killed. He chose neither by showing himself in front of Oda Nobunaga after having taken the tonsure and declaring himself a monk. Oda was clever enough to understand the stratagem and renewed to Ukōn the offer to side with him, an offer that Ukōn did not refuse. Ryūsa and Yukinaga were charged with crimes not committed under the false testimony of Araki Murashige (荒木村重), who due to his losses was an enemy of all Christians, and who became a merchant close to Hideyoshi. At the time, Yukinaga and his father incurred some big commercial losses as they were excluded from the circle of merchants benefiting from Hideyoshi’s patronage. They were able to prove their innocence and their name was cleared. But this situation caused not a few problems for Ryūsa. This may have been also one of the causes for Yukinaga’s almost stubborn sentiment to prove to Hideyoshi his unfettered loyalty regardless of his religious faith. This he proved by continuing to fight for Hideyoshi’s vision of conquest in the following years and until his death.

That same year, sixth month; he also fought in the battle of Owari, Takebana Castle. As a reward, Yukinaga obtained a second traffic route between Shimotsui, Shiwaku, and Utatsu (下津井 坂倉 宇多津), and he thought to unite it to the first sea traffic route of Muro, Shōdojima, and Hikita. Shiwaku Island, previously a territory ruled by the Noshima Murakami pirates, by 1585 was fully under Yukinaga’s control.

In this regard, Father Organtino, an Italian Jesuit stationed in Japan, writing about his travels between Kyoto and Kyushu around the same year, states the following:

“In the meantime, the divine providence did not miss to take care of the needs of the Fathers because at one league [of distance] from Funai there were two big and secure vessels in the harbor of Shiwaku, that is a harbor renowned here in Japan, and this place belongs to Agostino Yacurodono [Yukinaga]. In one of those vessels considered a better one, came a very skilled captain native of that place, a gentile and a very good man who wanted to be of service and do even more to obtain the will [esteem] of Agostino Yacurodono...three or four leagues distant from Usuki, it was necessary for the Fathers to go into smaller vessels (because it was very dangerous to travel in that weather & because there were many thieves [pirates] on the sea.).”

This letter refers to part of the trip undertaken by Organtino and Frois from Shiwaku, passing from Funai and to Usuki, having Bungo, Kyushu, as their final destination. As Organtino reported, Shiwaku by then was a famous place safe to travel to and from, but once in Usuki, there was a pirate area and therefore dangerous to be in. Organtino mentioned that in order to proceed on their journey, the Fathers had to obtain a travel permit from Condera Canbioye (Kuroda Yoshitaka Simon), Hideyoshi’s commander, and once they arrived they showed it to Xengoku (Sengoku Hidehisa). But he in turn did not issue a permit, and the Fathers were harassed for three days by local boatmen and forced to go back to Funai to request a further permit from Sengoku Hidehisa.

About all these troubles, Organtino commented:

“And it was not little charity that our Lord used with these Fathers and Brothers, by sending them in the month of December (in the full force of winter & at the time of so many riots and needs to which there were no human remedies [that could suffice]) Vessels so comfortable and safe as the ones of Shiwaku with such a person so well known and obliged to Agostino [Konishi Yukinaga]; because if he was someone else, we would have been in danger, as it is custom of Japan in time of continuous warfare and riots that all of us here escape & take whatever we are offered in such a good occasion as from it depends our life.”

158 Organtino Gnocchi Soldi. *Copia di due lettere dal Giappone scritte dal Padre Organtino Bresciano della compagnia di gesù dal Meaco del Giappone al molto Reverendo P.N. il P. Claudio Acquaviva preposito generale. Ed Luigi Zanetti. Rome. 1587. 11. Original text: “Entretanto não falro a divina providencia de acudir as necesidades dos padres porquê chegará huma legua de Funay duas embarcações mui grandes & seguras de Xiuacu, que he hun porto muy nomeado aqui en Japão, a aonde ha muitas embarcações & esta agora foger a Agostino Yacuradono, & em huna dellas que era a milhor vinha por capitão hun gentio de seu natural muito bô home & tinha muito desejo de fazer algo service & ganhar a vóta de Agostino...tre o quarts leguas longe de Usuki & era necesario que os padres fossem later em embarcações pequenas (o que era muy perigoso por ser en tal tempo, & aver muyto ladrones no mar...)”

159 Ibid. 22: Original text: “E não foi pequena a misericordia que nostro S. usou con os dito Padres & irmãos, mandandolhe nos mes de Dezembro (que era a força do inverno : & en tempo de tantas revoltas & necessidade, em o
In Organtino’s words, the place Yukinaga had carved for himself between the Island of Shiwaku, Shōdojima, and Bizen was a safe-haven for boats of a certain tonnage and a secure place to travel. But from his words certainly transpires the fact that Hideyoshi’s bureaucracy and the application of the laws of the realm depended very much on the people who enforced those. Organtino’s letter shows in effect that, while Yukinaga was successfully managing Shiwaku and its surroundings, Sengoku Hidehisa was not so careful. Neither were so complacent the boatmen who refused passage to the fathers, harassing them for days. Indeed, Organtino’s statement about the excellent service of Yukinaga’s men in a period of warfare tells the importance of proper secure seafaring networks on which the Christian fathers and others could rely. This shows also that the Seto Inland Sea area by then was not as yet totally under Hideyoshi’s control nor became fully integrated into the policy of unification until much later, as exalted by some Japanese and Western scholars.

Hideyoshi defeated the Chosokabe family in the sixth month of 1585. Shikoku Island was divided amongst Hideyoshi’s retainers. After Chosokabe’s defeat and Tokugawa Ieyasu’s truce, Hideyoshi enjoyed a relative period of peace in his Osaka Castle. Yukinaga spent time in Osaka Castle with his wife and also with his mother, father, and sister, who resided there as well. All of his family members were in the service of Hideyoshi. His mother Magadalena (Wasa) became the personal secretary of Kita no Mandokoro (Hideyoshi’s main wife Nene) together with his sister Catarina. His father Ryūsa was at the time Hideyoshi’s treasurer and was also in charge of Hideyoshi’s precious tea utensils. Organtino states that Yukinaga was amongst the captains of Hideyoshi, the most favored and the one who had the confidence of the Quabacundono, or kwampaku (Hideyoshi’s title since 1585). In fact, Yukinaga was invited every Sunday to
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Hideyoshi’s residence to talk and eat there, showing that he was welcome and in close terms of friendship with Hideyoshi. The same was true for Takayama (Justo) Ukōn, who arrived very happy, as he had just received a fief in Akashi to replace the domain he had previously in the land of Takatsuki. These two Christian warriors were in effect the backbones of Hideyoshi’s military structure based on a loyalty that was not without a certain degree of paternalistic bonding. Konishi Yukinaga was his Great Admiral of the Sea or, as Frois wrote, “Capitan Mor do Mar,” and Takayama Ukōn was his Captain of the Guards. Both had shared various campaigns and Yukinaga was influenced by Ukōn’s openness, joviality, and strong faith in Christianity. However, also Yukinaga, since his life in Okayama, had surrounded himself with friends sharing his same faith.

Since his life in Okayama, Yukinaga had surrounded himself with friends, who shared his faith, and he himself became a supporter of Christianity by accepting the Jesuit Fathers in his domains. However, the reasons for Yukinaga’s fervent Christianity are not to be found only in his acquaintances. His family’s mercantile background and Ryūsa’s approach to Christianity are important factors that certainly influenced Yukinaga’s thought. Ryūsa’s Christian commitments became stronger after he became Governor of Sakai. He did influence Yukinaga, to a certain extent. But it was only after Yukinaga pursued his administrative/military career and demonstrated excellent mediating skills that he was able to adopt and apply Christianity as a political, economic, and military tool in his domains. His Christian thought is shown in his role as a mediator during the submission of the Seto area, particularly of Amakusa. It is as mediator that he became extremely important in dealing with the Christian lords of Kyushu during Hideyoshi’s Kyushu’s campaign. But it was in the Seto Islands that Yukinaga began to apply Christianity as a medium to facilitate international relations, and to control the area on behalf of Hideyoshi.

3.6 The Christian Network: Jesuits in Japan

The Seto Inland Sea, as mentioned, was an area of cultural contact, not only between foreign cultures like Koreans, Chinese, Ryukyuans, and Portuguese but also amongst the Japanese themselves divided in various domains with various different traits. Jerry Bentley, an American historian, characterizes the process of cultural exchange as having taken place between West and East using three different methods of acculturation: forceful integration, willful absorption, and rejection. In all three cases there was a certain degree of exchange. Bentley states that: "...As far as cultural exchange is concerned the principal results of technology and disease were to magnify vastly Europeans' potential to inaugurate processes of conversion induced by political, social and economic pressures, and to increase equally vastly the incidence of deculturation."\(^{162}\)

While it is not possible to say that Japan had a process of de-culturation, the contrary is rather true, as in different periods it absorbed foreign cultures, using its surrounding sea like a filter to introduce and customize what was needed for its cultural expression and political development. The Sixteenth Century constituted the second period in which Japan came into contact with a foreign Empire: the West. Western culture, represented by the Portuguese merchants and Jesuit missionaries entered Japan by the backdoor, using trade to access diplomatic relations and cultural contact.

The process of religious absorption and mercantile exchange that took place was not without difficulties. The first ones to get acquainted with the Portuguese and the Jesuits were nevertheless the people of the peripheries, those on Tanegashima Island, and in Kyushu, and merchants and pirates of the Seto Inland Sea area, the reason being that mainly these people had access and skills to deal with foreigners. In any culture, merchants and warriors were the first to cross boundaries, and Japan was not different. The first convert to Christianity is said to be Yajirō, the pirate that led the Jesuit Father Francisco Xavier to Japanese shores. While some scholars think
it to be correct, the fact that Yajirō returned to his piratical endeavors soon after his encounter with the Jesuits, tells us that religious conversion took time and a lot of effort to bear its fruits in Japan as well as elsewhere.

It is possible to argue that the initial curiosity for these strangers was replaced by interest about their coming, their purposes, and their way of living. Nobunaga also had questioned their arrival in Japan from such far away places. As soon as he had determined that they were not people with bellicose intentions toward him or toward his policies, he treated them with hospitality, as long as they did not interfere with his goals and as long as they could provide new weaponry and trade. Oda Nobunaga used the Jesuits effectively to reduce the power of Buddhist sects that did not support him. In doing so, he favored the Jesuits as a political instrument to counter balance the power of the various Buddhist sects, although he never became a Christian himself. The Jesuits in turn had a program to convert Japan in order to regain the prestige they had lost in Europe during the engaging ideological battle of the Catholic counter reform.\(^{163}\)

This process of acculturation, as it is possible to argue, was not void of political and economic gains on both sides. In Japan, the key to open the door was trade and the Jesuits cleverly


\(^{163}\) The Jesuits were a Christian order constituted on 27th September 1540 by Ignazio da Loyola, a Spanish nobleman and an ex-soldier. This fact is reflected in the hierarchical structure, military in its formation, as its members were in effect mainly all ex-soldiers who took orders and became Fathers. The Society of Jesus, as it came to be called, had its supreme leader in the Pope of Rome. Their past experience in the evangelization of the Americas and in the Philippines gave them a well-rounded experience in dealing with other civilizations. Their teaching methods had improved along the journey from Europe to Asia and had reached a certain refinement by the time they landed in Japan. With it also came a change in perception about who was defined as uncivilized. Initially, the theory on the capability of indigenous populations to become civilized proposed by Bartolome de Las Casas was based on four degrees of capabilities to become human: men living as animals constituted the lowest level, followed by men able to communicate, simple folks, and then civilized people. The capability to be civilized gradually shifted with De Acosta, a Jesuit, to encompass people's diverse material cultures in dealing with ancient civilizations like Chinese and Japanese. In addition, the Jesuits' training process for members of the Society willing to become missionaries was very strict, so that only selected members with proven qualities could become missionaries. Their aim to "civilize" people by bringing them closer to Christianity had occurred in Medieval Europe where Christianity was used to unite people from diverse backgrounds under a unique set of ideas and rituals universally understood.
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leaned on the side of the Portuguese merchants from Macao and Goa to gain access and become acquainted with the Japanese warlords, particularly the ones who favored Christianity.\(^{164}\)

In return for being commercial intermediaries in Japan, the Jesuits requested permission to stay and convert people to Christianity. However, in proposing Christian concepts, alien and abstract to the majority of the Japanese, was a difficult task. Hence, the absorption of Christianity by the Japanese and the teaching of it by the Jesuits took time and great effort. Initially the Jesuits viewed the Japanese as a people that could “not be trusted,” but by 1583, Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), the vice provincial for Japan, wrote that they were “the best people that have yet been discovered.”\(^{165}\)

This dramatic shift in opinion was caused by the initial approach of the first vice provincial after Francisco Xavier, Father Francisco Cabral (1533-1609), also like Loyola, an ex-soldier, who believed the Japanese should be treated harshly when learning to understand European superiority. Cabral supervised the construction of the College of Funai in Bungo, after the lord Ōtomo Sōrin (1530-1587) was baptized as Don Francisco in 1578 and donated a plot of land for its construction. Initially in this college, the Fathers were occupied in learning the Japanese language in order to translate books in Japanese. They concentrated on understanding the Religious Buddhist sects’ scriptures. In 1574, the Italian Father, Organtino Gnocchi Soldo (1533-1609), together with Luis Frois (1532-1597), employed an erudite ex-monk (*Bonzo*) to read the eight books of the Hokkekyō Sect\(^{166}\). They meant to learn their holy scriptures in order to confute them in theologian debates

\(^{164}\) By the 1550’s, the Jesuits constituted the forebears of European civilization and culture in Japan. They stayed in Japan for forty years before other orders, like the Franciscans, were allowed into the country. This territorial supremacy over other Catholic orders in Japan gave them the advantage of knowing the Japanese well and to be trusted by them. The Jesuits in Japan acted as mediators between Portuguese merchants and their Japanese counterparts as they stayed in the country with the sole purpose of learning the Japanese language, use and costumes of the people, and the way by which Christianity could be introduced effectively in order to proselytize.


\(^{166}\) Luis Frois, *Historia de Japam*. Vol. II, Ed. Jose Wicki. Lisbon; 1976. 408-409. According to Frois, that monk was well versed in Japanese letters and a relative, as well as a retainer of a nobleman. By the age of thirty that monk decided to return to the world and married. But because he was poor he needed to work. Organtino employed him for
with Buddhist monks. The Jesuit Fathers would request permission to build churches also in order to teach children and young people the Christian doctrine so that the following generations could be raised as Christians, following rituals that would become a life style and thus become “civilized.” But due to the many wars in Kyushu and central Japan that made their lives precarious, and because the Fathers were just a minority, they did not encounter a great deal of success.

Contrary to the methods proposed by Cabral, Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), an innovator in his field, was convinced that a gentle approach would give better results. Furthermore, he believed in training a Japanese clergy and in teaching all the subjects taught in Europe, such as the humanities, science, philosophy, rhetoric, and medicine. But overall, Valignano wanted the Jesuit missionary Fathers to become fluent in Japanese in order to communicate and get used to Japanese customs so to be accepted. It was important to learn the everyday habits that made the Fathers “civilized” according to Japanese customs.

The process of acculturation in Asia indeed worked both ways. In 1580, the first novitiate was opened in Usuki, Bungo under the aegis of Ōtomo Sōrin, and a college in Arima (Takaku) on the land of Arima Harunobu (baptized with the name of Don Protasio). In Kyoto, Organtino Gnocchi Soldo had received a good piece of land from Nobunaga and took care of the construction of churches and seminaries. Later on, other colleges were opened in Azuchi, Amakusa, and Funai. Valignano increased the number of Fathers sent to Japan from 40 in 1572 to

two hours a day to translate in Portuguese alphabets, and for one hour the ex-monk explained the doctrines to the Fathers.

167 His uncommon but effective approach derived most probably from the result he saw in supervising the effort of another Italian Jesuit Father and his former ex-student, Matteo Ricci (1552-1614), in China. Matteo Ricci became very fluent in Chinese so as to converse with the mandarins’ literati about Christianity. He published many books in Chinese and in the last six years of his life became the superior of the Chinese mission. In order to convert the Chinese to Christianity, he adopted Chinese customs and studied them in depth. He debated Confucian philosophy to find common threads with Christian theology and cosmology. In fact, Confucian philosophy was accepted by the Jesuits, as thought to be similar to natural laws, while Buddhism was rejected. Indirectly, the Jesuits attracted the attention of the Chinese literati by Western scientific progress in subjects such as cartography, mathematics, and mechanics. Ricci used all this to explain Christianity in a coherent and rational way. Being a trained mathematician, he explained Euclid theorems which fascinated the Chinese, since those theories had practical application.

168 Ibid. 24
approximately 200 by 1582\textsuperscript{169}. The large number of Jesuits had to rely on the Portuguese trade for their survival. The Portuguese trade consisted in buying Chinese silk to sell in Japan for Japanese silver, via the Portuguese city of Macao. Since 1570, the Portuguese merchants had a secure harbor in Nagasaki, where their Great Ships, also called “Nao” or “Kurofune”, could enter. In Nagasaki, Japanese merchants had to pay an annual trading fee, while the Portuguese were exempt from such obligation.

In regard to money, the Fathers were scarcely provided for as they were financed by the Portuguese monarchy with 500 cruzados from their customs revenues from the Malacca trade\textsuperscript{170}. Valignano estimated that in order to have a viable mission in Japan, the Fathers needed an annual income of 12,000 cruzados. Therefore, he sent a proposal to the general of the Jesuits, Claudio Acquaviva, to have a share of 100 pikul of silk floss from the Macao trade allotted to the Fathers for their maintenance in Japan. Often due to shipwreck and piracy, the great ship did not reach Japanese soil, and then the Fathers were at the mercy of their hosts\textsuperscript{171}. Technically, the Church forbade the Jesuits to trade, but Valignano understood that if the missions in Japan were feasible and had to survive, there was no other way. He was accused by less liberal Jesuits like Father Cabral, who did not approve of his methods\textsuperscript{172}. Self financing the Japanese missions was a temporary remedy he thought viable until Japan would become Christian and Christianity could be


\textsuperscript{170} This revenue was later increased to 1,000 ducats. In addition, Pope Gregory the XIII promised an annual sum of 4,000 ducats in 1583. In 1585, that amount was raised by Pope Sixtus V to 6,000 ducats. But mostly the money did not arrive, as lamented by Father Valignano in his Sumario.

\textsuperscript{171} Alessandro Valignano, \textit{Sumario de la cosas del Japon (1583) y Adiciones del sumario de Japon (1592)}. Ed. Alvarez-Taladriz; Tokyo, 1954. 335-337.

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid. 117; Cabral believed that Valignano did undervalue the real scope of the mission, doing missionary work and taking care of the spiritual realm. But Valignano’s background, as a noblemen, and his understanding of politics much more than the Fathers who was unconcerned with the mundane world, allowed him to apply strict reforms for the success of the mission.
a government sponsored religion\(^{173}\). But until then, they had to rely on the silk trade versus
Japanese silver, established between Macao and Nagasaki’s merchants\(^{174}\).

The port of Nagasaki was established in 1570, by concession of the lord Omura Sumitada (Don Bartolomeo), but the insecurity of the domains and the particularity of the Japanese culture did not allow Valignano to accept as a property of the Jesuits the harbor city of Nagasaki. As Pacheco explains, Valignano stated in his own words that the Japanese did not conceive of a donation in the same terms as the Europeans. They were capable of taking back gifts and even items that they bought, as it was their culture\(^{175}\). Therefore, Valignano could not accept Omura Sumitada’s donation of Nagasaki, hence obtained as a concession, if he had foreseen the trouble. But from 1582, the increased number of missionaries, from 40 to 130, required more money and more trade. Previously, Father D’Almeida donated 4,000 ducats to invest in the silk business for the Fathers’ expenses. The agreement on the silk for silver trade monopsony (Pancada) was that the Portuguese would not send more than 1,600 pikuls of silk to be exchanged for silver\(^{176}\). Valignano negotiated for only 50 pikuls, sold for 121 ducats per pikul, which were to be for the Jesuits’ sustenance\(^{177}\).

Once the logistic problems of the Jesuits Fathers were taken care of, their evangelization tactics improved. The Jesuits started to appeal to the people by establishing free hospitals

\(^{173}\) To a certain extent this was true, but the eagerness to succeed in proselytizing Japan would have given him an unrivaled authority and power amongst his European peers. But his main concerns were also economically sound as, according to his judgment, the Mexican Galleons from Mexico or from the Philippines would have traded directly with Japan excluding stopping in Goa or in Macao and in doing so, eliminating the means for the survival of the Japanese missions. Valignano knew that the silk for silver trade was a lifeline for Macao and the Jesuits in Japan. In this regard, when Father Ruggieri arrived in Macao from China, he found the city in hard times financially, as the traders on whom the city depended had not returned from Japan. He was delayed for a year, as he also waited for the Jesuits’ earnings in that commercial enterprise. However, the necessity to keep trade alive and the missions in Japan had also a colorful political tone. Valignano wanted to keep away other Orders (like Franciscans and Dominicans) with the justification that they were not capable of dealing with the Japanese.


\(^{176}\) In a monopsony there is one sole buyer and in this case the only buyer from the silk were the Japanese who also determined the price and quantity to be sold annually to the Portuguese from Macao.
(D’Almeida’s hospital in Funai was already well-known for being the first to operate on patients, and to train Japanese doctors in Western medical knowledge), orphanages, and charitable associations focused on the well-being of the less fortunate, and so on. These public enterprises were established in all major domains and appealed to the Japanese, who often participated with private donations. Konishi Ryūsa is reknown for having built two hospitals and Yukinaga contributed to the sustenance of the Fathers. The aim of the Fathers, settled in key regions, was to spread Christianity to the higher classes, all over Japan. The conversion of the warlords, whom in turn would order the conversion of their retainers and people living in their domains, was essential to their view of religious prosperity. In addition, the reason for having so many centers disseminated all over Japan was that if wars broke out, by having churches, colleges and seminars in areas controlled by Christians, the Jesuits and their pupils could find shelter in other locations.

However, wherever the Jesuits would go, due to their language and habit expertise, they became the medium for Japanese merchants to trade. Valignano reported of dealings to import gold on behalf of certain lords. It is known that Ryūsa’s trade brought him often in Nagasaki. He traded 2000 Kanme of raw silk on behalf of Hideyoshi, and because he was a Christian he could probably deal easily with the Portuguese. In essence, the Jesuits came to play an important role in the development of Japanese daimyōs’ international relations and particularly regarding the trade relations with the Christian daimyōs of Kyushu. Yukinaga, being a Christian who knew the Fathers, became instrumental in favoring smooth relations between local lords, the Fathers, and the central government.

Konishi Yukinaga’s Christian Network: a Circle of Friends

Konishi Yukinaga, being born in a Christian mercantile family, was familiar with the Jesuits. His father and his family connections, the Hibiya, were well acquainted with the Portuguese merchants and Jesuit missionaries from Oda Nobunaga’s time. On February 27th, 1565, Father Louis de Almeida met Hibiya Ryōkei during his visit to Sakai. Father de Almeida was a medical doctor, but at the time ironically, as he got a bad cold, he had to stay in Hibiya Ryōkei’s home for a period or twenty five days\textsuperscript{179}. De Almeida’s travelling companions, Luis Frois and Gaspal Vilela, continued on to Kyoto. Once de Almeida recovered, he was invited together with Father Vilela to the Island of Sanga to visit Don Sancho (Hibiya Vicente) who allowed Vilela to get back to Kyoto in a palanquin, as he had not totally recovered from his ailment\textsuperscript{180}.

Hibiya Vicente attended from 1561 the Jesuit College in Bungo, Kyushu but went back to his family due to the civil wars that were taking place there. Vicente was ruling Sanga and became Yukinaga’s retainer once the latter ruled the traffic routes in the Seto Inland Sea. Given the friendship and family ties between the Konishi and the Hibiya, Ryūsa also came to host the thankful Fathers. Although in 1569, Luis Frois, the Jesuit historian had already visited Ryūsa four times from 1581 to 1584; it was Ryūsa who hosted the Fathers on various occasions.

Frois states: “Kyoto, April 14th, 1581. For a period of time the Fathers did not live in Hibiya Ryōkei Diogo’s house, instead they were hosted by Konishi Ryūsa Joachim, who intervened as host and he did it several times”, again in September 1584, De Figuereido writes:

\textsuperscript{178} Ikegami Hiroko, \textit{Shōkūhō Seiken to Edo Bakufu}, Kōdansha, 2002. 257. : This fact is reported also by Iwao Seiichi in his article “Japanese Foreign Trade in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} Centuries”. Acta Asiatica. Vol. 22. 1972.
\textsuperscript{180} José Vaz de Carvalho, “Luis de Almeida, medico, mercador e missionario no Japão (1525-1583)”. \textit{Cartas I, 168v}. Instituto Storico da Companhia de Jesus, Roma. 114: Here Carvalho calls Hibiya Vicente clearly Don Sancho, Sanga dono. However he is called Don Mancho in other documents.
"We took away from the church the altar that is now in the house of Ryôkei... that night Ryûsa hosted us in his home"\textsuperscript{181}

In Sakai, the tight network of Christians was formed by people well acquainted with each other. By September 1583, when Father Organtino and Brother Lorenzo went to visit Hideyoshi, they were received by Konishi Ryûsa, his treasurer, and by another Christian, his secretary, called Aydono\textsuperscript{182}. There is no doubt that the Konishi were Christians. Valignano wrote that Yukinaga was a Christian believer "brought up amongst the Fathers and devoted to them"\textsuperscript{183}. Since childhood, Yukinaga was familiar with the Jesuits and it is possible that he may have studied in the College of Bungo, but so far there is no evidence of it. Although his family was Christian, he lived from 1574 in Okayama, but even there, due to the traveling of the Fathers from Kyushu to the capital, he was able to meet lords and retainers interested in Christianity. In 1565, Father Vilela was invited to debate with Yûki Yamashiro no Kami Tadamasa Don Enrique (結城山城守忠正), who was a commander under Matsunaga Hisahide (松長久秀) and resided in Nara and Kyoto. Tadamasa descended from a noble family. He was a well-versed calligrapher, astrologer, and necromancer\textsuperscript{184}.

Father Vilela’s invitation occurred because Tadamasa met Diogo Hibiya Ryôkei on a journey and they began to talk about Christianity. Tadamasa was curious about the nature of a God responsible for men’s actions, and the possibility or rewards and punishments in the afterlife. The reality these foreign Fathers believed in had to be clarified; hence, he organized a meeting to


\textsuperscript{184} Alessandro Valignano, Sumario de la cosas del Japon (1583) y Adiciones del sumario de Japon (1592). Ed. Alvarez-Taladriz; Tokyo, 1954. 126.
discuss Christian beliefs, and Brother Lorenzo, the best versed Japanese brother in rhetoric and doctrine, was sent by Father Vilela. Father Vilela sent Brother Lorenzo but feared for his life, as that invitation could have been the trap of an ill-intentioned man.

Tadamasa was very impressed by the rationality of the new doctrine and decided to convert along with his family. Therefore, Brother Lorenzo sent word to Father Vilela, who rejoiced at the news. At the time, this type of disputation and refutation became a popular way to inform warriors, bonzes, and the nobility of Christian tenets, doctrine, rituals, and so on. Usually the debates were public, and to this particular one, according to Frois, attended by more than a thousand people.

These disputes were also a familiar scene amongst the various Buddhists sects. The frequent disputes showed that society was reforming and new tenets, values that could reflect the rapid social changes, were indeed needed, and Christianity offered a rational solution. But in 1565, it was not only Tadamasa who converted; also his brother became a Christian. His name was Yūki Yamashiro no Kami Don Juan, lord of Okayama Castle and owner of a big estate. Don Juan was so fond of the Fathers that he collected in a book with golden pages the signature of each Father he encountered. In addition, he claimed to have in his collection a piece of a letter signed by Francisco Xavier at the time of his coming. His enthusiasm for this new religion can be defined as limitless. He had a cousin who worked under him as a retainer, Yūki Yaheiji George. Yaheiji, who later on became an important figure for Yukinaga, was a generous man. He is reported in Jesuit records as being an honorable man, concerned with others’ well-being.

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186 Brother Lorenzo was a blind wandering monk living by entertaining people on the side of the roads, telling stories like a troubadour (Biwa Hōshi), before he entered the service of Father Francisco Xavier in Yamaguchi.
187 Luis Frois, Historia de Japam. Vol. II, Ed. Jose Wicki. Lisbon; 1976. 104: Another historical disputation happened few years later in 1569, and it was held by Oda Nobunaga. The confutation was between the Buddhist Nixio (called Nichijo by Frois) and Brother Lorenzo. The Jesuit brother expounded the concept of God, the four elements of creation, eternal life and the immortality of the soul. To these principles Nichijo had no refutations to reply with, and the Jesuits came out winning the theological match.
189 I will be referring to Yūki Yaheiji George as Yaheiji from now on.
Yaheiji’s personality was certainly overwhelming. It is written that, after a battle, Yaheiji befriended his former enemy, called Miki Bundayu Don Paulo (三木文大夫), as he discovered Don Paulo was also a convert.

The Yuki family was in contact with Sangadono (Vicente Hibiya) and with the Takayama family. Takayama Justo Ukōn became, together with his father Sakōn Tayu Chikafusa Dario, a fervent Christian. The Takayama were not wealthy, although their family descended from Prince Atsutane (897-966), ancestor of the Uda-Genji lineage, and therefore noble. Dario, Justo’s father, was employed at the service of Wada Koremasa, retained of the Ashikaga Yoshiaki, then Shōgun. It is through the Ashikaga’s connection first and Oda Nobunaga later that Takayama Dario and Justo came to be in the service of Oda Nobunaga. It is a rather interesting fact that these warriors were all connected to either the Miyoshi or to the Ashikaga houses. It is possible to assume that from its arrival, Christianity started to be explored by discontented noblemen as a possible venue to avoid Court internal factional disputes or as a tool against Buddhist claims.

When Oda Nobunaga began to favor Christianity many amongst the nobility and warriors turned to it. The Takayama’s, with the help of Father Organtino, built a church in their domain and it is known that a church was built also in Okayama. Justo Ukōn was baptized at the age of twelve and by sixteen he was already on the battlefield. At the age twenty-one he held his first domain in Takatsuki. Takayama Ukōn, as well as George Yaheiji, helped in the construction of the Southern Barbarians (Nambanjin) Church in Kyoto. Yaheiji sent forty to fifty men to work in the construction and collaborated on whatever was needed. Frois reported that he provided gold and silver for officials’ and workers’ expenses and sustenance. The church planned by Father Organtino was completed by 1576. Organtino’s constructions did not end there, as in 1580 he asked Nobunaga for land to build a house (casa) for his seminarists. By 1581, the materials for the

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191 Ibid. 459
house were donated. In a letter written by the donors of manpower and materials there is the signature of Konishi Josei (Yukinaga’s brother). Yukinaga’s family supported the expansion of Christianity and was part of an extensive Christian network.

The connection between all these warriors in the Kawachi and Bizen areas turned out to be influential and important for Yukinaga. By 1584, Yukinaga surrounded himself with a majority of capable Christian retainers, especially the Christian warriors of Okayama and surroundings, who knew him due to his activities in the Seto Inland Sea. According to Ikenaga Kō, Yukinaga married Yaheiji’s daughter (called Justa in Jesuit documents) who resided in Osaka Castle. It is in fact Yaheiji who promoted Christianity in agreement with Yukinaga in the Seto Islands where Yukinaga ruled. It seems that Yaheiji was a driving force in the promotion of this new faith and maybe this is one of the reasons Konishi Yukinaga was baptized in 1584 in Miyako (Kyoto), by Brother Lorenzo, together with his father Ryūsa and his mother Magdalena and fifty other people in the same church that his family, Yaheiji and Takayama Ukōn had helped to build. Yukinaga’s baptism was probably consequential to his friendship and marriage alliance with Yaheiji, but the fact that he seemed a changed man afterward implies that all the string of battles he participated in had worn him out.

Although it was the way of the warrior to kill an enemy once the sword was out of its sheath, Yukinaga was still a man from a mercantile background, proud of himself, a man of letters, a thinker, and although attracted by the quick-witted personality of the regent (Kampaku) Hideyoshi, and honored by his confidence, he could also see the politics that permeated that environment: the greediness of the high Buddhist prelates and monks, Hideyoshi’s lavish excesses versus the poverty of people in the countryside, people who starved on the streets due to wars, and

192 Southern Barbarian or Nambanjin was the name by which the Portuguese and missionaries were known in Japan.
194 Ikenaga Kō 池永昇, Chūsei Sakai wo Daihyo suru Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga [中世姫を代表す俊決小西行長]. Tokyo, 1936.
children who died from poverty. All this, including the unnecessary killings amongst the warrior elites based on an honor code that worshipped self-immolation, or the killing of others for the sake of obtaining an elusive perfection, became irrational to Yukinaga.

Yukinaga's own introspection and rationality did not allow him to seek perfection by applying an honor code reserved for the warriors (Bushi), a class he did not belong to, and whose tenets he did not care for. Perhaps it is no wonder that amongst his friends were people with strong religious beliefs or extravagant personalities, such as Don Juan or even Asano Yoshitaka, legendary for his easygoing personality defiant of chains of command. These samurai, warriors who had a background without a pedigree and that were the latest on the scene of the medieval period of civil wars, needed an ideological framework by which to justify their existence in power and be able to perpetuate their power. This framework was given by Christianity.

It was Christianity that appealed to Japanese like Konishi Yukinaga, Takayama Ukōn, and Hibiya Ryokei, so appealing that they wanted to go through a harsh religious training, similar to the warrior honor code or as it was interpreted. The Jesuits taught in effect basic catechism, the Ten Commandments, and prayers such as Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Salve Regina, and Credo in Latin and Japanese. In addition, the act of contrition, the mystery of creation, how to receive the Lord's Grace, and confessions were widely professed. Also flagellation, that was popular in the late fifteenth century, was part of the process of purification from sins committed. The purification of sins was already familiar to the Japanese in Shintō practices of renewing the harmony between heaven and earth, and therefore it was a concept well understood. Christian rituals for the elimination of sins and prayers were also a practice similar to the annual Shintō purification rituals (oharae) and prayers (norito) performed at the end of the year. Even Buddhism had in the practice of Shūgendo a way to practice austerities.

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196 Ibid.
But what appealed to the Japanese was the concept of salvation and of the immortality of the soul, the latter being extremely revolutionary and widely discussed. As explained by the Jesuits, the concept of the immortality of the soul was not known by the warriors and noblemen because the majority of those belonged to the Zen sect that proposed the existence of this life only. The Jesuits made known this concept to the people before receiving baptism. All this was reinforced initially by confutations of Shintō and Buddhist doctrines, by rationally analyzing errors and mysticism, at least until the first printed version of the hagiography of the Saints was published in Kazusa in 1591. In the same year was published “Dochirina Kirishitan” in Japanese, expounding the tenet that unless one became a Christian, one cannot be saved in the afterlife. Ikuo Higashibaba reports that Dochirina explained that it was necessary to cultivate virtues such as faith, hope, and charity in order to be saved after death, and it was this teaching that was emphasized previous to the evangelization en-masse planned by Valignano from 1580. Previous to 1580, the Buddhists were also preaching salvation in the afterlife particularly with the Jōdo Shinshū sect led by the monk Rennyo (1415-1499). Although this made sense to Higashibaba, still the concept of an indestructible soul, a part of oneself that remains intact after death, was not there.

By 1585, many warriors became Christians because they had, even at a spiritual level, some gains. Salvation and immortality, to which everyone aspired, were the prizes for believing and the methods for obtaining such were to be baptized and to follow Christian rituals and prayers. Konishi Yukinaga observed such rules with attention, as Luiz de Guzman observed:

“Amongst the ones that were converted by him [B. Lorenzo], there were more than fifty main warriors, there was a man of great importance, and very close to Hashiba, because he [Hashiba] loved him as if he were his son, and

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198 Ikuo Higashibaba, “Historiographical issues in the studies of the Christian Century in Japan”. Japan’s Hidden Christians. Ed. Turnbull Stephen. Library Japan and Edition Synapse, 2000. 38: Higashibaba rightly states also that only the Pater Noster and Ave Maria prayers were in both Latin and Japanese. This was a concern for the later Hidden Christians (kakure kirishitan) who started to recite only the Latin Ave Maria because it was not easily interpreted and discovered.
made him his Captain general of the sea: he was called Don Augustin, and it was not a grievance for Hashiba that he
came a Christian: God gave to the warrior lots of knowledge and the esteem of his laws as he would provide to
preach sermons when he could, and before he became a Christian he was very proud and presumptuous, but after he
received his baptism, he seemed a different man, because the point that he held before in maintaining his honor, now
he used to look after the laws of God with great care and gave to all a good example...”

Luiz de Guzman reports a perception of Yukinaga that may have favorably impressed the Fathers.

Yukinaga by then received the baptismal name of Agostino; presumably he was baptized on St. Augustine’s day, as was customary in Europe. But Konishi Yukinaga, although a
Christian believer, had also further motives that brought him to become officially a Christian. His
main purpose was to foster international relations with the Jesuits, but he also used politically
Christianity in his domains. According to Ikenaga Kō, after his baptism Yukinaga requested to
Kita no Mandokoro, Hideyoshi’s main wife (also called Nene), with the help of his own mother,
who was the secretary of Kita no Mandokoro, three main things: 1) the permission to believe freely
in Christianity and to be able to promote it; 2) the permission to have the house of the missionaries
built closer to higher ranking soldiers’ headquarters; and 3) tax facilitations for Japanese who

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199 Luiz de Guzman, Historia de las missiones que han hecho los religiosos de la compania de Iesus para predicar el
Libro dezimo. 331. Original text: “Entre los que se convertieron por su medio, que serian mas de cinquenta cavalleros
principales, fue un moco de grandes partes, y muy privado de Faxiba, porque le queria como si fuera su hijo, y le hizo
su Capitan general de la mar: el que se llamó don Agustin, y no le peso a Faxiba, de que se hiziesse Christiano. diole
da nuestro Seiior a este cavallero, grande conocimiento, y estima de su ley, y asi procuraba traer a los sermones quando
podia, y el que antes de ser Christiano era muy altiyo, y presumptuoso, despues que se baptizo, parecio otro muy
diferente, porque el punto que antes tenia en conservar su honra, le ponia despues en guardar la ley de Dios, con mucho
 cuidado, y en el dar a todos el buen exemplo...” Their baptism taking place in Kyoto in 1584 is reported also in one of
Organtino’s letters. However, Japanese scholars like Matsuda Kiichi have doubts about its truthfulness because
Konishi Ryūsa has been always portrayed as one of the first Christians in Kyoto. This meant that he probably was
baptized by 1550 or 1560. The problem derives from the Jesuit methods of evangelization in Japan. The Jesuits wanted
to project Christianity as untouched by the syncretism of native elements, and in order to do so the natives had to
understand the culture and be able to explain Christian concepts in their totality. Therefore, the Jesuits would baptize
people after years of catechism to make sure their pupils would have learnt their subject well. An example of this
policy was in their occupation and conversion of the Philippines. The Jesuits arrived in Manila in 1581 but their
 teachings methods permitted the baptism of the natives only in the 1590's, nine years after their arrival.

200 According to the Gregorian calendar St. Augustine day falls on the 28th August. Most probably the date for his
baptism was the summer of 1584 (Tenshō 12. 7th month).
decided to convert to Christianity. He was only able to obtain what he asked in his first request.\textsuperscript{201}

Regarding this point, Crasset indicates that it was actually the Vice-provincial Father Coehlo, in visit to Hideyoshi’s palace, who proposed the requests that were forwarded by Yukinaga to his mother.\textsuperscript{202} In this regard, the requests forwarded by Coehlo were somewhat of a different nature and more reasonable, if understood from a Jesuits’ standpoint. In essence, Coehlo asked that the Jesuits could: 1) preach Christianity in Hideyoshi’s domains; 2) have the Jesuits’ houses exempt from hosting warriors in time of war (as was a common encumbrance for the Buddhist monasteries); and 3) be exempt as foreigners from all sales taxes.\textsuperscript{203}

Yukinaga was eager to gain further prestige. He did not mind aiding the Vice-provincial in his endeavours. But he did not stop there, by requesting the license only to Kita no Mandokoro. Yukinaga had a close friendship with Ukita Hideie, now thirteen or fourteen years old. He asked permission to Hideie’s mother to profess his religion in Okayama. This fact is confirmed by Guzman, who affirms that Yukinaga received from Hideyoshi the license to propagate Christianity in his domains and also received the license to propagate Christianity in Bizen, Okayama, and domain of Ukita Hideie.\textsuperscript{204}

The difference between Ikenaga and Guzman’s versions consists in the fact that, according to Guzman, he also wanted to have free entrance for the Fathers in the domain of Amaguchi (in the Seto Inland Sea) because there were Christians who needed to have Fathers there. The domain of Amaguchi was under the Mōri and if the Mōri allowed the propagation of Christianity in their eight or nine domains it would have been a great satisfaction for the Jesuits. Guzman reports that

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\textsuperscript{201} Ikenaga Kō 池永昇, Chūsei Sakai wo Daihyo suru Shunketsu Konishi Yukinaga「中世堿を代表する俊決小西行長」. Tokyo. 1936. 120. Ikenaga takes as a primary source for this information the Shibata Konjiki "柴田根治記".

\textsuperscript{202} Crasset Jean, The History of the Church of Japan, written originally in French by Mr. L’Abbe de T. and now translated into English by N.N. London, 1705-1707. Vol. 1. 424

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid. 424

\textsuperscript{204} Luiz de Guzman, Historia de las misiones que han hecho los religiosos de la compañía de Iesus para predicar el sancto evangelio en la India oriental, y en los reynos de la China y Japon. Ed. Alcals, Buda de I. Gracian. Spain, 1601. Libro dezimo, 341.
\end{flushright}
Yukinaga was the vice-commander for the whole area of Shimo, so it made sense for him to have his territories converted to Christianity. He used Christianity as a tool to mobilize and pacify the population of the Seto Inland Sea. It was for this reason that he requested that the Fathers go to his territories to proselytize to the people there. To have the Seto area, a major sea route and international communication area, politically stable was not an easy task, but if he were successful, that would be a major victory in itself. In addition, he was already working for his father between the port of Muro, Shōdojima, Shiwaku and the maritime republic of Sakai. This is an important point, as the Seto was a major international relations area, together with the southern island of Kyushu and with transshipment coastal cities such as Sakai. It was Sakai in fact that attracted all the interregional and international commerce, and it was Sakai that was the starting point for the propagation of this religious integration policy envisioned by Yukinaga. In Sakai, Yukinaga’s father, Ryūsa, was nominated magistrate in 1585, as he replaced Nobunaga’s aide Matsui Yūkan (松井友閥), who fell from Hideyoshi’s favor. In that function, he was supervising the harbor of Sakai and was part of the influential mercantile elite or gōshō (豪商).

3.8 The “Confraria della Misericordia” (慈悲役者): between religion and civic power

In Sakai, by the 1580s, Konishi Ryūsa became part of the Egōshū (会豪商), a self-regulatory organ of the city, formed by wealthy merchants operating as an oligarchic group. The city was ruled politically by a group of thirty-six wealthy mercantile houses, of which ten of those were the most prominent. Sakai was compared by the Jesuit Gaspar Vilela, who traveled there in 1562, as the “Venice of the Orient.” Similar to Venice, Sakai was a maritime republic.

Sakai’s wealth was built by people who belonged to a certain guild or a district association. These people, within their guild and according to their occupational roles, received economic
advantages and protection from outside competitors. Therefore, as organized merchants became powerful, they could negotiate their own independence from the military power in order to keep trading and producing wealth, used in turn to finance conflicts going on elsewhere. The merchants themselves organized their own mercenary bands. However, by the late medieval period, the power of the guilds was already greatly reduced by major disruptions to mercantile trade caused by internal conflicts. A second factor for the weakening of the powerful guilds was the expansion of the mercantile populace given by the liberalizations of market policies begun by the mid 1550s.

Agricultural technological advances brought an increased productivity and increased the need to trade locally and internationally (revival of the tally trade). Toyoda Takeshi states that Sakai benefited economically, as farmers were able to produce more and to retain part of their produce, which they later sold in local markets, thereby increasing their production and wealth. By then the old guilds still were retaining a certain degree of authority in commercial matters by deciding the perimeters where the local markets could be held and where they were forbidden. As the political situation of Sakai was in danger, politically connected merchants like the ones belonging to Sakai's city council saw their lifestyles and economic power threatened. With the fall of the Miyoshi overlords, other commercial groups formed by merchants like Konishi Ryūsa and Hibiya Ryōkei switched their alliances to Oda Nobunaga. By Oda's time Sakai's independence was greatly curtailed.

Sakai's willful oligarchy resembled the Medici oligarchy of Florence, and as Florence, the city was organized into mercantile guilds called za (組) and various associations according to the occupational role of its districts. Like Florence, Sakai, under powerful overlords, grew in size and economic wealth. The machishū (町衆), or district groups, were originally formed by mercantile,

205 See Appendix Ie. It contains a map of Sakai, showing the city harbor. Vilela's comparison with Venice's mercantile oligarchy under the structural aspect was indeed correct; however the Venetian oligarchy in reality had less political strength than its Japanese counterpart.
206 Toyoda Takeshi, Sakai no hatten. 119.
religious people and located in each city quarter. People belonging to the gōshō of Sakai, like Ryūsa, were in contact in other main mercantile cities, such as Hakata and Nagasaki, and with Jesuits, Portuguese, wealthy local merchants, and other associations. Hence, they were capable of having at their disposal an extended networking grid, which in Ryūsa’s and Yukinaga’s cases included their religious network as well.

In 1583, Ryūsa became Hideyoshi’s treasurer, as he was known for his knowledge and talent. Later on, he also acquired the title of Master of the Tea Utensils, as he had to take care of Hideyoshi’s precious tea caddy and utensils collection. His network was so extended that he was in charge of Hideyoshi’s procurement for the troops stationed elsewhere, or the supply line in time of war, together with Yukinaga, his son. By then, Ryūsa was fifty years old and, an age considered in Japan suitable for retirement from the mundane affairs. It was in fact a custom for older merchants to retire from business (inkyō) and to dedicate themselves to other less mundane activities. By that time, Ryūsa began also to use his power and his influence in a different direction. Being a Christian, he contributed to the establishment of the Christian’s association called the Confraternity of Mercy (Confraria da Misericordia), a confraternity formed by lay men and Christian Fathers, which had its origin in 1329, in Florence.

In Japan, the Confraternity resembled institutionally the one that existed in Macao. The Misericordia had seven leaders and was based upon seven Christian doctrinal principles, which had their application in the physical world. Each one of these leaders was in charge of one duty that corresponded to one of seven spiritual principles. These seven duties were performed according to the seniority of the members. The last to enter the confraternity would have been in charge of

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208 I will refer to the Confraternity of the Misericordia from now on as Confraternity or/and Misericordia. The Confraternity was to serve the soldiers injured during the power struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibellins factions, who sought control of the republic. It then spread all over Europe, as well as in Portugal, and then to the Portuguese Empire in the Americas and into Asia.
visiting sick people, the next person would have been in charge of funerary services, the third had
to visit the prisoners, the fourth to persuade bad people to redeem themselves, the fifth to help the
poor, the sixth to host travelers, and the seventh to manage the assets of the confraternity. Thus,
the person with the highest seniority was also the leader, although as specified in the
Misericordia’s statute, all the participants had equal rights and duties.

The Confraternity mostly was dedicated to help the poor and people temporarily
disadvantaged. It had important social functions; one of the most important at the time was to take
care of Christians’ burials and funerary services, to cure the poor, and to give them shelter. The
benefits were shared by Christians, but also many non believers contributed to the continuity of
such an institution. It is possible to imagine that before it became formally organized, the
Confraternity relied on community based structures such as machishu and religious structures as
the follower of Buddhist confraternities or Kō. In Japan, charitable institutions were popular in the Nara period under Prince Shotoku.
They began to work toward charitable deeds, which were continued by Princess Komyo, who
funded institutions such as Hidain (charity house) and Seyakuin (charitable hospital). In times of
need, like the period of civil wars, however, no Buddhist institutions provided such charity; on the
contrary, they cured people only if they were able to donate or pay a certain amount of money. But
the concept of charity did exist. Dr. Costa states that the Japanese terms chosen for the
confraternity’s name and for the name of its members were adapted from the Buddhist notions of
compassion or Jihi and its lay participants were described as Kambō (look) or persons that

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210 Gaetano Ape, Istruzioni per lo Governo del Monte della Misericordia: Cavate dalla primi statute, dalle istruzioni
antiche, dalle volume delle conclusioni, e dalle Giunte generali, dalle testaments, ed alter pie disposizioni. Stamperia
Felice Mosca. Napoli, 1705. 23.
211 At the beginning, the Confraternity was not well regarded, especially in Kyushu and Sakai, as their members
instituted orphanages and those brought up controversies among the people. Women who had children out of wedlock
or that were too poor to raise them often would bring the children to the Fathers to be raised. The Japanese claimed that
this behavior encouraged women’s misconduct and unacceptable behavior. Valignano, in his Summario, asserts that in
Sakai the orphanage particularly was not well seen, but given the results, in years, it came to be supported even by the
“gentiles” or the non Christians.
assisted in matters related to faith or charity\textsuperscript{212}. They provided religious education, prepared people for confession, and comforted the sick.

Informally, these associations began in Kyushu where Father Lucena, an Italian Jesuit, worked, and where a system of auto-taxation was established to give money to the poor. Other associations existed in Takushima, Ikitsuki (Hirado) and Arima, Hakata. Frois reports that, in Nagasaki, the first Misericordia Confraternity was founded in 1570 by a Japanese Christian from Sakai, a layman called Justin, and his wife. Both of them shaved their heads (took the tonsure) and lived to care for others. Apparently, Justin was retired and all his children were grown up. Justin did not work only in Nagasaki; he apparently helped in the construction of the church and seminary in Osaka, as well as in the construction of a house in Sakai and in Gokinai, by offering his labor and managerial skills. Justin’s confraternity in Nagasaki was official by 1585. In 1590, it counted more than 120 members; they all wore the black robe of the brotherhood and they were able to sustain with their alms not only their confraternity. They also repaired their church and their houses, and built three hospitals: one for elderly men, another for elderly women, and the last for the lepers. This latter was outside the city\textsuperscript{213}. However, until 1609, Father Matheus de Couros states that there was not as yet a hospital for common people, meaning people who were not constrained by poverty or incurable sicknesses, but one opened that year\textsuperscript{214}.

In Kyoto the Misericordia Confraternity came to be informally established most probably by Konishi Ryūsa, who by 1591 founded a hospital in Sakai\textsuperscript{215}. However, in Sakai there was a house built just to host the Jesuit Fathers. It existed between 1585, date by which Ryūsa was in


\textsuperscript{215} Ibid. 71; According to the “Relação Annual” Vol. I (1598-1601): 115. The hospital in Sakai was built after the construction of the first in Osaka was completed. Therefore it is possible that the hospital in Sakai was also built by Yukinaga, upon his father’s wishes.
power as a magistrate, until 1588, when it was destroyed due to Hideyoshi’s anti-Christian edict\textsuperscript{216}. In 1587, Ryûsa was active in Sakai, where he made the thirty or more young people at his service participate in the mass; as most of them were from noble families, many of them were baptized. In Kyoto, the land bought by the Christians living there was used to build the church for the establishment of the Misericordia. Ryûsa took part in it by building a cross and by doing other edifying things\textsuperscript{217}.

In 1592, his son, Yukinaga, built another hospital in Osaka, as his father wished. The confraternities, like their Buddhist counterparts, had various branches and their members kept in touch with each other. As it occurred to Justin, often the leaders of a confraternity may have participated in the establishment of other confraternities or began funding major ones like the one in Nagasaki. The Confraternity of Nagasaki began as an informal Christian organization in 1570, soon after the establishment of the city as a Jesuit concession, and in 1583, it became fully functional and was officially recognized between 1583 and 1585.

The participation of Ryûsa in such a confraternity is not only a supposition. A letter dated Gokinai 1588 (Tenshô16, 5\textsuperscript{th} month, 10\textsuperscript{th} day), written after Hideyoshi banned Christianity, and addressed to the General of the Jesuits in Rome, Claudio Acquaviva, via his Vice provincial (Father Coehlo) was signed by Ryûsa and by his son Josei, Yukinaga’s brother and eleven other members including the Hibiya. This letter describes the situation of the Christians in Japan, after Hideyoshi’s anti-Christian edict of 1587. It compares the Christians to leaves of a tree taken away by the strong autumn wind. Their promise to keep Christianity alive in Japan can be interpreted as a plea for help to the Pope and to the Jesuits in Rome\textsuperscript{218}. This plea was hardly heard. However, it

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{218} Matsuda Kiichi 松田毅一, 一五八八年「天正十六年」五月,十日，付イエス会将長宛五機内切支丹代表祭書状とその署名人において」. "The letter written by exemplar Christian believers in Gokinai to the Jesuits Vice-General in the year 1588." Shigaku Zasshi. 1958. Vol. 67. (80-94), This letter is also contained in a summarized form in Koda Shigetomo "Konishi to ichizoku." \textit{Waran Satsuwa} 183-184.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
shows the participation of this eleven people, including the Konishi, belonging to and being active within the Christian network of Sakai.

Eleven was the number of founders of the Confraternity; this number could vary from four to eleven between founders and administrators. Valignano, as Kataoka writes, indicated that the founder belonged usually to the warrior class or to the mercantile classes. It is understandable, as both were able to independently finance their enterprises. The proof, however, that Ryūsa became the leader of the Misericordia in Nagasaki is contained in a letter dated March 10th, 1602 and written in Nagasaki. In this letter appear the signatures of seven people as the “mordomos” or the functionaries of the confraternity. The first name to appear is “Diogo Riusa,” also named the leader or provedor. Matsuda Kiichi writes that the name Diogo Riusa was indeed used by Konishi Ryūsa, as well as other names such as “Shinzaiemon Diogo” and “Xinza” or “Joachim Xiuça.” Matsuda, following Frois, tells that all those names corresponded to the person of “Joachim Xinça, father of Augustino.” The inconsistence regarding the date by which the letter was written, March 10th, 1602, as Ryūsa died in 1594, can also be explained. Ryūsa could not have signed such a letter unless the letter itself was written earlier, at that time it was signed, but it may have been dated when the various copies were sent to Rome from Macao. Furthermore, most of the other signatories were also contemporaries of Ryūsa, as this render plausible the explanation that the

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220 ARSI Jap-Sin. 33 Fl. 436. “Carta do Provedor e Oficiais da Misericordia de Nagasaki para o Padre General da Companhia de Jesus.” It is possible that the letter being written in Portuguese was given to amanuenses to be copied before it was sent to Europe. In this case, the letter in Japanese was sent to Macao from where it was then sent to Europe. Therefore, a gap of some years may have passed in between the original composition and the shipping of that final copy. The date was the one in the final stage of preparation.
221 Matsuda Kiichi, Nanban Shiryo no Kenkyū. Fukan Shobo. Tokyo, 1967. 168: In here, although Matsuda reveals that at the beginning it is not clear if Riusa is indeed Yukinaga’s father, it is made clear by 1588, when Ryūsa assumed also the name of Joan Gaio in the service of Hideyoshi.
222 Valignano states in his Sumario that usually for each letter there were three copies made and sent according to various routes, so that in case of shipwreck or other accidents, at least one of the three copies would have reached its destination. Valignano reports that by the 1580s, there were thousands of letters to be copied and sent so that he himself had three persons in charge of copying his own correspondence. Hence, the delay may have been caused by a number of factors like delays in copying it, its priority in Jesuits’ view, etc.
letter was sent much later, probably also due to Hideyoshi’s anti-Christian policy in act after 1587, and its taking away from the Fathers Nagasaki as a stable mercantile base.

The others signatories, in fact, were prominent merchants as well. The letter is further signed by Luis Riôca (also known as Kiyomizu Leon), Jeronimo Ryonet (Ryoetsu), Thoma Sôin (Thome Goto), João Sôca ( João Machida), Liam Sôxei (Liam Munekiyô), and Andre Cariuara (Andre Kashiwabara). Thome Goto, as Kataoka explains, was one of the merchants officially hired by the government (bakufu) to sell Christian publications written in Japanese. With this letter, the confraternity requested from the Pope the same privileges held by the Misericordia in Portugal and the monopoly of possessing the flag used in processions and funerals that no other confraternity could use in Japan. In addition, they requested the right to give indulgences, which in Europe was done under payment, and it was also a way to obtain further funds.

This fact is important, as the leader of the Misericordia of Nagasaki, Konishi Ryûsa, was in effect asking for a foreign legitimization of local powers and rights that were out of reach and could not have been bestowed by the ruler of Japan, Hideyoshi. The importance of this discovery that finds Konishi Ryûsa as the leader of the Misericordia put a stronger emphasis on the political and economic nature of the relation that he and Konishi Yukinaga, his son, had with the Jesuit Fathers and at large with the Portuguese merchants.

The economic and political nature of the Misericordia was intrinsically established by the type of relation, to a certain extent also symbolic, which existed between the donor, the receiver of the charity, and God himself. Symbolically, it affirmed that everyone was equal in front of God, as the donor would assume the same status of poverty in God’s eyes, and it practically counter-balanced social inequality. Isabel dos Guaimarães Sá reports that charity had a
fundamental legitimizing function because this ritual of temporary ‘social inversion’ was not in
reality taking place so as to subvert the existing power. In fact, if, on one side, charity was
accessible to everyone, on the other side it was necessary that the dominant groups would take
control of the charitable operation. In doing so, they reaffirmed their superiority as representatives
of the Spanish Crown (in this case of the Papacy), etc.\(^{224}\) Hence, the Misericordia, while helping to
create a social safety net for the poor, was capable of reinforcing and protecting the actual social
order. In addition, it created the basis for a stronger community based on mutual help and
cooperation, framed by the Christian doctrine of salvation based on people’s merit.

In Japan, this fact translated into the formation of Christian networks at a local level that
crossed territorial boundaries. These networks effectively helped, instead of damaging, the process
of unification envisioned by Hideyoshi. Although, in Japan the Misericordia was not
representative of colonial power, it did reinforce local layers of municipal and religious power.
This was done through charitable deeds. Therefore, the construction of hostels for travelers,
hospitals of various kinds, and orphanages, came to be just a part of the operation of conversion
that was taking place at multiple levels in Japanese society.

One of the main and most effective contributions that the Misericordia gave to the poor
was the establishment of what in Italy (and Southern Europe) was called Monte di Pietà, a
money-lending institution, which in Rome was usually established by the government or by the
papacy. Valignano mentions the establishment of three of these in Japan, located in each one of the
three parts of Shimo, Bungo, and Miyako (Kyoto). In this regard, Valignano wrote to his friend
and protector, Teutonio de Braganza, to request an amount of 5000 cruzados for the
money-lending institutions and 500 cruzados for the other establishments. In effect, he mentions
the fact that many Japanese were poor but they could not get out of their poverty, as they had to

\(^{224}\) Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, Quando o Rico se Faz Pobre: Misericordia, Caridade e Poder no Império Português, 1500-1800. Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses. Lisbon, 1997. 17
borrow money from a usurer who charged on average 70 to 80 % in interest alone. In case the
borrowers were late in returning their money, the whole amount borrowed was doubled so that
they would never get out of their misery\(^{225}\).

Valignano’s idea was to establish money-lending institutions that would lend money to
Christians for an initial amount of 6 ducats with a feasible repayable interest of just 10%. In 1591,
there was established in Nagasaki the first money-lending institution located in the Misericordia\(^{226}\).
Indeed, Valignano thought he had found a remedy for the very poor that would also appeal as an
incentive to increase the number of converts. Other incentives operated by the Misericordia were
the hospitals for the incurables, hospitals for noblemen reduced to poverty, and orphanages.

In Osaka, the orphanage and the hospital for the lepers were built by Yukinaga (Don
Agostino), who every year would provide the necessary supplies and funds, as did his father Ryūsa
(Joachim). In addition, annually Yukinaga gave 100 koku of rice, equivalent to 100 cruzados, to
Father Organtino in order to help the orphans who were raised in the houses of known Christian
families. In Sakai, Yukinaga, after Hideyoshi’s initial Christian persecution, bought a piece of land
and a house where the Fathers could live, and bought other land to use as a Christian cemetery. In
addition, he supplied Father Organtino with a sum of 300 cruzados to help with the construction of
the Fathers’ house in Osaka\(^{227}\).

All this, in effect, was to help the Christian community growing there, but the confraternity
(Misericordia), in effect, represented an interest group, and as such it began to represent the
interest of merchants like Ryūsa, and of warriors like Yukinaga, as it constituted a community,
identifiable through its religious beliefs, that was primarily trying to secure the survival of its
members by perpetuating their local authority.

\(^{225}\) Alessandro Valignano, Sumario de la cosas del Japon (1583) y Adiciones del sumario de Japon (1592). Ed.
\(^{226}\) Ibid. 342
\(^{227}\) Guerreiro Fernan, Relação Annual da Companhia de Jesus. (1598-1601). Coimbra Ipr. De Universidade. Coimbra,
This community built popular support in favor of men like Yukinaga, particularly in his domains. To have popular support was important as it made peasant riots less likely. In this regard, Hideyoshi was trying to keep the peasants and commoners supplied with the bare minimum to survive so they would not be able to create any insurgence. According to Organtino, Hideyoshi had impoverished the lower classes so they were less prone to riot, while for men in his service with a certain wealth and power, he showed a severe sense of justice. He had forbidden any animosity, quarrel, or rumor amongst his soldiers and if someone would find himself in such situation, if he could not be punished as he ran away, then all his family, retainers, or people where the crime was committed were to be punished on his behalf\textsuperscript{228}. In such social rigidity, as one could be punished for someone else's crimes without being directly related, the importance of having social support and a faith that promised the possibility of improving one's life on earth and in the afterlife was not a small matter.

The effects of the establishment of the confraternities as practical social safety nets for the common people, worked well for the receiver of the benefits as well as for the donor, who could count to a certain degree on the ethical behavior of his subjects. In 1582, Frois writes that after the assassination of Oda Nobunaga, the domain of Takayama Ukōn was the only one in which no rioting occurred, as he was absent from his lands. This shows what a great difference there was between Christian subjects and people in other domains\textsuperscript{229}. There is no doubt that Frois may have exaggerated in describing the virtues of the Christians of Akashi and Takatsuki, but as Christianity spread in territories like the Seto Inland Sea, his statement appeared to be true. There were Christian communities there that lasted for as long as the Shimabara rebellion took place in 1639. Probably Frois was not far from reality by affirming that Christian believers were part of a solid

\textsuperscript{228} Organtino Gnocchi Soldi. \textit{Copia di due lettere dal Giappone scritte dal Padre Organtino Bresciano della compagnia di giesu dal Meaco del Giappone al molto Reverendo P.N. il P. Claudio Acquaviva preposito generale.} Ed. Luigi Zanetti. Rome; 1587. 11.
\textsuperscript{229} Frois Luis, "Avvisi dal Giappone degli anni 1582-1584 con alcuni altri della Cina del 1583-1584, cavati dale lettere della compagnia di Gesù ricevute nel mese di Dicembre 1585." Francesco Zanetti, Roma. 1586. 37-40.
community. By 1598, the communities in Yukinaga’s domains of Shiki, Amakusa, Shodojima, and in various other parts of the Seto like Shimabara, were all Christian and came to constitute a threat as these communities provided support to the local lords.

Yukinaga knew the Fathers and what their objectives were. He also knew their policies of acculturation and how to use those. Therefore, Yukinaga, although a sincere fervent Christian, had other plans. He was astute and cunning because, being very close to Hideyoshi; he had to exercise his power in a very cautious and thoughtful way. Hideyoshi’s irascibility was legendary; therefore, if Yukinaga wanted to be free to exercise his will, he could do it in a realm where Hideyoshi did not have any influence. This realm was to be his Christian faith. Sonoda, one of Konishi’s most recent biographers, states that Yukinaga, being Japanese, understood freedom differently from how it was perceived in the West. It was an interior freedom. In this, Sonoda is right. But Yukinaga’s freedom in the Seto Inland Sea was real, and it was translated into actions. He did want to convert all the population in his domains to Christianity, so as to build a Christian community that would be less prone to riot or to go against his will, and possibly that would become a base for popular support. For this reason, he called in some Fathers to send their missionaries to his domains. Although Yukinaga was loyal to Hideyoshi, the power that he held was a threat in a country where Hideyoshi switched lords from domain to domain at his own will so they could never create popular support for themselves, instead remaining dependant on a centralized chain of power.

Yukinaga’s power was manifested by his outstanding personality, his leadership skills, and by his faith, with which he came to perceive the world as a place of limitless possibilities. These possibilities were precluded in a government whose Confucian belief system saw merchants, although providing essential services, lying at the lowest echelons of social ranks. Christianity, a faith in which God himself was poor, gave at a spiritual level all men equal hopes of being
successful in society. As symbol of Yukinaga’s faith, his ships in the Seto were recognizable by their sail with the sign of a cross.230

Ironically, his sails were in stark contrast to the ones of the Murakami pirates bearing the character Kami (神) meaning “up,” and the first character of their surname, that when pronounced meant “God” (Shintō God). But by no means was this a matter of religious war. It was a territorial war, fought to gain authority and resources. In order to get both, Yukinaga’s domains, from 1586, were to play an important role in the development of international diplomacy between Japan and all other countries, including the Portuguese and Spanish colonies in Asia, to which Hideyoshi intended to demonstrate his newly arrogated position of conqueror and unifier of all Japan.

3.9 Konishi Yukinaga’s between Shinkoku and Christendom

A retainer asked: "What type of person is Yukinaga?"

The reply was: "He is like the God of the wind; you cannot be disrespectful to him."

臣間。行長何人。曰風神凛凛不悔也。

宣組實錄 (Senso Jitsuroku)

In 1586, Yukinaga continued to work on reporting Hideyoshi’s will to other lords. His work intensified, compared to other mediators of the time, like Asano Nagamasa and Seyakuin Zenshū231, especially during the process that led to the conquest of Kyushu. Between 1586 and 1588, Yukinaga’s duties in controlling the traffic between the main harbors in central Japan and the Seto area assumed a greater importance, in sight of Hideyoshi’s vision of conquest. Yukinaga

230 Okada Akio 岡田章雄, Namban Shuzoku ko 【南蛮宗族考】. Chijin Shokan 地人書官. Tokyo, 1942. 140. The cross, described by the Fathers and reported in Akio’s book, was nothing less than the character Ko (小) for Konishi, as it is shown in an ancient map of Sekigahara’s battle located in Monumenta Historica Japoniae. That sign, in effect, looked like a cross on his ships’ sails, but it also stood for his own name “Konishi.” See Appendix figures in this thesis.
231 Murdoch and Yamagata, A History of Japan. Kōbe, 1903. 224. The definition of Seyakuin as “Ministers of pleasures” was at first used by Murdoch, as indeed Seyakuin’s main purpose was to gather women from all over the provinces to satisfy Hideyoshi’s sexual appetites. Seyakuin was an ex-monk turned physician, who was trusted by Hideyoshi.
continued to support Hideyoshi’s troops in their territorial conquest by working in concert with his father.

Ryūsa was now magistrate of Muro and Sakai, while Yukinaga operated as a naval magistrate for the whole Seto area (Funabugyō). He was in charge of keeping the seaway free of trouble so that trade could run smoothly according to Hideyoshi’s policies. As the Seto came under Hideyoshi’s control, other issues fell also into place, because a centralized control meant the elimination of power groups that were present until then in that area. Amongst these groups, there were Japanese mercantile enterprises as well as Koreans, Chinese, and Europeans who competed with each other, often also by attacking each other vessels. In this regard, Berry states that Hideyoshi’s policies indeed were apt to regulate domestic rather than international policy and to pacify that important area.\(^\text{232}\) This is true to a certain extent. In fact, Hideyoshi’s control in the Seto, although on the rise, had never been complete.

There is sufficient reason to affirm that instead Hideyoshi wanted to centralize commercial policies in his hands by taking out of the scene all those petty competitors who were not part of his envisioned “red seal system” of trade monopoly or Shuinjō (朱印状). The red seal system, according to some authors, began in 1592; others date it prior to 1582. This system authorized individuals, mostly wholesaler merchants, to whom were issued documents with Hideyoshi’s red seal, to trade with other countries in South East Asia. Mostly this was to supply Hideyoshi’s armies with gunpowder and gunpowder minerals like saltpeter and potassium (carium) needed for his campaigns, because, even if Sakai at that time was a big producer of muskets, the Japanese were still dependant on other countries to import the gunpowder needed for those weapons.\(^\text{233}\)

The extent of Konishi Yukinaga’s or Ryūsa’s trade network is not known, but it is possible to imagine that it was quite conspicuous as it included the wholesaler merchants of Sakai as Imai


\(^{233}\)
Sōkyū, Sen no Rikyū, merchants in Okayama, in Kyushu, and the Portuguese. Both Konishi established their trading networks from Sakai to Kyushu in the main harbor of Hakata, as well as on the Island of Tsushima. According to Maruyama Tsuneo, Yukinaga’s trading network included the lord of Hirado, Matsūra Dōka Takanobu (松浦道可隆信), who was favorable to Christianity. The Matsūra lords had been trading in gunpowder and weaponry since the Eiroku period (1558-1570). They had an extensive trade network due to the favorable geographical location of their harbors, and due to their connections with merchants and pirates from East Asia.

In 1586, Yukinaga’s relations with Matsūra increased considerably, as it appears that Yukinaga replaced Matsūra’s original toritsugu, Bito Tononori, in communicating with Hideyoshi, once the Matsūra became his ally. It was the involvement with the Matsūra lords and Yukinaga’s policing work in the Seto that brought him to deal with issues of international relations. In particular, three issues that lead to Yukinaga’s further involvement in the area were: 1) the Matsūra trade in the Philippines; 2) the “pacification” of Kyushu by controlling the Christian lords; 3) and the elimination of piracy in connection with the control of diplomatic and trade relations.

Regarding the first issue concerning the Philippines–Japan trade—it is probable that Yukinaga, under Hideyoshi’s order, prompted the Matsūra to establish trade in the Philippines. In 1586, Yukinaga got a new assignment that consisted of supplying Hideyoshi’s army, which was engaged in the Seto; therefore, he needed trading partners who could provide ammunitions and war-related supplies. By using his connection with the Matsūra lord and by being a Christian himself, he worked toward the establishment of a trading route between Hirado and the Philippines.

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235 Ibid. 133. This fact is corroborated in the Japanese source called Ōmagaritōnai 大曲篤内 and by Jean Crasset’s Historie in Western sources.
This occurred in 1584 when the first trading vessel sent from the Philippines showed up at Hirado, Matsūra’s domain. According to the Friar Santiago de Viera, there were three friars (Franciscans) and two Castillan (Spanish) merchants. One of the Franciscans was Francisco Manrique, the Prior of the Franciscans in Manila. They were treated cordially by the lord of Hirado, who expressed a wish to trade with the Spanish Philippines\textsuperscript{237}. Since it was not until 1587 that the Matsūra became subjected to Hideyoshi, it is possible to believe that Yukinaga supervised the Matsūra in his endeavors with the Philippines.

On June 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1585, a royal functionary from the Philippines, Ayala, reported the arrival of an embassy from the King of Hirado, looking for certain Franciscans friars. The envoy announced that a brother of the King had become Christian and that the King intended to convert if the friars would go to his domain. Another letter bearing the same date was transmitted from Santiago de Viera to King Philip II of Spain with the original letter attached (and its translation). It was from the King of Hirado (Matsūra) with presents described as “of little value” but as tokens of friendship. The content of the letter recounted that the ruler of the 63 domains of Japan, Hideyoshi, permitted religious freedom and this was attested to in a letter from a Father\textsuperscript{238}, and that he, the lord of Hirado, offered the Spaniards the route to his kingdom in order to establish trading relations. He further offered alliance and military support to the Spanish King Philip II against any enemy he was fighting in Asia. In addition, Matsūra mentioned that the captain of his vessel was his cousin and that he was a great friend of Don Augustin Konishi (Yukinaga)\textsuperscript{239}.

\textsuperscript{238} The Father in question is thought by the authors of the article to be the Jesuit Father Coehlo, as he had already appealed three times previously for military support to the Vice King of the Philippines on the occasion of the Shimabara rebellion of 1584, and by helping militarily the Lord Arima Haruncbu (Don Protasio) of Kyushu against his enemy Ryūzōji. He was able to defeat with improved western weaponry and gunpowder. Father Coehlo requested help to the Philippines on 3/3/1584, 11/11/1584 and the last time on 24/01/1585. This fact id also reported in Japanese sources such as 西班牙留美ンビーヤ市インド文化館英文 and in those the Father in question seems to be Father Cosmo de Torres.
This letter demonstrated that Yukinaga was known to be a Christian also in the Philippines, and that his name was used by Matsūra in his official correspondence as a guarantor of his goodwill. It also shows that Yukinaga had trading relations with the Philippines via Jesuits and Portuguese merchants, such as Vicente Landero, the Portuguese captain of the ship that carried the Spanish friars and arrived from the Philippines to Hirado, in Kyushu\(^{240}\).

In 1586, the situation in Kyushu was not pleasant as various daimyō were trying to overcome each other in civil wars of conquest. For example, through the offices of Father Coehlo and the weaponry obtained by the Portuguese, Arima Harunobu (Don Protasio) was able to defeat his long time enemy Ryūzoji and regain part of his lost territories. By June 26\(^{th}\), 1586 Ōmura Sumitada (Don Bartolomeo) also felt compelled, with the help of the Jesuit Father Coehlo, to request military aid to the governor of the Philippines. He temporarily went along with this request, but was advised that this type of procurement would only be detrimental to the Jurisdiction of Asian territories shared between Portuguese and Spaniards. In fact, by 1581 the Philippines governor had already been advised by Valignano not to send any friars to Japan, nor trading vessels, so as not to compromise the Jesuit missions and their operations in that country. At a political level, this situation was maintained until 1593. Trading exchanges were already occurring previous to that date.

The trade network of Yukinaga can only be imagined because no relevant documents have been so far brought to light. But by 1588 a vessel from the Philippines with forty men arrived at Sashinotsu in Amakusa, looking for the lord of Higo. In Spring 1588, Yukinaga, received half domain of southern Higo, where he settled in early summer. Yukinaga's domain in Higo included the big harbor of Takase, a centre of commercial exchanges that fell under his jurisdiction. The

\(^{240}\) Maruyama Tsuneo, Tōyōtomi Ki Kaigai Bōeki no ichi Keitai Zōkuron – Higo Katō Shi kankei no Shinshutsu Shiryō no Shōkai wo Kanete, Sakoku Nihon to Kokusai Kōryū. Vol. 1. Ed. Kenji Yanai. Yoshikawa Kobunkan. 1988.: According to Maruyama, Vicente may have been a lay brother "Irman Vicente" of Nágasaki, and a mediator for the Philippine trade. But in this case it was Vicente Landero as sustained also by Japanese documents.
Spanish traders were indeed searching for him. It is certain that even as late as 1599, Yukinaga traded with the Philippines. Valignano tells that in that year as many as six vessels, and among those one belonging to Konishi Yukinaga, sailed from Manila to Japan.

It was in that same ship that, in the proximity of Taiwanese shores, Yukinaga lost his third son. Kato Kiyomasa, by then his rival and neighbor, commentedironically in his diary that Yukinaga had built seven ships, a big one and six minor vessels, using the expensive camphor tree lumber. Nevertheless, he lost its cargo, as the ship built with such lumber could not even sail. Yukinaga, having lost his son, wandered aimlessly for six months in his domain before he could put himself together again, not caring about all the repairs and all the irrigation work needed there. This episode reveals the extensive trade network of Yukinaga, at least by 1599. In addition, it shows Yukinaga’s involvement in shipbuilding, an industry that indeed required a certain amount of know-how, knowledge of the seas and a cost not indifferent. But the cost of shipbuilding must have been alleviated by an equal or greater amount of overseas business.

In Kyushu by 1586, Otomo Sorin (Don Francisco), hard pressed by his enemy Shimazu Yoshihisa of Satsuma, requested military aid to Hideyoshi. His request was at first brought in March to Hideyoshi by the embassy of Father Coehlo to Osaka. Hideyoshi, after sending Yukinaga and Kuroda Yoshitaka as vanguard, promptly assembled and sent a force of 130,000 men led mainly by his stepbrother Hidenaga, Ukita Hideie, and his nephew Hidetsugu, against the Shimazu. The Shimazu forces retreated and later on, Shimazu Yoshihisa took the tonsure and went

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241 According to Maruyama Tsumeo the Spanish arrived on Tenshō 16 (1588), 7th month, 25th day. And they were searching for Sassa Narimasa. But Yukinaga took possession of his half domain on Tenshō 16, 6th month, 28th day, as reported by 小崎邦弥 Kozaki Kuniya 熊本の歴史 [Kumamoto no Rekishi] 1959. Vol 1. Hence, it is much more credible that they, being affiliated with the Christian lords of Kyushu and the Matsūra, were looking for Konishi Yukinaga in Amakusa, not, as stated by Maruyama, for Sassa Narimasa.


244 In 1600’s Asia, camphor wood forests were available only in Taiwan; hence Yukinaga may have obtained the lumber from Taiwan at a cheaper cost than in Japan. Camphor wood was already rare by that time and could scarcely be found in Japan in Bizen, Kompira temple area, and Itsukushima, Kyushu.
to submit himself to Hideyoshion on the fifth month of 1587. Also Ryūzōji, when he saw his domain threatened along with minor lords such as Arima, Nabeshima, Itō, Matsūra and Ōtomo, became Hideyoshi’s ally. The campaign against the Shimazu lasted from the fall of 1586 until the spring of 1587<sup>245</sup>.

At the same time that Hideyoshi’s army went to Kyushu, Yukinaga began sailing with the protection band, or keigoshū (敬固衆), of Hideyoshi, as a support for his troops engaged inland. The keigoshū was initially composed by Yukinaga, bearing the title of Hyuga no Kami (日向守), by Oda’s brave admiral Kuki Yoshitaka (九鬼孝高), by Kato Yoshiaki (加藤嘉明) and Wakisaka Yasuharu (脇坂安治).

Yukinaga’s actions with the protection band were of a piratical nature with the difference that they were authorized by Hideyoshi. In fact, in preparing the attack on Kyushu, which was ordered by Hideyoshi, the troops and provisions had to be gathered in advance. The records of the Nitta Shrine in Kawachi show that, on (Tenshō 15. 4<sup>th</sup> month), Spring 1587, a squadron, formed by nine thousand soldiers, landed and built a camp distant twelve kilometers from their main Shrine. The leaders of these troops, including Yukinaga, went to pillage the main Shrine, which was deserted except for the lonely presence of a brave Abbot who begged the generals to leave in place the precious items they were about to steal, as they were needed for the celebration of the Shintō God, Ninigi<sup>246</sup>. The leaders of this expedition decided to leave the objects there, but left a bulletin board cautioning the people that the Shrine was now under their rule and that pillaging and arson were forbidden and criminals were to be punished. The bulletin board was signed by Konishi Hyuga no Kami Yukinaga, Kuki Yoshitaka, Wakisaka Yasuharu, and Katō

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<sup>246</sup> Ninigi is considered in Japanese mythology to be the grandfather of the first emperor Jimmu Tennō.
Yoshiaki\textsuperscript{247}. For his services in the Seto, Yukinaga received an award in 1587, but his duties did not end there.

In the fall of the same year, after the pacification of Kyushu and the division of its land amongst Hideyoshi’s retainers and generals, Yukinaga was assigned to relieve Kobayakawa (小早川), Hideyoshi’s retainer and nephew of the Mōri, in his control of the Western Kyushu lords. Already by the seventh and eighth month of the same year, some riots occurred in the domain of Higo in southern Japan, belonging to Sassa Narimasa (佐々成正). Sassa instigated the riots that were repressed by Hideyoshi’s men and Narimasa was killed.

One month later, in Kobayakawa’s own domain of Hizen, due to his absence, other riots occurred in the fall of 1587, precisely on the twelfth day of the tenth month. Yukinaga was sent to quell the riots. These riots involved Arima Harunobu, to whom Saigo Nobunao asked military help to regain his lost territories that went to Ryūzōji, by Hideyoshi’s order. Arima Harunobu, backed up by Father Coehlo, was trying to regain his territories by going against Hideyoshi’s expressed orders. Yukinaga, who had relations with both Saigo and Arima, tried to solve the riots by pacifying both parties, asking Arima to publicly renounce the proposal of Coehlo and swear his loyalty to Hideyoshi. Once Yukinaga reported the situation to Hideyoshi, he did it in favor of Arima, so as not to cause further bloodshed\textsuperscript{248}. Organtino reports the fact vividly by saying that Yukinaga “…faked and painted in such manners the facts [occurred to] Isahaya dono when he went back [to report] to Hideyoshi, so that Hideyoshi could be satisfied.”\textsuperscript{249}

\textsuperscript{249} Organtino Gnecchi Soldi. Copia di due lettere dal Giappone scritte dal Padre Organtino Bresciano della compagnia di giiesu dal Meaco del Giappone al molto Reverendo P.N. il P. Claudio Acquaviva preposito generale. Ed. Luigi Zanetti. Rome; 1587. 82. Original text: “... disimolou & corou de tal maneira a cosa de Isaffaydono quando tornou a Quabacundono, que se ovver por satisfeito.”
But Yukinaga had other motives to be successful in negotiating a happy ending for Arima, his niece Marta, daughter of Bento, his elder brother, was married to Arima Harunobu’s son Naohiro (Miguel). As this may have appeared to be a marriage of convenience, it was also strategically placed as Yukinaga found new allies in Kyushu. Kyushu was given by Hideyoshi to the Mōri as an area to supervise. The Mōri assigned Yukinaga to be responsible for the supervision of Southern Kyushu, in Higo. He, being a Christian loyal to Hideyoshi, was somewhat put in charge to control Christians’ activities there.

By the summer of 1587, two major events occurred that made possible Hideyoshi’s control of Kyushu; the first was the death of both Ōtomo Sōrin (Don Francisco) and Ōmura Sumitada (Don Bartolomeo), who died a month apart, and with their passing, Christianity in Kyushu lost two strong supporters. The second event consisted of the banishment of the Jesuit Fathers on July 24th, 1587. Prior to the issuing of the anti-Christian ban, Hideyoshi showed himself as being favorable to the Fathers. He accepted Coehlo’s request to proselytize in his domains, once the Jesuit Vice provincial visited him in Osaka. They met in Hakata, where Hideyoshi visited the armed fusata vessel used by Coehlo in his trips, with Yukinaga and Takayama Ukōn. Hideyoshi prised the vessel very much so that Yukinaga and Kuroda Yoshitaka, realizing Hideyoshi’s design, urged Coehlo to offer the ship to him. Coehlo, after some thought refused, unaware of the danger he unleashed. That same night after everyone had retired from dinner, Hideyoshi, prompted by his physician, Seyakuin Zenshū, sent a message to Coehlo asking urgently for a reply to his infamous four questions that lead to the ban of the Jesuits from Japan.

251 Johannes Laures S.J., The Catholic Church in Japan. Charles and Tuttle Company, Tokyo. 1954. 116: The man accompanying Yukinaga was Kuroda Yoshitaka and not Takayama Ukōn, as stated by Laures, whom by then resided in his fief of Takatsuki, Bizen.
252 Jennes, History of the Catholic Church in Japan. The Committee of the Apostolate. Bulletin Mission Series #8. Tokyo. 1959. Jennes reports the four questions as being the following: 1) Why do the padres want to make converts and force people to convert?; 2) Why do they destroy Shintō and Buddhist temples and persecute the Bonzes instead of reaching a compromise with them?; 3) Why do you eat useful and valuable animals like horses and cows?; 4) Why do the Portuguese buy many Japanese and export them as slaves?
Seyakuin, who had also some resentment toward Takayama Ukōn, who seems to have shamed him on one occasion, suggested his expulsion from Hideyoshi’s circle by testing his loyalty. Hideyoshi sent also two messengers to Ukōn, requesting him to renounce his faith and retain his domain or be loyal to his God and lose everything. Ukōn replied he could never renounce his faith and for this he was banished from his domain. Organtino writes that Ukōn by then had an annual stipend of 60,000 scudi, and was rich as a prince. He further mentions that to be banned in Japan was similar to being condemned to death, especially for rich lords who were reduced to beggars. Organtino reveals also the fact that in his wording to Ukōn, Hideyoshi invested himself of imperial powers, as he claimed to defend the rights of the Emperor and of the Court by banishing Ukōn, who was found guilty of disloyalty to both.

This usage of words indicated that Hideyoshi’s plan to ban the Jesuit was premeditated, but could not be executed earlier as he needed assurance, something he had once he sojourned in Kyushu. The news of the expulsion of the Fathers from Japan caused no little worry among the Christian communities. Many Churches were destroyed and the persecution of Christians had just begun, but was not enforced. Yukinaga realized that it was not possible to have the Fathers expelled from Japan in just twenty days, as per Hideyoshi’s order, and told this to Seyakuin whose reply was: “If they cannot all go away this year, we will take them one by one and throw them in the sea!”

Yukinaga by then decided drastically to save as many Christians as he could and began by sending a vessel to his long-time friend, Takayama Ukōn, taking him to his island of Shōdojima.

Father Coelho answered as follows: 1) The reason for our arrival in Japan is to save Souls, but only peaceful means is used to persuade converts; 2) As the Fathers have no political power, they cannot use forceful methods against, therefore the destruction of temples is done by Japanese converts; 3) The padres and the Portuguese do not eat horse meat, although veal is used as it is a custom in Europe, but if Hideyoshi wishes, that can be stopped; 4) The Fathers do not approve of the slave trade, but because it is done on Japanese soil by Japanese, they cannot forbid this practice.

255 Ibid. 102.
This action was seen by many of Yukinaga’s biographers and historians as the turning point of his Christianity that had been latent until then. However, what the previous historians and biographers did not take into consideration was the working of random coincidence and probably fate. As a matter of fact, Yukinaga was quite some time in Osaka and Kyoto before he was able to visit Shōdojima. Organtino, who was already in Murotsu, wrote to Yukinaga about his whereabouts and requested his presence on the island. On the other hand, he received only a letter from his brother Bento saying that Yukinaga was unavailable and that Yukinaga did not think it was feasible that Hideyoshi would revoke his ban.

Hibiya Vicente was sent to call on Yukinaga, then in Sakai. Once Yukinaga arrived in Muro, he behaved in a very singular manner. He went to Organtino and without saying a word began to cry. Without any answer from Organtino, he took Yaheiji and went to his room for three hours, talking about the fate of the Jesuits. As he came out, he began to give orders as to where the Jesuits were to go. All of them (three in total) were bound for Shōdojima. There they met the party of Takayama Ukon, who was relocated ten leagues away from Organtino. Also, Ukōn’s parents were to stay in another place. They were all in hiding and had to be careful not to be seen there.

To all of them, Yukinaga allocated part of his stipend. To Yaheiji, he left 200 bales of rice. Yaheiji resided in Muro and was taking care of the orphans who arrived there from the orphanage of Gokinai. His wife and mother worked for the children and he served, with the ships available to him, the Fathers who wished to hide in Murotsu.

There is no doubt that Yukinaga found the situation problematic and it is clear from these different accounts that he cared for the fate of his fellow Christians. However, he was also

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surrounded by people with the same ideas, and this fact enabled him to take action at such a
difficult moment. Unlike Takayama Ukon, he cared for his career and did not wish to have it
compromised due to his faith, but if that were to be, then he would have accepted the consequences.

Ryūsa and Hibiya Ryokei had resolved to stay in Kyoto in their private homes; Magdalena,
Ryūsa’s wife, quit her job with Hideyoshi’s main wife and retired. Many Christians left their
homes to go abroad, while others went into hiding.

Yukinaga had wanted his domain in the Seto Inland area to be Christian, and since 1585,
Father Gregorio de Cespedes went there where he baptized 1,400 people. It is possible that, given
the persecutions, more Christians went into hiding in the Islands of the Seto, as Yukinaga forbade
entrance to his domains to people who were not Christians, and by doing so he sheltered many
people. As a protest, many baptisms occurred among the nobility and warrior classes, although
these baptisms were more or less kept secret like the Baptism of Gracia Hosokawa, or Ukita
Hideie.

It is not known what brought Hideyoshi to ban Christianity; there is the possibility that
Hideyoshi realized the power of the Jesuits and feared that a coalition of Christian lords could
overthrow him. But the ban could have included a series of factors. One of these might have been
the role played by the Fathers in domestic policy by helping the Christian lords of Kyushu
militarily; another might have been that their religious teaching and scientific thought had no
ground in Hideyoshi’s plan to bring Japan to the fore of East Asia as a powerful country. It was in
fact western religious thought, western superiority in the knowledge of the world, which mapped
an Eurocentric world in which Japan was just a peripheral country in the vast territories of the
globe. It is for reasons directly related to the domestic political control of its lords that Hideyoshi
sought legitimization only within East Asia’s political sphere by adopting his newly proposed
ideal of Japan as being “the country of the Kami” (Shinkoku), where no foreign Gods could rule.
By acting in such a manner, Hideyoshi cleverly took back the harbor of Nagasaki, where the bulk
of international maritime traffic ended, and put it under his direct control. His decision to counter
attack western ideological invasion with an indigenous religious idea based on Shintō was indeed
focused on regulating foreign trade and diplomatic relations. This would create a Japanese sphere
of influence that could supersede the Chinese world order based on tributary relations, as Japan in
Hideyoshi’s view was a militarily strong country worthy of recognition.

Hideyoshi was motivated not by a diplomatic protocol, of which he was most probably
unaware, but by his military prowess, a great dose of arrogance, and the knowledge that, as
occurred in Europe, not all countries were bound by ties of tributary relations. On the contrary, in
his eyes there was a vast world out there that was waiting to be conquered.

Hideyoshi realized also soon enough that he could not avoid trade relations with the
Portuguese, and this was the reason for his non-enforcement of the ban.

Notwithstanding the ban, the Seto remained a Christian area. But by 1588 Yukinaga was
appointed lord of half of the domain of Higo, in Kyushu. His stipend was by then of 240,000 koku
(equivalent to 24,000 cruzados) and although this was a promotion in reality, Hideyoshi took him
away from his popular base. As Valignano commented, the situation of Yukinaga in Higo was not
a good one because “Konishi is a foreigner there being himself from the Miyako area; and that, like
the rest of Hideyoshi’s ministers, he is hated by the local people and will be in mortal danger when
Hideyoshi dies.”258 It is probably to increase his popularity that Yukinaga allowed the Christian
escapees from Kyoto to enter in his domain. In his judgement Valignano was right; as a trained
politician he was aware of the problem.

Indeed Yukinaga had to settle a few riots among some of his retainers, particularly at the
beginning of his stay in Higo. He arrived there in the summer of 1588. But between August and
September, Amakusa no kami (Don Joan) rebelled against Hideyoshi, so that Konishi Yukinaga

1992. 53-54.
and Katō Kiyomasa were sent to quell the rebellion. They occupied Shiki and entered the Castle of Amakusa with their armies. Yukinaga waited for Katō’s command to attack but even so, he delayed as to give the Christians he knew were in the fortress time to escape. He avoided a massacre of Christians, nevertheless even women fought and as many as 300 died there259. The Jesuits had by 1587 moved their Novitiate to Amakusa, therefore their records may contain some truth. In that conflict, Yukinaga, who arrived as reinforcement, found himself to be the sole commander. Once Katō realized he lost 2,000 men, he retreated to his domain, and left Yukinaga there.

It is in this instance that Yukinaga negotiated with Hideyoshi to be able to have that domain under his control so the people could remain in Amakusa. He negotiated as well for the Fathers located there, so he took control of the area. Hence, that stretch of island also came to be under his control, and he had the freedom to have the Fathers in his own domains. Indeed, by the time of his death in 1600, there were more than 200 churches in his domain. In addition to the Jesuit College. Seven Fathers and various brothers lived there. Despite Yukinaga’s Christianity, as latent and submissive as he was to Hideyoshi’s power, he was capable of retaining his career and his faith.

By 1588, his mission in the Seto was not concluded as yet. After the submission of the rebellion in Amakusa, provoked by Iki Rinsen (老岐燦仙), Amakusa Tanemoto (天草種元), Kamitsuura Taneya (上津浦種矢), Ōyano Tanemoto (大矢野種基), and Sumoto Chikataka (栄本親高), Yukinaga was appointed as Supervisor of the Shiki and Amakusa areas. His duties consisted in eliminating piracy according to central government policies. After Hideyoshi’s ban on piracy, issued in the summer of 1588, Yukinaga began to handle the communication between Hideyoshi and Matsūra Takanobu of Hirado and the lord of Goto Islands. Yukinaga had the order to supervise the enforcement of the ban for what were regarded as Chinese and Korean pirates that

259 Schütte Franz Josef, Introductio ad historiam societatis Jesu in Japonia 1549-1650 ac proepiumad catalogos japoniae. Japoniae edendas ad edenda Societatis Jesu, Monumenta Historica Japoniae Propypeum. Istituto Storico
where hiding in Hirado and in the Goto Islands (Iki). If captured, the pirates had to be conducted to Osaka and punished, or sent back to Korea as per requested from the Korean government. Matsūra was ordered to capture a certain Tekkai, a Korean pirate wanted in his country. An envoy was sent from Korea to Sō Yoshitoshi (宗義智), lord of Tsushima Island, with the message to return Korean captives.

It was in the eighth month of 1589 that Yukinaga organized an embassy to Korea where his envoy was the merchant Shimai Sōshitsu (島井宗室). Shimai, a gōyōshōnin for Ōtomo Sōrin, belonged also to the wealthy association of Hakata and Sakai merchants. His business brought him often to Korea; therefore he knew the country and people there. Sō Yoshitoshi and Yukinaga went as well. The negotiations focused overall on the Korean side on the return of Korean pirates and on the fact that these two countries had to cooperate in order to get rid of piracy. It is in this way that Yukinaga became involved in successive negotiations related to the Invasion of Korea that followed in 1592.

Yukinaga, by then working as negotiator for Hideyoshi, had the function of linking publicly manifesting Hideyoshi’s will in peripheral areas, as Yukinaga himself became part of that periphery in which Hideyoshi sought to extend his control. Hideyoshi’s Shinkoku ideology manifested xenophobic ideas that were translated practically in the two bans (on Christianity and Piracy). These two bans worked toward the establishment of a Yamato-centric world view, and at the same time limited, by bringing it under control, the flow of trade and diplomacy with foreign countries. Yukinaga, unlike Takayama Ukōn, was never ordered to renounce his Christianity because he was instrumental in the effective execution of policies in Kyushu. Hideyoshi never doubted his loyalty, nor did Yukinaga ever give any sign that he was disloyal. One more point to his favor was the fact that Yukinaga’s family, since Hideyoshi’s start as military commander, had

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always backed him financially and the benefits and privileges they received were of course worth their support.

Yukinaga was not in himself a controversial figure in Hideyoshi’s retinue; his persuasive skills and logic permitted him to retain his faith in time of crisis. Although, as Hideyoshi came to perceive Christian ideology as “foreign” to Japan, all the Christians were given peripheral domains, almost to represent spiritual buffer zones from which foreigners could be managed and kept at a distance, while trade could be resumed. Yukinaga’s domain in Higo, by the end of the century, was mainly all Christian; his supervised domains of Shiki and Amakusa were the centre of Jesuit Colleges and Novitiates. Guerreiro reports that in Shiki, there were by 1598, six Fathers and ten Japanese lay brothers. Yukinaga always received the Fathers well and supported their stay in his domain

The closeness of Yukinaga to the Fathers and to his faith increased after his participation in the Korean wars. Yukinaga brought back from Korea many people as slaves, but he made sure they received no harm and provided them with Catholic instruction. Many of the children he brought back were adopted by noble Japanese families as house maids and ladies in waiting; many converted to Christianity and continued to live in Japan in areas like Marina Park, Vicente Kaun, Maxima of Arima. Among the many, there are examples of brave women such as the famed Julia Ōta, a Korean girl, who was brought to Japan and entered into the service of Konishi Yukinaga’s wife. She was baptized in 1596 by Pedro Morejon

Since Yukinaga’s return from Korea his faith seemed to have increased. He rekindled the ties with the Jesuits in Japan. The vice provincial became Yukinaga’s Padrino, a substitute father in Catholic religion. This was a political as well as an economic alliance. It was a political alliance because Yukinaga needed to build new popular bases in Higo, a domain he stayed in for

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just about a year and it was also an economic alliance because he needed the Jesuit to resume their trading operations. The Korean wars must have exhausted him financially due to the expenses he incurred in, as all other lords did. Yukinaga’s ties with Christianity never weakened. In Higo, the Easter of 1599 was a memorable event, to which participated all the Christians in his domain and from afar. In Yukinaga’s domain of Uto, Higo province, resided five Fathers and seven brothers, and in Higo alone, there were four Jesuit houses. It is possible to say that, in facing life’s adversity, Yukinaga’s faith increased. But perhaps it was a calculated faith, a faith that linked Japan to the outside world, and would have changed Japan’s from inside out. In fact, it is not possible to imagine how Japan would have turned if only Yukinaga’s Western faction would have been the winner at Sekigahara.

Between 1579 and 1589 Konishi Yukinaga worked as a supplier and as an informer for Hideyoshi. His collaboration became a close one as Yukinaga was a man to be trusted. From his early assignments as messenger, he became a mediator, and an envoy in particularly difficult negotiations. Although a Christian, Yukinaga was never disengaged from the central power as he used Christianity to unify and control his domains. He most and best of all Christian daimyo, without any presumption of sort, was able to demonstrate with his actions that Christianity was a useful tool for territorial unification.

263 By 1599 the Vice provincial in Japan was Pedro Gomez.
Conclusion

Konishi Yukinaga is a personage worthy of analysis who has been interpreted in various ways since his death. In life, he belonged to two co-existing but diverse worlds, physically and spiritually. Physically he was born into the mercantile rank, but raised his position in life by associating himself with the military ranks and by becoming a skilled warrior, a samurai. Spiritually, Yukinaga dwelled between the land of the Kami and the Kingdom of God. He accepted Christianity, a foreign religion, and according to his life experiences became a fervent Christian, or at least he has been perceived as such throughout the centuries.

It is with the perception of Yukinaga after his death that this thesis introduced him at first, because it was after his death that Yukinaga came to be seen under different lights, according to the intention of the writers. There is a stark contrast in categorizing Yukinaga as a fervent Christian and a martyr, or as the traitor that committed crime against the Court and the newly established Tokugawa regime, that renders this historical character a multi-faceted one. Without doubt, he was used by the Jesuits in their propaganda to revamp the missions in Asia, but he served the Tokugawa as well, by being depicted as a criminal, who committed treason and was justly punished by death.

His death corresponded with the death of most of his family members, beginning with his twelve-year-old son. Also, the documentation pertaining to his family and his business were either destroyed on purpose or were lost, so we have very few documents that portrayed this man and his family. Mostly, his character emerged from the Catholic Epistles left by the tireless hands of the Jesuit Fathers. But some Japanese historical records also reveal this fascinating and mysterious man. Yukinaga as a warrior has been reappraised since the beginning of the 1900’s, but relevant work just related to his family was presented by various Japanese scholars in the pre-war and post-war decades. In the pre-war years the figure of Yukinaga emerges once more to be interpreted according to the political, social or religious perspectives of the various authors. Ikenaga Kō, a
school teacher of Sakai, re-proposed Yukinaga as a valiant samurai and as a fervent Christian, backing up his book with archeological discoveries and Jesuits’ quotations. The Jesuit scholarship also reappraised Konishi but in light of the larger picture constituted by early Christianity in Japan. As the war years began, Yukinaga’s Christian strength, with authors like Sekine Bunnosuke, turned in national pride and the capability to sacrifice oneself for one’s country at war. He followed, of course, the path of Bushido, in accordance with the samurai spirit. But had the samurai of the Sixteenth Century ever sacrificed themselves? It seemed that instead they had held their own lives so dear that they fought and switched alliances as the wind changed.

Postwar authors have regained an insight into the historical motives and events that took place to study Yukinaga in his social and historical contest. Novelists and excellent works by biographers like Endo and Sonoda, or historians such as Toyoda and Tanaka, have brought to the fore the image of Yukinaga as a clever and skilled man. Yukinaga’s decision to adopt Christianity is seen as a personal one, motivated by the lack of freedom or by the admiration for a different and far culture and again spurred by anger against Hideyoshi’s sudden anti-Christian ban.

In my view, Yukinaga’s raise in status was possible because at the time the status of merchants was not as rigid as it became under the Tokugawa regime. Yukinaga’s father, Ryūsa, as a merchant, became the partner of the Hibiya family of Sakai. Hibiya Ryokei, a warrior who lost his status by becoming a Christian, brought him in contact with other influential persons in the area of Ōmi. Here Ryūsa had occasion to meet Wada Koremasa and to be hired for his mercantile services to manage the activities of the Jesuits in Japan. Hence, Yukinaga since his childhood was in contact with these foreigners, learning their ways and religion. Indirectly, and possibly directly, they brought Ryūsa more wealth, so he could expand his business into other areas. Yukinaga was most of all a merchant until his twentieth birthday, when he was called by Ukita Naoie, lord of Bizen, to negotiate on his behalf. However, he continued to be a merchant at the service of Hideyoshi’s troops even later. Once he accepted the position as a messenger and personal envoy,
toritsugu, for Toyotomi Hideyoshi in the Seto Inland Sea his situation changed and he became part of a military structure in purchasing duties.

My view of Yukinaga differs from the previous authorship, as Yukinaga was able to use his faith toward political and economic goals, which were in concert with the wishes of Hideyoshi. My utilitarian perspective, although it may seem simplistic, reveals the motives by which he was able to retain his status and his Christian faith for as long as he wished, even after the anti-Christian ban of 1587. In his favor he had three elements: skill in the use of a gun, navigational talent, and his status as a Christian. His position in an area important for international relation and trade was also important. He helped in subjugating an area used as a pirate base and, since earlier times, as a sea traffic lane for commercial endeavors and diplomatic relations. Yukinaga had at his disposal the trading communities' networks, including his Christian and warrior networks, and he used those to become the link between peripheral regions and the central government. In doing so, he exercised central power, but he also had a great degree of local autonomy.

However, to gain authority, legitimacy and a popular power base in the Seto Inland area, especially in the islands under his direct control, Yukinaga used his faith and the Jesuits to convert his domains. In this his father Ryūsa helped as he came to power and was given the harbor of Murotsu in the Inland Sea region. As my discovery indicated when Ryūsa’s standing rose in Hideyoshi’s service, he became the leader of a Jesuit charitable association, called Misericordia. This association gave him a certain degree of foreign legitimacy and authority over local communities both physically and spiritually.

Yukinaga in turn promoted the conversion of his supervised domains in the Seto Inslad Sea and among the citadel of Okayama, where his closest friends lived. He befriended other Christian samurai, like Takayama Ukōn, Yūki no Kami Yaheiji, while fighting for the wars of territorial unification mostly as a naval admiral. His post in the Seto area allowed him to expand his duties by becoming a diplomatic envoy for other Christian lords in Kyushu. Here he also engaged in trade
and after the submission of Kyushu to Hideyoshi, he obtained his fief in Higo. Yukinaga’s skills as a negotiator were particularly used in the Seto region to convince other lords to submit to the rising power of Hideyoshi. Konishi Yukinaga’s involvement with the Matsūra lords of Hirado and minor lords on the West Coast of Kyushu brought him to deal with the Philippines, as well as with the Korean government to eliminate pirates and to negotiate with Korea before the expansionistic wars of Hideyoshi took place.

Yukinaga remains a fascinating historical character as he dwelled between eastern politics and the western society. He was a peripheral person in the way he could deal with the peripheries, as he was a Christian, like the majority of Kyushu’s lords. And yet, he followed the policies of the central government which promoted Hideyoshi as the ruler of Japan. His destiny brought him to rule by applying his Christianity in the Seto Inland Sea and to dwell between the ancient Japanese islands created by Izanami and Izanagi, the mythical couple, the Islands of the Gods.

In describing Yukinaga it may be appropriate to use Takeno Jōō’s “wabi” concept as Yukinaga’s character was considerate, straightforward and not arrogant. This wabi concept was well expressed by Shunzai. It is with Shunzai’s poem that his death, in the fall of 1600, can be epitomized.

What more sincere than the first drops of an autumn shower?
Whose are the honest tears that fall?”

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Appendix:

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