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HEROES

TWO JAPANESE
CHRISTIAN HEROES

Justo Takayama Ukon
and
Gracia Hosokawa Tamako

by Johannes Laures S.J.

MIKI BOOKS

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Notice board posted in 1711 prohibiting the Christian religion (*Frontispiece*)

Autograph letter of invitation written by Takayama Ukon (*Page 15*)

Letter of thanks signed by Hosokawa Tadaoki (*Page 70*)

Detail of preceding letter showing seal of Hosokawa Tadaoki printed in Latin letters (*Page 71*)

All of the above items are in the Christian (*Kirishitan*) Collection of Sophia University, Tokyo.

Illustrations

TRANSLATION OF DECREE ON NOTICE BOARD PROHIBITING THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION (Frontispiece)

Since the Christian religion has been prohibited year after year, anyone suspected must be reported. These are the rewards which can be obtained: 500 silver pieces for the informer of a priest, 300 silver pieces for the informer of a brother. The same amount for the informer of a converted apostate. 100 silver pieces for the informer of people who give shelter to a Christian or a catechumen. Even an informer of the house of a host or a catechumen can receive 500 silver pieces, according to the importance of the case. When an outsider discovers that shelter is being given to a Christian, the headman and the officers of the village, together with their relatives, are to be punished.

The first year of Shōtoku (1711)
on the ... day of the 8th moon

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

FOREWARD

The glorious history of the Martyr Church of Japan has always aroused the admiration of the Christian world. That within less than two generations the Gospel seed should have struck such deep roots in a nation that thousands and thousands were ready to lay down their lives for Christ, is indeed a most remarkable feat in the annals of the Church. It is but natural that Church historians should have concentrated their attention on the lives of those who actually died for their faith, particularly the canonized and beatified martyrs, yet among the many who, to their regret, did not obtain the crown of martyrdom there are not a few, men and women, who by their heroic virtue were an inspiration to their contemporaries. Among the most outstanding are Justo Takayama Ukon and Gracia Hosokawa Tamako, to whom these pages are devoted.

We confine ourselves to a brief account for the general reader. For a more comprehensive study we refer to our German works, "Takayama Ukon und die Anfänge der Kirche in Japan" (Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Münster, 1954) and "Gracia Hosokawa" (Steyley Verlagsbuchhandlung, Kaldenkirchen, 1957), where the principal sources will also be found.

JUSTO TAKAYAMA UKON
(Takayama Hida-no-kami)

JUSTO TAKAYAMA UKON (Takayama Hida-no-kami)

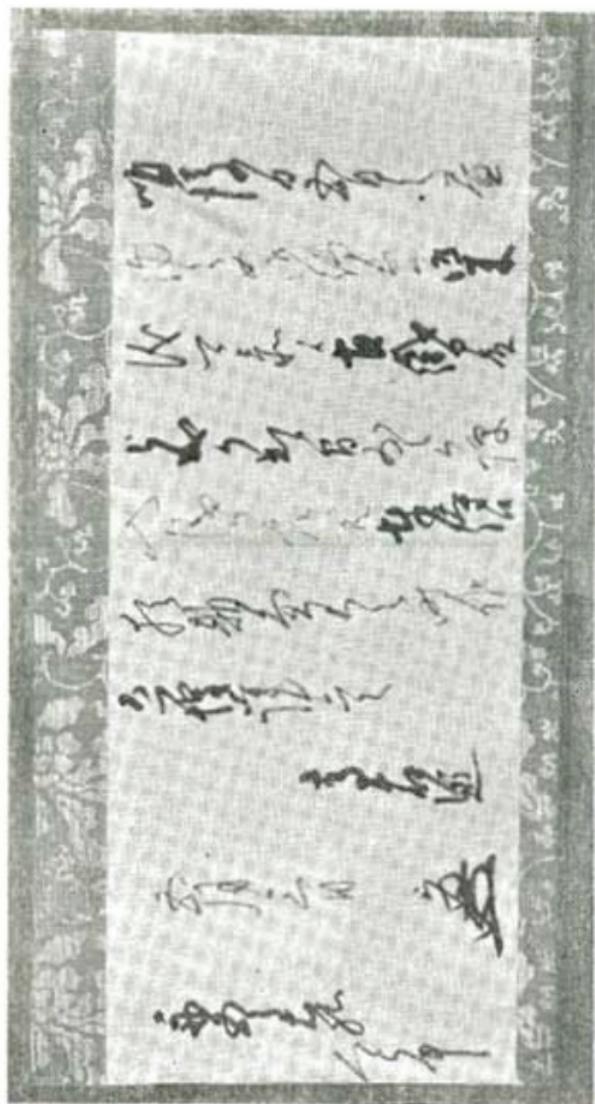
In the earlier Jesuit missionary reports from Japan the name of a nobleman, Takayama Hida-no-kami or Don Dario Takayama, frequently occurs. In 1563 he appears for the first time as the lord of Sawa Castle, and as a vassal of Matsunaga Hisahide. Matsunaga was not only lord of the province of Yamato but also Minister of Justice of the Shôgun, Ashikaga Yoshiteru and one of the most powerful princes of the *Gokinai*, i.e. of the five provinces around Kyôto: Yamashiro, Yamato, Kawachi, Settsu and Izumi. Takayama's native place was Takayama Village, in the province of Settsu. The reason why he took service under Matsunaga cannot be ascertained from the sources, but probably it was due to economic stress, for he had to support a large family of six children.

It is a well-known fact that St. Francis Xavier had tried in vain to establish a mission in the ancient Japanese capital of Kyôto or Miyako (Meako), as it was called in those times, but ten years later Father Gaspar Vilela, S.J., and

his Japanese confrère, Brother Lorenzo, succeeded in laying the foundations of this important mission. Whereas the Shôgun Yoshiteru showed the missionaries extreme favor, the bonzes and other enemies left nothing untried to rid themselves of the unwanted invaders. Despite all their vexations and calumnies the number of Christians in the capital constantly increased and in the neighboring commercial city of Sakai even a second, though smaller, mission could be established. Such was the state of affairs in the spring of 1563. When the enemies realized that they could not attain their end by hostile propaganda, they urged the powerful Matsunaga Hisahide to expel the missionaries and confiscate their church.

In his heart Matsunaga was a bitter enemy of the Christian religion and thus only too much inclined to comply with the request of the bonzes, but as the Shôgun had granted the foreign priest a letter of protection it was out of the question to oust him from the capital without a formal trial. Hence he resolved to have the Christian religion examined by a body of scholars and take action according to their findings. If they should find that Christianity was an evil religion the Shôgun would probably withdraw his protection and consent to the expulsion of the missionaries. The very fact that the two principal judges, Yûki Yamashiro-no-kami and Kiyohara Ekata, were sworn enemies of the foreign religion clearly shows that Matsunaga did not want to give it a fair trial but only wanted to cover up his real intentions. It was clear from the outset that the outcome of the "investigation" would be a condemnation of Christianity.

Among the enemies of the Christian religion none was more fanatic than Takayama; yet it must also be remark-



Autograph letter written by Takayama Ukon to Funakoshi Goroemon inviting him on the morning of May 5th (no year is given), as he had promised. "Furuta Oribe will also be present." This is one of the very few Takayama autographs in existence today.

ed that he was an honest enemy. He was honestly and firmly convinced that Christianity was a real danger for the nation, and so the mere expulsion of the missionaries seemed to him too light a punishment. Hence he demanded that Father Vilela and Brother Lorenzo should die if their religion were found to be bad. His suggestion was accepted by Matsunaga and his accomplices.

Yûki Yamashiro-no-kami found ways and means to trap at least one of his victims. Through a Christian, who had called upon him in a lawsuit, he sent a letter to Father Vilela asking him to come to Nara with Brother Lorenzo and instruct him as well as his friend in the Christian religion. Although he had discussed the Christian religion with his client, one may rightly doubt whether he was in earnest. When Father Vilela read this letter he was not a little embarrassed. Was it indeed possible that a sworn enemy like Yûki should have changed his mind, or was it only a clever trick to trap his victims? If he really meant what he said it would be a mistake not to accept his invitation; if it was only a ruse it would be unjustifiable to risk the lives of the missionaries and bereave the Christians of their pastors. To solve this dilemma Vilela consulted the leading Christians. They were of the opinion that in no case should he proceed to Nara but proposed that Lorenzo might go in order to find out Yûki's real intentions. If his invitation had been a treachery he would see that the Father had recognized it and so he would probably not dare to harm the Brother. Lorenzo courageously accepted the proposal and went to Nara, accompanied by the Christian who had delivered Yûki's letter.

Yûki, Kiyohara and Takayama questioned Lorenzo

most searchingly, but his answers were so clever and consistent that they were filled with admiration. To learn that God had created all things and by His Providence guided man's immortal soul so as to lead it to eternal happiness in heaven was something so beautiful and consoling that Takayama could scarcely trust his ears. If Christianity really was what Lorenzo had taught him, it was not only an excellent religion but the only way to salvation. If then he had heretofore hated it, he had been greatly mistaken. Hence the only conclusion would be to become a Christian. Being a straightforward and honest soldier, Takayama admitted his error, asked for baptism and persuaded Yûki and Kiyohara to do the same. However, since the Brother had promised Vilela to return as soon as possible, there was not sufficient time to properly instruct the three catechumens, it was agreed that he should take the good news to the Father whom they would shortly invite to come to instruct and baptize them.

After the lapse of several weeks Father Vilela was called to Nara, instructed the three and received them into the Church. Takayama adopted the Christian name of Dario by which he will be called henceforth. Thus the plot of the bonzes not only failed to harm the Church, but Christianity had gained as powerful allies those who had sworn its destruction. Even Matsunaga could not help playing the innocent and favoring outwardly the religion which he so deeply hated. His heart filled with great consolation, Dario returned to Sawa, resolved to procure the same happiness for his family and his retainers. At once he invited Brother Lorenzo to his castle to preach the Gospel to them. To his great satisfaction the Brother gathered a rich harvest. Dario's wife, his six

Justo Takayama Ukon

children and a great many retainers, one hundred and fifty persons in all, received baptism. Very soon Dario's mother, his two sisters and their husbands were visited by Lorenzo and became Christians. Even two barons of the neighborhood, friends of Dario, were led to the faith with a good many of their relatives and vassals.

Dario had six children, three sons and three daughters. The eldest son Ukon received the Christian name of Justo and appears in the Jesuit letters as 'Justo Ukondono', i.e. Don Justo Ukon. He was called to do great things for the Church of Japan, not only as her advocate before the mighty of the land and as an apostle of his vassals and friends of the highest rank, but above all as an heroic example of a holy life and Christian fortitude in the battles against the enemies of the Christian name. He was about ten years old when he received baptism.

POLITICAL CHAOS

At the time the Takayamas became Christians Japan was in a state of political upheaval. The theoretically unlimited power of the Tennô (emperor) had been reduced to insignificance for centuries. Only the privilege of conferring titles and honors had been left to him, but the financial remuneration on the part of the recipients scarcely sufficed to support the imperial court and its numerous retinue. Since the end of the twelfth century political power had been in the hands of the Shôguns who were supposed to rule the country in the name of the emperor, although, as a matter of fact, they paid little

Political Chaos

attention to the wishes of their sovereign. It was not long before the Shôgun became a mere puppet, whereas the real power was held by the Kanryô, his first minister. About the middle of the sixteenth century the power of the Kanryô was confined to the five home provinces around the capital (the so-called Gokinai), apart from the fact that three powerful houses fought among themselves to secure this important office for their families. In the more distant provinces the governors had long ago become independent princes and by constant wars endeavored to rob their neighbors of their estates and increase their own power. Amidst this general turmoil even the bonzes of some of the great Buddhist monasteries engaged in this struggle for power and greatly increased their holdings at the expense of secular rulers. That was the time when three great generals and statesmen rose to power and re-established order, thus laying the foundation of the unified Japan of today. Nobunaga, the first of the three, conquered the larger part of the main island of Honshû; Hideyoshi, who succeeded him, extended his sway over the rest of the country, whereas Ieyasu reaped the fruit of the conquests of both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, and obtained the office of Shôgun which his house maintained for two centuries and a half, not as figure-heads but as real rulers of the whole country.

NOBUNAGA; A FRIEND OF CHRISTIANITY

Two years after Takayama Ukon's baptism the mission of Kyôto had to endure great hardships. In 1565 the Shôgun Yoshiteru was assassinated by his treacherous ministers Miyoshi Yoshitsugu and Matsunaga Hisahide. The enemies of the Christian name intended to use the general confusion to destroy the Church as well, but yet the Christian samurai (knights) were resolved to defend the missionaries with their swords. Thus in order to avoid bloodshed and yet obtain their object the enemies prevailed upon the emperor, Ôgimachi, to exile the missionaries by imperial rescript. Thereupon they left the capital and fled to Sakai.

Soon the murderers of the Shôgun were engaged in a life and death struggle among themselves. Matsunaga was defeated and lost a great part of his domain. Takayama's fortress of Sawa was also conquered by the enemies, but Dario succeeded in making his escape. After a short stay in his native village of Takayama he became a retainer of his friend, Wada Koremasa. Wada was one of the staunchest vassals of the murdered Shôgun Yoshiteru, and when Yoshiaki, Yoshiteru's younger brother, sought refuge with him, he not only gave him hospitality but prevailed upon the young and brilliant general Nobunaga to obtain for him the office of Shôgun. In 1568 Nobunaga proceeded with a powerful army towards Kyôto, defeated Yoshiaki's enemies and had him installed as Shôgun by

Nobunaga; a Friend of Christianity

the emperor.

The Fathers had left nothing undone to obtain the repeal of the imperial rescript by which they had been exiled from the capital, yet in spite of the help and intercession of powerful friends all their efforts failed. When Nobunaga had obtained control of Kyôto, Dario urged his friend Wada to use his influence with the dictator in favor of the missionaries. Wada all the more gladly responded to Dario's request as he himself admired the Christian religion and for years had entertained the desire of becoming a Christian. Nobunaga at once granted Wada's request, and the latter charged Dario to bring Father Frois from Sakai to Kyôto. In March 1569 the Father returned to the capital to the great joy of the Christians, who in large numbers had come to welcome him. From then on Wada considered it a point of honor to protect and favor the foreign priest. He obtained for him an audience with Nobunaga, with the result that this mighty warlord henceforth showed him and his Christians extreme favor. Even so, however, the enemies did not cease to plot against the Church, but Wada frustrated their plans. Even when by their calumnies they succeeded, for a time, in robbing him of Nobunaga's favor he continued to help the Fathers in preserving the strong man's good graces.

THE TAKAYAMAS AT TAKATSUKI

The Shôgun Yoshiaki having been raised to his dignity by Nobunaga's mighty arm was scarcely more than a mere tool in the hands of his powerful protector. Thus it was but natural that he looked for friends willing to help him to free himself from such utter dependence. Yoshiaki's plans, however, did not escape Nobunaga's watchful eye. In order to attach the valiant Araki Murashige to his cause, Nobunaga gave him the entire province of Settsu (1573). Two years before, Araki had killed Wada Koremasa in battle, but as lord of the province of Settsu he became the suzerain of Koremasa's son, Korenaga, who had inherited from his father the tiny fief of Takatsuki. Naturally Korenaga had little love for his new suzerain and endeavored to free himself of his overlordship.

Dario Takayama and his son Ukon, who meanwhile had grown to manhood, served Wada Korenaga in unflinching fidelity as they had served his father Koremasa. Korenaga was a profligate and careless youth who listened more to the suggestions of his inexperienced friends rather than to the advice of his loyal samurai, particularly his uncle Koremasa and the two Takayamas. Being taken to task by his uncle, in a fit of anger he killed him with his own hand. His associates, moreover, urged him to rid himself of the Takayamas as well. Although faithful friends warned them to be on their guard, they refused to save themselves by flight but were resolved to fight for their lives. They knew Korenaga's treacherous

Apostolate in Takatsuki

intentions against his suzerain Araki and consulted with the latter how these might be frustrated and how they could save themselves from the danger which threatened their lives. Araki advised them to attack the enemy and promised them his help.

One evening the Takayamas were invited to Takatsuki for "a very important consultation." Knowing that Korenaga awaited them with fifteen well-armed samurai ready to kill them, they nevertheless accepted the invitation, but took with them an equal number of samurai to fight in honest battle for their lives. When they entered the rather small hall a fierce battle began in which some were killed and a good many wounded. Dario had a very narrow escape and Ukon was seriously wounded, whereas Korenaga had to withdraw on account of several fatal wounds. Meanwhile Araki set fire to the castle and Korenaga received strict orders to leave Takatsuki. A few days later he died of his wounds. Araki then gave Takatsuki to the Takayamas. Happily, Ukon, after some time recovered from his injuries, so his father being already old and of poor health, left the administration of the fief to his son and devoted himself almost exclusively to the Christianization of his retainers and new subjects.

APOSTOLATE IN TAKATSUKI

Dario's zeal was first of all concerned with his eldest son Ukon. The latter had been baptized already ten years before, but on account of the constant wars and his education in the military arts, had not been thoroughly

instructed in the Christian religion.

When in the following year (1574) the Superior of the mission, Father Francisco Cabral, S.J., visited Takatsuki, Dario availed himself of the opportunity to spread the faith among his retainers. Since there was as yet no church at Takatsuki, Dario offered his own house for the celebration of Holy Mass and the instruction of the catechumens. With zeal and eloquence he persuaded a great many samurai to hear the sermons and to induce their dependents to do the same. There were sermons for three groups of people: for the samurai, for their wives and daughters and for the common people. Those for the samurai were best frequented. All listened with keen attention and not a few proposed doubts and difficulties which were answered to their satisfaction. Many asked to be baptized, particularly among those that ranked highest, and no less than one hundred twenty persons were received into the Church.

Ukon had attended all sermons, had heard all objections and their solution. Being of a very keen intellect he thus received within a short time a thorough knowledge and a deep understanding of the Christian religion as well as a firm conviction of the truth of his faith, which, despite all trials and difficulties, he preserved to his death. At the same time his heart embraced the newly found truth with deep affection and his actions gave evidence that he was not only a Christian by name. Being himself a true lover of Christ he considered it his duty to lead as many as he could to the Good Shepherd. His gracious manners and his marvellous eloquence did the rest to make him a true apostle. None of the Fathers or Brothers equalled him in zeal and eloquence. Dario's next

Ukon's Family

concern was the erection of a church and a house for the priest. For the construction of the church only the best and finest wood was to be used. Around the church he planted a beautiful park in the middle of which a large Cross was erected. This again was surrounded with flower beds of daisies, lilies and roses which he himself collected from distant places. A pond with all kinds of fish was to add to the beauty of the park, all for the glory of God and for the entertainment of the Christians who would come to visit the church. Dario gave heart and soul to this work and did most of it with his own hands.

The work of Christianization thus begun in 1574, made such progress that in one year's time the samurai of the highest rank, together with their wives and children, became Christians. Two years later the faithful numbered already five hundred and very soon the entire fief would have been Christianized if a Father or a Brother could have permanently resided at Takatsuki. Even so the "little flock" increased rapidly. In the year 1577 alone no less than four thousand baptisms were administered and at the end of 1579 there were in all eight thousand Christians. An equal number of catechumens prepared themselves for baptism.

UKON'S FAMILY

Shortly after taking over the administration of Takatsuki, Ukon would seem to have married. His wife Justa was the daughter of Kuroda, a friend of Takayama Hida-no-kami, and converted by the same to the Christian religion.

Justo Takayama Ukon

Since, however, Kuroda died shortly after his baptism, his wife was persuaded by her non-Christian relatives to give up her faith and have her children educated in paganism. She, moreover, married the younger brother of her deceased husband. When Justa, as Ukon's wife, was no longer under the authority of her mother, she again became a fervent Christian, all the more as her husband was such an exemplary follower of Christ. Having great pity on her unfortunate mother, she, as well as her husband, wrote her many letters exhorting her to return to the faith she had given up. When a few years later she had been stripped of her estate of Yono by Nobunaga, she received hospitality at Takatsuki, was reconciled with the Church and died a good Christian. Her second husband as well as his children likewise received baptism.

Ukon gave such a shining example of conjugal fidelity that he was the admiration of all, even his enemies. Hideyoshi, who himself was notorious for being the contrary, could not help openly praising Ukon's moral integrity. He said that it was a real miracle that a young man of such abilities and an object of general admiration could keep his heart pure amidst the dangers of court life. When one day Ukon's enemy slandered him as an hypocrite Hideyoshi gave him a strong rebuke and ordered him to stop such evil talk.

About Ukon's children very little is known. His eldest son Joam was probably born in 1575, and his eldest daughter died very young in 1577. In 1581 a second and a few years later a third son was born, but both of them had already died in October 1585. With certainty we know only of another daughter who was born much later, probably shortly before 1600.

FIRST TRIAL

During the first years of the Takayama rule at Takatsuki, Ukon's person was still eclipsed by his chivalrous father Hida-no-kami, although theoretically he was lord of Takatsuki. Since 1578, however, Ukon played the more important role. Whereas Hida-no-kami was merely a simple and straightforward samurai of the old type, his son was an ingenious general, a great military engineer and a famous master of the tea ceremony. If Dario was an exemplary Christian and a zealous apostle, Ukon was destined to become to the young Church of Japan the heroic example of constancy in the faith.

In those chaotic days of war of all against all, it was quite common that vassals rebelled against their suzerain if thereby they could obtain greater power, even though it might mean destruction to their lawful overlord. Araki Murashige had received numberless benefits from Nobunaga who had made him lord of a large province, yet scarcely five years had passed when Araki joined a league which aimed at nothing less than Nobunaga's overthrow. The conspirators had purposely concealed their ideas from Takayama Ukon, since they feared that he would oppose them on moral grounds. When, however, he learned of their treachery, he did all he could to dissuade his suzerain from committing such a crime. Araki listened to him in silence and asked him to explain his views to the assembled samurai. When Ukon left

Justo Takayama Ukon

Takatsuki on the appointed day, he said to his wife that even if he were to be crucified at the gates of Takatsuki he would fearlessly say what his conscience told him, to prevent such an unjust war.

In his address, Ukon pointed out that war against one's lord and benefactor was the greatest injustice and ingratitude and hence morally wrong. Apart from this it would be folly to believe that a great warrior like Nobunaga could be defeated, so that for this reason also it was unjustifiable to make war on him. Shortly before, Ukon had given his younger sister as hostage to Araki, but now, in order to dispel all suspicion that possibly he had been urged by Nobunaga to speak against the intended war, he sent for his only son and gave him also as hostage to his suzerain.

Ukon's pleading made such an impression on Araki that he at once resolved to call upon Nobunaga and ask forgiveness for all that had happened. When he was already on his way to Azuchi, Nobunaga's residence, the war party sent a messenger after him to tell him that they would depose him and choose another suzerain if he were to follow Ukon's advice. Araki had not the moral strength to ignore the threats of his rebellious samurai and do the right thing. He returned to them and declared war upon Nobunaga. For Ukon this meant an exceedingly acute conflict of conscience.

He knew very well that as a Christian he could not lawfully take part in a war which he considered unjust; on the other hand he would be considered an unfaithful vassal if he did not support his suzerain. And there were his hostages! They would be put to a cruel death. No wonder, therefore, that he could not at once make up his mind

First Trial

what to do. Meanwhile Nobunaga appeared with a mighty army in front of Takatsuki. He at once realized that it was out of the question to storm the strong fortress defended by such a brilliant commander and that he could conquer it only after a long siege and with heavy losses. Since, however, this key fortress was of paramount importance for Araki's destruction, Nobunaga tried to gain his end by bringing moral pressure to bear on Ukon.

Knowing that Takayama Ukon was a staunch Christian, Nobunaga called Father Organtino to his camp and asked him to remind Takayama that a good Christian could not lawfully give allegiance to a traitor. Hence Takayama should immediately open the gates of Takatsuki to his supreme lord and turn against the traitor Araki. If he did, he would be royally rewarded and all efforts would be made to save the lives of his hostages as well as his honor as a samurai. Father Organtino replied that he himself had told Takayama he could not lawfully join hands with a traitor but had received the answer that nothing but fear for the lives of his hostages had prevented him thus far from declaring himself openly against the traitor. Organtino, moreover, remarked that it would be labor lost to try and move a man like Takayama by promises of reward. To satisfy Nobunaga the Father went to Takatsuki and delivered the message. Thereupon Ukon began to negotiate with Araki, with the result that the latter was ready to withdraw from the league if Nobunaga would pardon him and not impair his estate. This Nobunaga was unwilling to do and thus the negotiations came to naught.

Seeing that Takayama was unwilling to capitulate Nobunaga decided to use force. All the Fathers and

Justo Takayama Ukon

Brothers were interned and Father Organtino was dispatched to Takatsuki with this ultimatum: If Ukon refused to hand over Takatsuki immediately, all missionaries and Christians of Gokinai would be crucified and all churches destroyed. Only through a ruse was Organtino admitted at all to Takatsuki, for Ukon's father had given strict orders to kill any further messenger from Nobunaga. Hence the Father pretended to be fleeing from Nobunaga and seeking refuge in Takatsuki. Thus he was at last admitted to the castle. Ukon's father was not only strongly opposed to the capitulation of the fortress but threatened even to commit suicide if Ukon were to yield to Nobunaga's pressure. This, together with Nobunaga's fearful threats, caused Ukon most excruciating agony. Many hours he spent in prayer to find a solution which would satisfy his conscience, save his honor, his hostages and Christianity and keep his father from losing his soul. Since Dario flatly refused to allow the Father to see Ukon, the latter waited until his father had gone to rest and then called on the priest to tell him of his terrible dilemma and what he had resolved to do:

He would retire as lord of Takatsuki, return the castle to his father and proceed to Nobunaga's camp to meet whatever fate might await him. If Nobunaga were to kill him, he would die a martyr; if he were to spare him, he would henceforth devote his life to the service of God and the conversion of souls. Since in similar situations many Japanese samurai had retired from the world without incurring disgrace, Araki could not justly charge him with treason and revenge himself by killing his innocent hostages. Finally, his father Dario would be free to defend Takatsuki to the last without having to resort to suicide

First Trial

(seppuku) like non-Christian lords.

Having made his plan known to Father Organtino, Ukon called a number of his Christian samurai, told them what he was about to do and gave them a letter for his father, whom henceforth they were to obey as lord of Takatsuki. Then he distributed his arms as souvenirs among them, cut his hair and donned a pilgrim's paper garb. In this attire he went under cover of night with Father Organtino to Nobunaga's camp. The latter received him with great joy but would not allow him to become a missionary. Henceforth he was to serve immediately under him.

When the next morning Dario read Ukon's letter he became very angry, blamed everything on Father Organtino and gave strict orders for the defense of the castle. Yet the Christian samurai had agreed among themselves not to move and to disregard Dario's orders. As a result, the latter saw that all was lost and so he left Takatsuki with the leader of the non-Christian samurai and hurried to Araki's castle at Arioka (Itami of today). He told his suzerain all that had happened and pointed out that he himself had done all in his power to defend Takatsuki. In this way he hoped to save his hostages from a cruel death. Araki could not help admiring Dario's loyalty, and as Ukon also had done nothing contrary to the Japanese code of honor, he could not, in justice, destroy his hostages. Yet Dario was interned in the castle but treated with consideration. Meanwhile, the Christian samurai had played Takatsuki into Nobunaga's hands, who gave it back to Ukon with a considerably increased rent.

About one year later Itami capitulated. Araki had previously escaped but had left behind the unfortunate

hostages. Nobunaga had them all cruelly massacred with the exception of Ukon's son and sister. Dario also was to feel Nobunaga's anger and was condemned to death, but by the intercession of powerful friends the death sentence was changed to lifelong exile. He was deported to distant Echizen and for a time kept in strict confinement. Very soon, however, Nobunaga allowed him to call his wife and his daughter to his place of exile and to move about freely. Since, moreover, Shibata Katsue, lord of Echizen, was a warm friend of the Christian religion, Dario was able to spread the Gospel and thus become the apostle of that distant province where theretofore no missionary had penetrated.

THE ZEALOUS APOSTLE

If Nobunaga had until then favored Christianity, he now even doubled his favors. In his new residence of Azuchi, on the shore of Lake Biwa, he donated to the Fathers a large plot of land for the erection of a church, whereas he had peremptorily refused all Buddhist sects permission to establish themselves in his new capital. About this time the Jesuit visitor Alessandro Valignano had arrived from India to investigate the conditions of the Japanese mission, particularly to remedy the appalling insufficiency of the missionary personnel. For this purpose he erected a novitiate and a college to prepare the Japanese youths who had joined or were in future to join the Society of Jesus for the sacred ministry. He also gave orders for the erection of two seminaries where

The Zealous Apostle

Japanese lay-helpers were to be trained as catechists. The first seminary was opened at Arima (Kyûshû) and the second was to be built in Kyôto or its environs. Father Organtino, superior of the Kyôto residence, had at once begun the work and had collected all the building materials, but as the site was too small and none of the neighbors were willing to sell land to the Fathers, the erection of such a large building in the capital could not be realized. Hence Takayama Ukon and other Christian lords advised Father Organtino to erect the seminary on the building ground which Nobunaga had donated at Azuchi. This plan met with Organtino's approval and Takayama promised to ship the building materials to Azuchi and to defray all the expenses. He was as good as his word, and within one month a stately building rose at Azuchi to the great satisfaction of Nobunaga and all Christians.

It was due to Ukon's zeal also that the first pupils of the seminary were gained. Although his Christian samurai were rather loath to send their children to a semi-monastic institution, Takayama spoke with such warmth on the importance of native missionaries and on the great honor of devoting one's children to the service of God that they yielded to his pleadings and sent their children to the new institution. For the material needs of the seminary Ukon granted a generous annual rent.

Having become Nobunaga's immediate vassal, Takayama Ukon could act as lord of his estate without fear of interference from any intermediate suzerain. Thus he could more freely work for the spread of Christianity. Being himself firmly convinced that the Christian religion was the greatest treasure a man could find on earth, he left

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nothing untried to make his subjects share this happiness. He refrained, however, from physical or moral restraint and confined himself to inviting the non-Christians to the sermons and to recommending them to become Christians. Those bonzes of his domain who were unwilling to receive baptism could retain their revenues, but it seems that not a few of the Buddhist priests did become Christians, since many temples were either destroyed or changed into churches. It goes without saying that opposition arose and that Ukon was a thorn in the flesh of many bonzes. Seeing however that it would be of little avail to complain to Nobunaga, who hated the bonzes, they asked Ukon's enemy, Nakagawa Kiyohide, to denounce him to Nobunaga. Knowing from his own experience of Takayama's faithfulness and integrity, Nobunaga paid no attention to Nakagawa's calumnies. Thereupon the bonzes had Ukon burned in effigy and prophesied him an ignominious death, but he laughed at them and went on to make converts. Towards the end of 1579 Takatsuki had already eight thousand Christians, in October of the following year fourteen thousand and in 1581 eighteen thousand in a population of about twenty five thousand. In spite of this astonishing growth no priest or even Brother resided permanently at Takatsuki until the summer of 1581.

In the spring of 1581 the Visitor Valignano came to Gokinai to see the state of the Kyôto mission and to pay homage to Nobunaga. On this occasion he twice visited Takatsuki. His first visit took place during Holy Week and the Easter Holidays. Father Luis Frois begins his description of the celebrations at Takatsuki with a panegyric on Takayama Ukon. He writes: "On Tuesday of the

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Holy Week the visitor arrived with his suite at Takatsuki, gentlemen and noblewomen coming one mile to meet him. Of all the beautiful things the visitor saw (at Takatsuki) nothing aroused his satisfaction, nay, his admiration, so much as meeting Justo, lord of this castle, who on account of his works, indeed, deserves the name he bears (Justo, i.e. the just). For although he is such a powerful lord, a young man of twenty-eight years and one of the distinguished officers of Nobunaga, he nevertheless shows such a humility and obedience towards the Church and the Fathers that he appears more like one of their servants than like a mighty lord. He observes God's law so exactly that all non-Christians marvel, and it is indeed most astonishing to see so brave and youthful a general, in such a high position at court and among so many pagan lords, with whom he converses in a most lively and intimate way, lead such an exemplary life. Yet the Lord has endowed him with such prudence that he behaves towards all in such a way that although he fulfils everything prescribed by the Christian religion, he is, nevertheless, esteemed and loved by all".

The news that Valignano intended to hold the solemn ceremonies of Holy Week at Takatsuki had soon spread among the Christians of central Japan. Accordingly even from distant places, Christians, and above all Christian samurai, flocked to Takatsuki, for it was the first time that those ceremonies were to be held there. The silver candle sticks, the rich brocade vestments, the many priests and clerics, the beautiful ceremonies and the choir of the seminarians of Azuchi, made a very deep impression. The great number of Christians, the many Holy Communions and the public flagellation on Holy Thursday

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almost made the visitor believe that he was in Rome and not at Takatsuki. On Good Friday he was greatly edified by the public penance of a young samurai who, on Holy Thursday, had taken part in pagan entertainments at Kyôto and thus given scandal to the Christians. He scourged himself before the assembled Christians and later distributed large quantities of rice among the poor. In the great procession on Easter Sunday fifteen thousand Christians and five thousand pagans took part. After the celebrations Ukon invited all Christians to a splendid dinner and entertained them with martial games.

All who had taken part in these celebrations were so deeply impressed that Ukon and the other Christian lords urged the visitor to celebrate also the feast of Corpus Christi at Takatsuki on his way back to Kyûshû. Valignano agreed, and the celebration took place even before he started for Kyûshû and was held with even greater pomp than that of Holy Week and Easter. During this second visit there were, moreover, two mass baptisms of five hundred and one thousand five hundred people. Ukon prevailed on Valignano to visit also the churches and chapels of the Takatsuki district, twenty in all. Undoubtedly he wanted to induce the visitor to assign a resident priest to his domain, because, owing to the appalling shortage of missionaries, Takatsuki had up to then only occasionally been visited by a priest or a Brother. Having seen for himself the urgent need of a pastor, Valignano could no longer resist Ukon's entreaties and promised to send a Father and a Brother to minister to the Christians.

Just one year after Valignano's visit to Nobunaga's court, the latter was destroyed by his treacherous general,

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Akechi Mitsuhide. Nobunaga's eldest son, Nobutada, perished at the same time. Akechi tried all he could to draw Ukon to his side, but all to no avail. Ukon not only spurned the offer but asked and obtained the favor to strike the first blow at the traitor. At Yamazaki, a suburb of Kyôto, with a handful of valiant samurai he defeated a much stronger posse of the enemy, who took to flight, but was killed by the peasants before he reached his stronghold of Sakamoto. His adherents were completely routed by Hideyoshi so that Akechi's rule lasted hardly two weeks.

Hideyoshi, Nobunaga's ablest general, had assumed the role of avenger of his lord and had destroyed Akechi with the help of Nobunaga's surviving sons, Nobuo and Nobutaka. Now the question arose as to who was to become the heir to Nobunaga's power. Both Nobuo and Nobutaka coveted the rich heritage for themselves, but were at one in refusing it to Nobutada's infant son, Hidenobu. Hence it was not too difficult for Hideyoshi to have the latter declared Nobunaga's successor and himself made the infant's chief tutor. It soon became evident that Hideyoshi himself aimed at nothing less than becoming Nobunaga's successor and that the sword would decide the issue. The discord between Nobuo and Nobutaka enabled him to attack and destroy them one by one. Nobutaka concluded an alliance with Shibata Katsue, but Hideyoshi swiftly acted before they could even join hands. Shibata was completely defeated and committed harakiri with the rest of his samurai; Nobutaka was assassinated by his own people. Nobuo obtained help from the powerful Ieyasu and it seemed that a long civil war was inevitable. Hence Hideyoshi, seeing that he could not conquer his enemies

so easily as Shibata, maneuvered to divide them: *divide et impera*. Nobuo actually made a separate peace with Hideyoshi, renounced his claim to his father's heritage and had to be satisfied with a modest indemnification. Ieyasu also was ready to conclude a peace treaty on very favorable terms. Thus Hideyoshi had become the real ruler of central Japan within less than two years after Nobunaga's death. To legitimize his usurped rule he prevailed upon the emperor to confer upon him the office of *Kampaku* (regent). Simultaneously he was adopted into the Fujiwara family, who for centuries had held this office. Hideyoshi founded the Toyotomi branch of this distinguished clan and is known in Japanese history as Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

Takayama had performed wonders of bravery under Hideyoshi to avenge the death of his lord Nobunaga. As a result he won Hideyoshi's favor and was made the chief of his bodyguard. Many other important offices Hideyoshi entrusted to Christian lords. Konishi Yukinaga was made Grand Admiral, his father, Konishi Ryûsa, became Hideyoshi's treasurer and one of the governors of the wealthy city of Sakai. Another Christian, Ai, obtained the office of secretary of the *Kampaku*. If Nobunaga had favored Christianity, Hideyoshi showed himself a still greater friend in every way.

When Hideyoshi had become *Kampaku* he gave all important castles around Kyôto to members of his family, yet for several years he left to Takayama Ukon the important castle of Takatsuki out of consideration for his unflinching fidelity. For his services in the war against Akechi, Takayama received a substantial increase of rent so that his estate was now about twice as large as in 1573

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when it was entrusted to his family. He was now also entirely free to push the work of evangelization more vigorously than had been possible during Nobunaga's life time. Up to then he had used no moral coercion to convert the bonzes and had not even urged them to listen to the sermons. Now he was determined to make his entire fief Christian, so the bonzes were told either to become Christians or to leave the country. In this he probably followed the advice of the foreign missionaries who, like practically all their European contemporaries, were of the opinion that a sovereign had not only the right but the duty to lead his subjects to what he believed to be the only true religions. At any rate, at least one hundred bonzes became Christians and Buddhism disappeared altogether from Takatsuki. Converted bonzes not only retained their old rents but even received an additional grant if their income did not allow them to live in accordance with their rank. A good many temples were changed to Christian churches and those not suitable for this purpose were destroyed. In 1585 the number of Christians was about thirty thousand.

When Akechi Mitsuhide plundered Azuchi, the seminary of the Jesuits was likewise pillaged so that nothing but the bare wall was left, and what was left very likely fell a prey to the fire which soon after destroyed Nobunaga's castle as well as his new capital. The plan now was to reopen the seminary in Kyôto. Since, however, the property of the Jesuits in the capital was too small for a large number of students, Takayama Ukon offered to reopen the institution at Takatsuki. The offer was accepted and Ukon made himself responsible not only for the seminarians' board and lodging but also built a new church for

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the school. The new seminary flourished and attracted pupils from the first families of the country. One of the most talented and most pious students was the son of a cousin of the emperor Ôgimachi.

Ukon's apostolic zeal was, however, not confined to the conversion of his retainers and subjects at Takatsuki; he also availed himself of the prestige at Hideyoshi's court to make converts among the members of the highest nobility. As Nobunaga had built for himself a magnificent residence at Azuchi, so Hideyoshi chose Ôsaka for his new capital and there built the still existing gigantic castle. All daimyôs were expected to erect luxurious mansions, and the Buddhist sects to construct costly temples in the new capital, to increase its splendors. Takayama under these circumstances thought it advisable, if not necessary for the Fathers to build a beautiful church in Ôsaka, a thing which, moreover, Hideyoshi undoubtedly expected of them in token of their gratitude for his numberless favors.

Takayama had, moreover, a very concrete plan to solve this problem quickly and without financial sacrifices for the Fathers, who were already burdened beyond their limited resources.

The plan was: At Okayama, in the province of Kawa-chi, the Christian Yûki had erected a fine church, but as they had been changed to another fief this church was no longer needed, for the Christian samurai had left Okayama with their lord. To prevent the conversion of this abandoned church into a Buddhist temple and preserve it for Christian worship, Takayama wanted to obtain permission from Hideyoshi to transfer it to Ôsaka. Father Organtino was to propose this to Hideyoshi and ask for

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a suitable plot of land. Hideyoshi approved of Ukon's plan and donated a beautiful site. Takayama at once had his people transfer the building to the new capital and defrayed all the expenses. Thus on Christmas 1583 Ôsaka had a fine church.

The hopes Takayama had entertained regarding the new church were fulfilled beyond expectation. He himself encouraged his friends to go and listen to the sermons, and even before the work of construction had been completed many young noblemen met in his house to listen to his persuasive pleading. One of the foremost of them visited the priest, heard a sermon and asked the Father to accept him as his disciple. On the following day he came with a great many young nobles to hear another sermon and pleaded with his friends to become Christians. The blessing of the new church on Christmas drew such crowds of people that the Fathers and Brothers had no rest by day or night. Very soon there were many conversions among the highest nobility. The most outstanding convert was the brilliant general Gamô Ujisato, son-in-law of Nobunaga. He was a close friend of Takayama who greatly esteemed him for talents and noble character. Hence he labored unsparingly to win over this extraordinary man to the faith. It was no easy task, but in the end Ukon succeeded, also thanks to the great favors he obtained for his friend from Hideyoshi. Scarcely had Gamô received baptism when he also became a fervent apostle. It was he who took the first steps to win over another outstanding general, Kuroda Yoshitaka, and with the help of his friends, Takayama Ukon and Konishi Yukinaga, he saw his efforts crowned with success: Kuroda became a Christian and soon joined Takayama, Gamô

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and Konishi in their endeavors to lead young noblemen to the faith.

It would lead too far to enumerate the names of all who received baptism in the church of Ôsaka, nor would it be easy to do so owing to the lack of exact statistics. Father Cespedes, S. J., in his letter of October 30, 1585, mentions five great lords who were brought to the faith by Takayama Ukon's zeal: Gamô Ujisato, Kuroda Yoshitaka, Ichibashi Hyôkichi, Makimura Chôbyôe and Seta Samanojô. Besides, Cespedes further remarks, many other noblemen and samurai of high rank, two hundred in all, received baptism. Cespedes closes his most interesting report with this panegyric on Takayama: "Justo Ukon-dono" is a rare bird on this earth. He grows daily in virtue and perfection and through his shining example the Lord has, as it were, inspired the above mentioned noblemen to receive baptism; for by his advice and his entreaties they were induced to listen to the sermons. Although Ukondono . . . is such a great lord and is living in the midst of the world, it nevertheless would seem that he lives outside it, for whilst never neglecting the duties of his office, yet he is indefatigable in finding ways and means to lead all to the knowledge of their Creator. He speaks so brilliantly on the things of God that in truth none of our Japanese Brothers could do it better. His life makes such an impression on the pagans that all love and venerate him. Chikuzen-dono (Hideyoshi) also frequently speaks of him and says that he leads such a pure life that his equal is not to be found. He loves and highly esteems him (Ukon) and numbers him among his most intimate courtiers."

As we have seen, Hideyoshi for several years did not

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change Ukon from Takatsuki, whereas nearly all other lords around the capital had been removed to other fiefs. Eventually Takayama also had to leave Takatsuki, but in exchange he received the much better fief of Akashi (West of Kôbe). When the bonzes of Akashi heard of it they were seized with great fear lest their new lord should destroy Buddhism at Akashi as he had done at Takatsuki. Thus they loaded their idols on board a ship and went to Ôsaka to implore Hideyoshi's protection against the impending disaster.

Although Hideyoshi's mother and his physician, the exbonze Seyakuin Zensô, pleaded in their favor, Hideyoshi bluntly refused their request, pointing out that Takayama was free to act as he saw fit in his new fief. He even went so far as to demand of the bonzes to burn their idols and in spite of the pleadings of his mother, insisted on his demand. Seyakuin, who even before had greatly disliked Ukon's Christian propaganda among the high nobility, never forgot this defeat and was henceforth looking for an opportunity to take revenge.

Ukon's new subjects at Akashi showed a remarkable readiness to become Christians. Shortly after he had taken possession of the fief the leading men assembled and resolved to ask their new lord for Fathers to instruct them in the Christian religion. Ukon was deeply moved by their request and thanked them most heartily. He remarked that their desire to become Christians pleased him more than the possession of an entire province. Very soon the work of evangelization began and before two years had elapsed Akashi had a beautiful church and two thousand Christians.

SECOND TRIAL

It would be most astonishing if Takayama's vigorous Christian propaganda had not provoked opposition. As a matter of fact, about two years before the ex-bonze Seyakuin Zensô had already threatened to denounce Ukon on this account to Hideyoshi. When Kuroda Yoshitaka received baptism he said that Ukon's Christian propaganda among the high nobility greatly displeased him and might some day become a danger to Hideyoshi. Hence he would have to warn his lord against this danger. Whether he actually complained to Hideyoshi cannot with certainty be ascertained from the sources, but if he did complain Hideyoshi must have ignored his warning. When Hideyoshi refused the request of the bonzes of Akashi, in whose behalf Seyakuin had exerted himself, his hatred of Takayama and the Christian religion deepened still further. And before long he found an opportunity to revenge himself, as we shall see hereafter. Takayama knew very well of Seyakuin's hostile activity, yet paid little attention to it. However, he did not altogether trust Hideyoshi's apparent benevolence towards Christianity, knowing from experience that he was inclined to suspicion. Hence it was all the more to be feared that Seyakuin's insinuations might arouse Hideyoshi's antagonism and provoke a persecution of Christianity.

Nevertheless Ukon continued to make converts, for his intention was good, nor did he fear persecution for the cause of Christ, as he had clearly proved by his heroic

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courage during the war between Nobunaga and Araki. He was very soon to make even greater sacrifices for his faith.

In the spring of 1587 Hideyoshi, at the request of the Christian lord of Bungo, Ôtomo Sôrin, had appeared with a powerful army in Kyûshû to destroy Ôtomo's enemy, Shimazu Yoshihisa, lord of Satsuma and Ôsumi. After a short campaign Shimazu capitulated and Hideyoshi distributed the provinces of Kyûshû according to his own will. Nearly half of the large island received Christian lords so that the Christianization of the country seemed to be a matter of only a few years. Then all of a sudden Hideyoshi turned a persecutor over night. All missionaries were to leave Japan within twenty days, churches were to be destroyed and the Christians to return to the religion of their ancestors. It probably will never be possible to explain this sudden change of Hideyoshi's policy, but this much seems to be certain, that Seyakuin's hostile insinuation had something to do with it and that his intrigues were mainly directed against his enemy, Takayama Ukon. Hence the latter became the first victim of Hideyoshi's persecution. Even before the publication of the edict of persecution Ukon received a message to the effect "that the law of the Christians was from the devil and that it was spreading rapidly in Japan, particularly among the leading samurai and great lords, owing to his (Ukon's) propaganda." "This," Hideyoshi further remarked, "greatly displeased him, for because of the mysterious and close union among the Christians which surpassed even that among brothers, he was afraid that they might cause trouble to the 'Tenka' or monarchy of Japan. Knowing, moreover, that he (Ukon) had

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converted the people of Takatsuki and recently also that of Akashi, to Christianity, destroyed their temples and burned their idols, the ruler of Japan could no longer tolerate these things. Hence if he (Ukon) wanted to remain in his service, he would have to give up his Christian religion”.

The answer of a man like Takayama Ukon can easily be guessed. It is recorded by Father Prenestino in a letter of October 1, 1587: “Ukon-dono as a valiant soldier and staunch follower of Christ, a man of a keen intellect and filled with the love and fear of God, answered fearlessly that he had never done anything against His Highness, and if he had made the people of Takatsuki and Akashi Christians he considered this a praiseworthy deed. As to giving up his faith, he would never abandon it or risk his salvation, for the whole world. Hence he there and then gave back the fief of Akashi to His Highness.” In vain did some of his pagan friends advise Ukon to give an evasive or, at least, a less decisive answer in order to satisfy Hideyoshi and avert greater evil; he replied with great emphasis that in matters of faith it was unlawful to have recourse even to the least ambiguity. Then he turned to Hideyoshi’s messengers and charged them not to tell their lord anything but what they had heard from his mouth.

This was a courageous and proud answer, worthy of a soldier of Christ who knew no fear and was ready to make any sacrifice for his conviction. It would seem that it even impressed Hideyoshi, for he sent a second message to the effect that because Ukon refused to give up the faith he could no longer be lord of Akashi, but was free to enter the service of Sasa Narimasa, the new lord of

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Higo, as a simple samurai. Ukon, however, would not serve under Sasa Narimasa and preferred to go into exile with the Fathers for the sake of his salvation. Hideyoshi thereupon in a fit of anger deprived Takayama of the fief of Akashi.

With great resignation, nay even with deep joy, Ukon accepted the unjust sentence of the tyrant, for he considered it not only an honor to suffer for Christ but even desired the crown of martyrdom. Prenestino writes: "When he (Ukon) had dismissed the messengers he felt in his heart a wonderful courage and an extraordinary spiritual consolation. Animated by the desire to die a martyr out of love for Christ he laid aside his sword and his dagger and prepared to present himself before the *Kampaku* (Hideyoshi) to give an account of our holy religion in the form of a sermon which he had prepared long before for such an occasion. However his own people as well as other friends kept him back, pointing out that such boldness would infuriate the *Kampaku* to the point of killing him then and there. In the end he yielded to their remonstrances and gave up the idea.

Through Ukon's degradation his family was now ruined and his retainers were compelled to look for another lord. That very night Ukon withdrew to a tiny island in Hakata Bay and eventually found a hiding place on the Island of Shôdoshima, in the Japanese Inland Sea, which belonged to his friend Konishi Yukinaga. It seems that not even Hideyoshi knew Ukon's place of concealment. When in 1588 Konishi was given Southern Higo in exchange for Shôdoshima Ukon followed him to his new fief. Meanwhile Hideyoshi had spread the rumor that he would reinstate Takayama if he were to come to Kyôto.

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Konishi did not trust the crafty tyrant and offered Ukon a substantial yearly rent, but the latter would not expose his generous friend to Hideyoshi's wrath and decided to proceed to Kyôto, awaiting whatever Hideyoshi might have in store for him.

As a matter of fact, Hideyoshi had thus cleverly trapped his victim and obtained hold of his person, for, far from reinstating Takayama, he sent him into exile to Kanazawa to be closely watched by the lord of the place, Maeda Toshiie.

Maeda was Ukon's friend and eventually obtained permission from Hideyoshi to take him into his service as a simple samurai, on condition that he never be seen in Kyôto or its neighborhood. In the battle of Odawara (in 1590) Takayama distinguished himself by his great bravery and won high praise from Hideyoshi, although he did not give him the honor of an interview. However, he ordered Maeda to grant him a substantial rent. When, two years later Ukon's name was again mentioned in Hideyoshi's presence, he invited the exile to his camp at Nagoya (in Hizen), spoke kindly to him and even called him to a solemn tea ceremony. This meant Ukon had regained Hideyoshi's favor and could henceforth move freely, although he was not again made a ruling daimyô. He remained in Maeda's service as before and founded Christian communities in the three provinces of Kaga, Etchû and Noto. Maeda Toshiie's son, Toshinaga, was so deeply impressed by the exemplary lives of both Ukon and his father Dario, that he wanted to become a Christian and asked for baptism. But the Fathers, fearing that hereby he might incur Hideyoshi's disfavor, advised him to wait until a more propitious time.

Second Trial

The effect of Hideyoshi's edict of persecution was not as disastrous as one might have expected. In reality it remained more or less a dead letter, at least for about ten years. In central Japan, however, the work of evangelization came to temporary standstill, whereas in Kyûshû it made good progress. As a result of Valignano's embassy (in 1591) the missionaries were granted even greater liberty, particularly at Nagasaki, and even in central Japan Christian propaganda work could be resumed. It was here especially that a number of distinguished personalities were received into the Church. Apart from the famous Lady Gracia Hosokawa, who already in 1587 had been secretly baptized, Nobunaga's grandson, Hidenobu, and his younger brother, two sons and two nephews of Maeda Munehisa, governor of Kyôto, several members of the Ukita family and many others of high rank were received into the Church. From 1592 Takayama Ukon also resumed his apostolate among the higher classes. From the information available to us, there appears only Hosokawa Okimoto as Ukon's disciple, but he has undoubtedly led many more to the faith, as appears from a text in the annual letter of 1596 which reads: "Above all Justo Ukon-dono distinguishes himself and does more than all others; for by the purity and righteousness of his life and the power of his word he moves the hearts of many and ceaselessly endeavors to 'catch big fish', because he knows that after the conversion of the lords, their subjects also can easily be won over. In this way he has induced many to receive baptism at a favorable time and to declare themselves openly as Christians".

During the first years after the issue of his edict Hideyoshi had not shed Christian blood. Contrary to his

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prohibition, the Fathers had remained in the country and continued their work of evangelization without much opposition, although they observed a certain reserve in order not to provoke Hideyoshi's anger. The tyrant knew all this but apparently ignored it, probably because he would not endanger the lucrative trade with Macao by violent persecution. Then, like a bolt from the blue, came the execution of the twenty-six martyrs at Nagasaki (on Feb. 5, 1597) which put a sudden stop to Christian propaganda.

This is not the place to enter into the causes which led to this tragic event. But what of Takayama Ukon? For a moment it seemed that his long cherished dream would be fulfilled: a martyr's crown seemed to await him. In the first fit of anger Hideyoshi had threatened to kill the missionaries and all Christians, and accordingly demanded a list of all the faithful of Kyôto and its surroundings. Ukon's name was the first on the list. Full of joy he called upon his lord, Maeda Toshiie, to bring him the good news and take leave. Maeda greatly admired him but was glad to tell him that Hideyoshi had mitigated his sentence and that only the Fathers who had come from Manila and their servants were to die. Contrary to Maeda's expectation it was a greatly disappointed Ukon to whom he bade farewell. Seeing him off to the entrance hall he told the assembled samurai what had happened and then continued: "Takayama Ukon who stands before you is a most excellent and distinguished man, brave and courageous and wise and learned withal. Believe me, if he now were to enjoy the grace and favor of the king (Hideyoshi) he would be the first or, at least, the second man in Japan; but since he is unwilling to give up his Christian religion

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he finds himself in the present situation.”

THIRD TRIAL

The execution of the twenty-six martyrs was only the beginning of a general persecution. Again Hideyoshi issued a decree of exile against all the missionaries and this time seemed to be determined to enforce it. It would have been impossible for the Fathers to remain in the country, had not Hideyoshi died before the majority of them had left. By his unexpected death (on Sept. 16, 1598) a situation arose which seemed favorable to Christianity.

Before his death Hideyoshi had entrusted the government to a board of five regents in place of his infant son, Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, the mightiest man after Hideyoshi, was to preside over the board of regents. By this proviso Hideyoshi hoped to attach him closely to his house until Hideyori would come of age. It soon became clear, however, that sooner or later Ieyasu would push Hideyori aside and usurp for himself Hideyoshi's heritage. In 1600 the battle of Sekigahara decided the issue definitely in favor of Ieyasu, who thereby became the ruler of Japan and the founder of the Tokugawa Shôgunate.

For the future of the Church, Ieyasu's attitude towards the Christians was of cardinal importance. Although he gave them a certain amount of freedom, occasional remarks and unfriendly acts showed that in his heart he was no friend of the foreign religion, and that he aimed at nothing less than its complete destruction. First of all

he strictly forbade the higher nobility to receive baptism and was firmly determined to enforce his prohibition. Hence none of the ruling daimyô became openly Christian and although a number of non-Christian lords were filled with respect or even admiration for the religion of the Cross, not one of them had the courage to declare himself a Christian. Under such circumstances Takayama could no longer make converts in the capital and retired to Kanazawa to evangelize the three provinces of the house of Maeda.

The comparatively peaceful years from 1600-1614 were for the Church nothing more than a truce, or rather the quiet before a storm which some day was sure to break. During those years the number of baptisms was rather small, and Ieyasu's occasional hostile remarks as well as his many anti-Christian acts filled the Christians with fear and apprehension. Apparently Ieyasu wanted to wait until the staunch Christian daimyô should have died or, under moral pressure, have given up their faith. Another reason for his slow and cautious procedure were the many partisans of Hideyori who might use the persecution of Christianity as a pretext to rise against Ieyasu, who had snatched the heritage of the house of Toyotomi from Hideyoshi's son. Finally Ieyasu was also afraid the lucrative trade with Macao and the Philippines might suffer if he declared open war on the Christian religion. After a lapse of fourteen years, however, all these considerations had lost their weight and so Ieyasu began his war of extermination against the hated foreign religion.

On January 27, 1614, there appeared an edict to the effect that all missionaries were to leave the country, all churches be torn down and all Christians return to the

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religion of their ancestors. Immediately the missionaries (those who were unable to hide themselves) were deported to Nagasaki. Simultaneously Takayama's suzerain, Maeda Toshinaga, received strict orders to conduct him under strong military escort to Kyôto, should he refuse to give up his faith. Ukon's friends pressed him to yield, at least outwardly, so as to save himself and his family from the impending disaster, but Takayama replied "that for a man who had any sense of honor and was firmly convinced of his Christian religion it was inadmissible to speak of such cowardice, even in jest." And so he preferred to face a dark and uncertain future with his wife, his only daughter and five grandchildren rather than turn a traitor to Christ. In those days of feudal Japan it was not the custom for a samurai to submit to an unjust order from his suzerain without fighting for his life. Hence Ukon's suzerain expected armed resistance and prepared for battle. When Takayama learned of it he sent a messenger to assure his lord "that he did not even think of defending himself, as he had always done in similar circumstances in the past; on the contrary he was arming himself with humility and patience, as he had learned in the school of the Gospel, to conquer himself rather than others".

The future of the exiles was indeed dark and uncertain. Ukon hoped that he might still die a martyr or, failing that, be exiled to a foreign land. In the middle of winter the eight victims left Kanazawa. While they were trudging the snowy mountain paths all of a sudden the rumor spread that they were to be massacred. Instead of being frightened they knelt down and prepared themselves for death, but very soon it appeared that it was a false alarm

by which their friends had hoped to make them apostatize. When after ten days they arrived at Sakamoto, near Kyôto, the governor of that city would not allow them to enter the capital, because he was afraid their presence might encourage the Christians in their resistance to the edicts of the persecutor. Instead, the governor asked for further instructions from Ieyasu. He had to wait thirty days before he received the following answer: the women were free to go wherever they pleased, but the men should be taken on board a ship to be deported to Nagasaki. The women however preferred, to share the fate of their dear ones and went with them to Nagasaki.

Meanwhile missionaries from all parts of the country had arrived at Nagasaki, whence they were to be exiled to foreign countries. Before they actually left Japan more than six months of fear and hope went by. Ieyasu greatly feared that the Macao ship might possibly fail to come to Japan if he were to deal too severely with the missionaries, and it was probably on this account that he put off their deportation until the ship had arrived. When the Macao ship actually appeared at Nagasaki he was so pleased that the Fathers hoped he might, at the last minute, soften down his categorical edict and allow at least some of the priests to remain at Nagasaki to minister to the Portuguese traders. This hope, however, proved not only futile, but Ieyasu's answer to the petition on behalf of the missionaries was the immediate execution of his edict.

Takayama and his family for months did not know what was in store for them. According to Ukon's own words he felt safe for his life only on two days. Many times Ieyasu's spies came to search his house, fearing he

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might hide weapons and prepare a revolt. Ukon's intimate friend, Hosokawa Tadaoki, had volunteered to plead his cause before Ieyasu, but Takayama smilingly declined the offer saying that he would not exchange his present situation for anything in the world. Hosokawa was so deeply impressed by this answer that he said that thereby Ukon had crowned his life of heroic deeds. At last Ieyasu decided to exile Takayama to Manila, and on November 8, 1614, he, with his family, Naitô Tokuan with his dependents, and a number of missionaries went on board a ship bound for the Philippines.

At the last moment Ieyasu sent an order to sink Ukon's ship in Nagasaki Bay, but the boat was already out of reach so that the exiles escaped in safety. Almost simultaneously with Ieyasu's messenger, a delegation from Hideyori appeared at Nagasaki to offer Takayama the command in the defense of Ôsaka, Hideyori was then just preparing for the final struggle with Ieyasu who had robbed him of his heritage. He was convinced that if such a brilliant general as Takayama Ukon were to direct the defense of his stronghold of Ôsaka the entire might of the country would not be able to storm it. When Hideyoshi's message reached Manila, Takayama had already gone to a better world, but all who had known him unanimously declared that he would certainly not have accepted the offer, even if it had reached him in time because he had cut all ties with the world and considered his exile for the sake of Christ the most precious treasure he could obtain in this mortal life.

The voyage to the Philippines lasted about one month and was full of hardships and dangers. On board the tiny junk no less than three hundred and fifty people were

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crowded and the rough sea added further to their hardships. One priest died during the voyage and three more Jesuits died shortly after their arrival in the Philippines. In Manila, the prospective arrival of the illustrious exiles caused a religious enthusiasm. The royal governor, Juan de Silva, sent a galley with refreshments and a message in the name of the king, welcoming them and offering his hospitality. When Ukon's ship was nearing the shore the whole city flocked to the harbor and the governor sent his bodyguard, together with the nobility and the clergy, to welcome the confessor of Christ and conduct him to his palace. On the landing of the slip the galley fired a salute and immediately all guns of the fortress boomed in answer. When Takayama appeared at the city gate the infantry fired such a smart volley that it was a real joy for the old soldier to see how skillfully Spanish soldiers handled their rifles.

At the entrance of the palace the governor, with the royal council and the highest civil authorities were awaiting the illustrious exile. As soon as the governor saw him he went to meet him and while they embraced each other both of them wept from joy. Silva congratulated Takayama on his heroism by which he had endured so much hardship and even exile for the sake of Christ and offered him the hospitality of the colony in the name of the king of Spain. Ukon thanked the governor most heartily for the warm welcome and for his offer of hospitality, but insisted that he was unworthy of such honors, as the Lord had not allowed him to fulfill his ardent desire to lay down his life for Him. Then he took leave and was driven in the governor's carriage to the college of the Society of Jesus. When he drew near the cathedral church, all bells

To a Better World

began to chime and at the entrance he was met by the clergy, who led him into the church to thank the Lord for his safe arrival. The same happened in the church of the Augustinian monastery. In front of the Jesuit college the Fathers and their students awaited the confessor of Christ and led him in procession to the college church where a solemn Te Deum was chanted. A banquet in the refectory of the college was also held in honor of the illustrious guest and some houses in the neighborhood of the college were placed at his and his family's disposal.

On the following days the governor, the highest civil authorities, the archbishop, the secular and regular clergy vied with one another to show Takayama their affection and respect. As he had left Japan poor, his property having been confiscated by his suzerain, the governor offered him a yearly rent to enable him to live with his family in comfort and ease, but Ukon declined the offer, saying that he was an old man and unable to do battle for the king of Spain. In vain the governor pointed out that the king wanted nothing in return but merely wished to help him as a brother in Christ. This noble duel between Christian charity and heroic unselfishness was ended by Divine Providence which called Takayama to his reward.

TO A BETTER WORLD

Ieyasu had not dared take Ukon's life because he felt it was dangerous to destroy a man so well known and admired by so many. Nor did it seem necessary to make him die a violent death, as he was already old and of

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weakened health on account of the wounds and hardships endured in so many battles. Thus it was unlikely that he would live much longer, even though he would safely reach Manila. Yet Ieyasu's last minute order to sink the ship shows that he was by no means sure of an early death for his victim. As a matter of fact, death was very soon to overtake Takayama. The long arduous journey from Kanazawa to Nagasaki in the midst of winter, the daily threats to his life during the six or seven months he was waiting there, the long voyage to Manila in a crowded junk had broken Takayama's health, and the sudden change of climate and diet did the rest. About forty days after his landing he was seized by a deadly fever and died within a few days. At midnight between February 4-5 he breathed his last and died with the holy names of Jesus and Mary on his lips.

The untimely death of the illustrious exile caused general mourning among the inhabitants of Manila, "Is it indeed possible that this holy man should have died and we no longer should have the blessing of his presence in our midst," was heard from all lips. On the other hand all were convinced that he had died a martyr as a result of the hardships of his exile and that he had received from the Lord the glorious reward for his heroic life in Christ's service. Hence it was resolved to honor him by a solemn state funeral in which the governor, the archbishop, the royal council, the civil authorities and the clergy were to take part. Nor was that all: the entire city flocked to the funeral to pay homage to the venerable dead. They wrangled for the honor to carry his body to rest, and the governor had to decide the question. Ukon was buried in the Jesuit church (St. Ann's) near the main altar where

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the provincials of the Order were also laid to rest. Before the body was lowered into the tomb the crowd pressed forward to kiss the feet of the man whom they all considered a saint.

During the following nine days masses were celebrated for the deceased, but the climax of the funeral services was the solemn funeral high mass. The walls of the church were covered with black silk cloths and on them artistic symbols, verses and epigrams in Spanish, Latin, Chinese and Japanese paid tribute to Takayama's bravery, heroism, sanctity and unshakable faith. In his funeral oration Father Juan de Ribeiro, rector of the Jesuit college, eulogised the deceased as a victorious champion of Christ in his battle with three tyrants, but although he spoke for a full hour his audience wanted to hear more of this extraordinary man. Hence the city asked the Jesuit Fathers to compose a detailed biography. Father Pedro Morejón, who for more than twenty years had known Takayama, was charged with this task, but on account of his many other duties he was unable to complete it.

The people of Manila expected with certainty that this great servant of God would some day be raised to the honors of the altar, because they considered him a real martyr. When, therefore, in 1634 the bodies buried in St. Ann's church were transferred to the new church of St. Ignatius, Ukon's remains were separated from the rest and buried in the chapel of St. Joseph's College. They were placed in a precious shrine and the monument was decorated with the portrait of the deceased. But unfortunately, in the turmoil caused by the suppression of the Jesuit colleges and residences in 1767, the remains of Takayama as well as all traces of their whereabouts have

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disappeared.

In Takayama Ukon the Catholic Church in Japan venerates a hero who not only was one of the greatest men of his times but who by his holy life, his apostolic zeal and his unshakable faith deserves to be held up not only to his compatriots but to the entire Christian world as a model of a saintly life in this world. Now that at last all obstacles to the spread of the Gospel have been removed and so much stress is rightly laid on the need for lay-apostles, his beatification would not only seem to give a strong impetus to the work of evangelization but would also be highly welcomed by non-Christian Japan as a well-deserved tribute to one of her greatest sons.

GRACIA HOSOKAWA TAMAKO

GRACIA HOSOKAWA TAMAKO

Every Japanese knows Lady Gracia Hosokawa, the ideal of chivalrous womanhood, who sacrificed her life to save her honor and thus gave an heroic proof of conjugal fidelity. The Christian world, to which this remarkable woman is also well known, beholds in her the model of a Christian who sees in all misfortune that can befall man, be it even an unjust and cruel death, God's will, to which a Christian must bow, no matter how deeply he may feel the injustice of those who unwittingly serve Providence by sacrificing an innocent victim.

HER PARENTS

Lady Hosokawa, whose Japanese name was Tamako (pearl), was the third daughter of the ill-famed Akechi Mitsuhide. In the annals of Japanese history Akechi is

one of the most-hated men for having rebelled against his lord Nobunaga and destroyed him. We will by no means try to justify Akechi's rebellion, yet historical fairness obliges us to point out the many noble traits of his character. That he, nevertheless, became a traitor to his lord is due, to no small degree, to the numberless provocations on Nobunaga's part, as we shall see later. Akechi's life may rightly be called one great tragedy, the end of which was his violent death at the hands of bandits.

Akechi Mitsuhide was the son of Akechi Yorimitsu, a petty lord in the Province of Ômi. His castle Akechi, whence his family's name, had the modest yearly income of 1500 koku¹. There Mitsuhide was born in 1526. When he was eleven years old his father died as a hostage in his enemy's castle. Mitsuyasu, Yorimitsu's younger brother, acted as the boy's tutor and gave him a thorough education in the military arts as well as in the Chinese classics. At the age of eighteen Mitsuhide chose as his companion for life a girl by the name of Fushiya, but when, on the evening of the wedding, he saw his bride unveiled, he discovered that she was not the lady of his choice. When he asked Fushiya's father for an explanation he was told that Fushiya was suffering from small pox and that her younger sister had been substituted in her place. Mitsuhide, however, insisted that he would marry no one else but Fushiya. This episode throws light upon Mitsuhide's fine character, for since he loved Fushiya he remained faithful to her, no matter how much the hideous disease might have disfigured her face. He, moreover,

1) The income of the Japanese feudal lords was calculated in the yield of the yearly rice crop of their domains. One koku of rice is about 180 litres.

Her Parents

kept himself free of the proverbial dissolution of the feudal lords of his age, which is again a high tribute to his lofty character. No wonder that Fushiya was deeply attached to such a husband and generously shared with him the hardships of trial and poverty which were very soon to overtake them.

Thirteen years later Akechi Castle was besieged by Saitô Yoshimasa and as Mitsuhide's uncle realized that all was lost he resolved to end his life by *seppuku*¹ and save his honor. Mitsuhide wanted to do the same, but Mitsuyasu would not let him, since by his uncle's voluntary death the honor of the family was sufficiently safeguarded. Thus Mitsuhide, upon the advice of his uncle, fled to Wakasa with his wife and children. For ten years he led the hazardous life of a *rônin*² and tried in vain to find a new lord, yet these hard days were softened by the love of his faithful wife.

Mitsuhide, who was greatly esteemed for his kindness and classical skill, frequently associated with other *rônin*. Now custom had it that each of them should in turn be host to the others at a banquet. When Mitsuhide's turn came he was a little worried not knowing how to raise the means for such a costly entertainment. When he confided his embarrassment to Fushiya she consoled him and begged him to leave the matter to her. When on the appointed day the *rônin* friends gathered in Akechi's house, she served them a splendid meal, to the great astonishment of her husband, who could not imagine where she had found the means for such a treat. Later she told him that she had cut and sold her luxuriant hair and from the

1) Suicide by disembowelment, called also hara-kiri.

2) Errant knight

proceeds defrayed the expenses for the banquet.

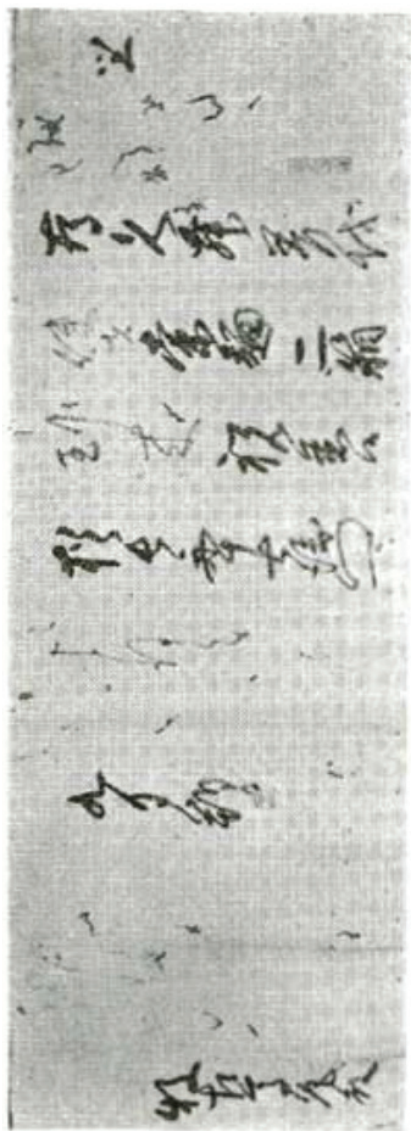
Mitsuhide was deeply moved by his wife's unselfish devotedness and considered himself fortunate amidst all the hardships of his hazardous life. Fushiya shared with him all the privations of poverty without a word of complaint or impatience. She was to her husband a faithful and thoughtful wife and a good mother to her children. Even when Mitsuhide had become a great lord, Fushiya never forgot the days of hardship and poverty and remained as modest and unpretentious as before.

Mitsuhide and Fushiya were the parents of our heroine. She was born in 1563, and as her father three years later began his brilliant career in the service of the great warlord Nobunaga, she probably never felt the pinch of poverty, but, on the contrary, enjoyed all the comforts of a well-to-do family. From her excellent mother she learned all the virtues and duties of an exemplary wife and loving mother, whereas her father took good care to impart to her a thorough education of her mental faculties. Tamako was not only very beautiful but was also endowed with a keen intellect and an ardent desire for knowledge. She studied the teachings of Buddhist sects, particularly Zen Buddhism, and enjoyed discussing subtle problems with learned men, asked many questions and was not satisfied with haphazard answers. Being of a rather melancholic disposition she was not tempted to waste her time in vain pursuits or worldly pleasures. Conscious of her beauty and extraordinary talents, she was apt to be arrogant and overbearing towards her surroundings and harsh and impatient towards her servants. In a word, in her were combined all the virtues and faults of a brilliant and well-educated daughter of a ruling

prince.

MARRIED TO HOSOKAWA TADAOKI

Three years after Tamako's birth Nobunaga took her father, Mitsuhide, into his service. In recognition of his great merits as a general, Nobunaga gave him in 1571 the large estate of Sakamoto and later, in addition, the entire province of Tamba with an income of 100,000 koku. Very soon Akechi became the intimate friend of Hosokawa Fujitaka (Yûsai), a valiant samurai and a man of letters. Both Hosokawa and Akechi distinguished themselves by their brilliant military achievements and thus stood high in Nobunaga's favor, who noticed also their close friendship, with great satisfaction. Hence he proposed a marriage between Hosokawa's eldest son, Tadaoki, and Akechi's third daughter, Tamako. He even went so far as to make the go-between and all was settled for the marriage. In 1578 the young couple celebrated their wedding. Tadaoki was born in the same year as Tamako, i.e., in 1563, so that both were no more than 15 years old. In those days marriages like this were nothing extraordinary but rather the rule for sons and daughters of the higher classes. For two years the young couple lived in Seiryûji Castle, in the province of Yamashiro, but in 1580 they moved to Tanabe Castle at Miyazu, in the province of Tango, which Nobunaga had given Tadaoki in the same year. In 1579 Tamako gave birth to a daughter, Ochô, and in the following year her eldest son, Tadataka, was born at Seiryû Castle.



Letter of thanks signed by Hosokawa Tadaoki, acknowledging receipt of two boxes of soba (buckwheat noodles).
Tadaoki himself did not write the letter but merely attached his seal to it.



Detail from letter on previous page showing seal of Hosokawa Tadaoki with his name spelled in Latin letters “Tadaoqui.”

Gracia Hosokawa Tamako

Tadaoki and Tamako must have experienced very happy days during the first four years of their married life. They were not only of the same age but on account of their disposition and education seemed to be made for each other. Tadaoki was not only a brave soldier but also a man of high culture, being one of the outstanding disciples of Sen-no-Rikyû, the great master of the tea ceremony. Tadaoki loved his beautiful wife passionately and Tamako answered his love with equally deep affection. Their happiness was, nevertheless, not altogether undisturbed by domestic quarrels. Tadaoki was of a very hot-tempered disposition and Tamako, the strong willed and self-conscious lady, would not always patiently put up with his fits of anger. But as they were deeply attached to each other harmony was soon restored.

AKECHI'S REBELLION

Scarcely four years had passed when Tadaoki's and Tamako's happy and peaceful life was rudely disturbed. On June 21, 1582, Tamako's father rebelled against his lord Nobunaga and destroyed him. It would lead too far to set forth in detail all that led to this fatal event. Suffice it to say that Nobunaga had for years slighted Akechi and greatly wounded his sense of honor. The estrangement between the two men began already in 1579. Nobunaga was a very haughty man who treated even feudal lords like slaves. It seems that he took special delight in teasing and insulting Akechi, all the more as the latter never showed the slightest sign of anger or resentment. Thus

Akechi's Rebellion

Nobunaga's slights went from bad to worse until his victim took fearful revenge. The almost incredible thing is that Nobunaga unwittingly gave Akechi a most welcome chance to destroy him.

In the spring of 1582 Nobunaga had charged Akechi to prepare a great banquet in honor of Tokugawa Ieyasu and other lords who had given him help against Takeda Katsuyori. Akechi spared no effort to make the banquet as splendid as possible. He sent his servants to Kyôto, Sakai and Nara to borrow the most valuable pieces of China for the tea ceremony from famous temples and wealthy individuals and succeeded in collecting an astonishing quantity of them. When the noble guests began to arrive, a very urgent call for immediate help came from Hideyoshi, who had laid siege to Takamatsu, a strong fortress of the mighty Mōri Terumoto, in the province of Bitchû. Nobunaga at once relieved Akechi of his office as master of the feast and charged him to rush help to Hideyoshi. Akechi was furious because of this new affront but, at the same time, realized that Nobunaga had thereby given him an excellent chance. He had received orders to lead a powerful army to Takamatsu, and so he could get ready for a decisive blow against his persecutor without arousing the least suspicion. He at once hurried to Sakamoto Castle, called his samurai to the colors and then proceeded to Kameyama to further strengthen his contingent.

He made preparations for battle, but only very few of his men knew exactly against whom they were to fight. Nearly two weeks elapsed before Akechi moved his army. Meanwhile he had made sure when Nobunaga would proceed to Kyôto to celebrate the anticipated victory over the Mōri clan. When Nobunaga had actually arrived in

Kyôto and lodged himself in the Honnôji Buddhist temple Akechi left Kameyama and marched towards Kyôto telling his soldiers that the enemy was in Honnôji. About four o'clock in the morning he attacked Honnôji. Nobunaga, who had not even the slightest idea of Akechi's plans, was washing his face when the soldiers invaded his quarters. Hit by an arrow in his side he pulled it out, seized a halberd and began to fight like a lion for his life, but was soon wounded by a bullet in the arm and retired to his room. Simultaneously fire was set to the temple and Nobunaga perished in the flames if he did not take his life by *seppuku*. Thus died the great Nobunaga as the victim of the man whom he had treated so ignominiously.

EXILED TO MITONO

Akechi had revenged himself, but if he wanted to enjoy the fruits of his treason, he had to seize power and take Nobunaga's place. Events proved that he lacked the necessary foresight and energy to take advantage of his chance. Instead of making friends and allies and seizing the fortresses in the neighborhood of the capital (which would have been easy enough since their commanders with the bulk of the garrisons had followed Hideyoshi to battle), Akechi proceeded to Azuchi to rob Nobunaga's treasures, and thus lost most precious time. Meanwhile Hideyoshi had learned of Nobunaga's death, concluded peace with Môri and marched towards Kyôto to avenge the death of his lord. Only then Akechi realized the danger which was

Exiled to Mitono

threatening him, left Azuchi and tried to find allies, but it was already too late.

When he asked the Hosokawas to join hands with him he met with a resolute refusal. Although they were bound to Akechi by marital ties they could not possibly help the man who had slain his lord, if they had any sense of honor, apart from realizing that Akechi could not possibly hope to defeat a brilliant and resourceful general like Hideyoshi. Yet the fact that Akechi's daughter was Tadaoki's wife could easily endanger the Hosokawas. To kill her would have been cruel and unjust, but to live with her in spite of what had happened was dangerous in the extreme. Tadaoki might have divorced her, but his deep affection made him shrink from giving her up for ever. A faithful samurai pointed a way out: to hide her in the mountains or Mitono so as to protect her from danger and take her back to himself when the political chaos of the impending civil war should have settled down. Tadaoki grabbed at this idea, and Tamako went to Mitono with a few faithful ladies and a detachment of samurai to keep watch.

While Hideyoshi was approaching Kyôto with a great army, Akechi was attacked by Takayama Ukon, Ikeda Nobuteru and Nakagawa Kiyohide, who had hastily returned from Takamatsu to save their castles from the impending danger. When Akechi made a sortie from his camp at Shôryûji, Takayama attacked him near Yamazaki and succeeded in forcing him to retreat, whereas Ikeda and Nakagawa pressed on the enemy's flanks and completely routed him. His columns fled towards Kyôto only to find the gates closed, and so hastened to Akechi's stronghold of Sakamoto. Akechi himself first sought

shelter in Shôryûji, but seeing himself surrounded by the enemy, disguised himself and fled at night to reach Sakamoto. In vain did he offer a royal reward to some peasants for conducting him safely to Sakamoto; instead they robbed him of his armory and killed him. His head was offered to Nobunaga's third son, Nobutaka, who had it sewn upon his body and sent to Kyoto to be fastened to a cross. Thus Akechi's rule lasted only thirteen days, from June 21 to July 3. After the battle of Yamazaki, Hideyoshi arrived with the main force and sealed the defeat of the enemy by the reduction of his last stronghold, Sakamoto.

Already on July 4, the news of Akechi's death reached Mitono. Simultaneously it was rumored that all of his relatives up to the third degree were to die. Thereupon one of the guards advised Tamako to take her own life, as it behoved the wife of a daimyô, rather than be ignominiously killed by the hands of the enemy. Tamako replied that indeed filial piety obliged her to follow her father to death, but as the wife of a samurai she was subject to her husband, without whose order she was not allowed to kill herself.

Days and weeks passed but no emissary of the enemy nor word from Tadaoki came to Mitono. So Tamako had ample leisure to reflect upon the misfortune which had befallen her without any fault of hers. She was well-versed in the philosophy of Zen Buddhism, but it was a different thing to speculate on the meaning of suffering in happy days and to be reconciled to actual suffering, and consider pain and joy as something irrelevant to a person of real wisdom. Gone were the happy days of Tanabe, gone the dreams of a brilliant future. The thought of her children left behind at Tanabe only added to her

Happier Days

grief. What the future had in store she did not know, nor did she venture to hope to be recalled by her husband. The loneliness of the place did the rest to make her yield to melancholy to which she was inclined by nature. Her guards were growing restless and bad-tempered at being forced to idle away their time in this lonely mountain village, and their sarcastic remarks added to Tamako's grief. The villagers, however, showed deep sympathy with the misfortunes of their mistress, and even a semi-religious veneration. Another consolation was the thoughtful attachment of her ladies-in-waiting, particularly the sympathetic and faithful Kojijû.

HAPPIER DAYS

Thus two years went by during which great things had happened. Shortly after Akechi's death, a life and death struggle between Hideyoshi and the rest of Nobunaga's generals wrought havoc upon the country. Finally Hideyoshi triumphed over all his rivals and succeeded in taking the place of his former lord, Nobunaga. In this struggle for power he had been greatly helped by the unwavering fidelity of the Hosokawas. Nor was it unknown to him that Hosokawa Tadaoki's wife was a daughter of the ill-famed Akechi Mitsuhide and that she was hiding in the mountains of Mitono. If he had not insisted that she too should die, it was undoubtedly out of consideration for the eminent services the Hosokawas had rendered his cause in the struggle for power. It would not only have been ungrateful but unwise in the extreme to

alienate such faithful servants by wreaking vengeance on an innocent woman for the sole reason that she was Akechi's kith and kin. Hideyoshi was, moreover, still in great need of devoted and powerful allies, since he had robbed the house of Nobunaga of their inheritance and had to fear their revenge. Thus it was good statesmanship to bestow a singular favor upon the Hosokawas and bind them even more closely to his cause. Knowing very well how deeply Tadaoki was attached to his wife he suggested that he should reunite himself with her and take her to Ôsaka.

We may easily imagine with what joy and eagerness Tadaoki responded to Hideyoshi's intimation. How happy, too, must Tamako have been when after two years of loneliness and grief she was recalled by her husband and reunited with her children. In Ôsaka Tadaoki built a luxurious mansion at Tamatsukuri and here he and Tamako began a new life, looking forward to a happy future.

Tadaoki's happiness was, nevertheless, not altogether free of apprehension. Though he did not in the least question Tamako's unflinching faithfulness, he was not altogether sure whether Hideyoshi, who was notorious for being a libertine, would not cast lustful eyes on her, all the more as he had an undoubted claim to Tadaoki's and Tamako's gratitude. This fear of Tadaoki's was further deepened by the fact that Hideyoshi had allowed their reunion only on condition that Tamako should live at Ôsaka, where he himself usually resided. The Hosokawa chronicle relates how Hideyoshi had once invited Tamako, when she was living at Mitono, to visit him at Ôsaka, and although the compiler of the chronicle doubts the truth of this rumor, the very fact that it arose seems to

Happier Days

indicate that the Hosokawas were afraid of Hideyoshi's advances. It is also said that one day Tadaoki asked Tamako what she would do if Hideyoshi were to call her to his palace. She answered that she would make sure he would not call her a second time. It seems that Hideyoshi once did invite Tamako. While she was bowing to him, a dagger, as if by chance, fell from her bosom. Apologizing for her awkwardness she picked up the weapon and put it back in her bosom. Hideyoshi very well understood the hint and did not call her a second time.

Although Tadaoki had not the slightest reason to doubt Tamako's fidelity, his jealous love wanted to make sure that no man should converse with her or even see her. He did not allow her to leave the house, and the guards were given strict orders to admit to her presence none but the very nearest relatives. Although in those days it was the general custom of the higher classes to confine their ladies to the house, Tadaoki seems to have gone far beyond this general custom. Thus he created for his wife another Mitono, although she had all she might desire: a pretty mansion, beautiful clothes, many ladies-in-waiting and all kinds of domestic entertainment. Although it is true that Tamako made full use of these means of distraction she must, nevertheless, have keenly resented her husband's altogether unwarranted jealousy and at times gave expression to her feelings by sharp and sarcastic remarks. The result was that from time to time, again, as before, their domestic peace was disturbed by temporary disharmony. The forced leisure, moreover, recalled to Tamako's memory the anguish and sufferings of the days of Mitono, and again she asked herself why her life and the life of all mankind was fraught with so much suffering, in

which she could see no deeper meaning. Unable to find a satisfactory answer and being by nature inclined to melancholy, she was tempted to believe that a cruel and blind fate ruled over the destiny of man to which he must resign himself, no matter how human nature might rebel against such a tragic destiny.

FIRST KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOOD TIDINGS

As has been said, Tadaoki was a favored disciple of the great master of the tea ceremony, Sen-no-Rikyû. Soon he was to become a close friend of another of Rikyû's distinguished disciples, Takayama Ukon. Takayama was a fervent Christian and spared no effort to win over his friends to the religion of the Cross, because he was firmly convinced that Christianity alone could give man true and perfect happiness. That was why he endeavored to convert Hosokawa Tadaoki also to this religion. Tadaoki showed no aversion to such an idea, but no more did he show any desire to become a Christian. Yet he told his wife Tamako all he had learned about the Christian religion. Tamako was deeply moved when she received the first message of the Good Tidings and eagerly listened to all Tadaoki had heard from his friend. To learn that man was created by God, that his life was guided by a loving Providence and that the Son of God had died a painful and ignominious death on the Cross to redeem man and make his suffering bear everlasting fruit in heaven, was something entirely new and a real consolation to a soul

Visits the Church

steeped in suffering. Now she began to understand that her past suffering was not a blind and cruel fate but something sent her by Divine Providence for the expiation of her sins and the purification of her soul.

VISITS THE CHURCH

Eagerly Tamako was waiting whenever her husband had gone to meet his friend to learn some more about this wonderful religion. She ardently desired to visit the church and listen to the sermons, but as she was not allowed to leave the house, this wish could, to her deep grief, not be fulfilled. When, however, in 1587 Tadaoki had joined Hideyoshi in the Kyûshû campaign there seemed to be a possibility of realizing her long cherished wish. On leaving, Tadaoki had again, as usual, given strict orders to the guards not to allow their mistress to leave the house, but Tamako with the help of the clever and devoted Kojijû succeeded in deceiving the guards. On the birthday of Buddha (April 8) the ladies-in-waiting used to visit the temples. This time Tamako joined them in disguise and managed to slip unnoticed through the back-door. Instead of going to the temples she proceeded with Kojijû and others of her ladies to the Jesuit Church. Through Kojijû she sent word to Father Cespedes that some noble ladies wanted to hear a sermon. Father Cespedes replied that, as the preacher, Brother Cosme, had just gone out, the request could, to his regret, not at once be granted. In that year Easter Sunday coincided with Buddha's birthday, hence the church was beautifully

decorated for the feast. Tamako asked the Father through Kojijû to explain to her the meaning of the pictures and other ornaments of the church; he gladly did so, and Tamako was particularly impressed by the beautiful picture of Christ on the main altar.

Meanwhile Brother Cosme had returned and gave the ladies a long sermon. Tamako asked many questions and was not easily satisfied by Brother Cosme's answers. She disputed with great vivacity and subtlety so that the Brother was not a little surprised, for never had he met a lady so well-versed in Buddhist teachings and so clever and to the point in discussing difficult questions. Yet in the end Tamako was satisfied and asked the priest to baptize her. Of course, he first wanted to know who she was, but she would not tell her name. Under these circumstances Father Cespedes could not but declare himself unable to grant her request. He would have run the risk of baptizing one of Hideyoshi's concubines.

When it was already late in the afternoon Tamako left the church with her suite, unhappy that her desire had not been fulfilled. To establish the identity of the noble visitor Father Cespedes secretly sent a servant after her, who saw her disappear in Hosokawa's mansion. This was very good news for the Father, for Hosokawa Tadaoki's wife was considered one of the noblest and most distinguished ladies of the country.

If Tamako had visited the church partly out of curiosity she now was more than ever filled with respect and admiration for the Christian religion. From Brother Cosme's answers she had clearly seen that the teachings of the Japanese sects were wrong and Christianity alone was the truth. Since the guards had learned of Tamako's

Visits the Church

visit to the church they were much more on their guard so that it should never happen again. Nevertheless, to satisfy her desire for a still greater knowledge of the Christian teaching, Tamako asked Kojijû to visit the Father, propose her doubts and receive their solution. She should, moreover, listen to the sermon and report to her all she had heard. In this way Tamako not only hoped to get to know the Christian religion still better but, at the same time, to lead Kojijû to the faith.

Kojijû, who was a very intelligent and prudent person, acquitted herself so well of her task that her mistress became even more desirous to receive baptism. Kojijû herself was also so deeply impressed by all she had learned that she wanted to become a Christian as well. To the great joy of her mistress she was soon baptized under the name of Maria. When she told her companions of the great happiness she had found in her new religion, they also wanted to listen to the sermons and become Christians. Tamako was overjoyed and encouraged them to persevere in their good resolutions. Soon seventeen of the most prominent ladies-in-waiting were really baptized, but their mistress, to whom, under God, they owed their conversion, was not allowed to share their happiness, to her great regret.

Tamako and her companions led a semi-monastic life: they prayed in common, read spiritual books and encouraged each other by pious conversation. Tamako sent every day alms to the Fathers, told them how she longed for baptism and asked them for spiritual books. Father Cespedes sent her among other books a Japanese translation of the "Imitation of Christ", by Thomas à Kempis. The Japanese text of some of the books she received was

Gracia Hosokawa Tamako

written in Latin transliteration, but with the help of a Latin alphabet and a few explanations, which Brother Vincent sent her, she could very soon read and write Latin script better than the good Brother. Tamako, moreover, gave liberal alms to the poor and with her own hands nursed the neglected children of the samurai and servants. Even more than her works of mercy the radical change of Tamako's character and conduct aroused the admiration of her companions. Formerly she had been sad and melancholy, now she was joyful and bright, formerly impatient and irascible, now meek and patient, formerly hard and haughty, now kind and humble. In a word, she had changed into another person, so that her companions firmly believed that her husband would also become a Christian, when, upon his return, he would behold the marvelous change in the life and character of his wife. This would probably have happened, if, in the meantime, Hideyoshi had not turned an enemy and persecutor of the Christian religion, as will be seen hereafter.

Although Tamako had not as yet received baptism, she led a truly Christian life with her ladies-in-waiting, whom she treated as sisters rather than subordinates. Many a time she would say that she envied Takayama Ukon's wife who had such an excellent Christian for a husband and could hear the word of God whenever she pleased. In her apostolic zeal, though not, as yet, a Christian herself: she greatly resembled Takayama Ukon. She urged her ladies-in-waiting to induce their husbands to listen to the sermons, with the result that one of them became a Christian. By a pious stratagem she even succeeded in sending the first officer of the guard to the church at Ôsaka. Calling him she said: "You know that the

Christianity Persecuted

anniversary of the death of my father is approaching and that according to the customs of our ancestors I must offer the yearly expiation for the rest of his soul. Yet I have heard from my servants that the Christians consider these ceremonies futile and vain, and say, moreover, that the bonzes deceive the people. Hence I beg you to go to the church of the Christians and ask the opinion of the Fathers in this matter and report to me exactly what they have said and what they think about those ceremonies. For it seems to me unreasonable to do something which is of no use to the repose of my father, yet I am loath to believe what my servants tell me about the matter. You are a man of sound judgment and hence will know how to judge in such matters." Tamako had previously sent word to the Fathers and when the officer came to the church a Japanese Brother explained to him all he wanted to know and then went on to explain to him the Christian religion in such glowing terms that he was filled with enthusiasm, asked the Fathers to pray for his son and allowed his wife to become a Christian. He himself also took instructions to prepare himself for baptism.

CHRISTIANITY PERSECUTED

In the spring of 1587, as narrated above, Hideyoshi led a powerful army to Kyûshû, ostensibly to help the Christian Ôtomos against the Shimazus, in reality to conquer the island for himself. In a short campaign and with clever diplomacy he compelled the Shimazus to capitulate and distributed the provinces of Kyûshû according to his

will. In this way nearly one half of the large island received Christian lords so that, humanly speaking, the conversion of all Kyûshû seemed to be only a matter of a few years.

Up to then Hideyoshi had shown extraordinary favor towards the Christian religion and when in 1586 the Vice-provincial head of the Jesuits, Father Gaspar Coelho, came to Ôsaka to thank the *Kampaku* (Hideyoshi) for all he had done on behalf of the Fathers and the Christian religion, he was received in solemn audience and treated with extraordinary respect. During the Kyûshû campaign Hideyoshi again showed singular marks of benevolence at the fortress of Yatsushiro which had shortly before capitulated. The garrison, fearing the victor's vengeance asked Father Coelho to intercede for them, and Hideyoshi spared their lives. When Coelho took leave he was asked to call again at Hakata after the end of the campaign. At Hakata he once more found the *Kampaku* most gracious and obliging. Then all of a sudden Hideyoshi turned persecutor.

On July 24, 1587, he issued an edict to the effect that all missionaries were to leave Japan within twenty days. A great deal has been written on the motives which prompted this sudden change of policy, but it will perhaps never be known with certainty why Hideyoshi became a persecutor over night. Was his friendly attitude towards Christianity during the first five years of his reign nothing but diplomacy or had he changed his mind because of sad experiences during the Kyûshû campaign? Or was his sudden change of policy due to an outburst of anger? All of these explanations have been given, but none of them entirely solves the problem. We know that

Christianity Persecuted

Hideyoshi, even before Nobunaga's death was suspicious about the Christian propaganda, and in the Jesuit letters it is repeatedly pointed out that his physician-in-ordinary, the ex-bonze Seyakuin Zensô, fomented this suspicion. The fact is that the immediate cause of the outbreak of this persecution were the violent anti-Christian utterances of this ex-bonze. As, however, Hideyoshi had come to Kyûshû to help the Christian lords of Bungo against their pagan oppressor it would have been bad policy to start a persecution before gaining complete control of Kyûshû. It is to be noted, moreover, that Hideyoshi's edict appeared only after the death of the two principal Christian lords, Ôtomo Sôrin and Ômura Sumitada. That Seyakuin Zensô had a hand in the affair becomes clear from the fact that the first victim was Takayama Ukon, whom he particularly hated because of his propaganda among the great lords.

Whatever may have been Hideyoshi's motives, his edict threatened the Church in its very existence. The Macao ship which had just come to Japan was to return only after about six months, but the missionaries were to leave the country within twenty days. Hence the Vice-provincial head sent word to Hideyoshi that it was impossible to find transportation for so many within such a short time; thereupon the time of grace was extended to six months. Yet the missionaries were told to proceed at once to Hirado whence they would be deported later. After the issue of his edict Hideyoshi tried to persuade the lords of Arima and Ômura to give up the faith, but to no avail. Furthermore all churches of these entirely Christian territories were to be torn down, and the execution of this order was started immediately. The churches of Kyôto,

Ôsaka and Sakai were confiscated but not as yet destroyed.

REBORN IN CHRIST

The news of the outbreak of persecution, far from frightening Lady Hosokawa, rather filled her with religious enthusiasm and increased her desire to become a Christian, even though it might mean martyrdom. Since the Fathers had to leave very soon no time was to be lost if her hopes were not to be frustrated for ever. Until then Tamako had believed that baptism could be administered only in the church and by a Father or a Brother, and since she was not permitted to visit the church, she was at a loss as to how she might become a Christian. She saw no other possibility than being carried to the church in a big basket, receive baptism and return in the same way. Happily she communicated her adventurous plan to Father Organtino who strongly urged her to give it up, as it might easily lead to yet sharper anti-Christian measures, whilst there was no need for it, since baptism could be administered also outside the church and by anyone. So the Father assured her that she would be baptized before the departure of the missionaries.

Tamako was filled with joy and prepared herself for baptism. She as well as her Christian ladies-in-waiting were ready to die for their faith and resolved to declare themselves openly as Christians if Hideyoshi were to start a bloody persecution, as that would secure for them the crown of martyrdom. Father Organtino then taught

Trials

Maria Kojijû the Latin formula of baptism and told her to baptize her mistress at home. So it was done and Tamako received the name of Gracia, the name by which she is also known in Japanese history. Her heart filled with deep gratitude, and overflowing with joy she thanked the Fathers for the priceless favor of having been made a child of God, and assured them that she was resolved to die rather than give up her faith, so that they need not worry about her perseverance. Kojijû, who had been chosen to administer baptism to her mistress hurried to the church, cut her hair in the presence of the Fathers and made the vow of perpetual virginity.

TRIALS

If Hosokawa Tadaoki had thus far shown no sign of hostility towards Christianity but, on the contrary, had shown promise of becoming a Christian himself, Hideyoshi's edict intimidated him to such an extent that he carefully avoided anything which might compromise him as a friend of the proscribed religion. Hence it was to be expected that the conversion of his wife and her ladies-in-waiting would greatly exasperate him. When he returned from Kyûshû the completely changed atmosphere in his house could not possibly escape him, although he was as yet ignorant of its cause. At all events, it irritated and provoked him to anger. He had always been violent in his outbursts but now he lost all control of his temper. A Christian lady, who was a nurse to his children, had been guilty of a small negligence and so he

punished her by cutting off her nose and both ears and then chased her from his house. He cut the hair of two other ladies and expelled them also, just because they were Christians. Gracia secretly sent them material help and encouraged them to persevere.

Tadaoki did not as yet know that his wife was a Christian, yet, because of her change of behavior, particularly her patience, he suspected her of being one. Her meekness and patience provoked him to anger and violence. When one day he was leaving for Tango he threatened that after his return he would make a careful inquiry without, however, specifying what he was going to do. Gracia believed that he would try to find out who in his house were Christians and persecute them, and so prepared herself for the worst. From the extant sources it does not appear whether this inquiry ever took place, but we know for certain that eight years later Tadaoki still did not know definitely that his wife was a Christian.

If Hideyoshi was resolved to enforce his edict, the Church was doomed, but in reality he did not insist on its strict execution; it remained, more or less, a dead letter and did little harm to the Church. In the autumn of 1587 the missionaries of central Japan proceeded to Hirado with the exception of Father Organtino, Brother Cosme and the catechist Leo, who hid themselves on the Island of Shôdoshima, in the Japanese Inland Sea. The Fathers who had gone to Hirado were resolved to remain in Japan, and when Hideyoshi had left Kyûshû they resumed their apostolate in the fiefs of the Christian lords. They had indeed to use some restraint so as to avoid challenging Hideyoshi's anger, but their work went on undisturbed. On the whole it was a blessing for the Christians

Trials

in Kyûshû that the Fathers had somewhat to restrain their fervor, for thus they had the necessary leisure to complete the instruction of those masses of converts who had received baptism with only a rather summary preparation. Quite a good number of pagans in Arima and Amakusa were led to the faith.

When the Macao ship left Japan a number of clerics went on board to receive Holy Orders at Macao and later return to Japan. Thus the captain could inform Hideyoshi that part of the missionaries had gone with him and that the rest would be taken on board the next year, since he could not accommodate so many. While his messenger was on his way to Kyôto the captain hurriedly left Nagasaki port. Hideyoshi received the message very ungraciously and threatened to kill all Fathers who had remained in Japan. He immediately ordered the churches of Kyôto, Ôsaka and Sakai to be destroyed, whereas before they had merely been confiscated. Nevertheless, in Kyûshû the Fathers were left unmolested, although Hideyoshi knew very well that they had remained in the country. In central Japan, however, the work of evangelization came to a standstill.

It will be recalled how Gracia had assured the Fathers that she was ready to suffer anything and even die for the faith. A letter which she wrote to Father Cespedes a few months later shows that she had kept her word. A Christian named Sancho Takeda had been to Kyûshû and on his return to Ôsaka had given Gracia news about the Fathers. Thereupon she wrote a letter to Father Cespedes which we shall quote in full: "Sancho Takeda has arrived here and brought me news of the Fathers and Brothers. What pleased me more than anything else was to learn

that they are all resolved to remain in Japan. All this has encouraged and comforted me and has given me hope that I shall see them again some day in these parts. As to myself, your Reverence knows very well how I became a Christian, not by human persuasion but only by the grace and mercy of God Almighty, whom I have found. Even if the heavens should fall down upon the earth, if trees and herbs should wither, I shall never waver, as I trust in Him. Very great is the misfortune which has befallen us because of this persecution of the Fathers, but by it the faith of true Christians has proved to be of sterling merit. After the departure of the Fathers I have undergone many trials, but God favored and comforted me in every way.” Then Gracia writes about the sickness and recovery, as by a miracle, of her second son as following on his baptism and about Tadaoki’s violence towards the three ladies reported above.

At the end of the letter she writes: “Maria and myself are ready to face any persecution whether from *Etchû-dono* (Tadaoki) or *Kampaku-dono* (Hideyoshi) and we should be happy to suffer for the love of God. I am always very eager to get news about the Fathers and hope that the Lord will bring them back hither so that they may help me in procuring salvation for my children. I ask you to miss no opportunity to write to me and, moreover, to remember me in your prayers and the Sacrifice of Holy Mass. All Christians around me are strong and steadfast and I endeavor to fill them with a desire for martyrdom if we should be found worthy of such an honor. Ôsaka, the seventh day of the eleventh moon (Dec. 7, 1587).” This wonderful letter is, as far as we know, the only self-testimony of this heroic lady. We owe thanks to Father

Second Son Baptized

Cespedes for passing it on to posterity.

SECOND SON BAPTIZED

So far, we have purposely not quoted in full the section of Gracia's letter in which she reports the "miraculous" cure of her second son, because we meant to devote a special section to her children in general. As we have seen, her eldest daughter, Ochô, was born in 1579 and her first-born son, Tadataka, in the following year. These two children were therefore no longer infants when their mother became a Christian, so that they could not receive baptism without a certain amount of instruction and their free consent. Nor do we find even a hint that Gracia ever tried to lead her eldest son to the faith. Yet it is expressly stated in the sources that she, for a long time, endeavored to make her eldest daughter a Christian. We shall see that in the end she succeeded. The second son, Okiaki, was probably born in 1585. How he was baptized we learn from Gracia's letter quoted above, where she writes: "My second son, a child of three years, was very ill, and when it seemed that there was no hope for his recovery, I was in great anxiety for his salvation. I talked over the matter with Maria and we agreed that it would be best to recommend him to God, who created him. And so Maria baptized him in secret and gave him the Christian name of John. On that very day he began to recover, and now he is perfectly restored to health."

From this text it is clear that Gracia had her child baptized because she believed that he would surely die. That

he recovered must have filled her heart with great joy but, at the same time, she was now faced with the problem of instructing the child when he grew up, without arousing the suspicion of his father. How she solved this problem we do not know, but we do know that Tadaoki for many years did not know his second son was a Christian.

In 1586 Gracia gave birth to a third son, Tadatoshi, and two years later to a second daughter, Tara. It would seem that for years she did not attempt to lead these children to the faith. That she hoped to see them become Christians some day clearly appears from the above quoted letter where she says she hoped that the Fathers would return to Kyôto and help her to save her children. Gracia's sixth and youngest child, her third daughter Oman, was born as late as 1598, that is, two years before the death of her mother. Of these six children only three became Christians: Okiaki in 1587, Tara in 1595 and Ochô in 1596. Under what circumstances Tara and Ochô received baptism will be seen later.

In her letter to Father Cespedes Gracia had written about the many "tribulations" she had to endure and her determination to suffer for the sake of Christ. It seems, however, that her patience was so severely tried that she resolved to flee from home and join the Fathers in Kyûshû. Happily, she first informed Father Organtino about the matter and was strongly advised to give up the idea as it would precipitate a general persecution. It was no easy task to dissuade the strong-willed lady from giving up her plan, but in the end she resigned herself to God's will and resolved to bear whatever Providence might have in store for her. Organtino was so pleased that he left his hiding place and went to Ôsaka expressly

Consolation Amidst Tribulation

to console her. He gives high praise to the virtue of our heroine when he writes: "She is resigned and leads an exemplary life with her Christian ladies so that one cannot deny that the Lord has poured the fullness of grace into her heart. She has never met a priest, except for the one time when, during the absence of her husband, she, in the greatest secrecy and under great difficulties came to hear a sermon, for her husband keeps her always closed up in his house. Consequently she could never go to confession or receive any other sacrament except baptism, which one of her attendants administered her in her home. Nevertheless, by the sacrament of regeneration the Lord showered His graces so abundantly on her that she became an altogether different person from what she had been before. He gave her, above all, such patience that she embraces our holy faith with great fervor and affection."

CONSOLATION AMIDST TRIBULATION

Despite Hideyoshi's edict, the work of evangelization made good progress in Kyûshû, although in central Japan little could be done for the bereft Christians for a number of years. When, however, Hideyoshi received Father Alessandro Valignano, S.J., in solemn audience as ambassador of the viceroy of India, (March 1591) better times returned also for the Christians of Gokinai. Not only could several Fathers reside in Kyôto but also vigorously push the work of evangelization, although with great caution, so as not to arouse opposition. In this way Father

Organtino, above all, was working so successfully among the highest nobility that he reaped even a richer harvest than when Hideyoshi was a friend of the Church. Among the neophytes there were two grandsons of Nobunaga, two sons and nephews of the governor of Kyôto, Maeda Munehisa, and several members of the mighty Ukita family. For Gracia it was a great encouragement that a younger brother of her husband, Hosokawa Okimoto, became a Christian. Shortly before, Okimoto had adopted Gracia's Christian son, Okiaki, without knowing that both the child and his mother were Christians. One night Okiaki's tutor heard how the boy in his dreams invoked the holy names of Jesus and Mary. That little incident was the grain of seed which blossomed out into Okimoto's own conversion, all the more surely thanks to Takayama Ukon's nursing.

Gracia having thus found a powerful ally, judged it safe to try and lead her two daughters to the faith. Tara willingly responded to her pleading, but with Ochô it proved a labor lost. Thus two of Tadaoki's children had become Christians, though unbeknown to their father; nor did he know for certain that their mother had been a Christian for many years past. If, since the publication of Hideyoshi's edict Tadaoki had carefully avoided everything that might compromise him as a friend of the proscribed religion, his fear had vanished in the course of time, since Hideyoshi did not urge his prohibition but let the Christians live in peace. Under these circumstances Gracia was emboldened to tell him openly that she was a Christian. On a favorable occasion she asked him: "Are you not aware that everybody considers me a Christian?" Tadaoki answered: "I have no objection to your following this

Tadaoki in Danger

excellent religion." Now she was free to profess her faith openly and without fear, but even then did she not tell her husband that two of his children were Christians, as she feared to cause trouble unnecessarily. Knowing now that his wife was a Christian, Tadaoki not only did not molest her, as he had done in the past, but admired her for the courage and constancy with which she had borne all the trials on behalf of her religion. He even built for her a beautiful oratory where she could retire quietly for prayer and meditation.

TADAOKI IN DANGER

Gracia was no longer molested on account of her faith, but before long Providence sent her another, even more exacting trial. When Hideyoshi's son had died and there seemed no hope for an heir to succeed him, he adopted his nephew Hidetsugu, invested him with the dignity of *Kampaku* and himself adopted the title of *Taikô* (1592). The very next year Hideyoshi's wife, Yodogimi, gave birth to a son, Hideyori. As was natural the *Taikô* now wanted his real son, Hideyori, to succeed him, but his previously adopted son, Hidetsugu, stood in the way. At first Hideyoshi tried to solve the problem peacefully and suggested that Hidetsugu adopt Hideyori and renounce in his favor the dignity of *Kampaku*, but Hidetsugu declined. Then the *Taikô* wanted him to go to Korea where a great kingdom would be in store for him, but Hidetsugu again refused. A war of succession, then, seemed inevitable, and Hidetsugu endeavored to engage powerful daimyô's

on his side. Hideyoshi knew this but feigned ignorance, whilst laying his plans for Hidetsugu's destruction. At last the *Kampaku* was told to proceed to the Kôya Monastery with only a few samurai and there await further instructions. A few days later he and his companions received orders to take their lives by *seppuku*.

The *Taikô* took terrible revenge on Hidetsugu's relatives and partisans. For a time Hosokawa Tadaoki also was under suspicion and his life greatly endangered. Since in such cases those doomed to die always killed their wives and children, Gracia's life was likewise threatened. Hence she asked the Fathers to have a number of Masses celebrated that the Lord might avert the danger. Meanwhile she was preparing herself to die as a Christian. As she was not allowed to go and make her confession to a priest she confessed her sins to her faithful companion, Maria, sent her to Father Organtino to tell him all she had confessed and obtain from him absolution. Although Organtino was greatly edified by Gracia's humility, he could not, of course, give her sacramental absolution, which requires the physical presence of the penitent. Yet he sent word to her that she could obtain forgiveness by an act of contrition and loving trust in God's mercy, even without sacramental absolution.

It seems that the danger did not pass at once, for Tadaoki demanded of his wife that she take her own life in case he should have to die. Gracia doubted whether as a Christian she could lawfully do this and consulted the Father on this point as well as on other matters. Organtino replied that under no circumstances was a Christian allowed to take his own life, and Gracia promised to act accordingly. Happily the danger passed.

READY FOR MARTYRDOM

Nearly ten years had elapsed since the publication of Hideyoshi's edict, but no Christian blood had as yet been shed. Nor would this probably ever have happened if new complications had not changed the *Taikô's* attitude towards Christianity. It is beyond the scope of this short biography to relate all the details of the complicated and unfortunate events which led to the crucifixion of the twenty-six martyrs. Suffice it to say that Hideyoshi, in a sudden rage, threatened to kill all Christians. Instead of being frightened the Christians were filled with an enthusiastic desire for martyrdom. Gracia and her Christian companions also hoped to gain a martyr's crown and prepared themselves for death. They declared that even if the summons came at midnight they would promptly answer the call and hurry barefooted, just as they were, to the place of execution, since each one wanted to be the first to die.

About that very time Gracia had the great consolation of seeing her eldest daughter, Ochô, embrace the faith. As we have seen she had, for a long time, been deaf to the pleadings of her mother, and even when the latter prepared herself: with her younger daughter, Tara, for martyrdom, she refused to become a Christian. It was a dream that made her suddenly change her mind. One night she dreamt she saw her mother and her sister Tara hurry to the place of martyrdom and when she wanted to accompany them her mother rebuked her, saying that the

Gracia Hosokawa Tamako

honor of martyrdom was a privilege of Christians only. Her mother's refusal grieved her so much that she woke up, sobbing and weeping. She rose at once and hurried to her mother begging most earnestly to be admitted to baptism.

One may rightly doubt whether Hideyoshi ever really meant to destroy all Christians. At all events, owing to the intercession of powerful friends, the death sentence was confined to only six Franciscans and twenty Japanese Christians (among them three Jesuits). On February 5, 1597, they died on the cross on the "Holy Mountain" (Tateyama) at Nagasaki. Very likely Gracia had again to suffer at the hands of her husband, although nothing definite can be ascertained from the sources. This much, however, is certain that even then Tadaoki did not know that three of his children were Christians.

The crucifixion of the twenty-six martyrs was only the beginning of a general persecution. Presently a new edict was issued to the effect that the missionaries were to leave the country, and this time the tyrant was firmly resolved to enforce it. Very soon a group of missionaries was deported to Macao, and the rest was to follow within a short time. However, an entirely new situation arose when Hideyoshi died (on September 16, 1598): those of the Fathers still in Japan could stay on.

In 1598 Gracia gave birth to a third daughter, Oman. The prevailing anti-Christian atmosphere made it appear advisable to defer baptism in the hope of better times, but slightly better times came only after Gracia's death, and Oman never received baptism.

THE CATASTROPHE

Before his death Hideyoshi had done everything in his power to secure the succession of his infant son, Hideyori. There was only one man in the country who might become a danger to the child, Tokugawa Ieyasu. To meet this danger the *Taikô* appointed Ieyasu Hideyori's tutor, thinking to attach him closely to the cause of the Toyotomi family. Yet in order to limit Ieyasu's powers, a board of five regents (*Tairô*) with Ieyasu as their head was to rule the country until Hideyori would come of age. Besides, five governors (*Bugyô*) were to make sure that the ordinances of the board of regents were faithfully carried out.

As was to be expected, harmony between the new rulers was of short duration. Hardly a year had gone by when trouble arose. Ieyasu's high-handed methods aroused the suspicion of his colleagues and, most of all, of the *Bugyô* Ishida Mitsunari. The latter even went so far as to accuse Ieyasu of plotting against Hideyori and of aiming at nothing less than dictatorship. Against these charges Ieyasu defended himself with great moderation but, at the same time, called an army of 30,000 troops from his Kantô domain and categorically commanded Ishida to commit *seppuku*. The Christian prince, Konishi Yukinaga, protested so strongly against this that in the end Ieyasu revoked his order and merely insisted that Ishida retire to his fief and never be seen again in Ôsaka.

From his exile Ishida with (the regents) Ukita Hideie and Uesugi Kagekatsu forged new plots against Ieyasu,

who behaved more and more like a dictator, and in the summer of 1600 open war broke out. By a clever trick Ieyasu's enemies enticed him to leave Fushimi and Ôsaka and thus enable them to take these strongholds. Uesugi Kagekatsu had remained on his estate, whereas his colleagues were living at the court of Hideyori in Ôsaka. When Ieyasu ordered him to discharge his duty like the other *Tairô*, Uesugi haughtily answered that the *Taikô* had allowed him to remain in his fief for three years. Ieyasu accepted the challenge and marched to distant Aizu to subdue his obstreperous colleague. This was just what his enemies had been waiting for. They conquered Fushimi and Ôsaka and got Hideyori's person into their power. Had they promptly and vigorously followed up their success they might easily have defeated Ieyasu's allies before he could return from Aizu. Yet, because of discord as well as the lack of an outstanding leader and a definite plan of action, they missed their chance and enabled Ieyasu to return and prepare for the decisive battle.

One of Ieyasu's most zealous partisans was Hosokawa Tadaoki. He had joined Ieyasu's army and he as well as the rest of the latter's allies had left their wives and children in Ôsaka. Here Ishida saw an excellent opportunity to draw Ieyasu's allies to his camp by moral pressure: their wives and children were to be taken as hostages to Ôsaka Castle. As his first victim he singled out Gracia, for she was well-known throughout the country on account of her beauty and intelligence, and her husband Tadaoki was one of the most outstanding princes of Japan. If he should succeed in winning over Hosokawa all the rest of Ieyasu's allies would most probably follow his example.

The Catastrophe

Presently Ishida ordered Gracia to be taken to the castle, but the guard of the Hosokawa mansion, Ogasawara Shô sai, refused to hand her over. Tadaoki, before leaving Ôsaka had given him orders to kill his wife if her honor was threatened, and this order Ogasawara was determined to obey, come what may. When, therefore, Ishida threatened to take Gracia by force Ogasawara told his mistress what her husband had enjoined on him before leaving for battle. Gracia made no reply but went to her oratory, lit the candles and began to pray and prepare for death.

Of Gracia's death there exists only one contemporary record which deserves faith. It is found in the annual letter of 1600, compiled by Valentin Carvalho, S.J., from reports of eye-witnesses. We quote the following passage: "When she (Gracia) had finished her prayer she stepped from her oratory, courageous and determined, and bade all servants and ladies who were with her, to save themselves, since she alone wanted to die as her husband had ordered. The servants refused to leave and insisted on dying with her. For in Japan it was not only custom and a point of honor in such cases to follow one's mistress to death, but Gracia's servants were also attached to her by such great love that they wanted to die with her. Nevertheless, she insisted on her will and all were compelled to leave.

"When they had gone she knelt down, invoked several times the names of Jesus and Mary and bared her neck with her own hands. Her head was cut off with one single stroke. Then the samurai covered her body with silk cloths, strewed gunpowder on it and set fire to it. Then they retired to the entrance hall, since they believed it

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was unbecoming for them to die in the same room as their mistress. There they disemboweled themselves and soon they themselves as well as the rich and luxurious palace were reduced to ashes.

“Only the ladies whom Gracia wanted to save escaped death. Weeping they hurried to Father Organtino and told him all that had happened. The Father and all Jesuits were deeply afflicted that the Church in those regions had lost a lady who, from the day of her conversion, had always been an exemplary Christian and a model of virtue.”

The Hosokawa Chronicle (*Hosokawa kaki*) gives a much more detailed account of the tragic event, but it was composed more than one hundred and fifty years later. It was compiled by Ono Takejirô from various sources, some of them contemporary records, but they contain many things which even the compiler considered as mere legends. In the main points, however, the chronicle agrees with Carvalho's report, except in the manner of Gracia's death. It points out, moreover, that Gracia was the object of general admiration because she died for a just cause and that Ogasawara and his fellow samurai were given credit for their chivalrous behavior. It is said there also that when Ishida Mitsunari learned of the tragic death of Lady Hosokawa he resolved not only to take no more hostages, as it would only swell the number of his enemies, but to return those he had already in his power. On the other hand all daimyô's felt they were under a grave obligation to Hosokawa Tadaoki for his wife's heroic sacrifice.

NO SUICIDE

According to the customary version of Japanese historians, Gracia died by her own hands. The same is maintained also by the various reports of the Hosokawa Chronicle, except the traditional version of the Hosokawa family. According to this, Gracia asked Ogasawara to cut off her head; as, however, he could not carry out this order without stepping into her room, which he considered unbecoming, he pierced her breast with the sword. As a Christian, Gracia could not lawfully command Ogasawara to kill her, and if the Hosokawa Chronicle maintains that she did, this can easily be explained, as the Hosokawa family wanted to see their illustrious heroine die in a manner worthy of the wife of a samurai. It is to be noted also that not even in a single place does the Hosokawa Chronicle give the slightest hint that Gracia was a Christian or that on account of her religion she had raised any objection to her violent death.

From Carvalho's report, however, it becomes absolutely clear that Gracia neither committed suicide nor asked to be killed, but that she was decapitated by order of her husband Tadaoki, as we have seen. Having learned from Father Organtino (five years before) that a Christian under no circumstances is permitted to take his own life, she had promised to act accordingly. Hence one cannot assume that such a strong-willed woman and such a staunch adherent to her religious conviction should have broken her promise. This is confirmed, moreover, by her

obituary in Carvalho's report where we read: "This princess was admirable in her conversion as well in her life after she had become a Christian, as has been stated in many letters. She had such a delicate conscience and was so much afraid to do anything which might offend God that all Fathers were filled with admiration."

Christians may be surprised to know how Gracia could lawfully allow herself to be killed unjustly, but from the circumstances in which she found herself, a satisfactory explanation can easily be given. On this point Carvalho writes: "As if she had anticipated what was in store for her, she twice made a confession in writing to the Father, since oral confession was impossible on account of the guards of her mansion (who would not allow her to leave the house). Over and above this, she asked the Father by letter in those days before her death, to solve for her many doubts so as to know exactly how she would have to behave if that which actually has taken place should happen. The Father's answer greatly contented and assured her in her heart. Thus she later died with great courage and was perfectly resigned to the will of Our Lord, accepting this manner of death as coming from His hands and for the atonement of her sins."

This passage shows clearly that Gracia had no illusions about what was to be her lot and that she asked the advice of the priest in order to know how to act. Undoubtedly Father Organtino had advised her to bow to the will of her husband and accept with good conscience the unjust death as God's will. In feudal Japan a samurai and much more a feudal lord had absolute power over the lives of his subjects, vassals and even the members of his family. If it must be admitted that a Christian is not only

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allowed to save himself from an unjust death, but is even obliged to do so, whenever it can be done without causing greater evil, it must be noted that in Gracia's case the only thing to do was what she actually did. For there was no possibility of escaping death by flight, and even if there had been, great evils would have arisen. Not only would Tadaoki have divorced his wife but would also have laid all the blame to the Christian religion and probably have instigated the authorities to start a general persecution. Hence the fact that Gracia did not attempt to flee but submitted to the unjust death sentence, was not an unchristian action. The fact that the compiler of the annual letter not only finds no fault with her but, on the contrary, exalts her with the highest praise is a clear proof that he as well as the rest or the Fathers fully approved of Gracia's action.

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Before her death Gracia had ordered her servants to save themselves by flight. They hurried to Father Organtino and told him what had happened to their mistress. "When the fire had consumed all," Carvalho continues, "Father Organtino sent a very pious lady, together with others, to the place where Gracia had died so as to pick up what might be found of the remains of her body. They found a few bones which were not completely burned and, since they knew for certain that she had died in this place, they brought them to Father Organtino. He, together with Father Morejón and the Brothers, celebrated

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Holy Mass for the repose of her soul and held funeral services for her. Her earthly remains were buried in the Christian cemetery of the city of Sakai.”

When Tadaoki heard of it he was deeply moved by Father Organtino’s veneration for his wife, whom he had loved so much, and who had gone to her death rather than betray his trust in her, and this all the more so as the Father had exposed himself to no mean danger, as the rulers of Ôsaka were Hosokawa’s enemies. Hence Tadaoki even in the midst of the turmoil of civil war, expressed to the priest his most heartfelt thanks and was from then on one of the warmest friends of the Church. Already before Gracia’s death he had been on friendly terms with Father Cespedes, since he was the only priest whom Gracia had ever seen when in 1587 she visited the church of Ôsaka in disguise. These friendly relations now deepened to true friendship which lasted until the Father’s death (in 1611).

Only after the civil war had been ended by Ieyasu’s victory at Sekigahara was Tadaoki able to honor the memory of his heroic wife by solemn funeral rites. Since she had died a Christian he rightly believed that a Buddhist funeral would not contribute to the salvation of her soul, and so he asked the Jesuit Fathers to hold a Christian funeral for her which he himself wanted to attend. Nothing could have been more welcome to the Fathers than this request from Gracia’s husband.

In order to add to the solemnity of the funeral Father Organtino invited all Fathers, Brothers and catechists in the surroundings of the capital. Tadaoki himself with about one thousand of his vassals, came to the church, which had been richly adorned for the occasion. The

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throng of people was so great that special guards had to keep order at the entrance and in the neighborhood of the church. The funeral oration was delivered by a Japanese Brother on the Bible text: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Apocalypse, XIV, 13), and in the peroration the speaker lauded his heroine as an exemplary Christian whose untimely death had caused general sorrow. The stately ceremonies and, above all, the stirring sermon, made a deep impression on all, and Tadaoki was even moved to tears. To show his gratitude he accepted the hospitality of the Fathers and dined with them. During the meal he conversed as freely and affectionately with them as if he had been a Christian lord. From that day on he showed even greater favor to the Church and gave his vassals permission to become Christians.

In token of gratitude for faithful service in the civil war, Ieyasu gave the Hosokawas the great province of Buzen in exchange for the much smaller fief in Tango. When Tadaoki had moved to his new domain his vassals talked so much of the beautiful funeral in Ôsaka that his two Christian daughters also heard of it. Since they had been unable to attend the funeral they asked their father to repeat the celebration at his new residence of Kokura so that they also might honor the memory of their beloved mother. Although the new mission of Kokura had only a poor temporary church the services were, nevertheless, in certain respects even more splendid than in Ôsaka. On behalf of his daughters Tadaoki donated to the Fathers a gold bar and sixty bags of rice with the intimation that it should not be distributed among the poor, as the Fathers had done in Ôsaka, but be used for defraying the expenses of the funeral. Tadaoki's vassals added forty

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cruzados of their own. All that was left over and above the cost of the funeral, was given to the five hundred poor who had presented themselves upon hearing the news that alms were to be distributed. Tadaoki, who heard of it, was greatly pleased and spoke freely and appreciatively of the Christian religion.

In 1602 and 1603 the anniversary of Gracia's death was again observed. The following year, 1604, Tadaoki wanted to mark the day by a special favor: To seven criminals condemned to death he granted amnesty and sent them to the Fathers. The next day he despatched to Father Cespedes the following message: Although the day before he had made him a present of seven amnestied prisoners, he would consider himself very stingy if he did not pardon all criminals condemned to death. So he released all those who were under death sentence, twenty in all, as an offering for the repose or the soul of his beloved wife. Deeply moved by Tadaoki's generosity and well aware that they owed their lives to the Christian religion, the twenty entreated the Father to instruct and baptize them, since they wanted him who had saved their lives also to be the Father of their souls.

TADAOKI FAVORS CHRISTIANITY

On account of Hosokawa Tadaoki's favor, Christianity was looked upon with great respect, not only in his domain but also elsewhere; for he was considered one of the wisest and most intelligent princes of Japan. He himself often listened to the sermons, proposed doubts and

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showed himself much satisfied with their solution. The natural consequence of this favorable attitude of the lord of the land was an ever increasing number of baptisms. In 1602 there were only two hundred and seventy, but in 1603 already five hundred and in 1606 no less than one thousand and sixty. The church of Kokura soon proved too small for the influx, and a larger one had to be built. Tadaoki generously contributed towards it. In 1609 there were two thousand baptisms at Kokura and its neighborhood and one hundred and twenty-five more in the newly established mission of Nakatsu. Thus the Fathers could rightly hope that within a few years the entire province of Buzen would be Christian.

When Gracia died only three of her children were Christians, but very soon after her death it seemed as if the entire family would be converted to the Christian religion. In 1606 or 1607 a younger brother of her husband's studied Christian doctrine with great zeal and encouraged his vassals to do the same. On account of Ieyasu's anti-Christian attitude he did not as yet receive baptism but hoped to do so when conditions should have become more favorable. Tadaoki's parents also frequently listened to the sermons and seemed to like them. Tadaoki's mother, in particular, became a very warm friend of the Christian religion, whereas formerly she had been fanatically anti-Christian. She not only advised her ladies-in-waiting to listen to the sermons and receive baptism but she herself also wanted to become a Christian.

Of all members of the Hosokawa family none was so much attached to the Christian religion as Tadaoki's heir presumptive Tadatoshi. For years he heard the sermons and greatly wished to receive baptism, but on account of

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Ieyasu's aversion to Christianity could not as yet venture to declare himself openly a Christian. He, nevertheless, always cherished the memory of his pious mother and kept a priest in his domain to celebrate mass every year for the repose of her soul. Even when his father became a persecutor he remained in his heart deeply attached to the Christian religion.

For the spread of Christianity in the Hosokawa fief the attitude of the head of the family, Tadaoki, was of paramount importance. If even before Gracia's death he had been on friendly terms with Father Cespedes, Organtino's reverence for the earthly remains of his wife made him, as we have seen, a warm friend and protector of the Church. Not only did he shower his favors upon the Fathers but was also glad to see his vassals embrace Christianity, nay even encourage them to do so. On many occasions he spoke well of the Christian religion and the Fathers and openly showed his contempt for Buddhism and the bonzes. When Katô Kiyomasa, a sworn enemy of Christianity, slandered the Fathers in order to induce Tadaoki to expel them he drew his sword in their defense, and it was only with difficulty that his people succeeded in preventing a duel between the two. When the bonzes threatened Tadaoki with Ieyasu's anger if he did not exile the missionaries he replied that gratitude towards his faithful wife obliged him to have priests in his domain to celebrate Mass for the repose of her soul.

Because he was so lavish in granting favors many believed that in his heart he was already a Christian and he himself said that he was not far from the faith. If, nevertheless, he did not receive baptism it was because he found Christian morality too exacting and because he

Tadaoki Turns Persecutor

would not expose himself to the anger of Ieyasu who hated the Christian religion.

TADAOKI TURNS PERSECUTOR

The ceaseless warnings of the bonzes and the ever increasing hostility of Ieyasu against the religion of the Cross at last prevailed. Tadaoki lacked the moral courage to sacrifice the possessions of his house and incur disgrace for the sake of a religion which he could not help admiring. As early as 1609 he occasionally made remarks which filled the Christians with fear and anxiety. What still held him back from open persecution was his friendship for and gratitude towards Cespedes and Organtino. When, however, Father Organtino died (in 1609) he time and again insinuated that he did not want to have Christians in his fief. And scarcely had Father Cespedes also closed his eyes when these threats were followed by hostile deeds. The body of the Father had to be carried to Nagasaki and simultaneously the churches were torn down and the missionaries expelled from the country. At first no Christian blood was shed because Ieyasu had not as yet declared open war on Christianity. When, however, in 1614 this arch-enemy of the Christian name issued his edict of persecution, the Christians of the Hosokawa domain were urged by terrible threats to give up their faith, and the following year saw the first martyr lay down his life. In 1618 Tadaoki had no less than thirty-six Christians executed and the year after he did not even spare the life of one of his bravest warriors and two of the

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latter's relatives, one of them a mere infant. In 1620 five more Christians had to die for their faith.

For all these martyrdoms Tadaoki alone is responsible. His son and heir presumptive, Tadatoshi, although in his heart he strongly disapproved of his father's policy, had not the courage to protest. Even the martyrdom of one more Christian which occurred after the elder Hosokawa's retirement (1621) must be blamed on him, and not on his son; for the annual letter of 1624 states expressly "Tadatoshi was much more lenient and better than his father, and rather like his mother in the way he favored Christianity." In fact during the years 1624-1631 we know of no martyrdoms in the Hosokawa domain, whereas in the rest of the country persecution became more general and violent from year to year. When, however, Tadatoshi received from the Shôgun the large province of Higo for the much smaller fief in Buzen, his resistance broke down, for the nine martyrdoms of 1634 and the sixteen of 1635 must be put to his account.

FATE OF GRACIA'S CHRISTIAN CHILDREN

The annual letter of 1603 says Ochô and Tara were fervent Christians, although they were cut off from the outside world as their mother had been. Since Ochô died in October 1603, it is as good as certain that she persevered until the end. Tara married Inaba Kazumichi, lord of Usuki in Bungo, and influenced her pagan husband in favor of the Christian religion. When, however, Ieyasu

Fate of Gracia's Christian Children

banished twelve of his Christian vassals in 1612, Inaba began to molest the Christians and exiled the missionaries. Since 1614 he shed Christian blood. Tara died in 1615, and one may rightly assume that she ended her life as a true Christian, although she was unable to keep her husband from persecuting the Christians.

Gracia's Christian son, Okiaki, met a most tragic death. In 1601 he still appears as the adopted son of his uncle Okimoto, but just about that time his adoptive father incurred the disfavor of his elder brother, Tadaoki. His real father took Okiaki from Okimoto and made him his heir presumptive in place of his elder brother, Tadataka, whom he had deprived of the primogeniture. Yet already in 1604 Tadatoshi appears as heir presumptive, probably because his father had meanwhile learned that Okiaki was a Christian. Okiaki was ordered by his father to replace Tadatoshi as hostage in Edo, but on the way there he escaped and henceforth became a *rônin*. He took service under various lords and eventually became a vassal of the Taikô's son, Hideyori. In 1615 he fought valiantly for his new lord but suffered a crushing defeat and had a very narrow escape. From his hiding place he attempted to reconcile himself with his father. Although Ieyasu was ready to pardon him, Tadaoki insisted that he die and ordered him to take his own life. Okiaki refused and was then decapitated, probably by his own father.

CONCLUSION

Gracia was destined to die an unjust and cruel death, yet Providence spared her the sorrow of seeing her husband and one of her sons turn persecutors and her Christian son slain by his father's hand.

Truly, tragedy was the keynote of her own life as well as of the lives of some of those nearest and dearest to her. But on this dark background Gracia Hosokawa stands out like the "valiant woman" of Scripture. Surely, Cras-
set is right when in a few bold strokes he thus draws her portrait: "Nature had made her a miracle of beauty, and grace, a mirror of virtue. Her only misfortune was her loveliness, and her only fault the passionate love of a husband altogether unworthy of her."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Johannes Laures, S.J. has made early Christianity in Japan his particular field of study. He is an authority on the subject and his monumental *Kirishtan Bunko*, a bibliography of the literature of the period, has made his name known to scholars the world over. His scholarship has not blinded him to the color and drama of that age and he is the author of several graceful and touching tributes to the famous martyrs and other Christian heroes of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. *Two Japanese Christian Heroes* is another example of his research in the byways of Christian heroism and martyrology. Father Laures was born in the Rhineland. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1913 and was trained in Holland where he was ordained in 1923. He spent the years 1923 to 1928 in the United States, completing his studies in theology and, at the same time, acquiring a Ph.D. at Columbia University, New York, in political science. He came to Japan in 1928 and was assigned to Sophia University, Tokyo, an institution founded by the Jesuit Order, to teach economics and history. Today, he is still at his university post, but he devotes a good deal of time to writing, in Japanese and English as well as in his native German. His *Kirishtan Bunko* first appeared in 1940. A second

About the Author

edition came out the following year, and this year, 1958, a third, revised and enlarged edition was published in Tokyo. Father Lares is a contributor to several missionary and evangelical publications. To reach a wider audience, he has published in Japan, *Nobunaga and Christianity*, in 1950; *The Beginnings of the Miyako Mission*, in 1951; *Takayama Ukon and the Beginnings of Christianity*, in 1954; and *Hosokawa Gracia*, in 1957. These books were subsequently translated into German and Japanese. For English readers only, in 1957 he published *The Catholic Church in Japan, a Short History*.

Being a priest and a scholar, in his writings as well as in his personal approach Father Lares gives evidence of a broad humanity and a deep understanding of the human heart. His Christians are, above all, men and women of flesh and blood. Grace is theirs but it came to them only after great physical and moral conflicts. As Japanese they had to struggle not only against human weaknesses but also with the harsh and inflexible laws of their country. So successful were they that this period of Japanese history has been called the Christian century, and Japan, by this same token, became a land of heroes and of martyrs.

PAUL C. BLUM