

# JAPANESE PERFORMING ARTS KNOWN BY MISSIONARY PRIESTS WITHIN THE INTERCULTURAL MILIEU OF THE 16TH CENTURY: DID FRÓIS ENCOUNTER CHRISTIAN NOH?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** In 1549 Francisco de Xavier, a Catholic missionary, went to Japan, and from then on missionaries continued to arrive there throughout the 16th century. Notably Luís Fróis, who arrived from Portugal in 1563, lived in Japan for more than 30 years, and wrote “Historia de Japam” and other works comparing the cultures of Japan and Europe, considered invaluable historical materials for understanding the Japanese culture of that period: for example, pronunciation, music and theatre. In addition, European religious music was taken to Japan by missionaries. They founded theological schools called Seminarios or Correggios where Japanese boys were taught vocal and instrumental music. Later, a commission of four boys was dispatched to Rome, and they came back with some musical instruments and typographic machines.

This paper focuses on the description by the missionaries of Japanese music and plays of that time in this intercultural setting, which enabled them to become acquainted with those concrete images.

**Keywords:** Luis Fróis; Catholic missionaries; the 16th century; intercultural encounter; music; plays; Japanese culture; European; Noh

**Resumen:** En 1549, empezando por Francisco de Javier, misioneros católicos llegaron a Japón. Luís Fróis llegó en 1563, pasó tres décadas en Japón y escribió “Historia de Japam” y libros sobre comparación cultural entre Japón y Europa, considerados como material invaluable para entender la cultura japonesa de aquel entonces. Por ejemplo, habla sobre la pronunciación del japonés de esos días, la música, el teatro, etc. Además se especula que hay espectáculos de Noh basados en la Biblia.

Así mismo, los misioneros trajeron música religiosa europea y fundaron escuelas teológicas llamadas: “Seminario” o “Colegio”. Allí jóvenes japoneses aprendieron música vocal e instrumental como materia. Posteriormente hasta enviaron una misión de cuatro jóvenes a Europa, quienes volvieron con instrumentos y máquinas tipográficas. Este trabajo se concentra en las declaraciones de los misioneros sobre los espectáculos musicales japoneses de aquellos días mediante el intercambio cultural para conocer una imagen concreta.

**Palabras clave:** Luis Fróis; misioneros católicos; siglo XVI; encuentro intercultural; música; artes escénicas; cultura japonesa; europeo; Noh

## 1. Japanese performing arts in “Historia de Japam”

Luís Fróis (1532-1597) came to Japan in 1563, missioned for years in Kyoto as well as elsewhere, and was requested by the Jesuit minister in 1583 to write the history of Jesuit activity in Japan for the reference of missionaries coming to Japan. He continued to write this for more than 10 years.

The Japan, in which Fróis stayed, had seen the end of the 240 year Muromachi shogunate and was well into the Warring States Period. While Nobunaga Oda (1534-1582) stood out as the initiator of the unification of Japan, it was his successor Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1537-1598) who became the first to unify the country. Fróis met both of these men. At first, both were favorable to Christianity, however in 1587, an edict expelling Jesuit missionaries was issued by Hideyoshi, and in 1596 he started the first persecution of Christians in Japan.

Let's look at the performing arts of that time from the perspective of Fróis. In those days such were popular as vocal music with a focus on songs that tell a story; Heikyoku<sup>3</sup>, Joruri<sup>4</sup>, as well as Kowakamai; dance and song combined, Hitoyogiri which was a form of Shakuhachi and the Noh in which feudal lords absorbed. Some of what Fróis witnessed follows.

The text is the translation into Japanese. The work was done directly from the handwriting copy<sup>5</sup> (of Fróis' original which had been lost) (Matsuda; Kawasaki, 2012). The references are from this Japanese book, attaching the volume and the chapter of the Fróis' copy corresponding to it.

### 1. 1. Festivals

- Gion-maturi: 1562 (the year of writing)

The Gion-matsuri is a festival which began for quelling the plague, associated with the Yasaka shrine (Gionsha) in Kyoto, and has continued from the 9th century until the present. The tradition is seasonally timed for summer, and its parade of decorated floats is the highlight.

Fróis wrote: «A few days before the festival, craftsmen, as well as each participating towns are assigned their respective roles. Everyone advances in the long line of the parade. Fifteen or more units with raised floats proceed along the road. These floats are decorated with silk cloth, and a long pole or halberd is set up in the middle. In the second or the third level of the float, there are many

boys who are children of citizens of the capital, wearing expensive silk clothes. They perform on musical instruments and sing loudly.

Following each car, are the craftsmen who parade with the mark of their profession, along with warriors who advance with spears, bows and arrows, and long swords...» (1-pp. 146-148) (I-36). This is very close to what we can observe nowadays. Fróis further said that the number of the floats was around 15, but this has changed over the ages, and today we see 33 floats.

- Sumiyosi-matsuri: 1562

Also, Fróis mentions the Sumiyoshi shrine festival of Sumiyoshi shrine, which is one of the oldest holy places (1-p. 149) (I-36).

- The Sakamoto festival: 1569

«Nobunaga put to the flame a temple called “Sanno” which had seven brilliant and carefully crafted large portable shrines. Once a year these were used for a festival whereupon all of the monks of the Hiei temple complex leave armed and forming a large group, board ships on the lake... It was all reduced to ashes» (2-p. 111) (I-83). Even now the Sanno-matsuri is still held, however Fróis’ description is of the old style in which the monks took almost all the roles in the festival.

### **1. 2. Tea ceremony: 1565**

Fróis referred to the tea ceremony frequently. This ceremony was popular with the Sengoku Daimyō (territorial lords of the Warring Period), and these lords gathered tea sets, paying huge sums of money. Fróis was horrified to find that the price of a bowl, which did not appear to be expensive to him, was comparable to that of a precious jewel (1-p. 253) (I-59).

### **1. 3. Miko (Medium): 1565**

Fróis visited Kofukuji Temple in Nara and went to Kasuga-Taisha shrine. He talked about the Miko: «These women perform like a great sorceress. If someone desires health, property, an easy delivery, victory over foes, or the regaining of their lost article, he goes to the Miko and has her perform a Kagura. Men from the shrine bring drums and other instruments and Miko also bring other instruments as well. One of the Miko dances with a wooden wand, decorated with zigzagging paper streamers (called Gohei) in front of

the kami (god) statue. She dances fiercely to the sharp, rapid music, which at the same time sounds like a cry, a yell, and the roar of hell itself. Finally the Miko falls in a trance, which people liken to having the spirit of the god enter her, to the ground. She then raises herself and answers to what people have asked of her» (1-pp. 272-273) (I-36). Kagura are still performed in shrines, however such shamanistic performances are no longer seen.

#### **1. 4. Nobunaga: music and performances**

- Music: 1569

When Nobunaga invited Fróis to the capital, Fróis relates that, «Nobunaga was in a secluded part of his residence, listening to music» (2-p. 138) (I-85). This is an interesting depiction for Japanese, especially as to exactly what kind of music Nobunaga was listening to, due to the fact that Nobunaga is seen as rather quick tempered and somewhat peculiar. It has been supposed that the music was Kowaka, or a Noh song. It is known that Nobunaga performed singing and dancing Kowaka-mai “Atsumori” before taking the field, and also 70 titles of Kowaka-mai can be seen in the “Nippo-jisho (Vocabulário da Língua do Japão)” (1603-4): the dictionary of Japanese explained in Portuguese, in the explanatory notes.



*Fig. 1 - Kowakamai*

- Gifu castle: 1569

At this time, when Fróis went to see Nobunaga, «after listening to his favorite music, he went out to see his new palace in constructing. ...and seemed pleased that Fróis had come to meet him» (2-p. 205) (I-89).

Nobunaga was accompanied by two lords, three nobles, a Buddhist priest, two musicians from the capital and Irmão Lorenzo.

Fróis wrote about the architecture of the castle and the garden in detail. «In the first garden, there is a structure made of a wonderful wood which similar to a theatre for plays or holding festivals» (2-p. 205) (I-89). The musician could have been a Gagaku-shi or Noh Player, and the construction would have been in the style of a Noh theatre.

On the third floor of the palace, Fróis and Lorenzo were shown valuable tea set in the tea ceremony room. Returning to the first floor, «Nobunaga brought forth a tiny man wearing a gorgeous costume from a palanquin and had him dance and sing, which was a very entertaining for all the people there» (2-p. 208) (I-89). It is not clear what type of performance the man did, but in all likelihood it also was probably a Noh or Kyōgen song, Kouta, or Kowaka-mai.

- Uma-zoroe: 1581

Uma-zoroe is literally a 'horse parade'. «Nobunaga summoned his generals to put on full regalia and with their horses also finely dressed, to parade. While, he told Valignano and all the priests and monks to attend at the event. ... On this day Nobunaga sat in a luxurious chair made of velvet with gold sculpture, which had been a gift from Valignano» (3-p. 109) (II-31). This description is intended to show Nobunaga's power to his people.

### **1. 5. Biwahōshi**

- The role of Biwahōshi: 1587

In general terms Fróis explained the Biwahōshi as follows: «Those days, among the feudal lords, there was a custom to have a young blind person serve in the residence. The first reason is for amusement purposes; this is an appreciation of his skill on the Biwa as he sings of the olden-times of Japan. The second reason was for sending a message. The Biwahōshi are thoughtful, and skillful in matters of negotiation. After they became Christians, in our church also, we utilized the services of such blind youths. However our purposes were different; that is we had them go around the country, teaching and preaching the doctrine of the Christian to pagans and new converts, and telling about the legend of saints and Deus to Christians» (4-p. 157) (II-88).



Fig.2 - Biwahoshi

- Lorenzo: 1551

Lorenzo of Yamaguchi became a Christian, and was baptized by Xavier. «He, as per Japanese general custom, made his living by way of the biwa, playing and singing in the residence of a nobleman, displaying banter and wit, and singing the old stories» (6-p. 54) (I-5). Fróis showed his appreciation of Lorenzo: «As he showed surpassed lively brilliance, great judgment, understanding and memory, he was loved by people» (6-p. 54) (I-5). Further: «He became one of the most important preachers in the Society of Jesuits in Japan» (6-p. 56) (I-5). Lorenzo often appears in this work.

- Tobias: 1587, 1590

Also concerning the Biwahōshi, Tobias, Fróis wrote no small amount. Tobias was requested to take his missionary and baptism work around the country (4-pp. 158-161) (II-88). And «he got a high title for the blind musician (Kengyo) to make it easy to go between the people» (3-p. 271) (II-9).

### **1. 6. Noh Play: 1592-3**

Fróis met many great Japanese and was able to describe their characters. Of course he wrote favourably about the Christian feudal lords, and he especially appreciated Ukon Takayama. He was devoted to tea ceremony, and invited the warring lords including Ieyasu Tokugawa (later became the first Shogun of the Edo period). Fróis wrote in conjunction with a Noh play that Ukon was invited to: «Hideyoshi held a Noh Play in the residence of Terasawa Shimanokami, and he himself performed Noh» (5-p. 286) (III-56).

It is known that Hideyoshi was very taken with Noh. He requested a Noh play be made and performed in which he himself was the hero. Ukon also greatly appreciated Noh. It is shown in this chapter that the Sengoku Daimyō were likewise enamored of Noh. In “Nippo-Jisho”, we are able to find many words concerning Noh Plays: Nō (Noh), Qiōguen (Kyogen), etc., containing derivative words, phrase examples and sources, and other words.

*Japanese performing arts known by missionary priests within the intercultural milieu of the 16th century*

### **1. 7. The subjects for boys & Ashikaga-gakko: 1577**

A noble warrior Chikakata Tawara of the country of Bungo adopted a son of nobility from the capital. The boy, Katsushiro « in learning the subjects required of him by Chikakata, showed progress over the course of a short period. These subjects comprised calligraphy, the study of elaborate books, the performance of various musical instruments, horse riding, fencing, archery, etiquette, the way of ceremonies, and various traditions related to administrative office» (7-p. 86) (I-113).

The subjects written here are different from that of Ashikaga-gakko, which was the only high educational institution for the children of noble warriors. These subjects on the other hand were: the science of divination, Chinese classics, the study of ancient Japanese thought and culture, medicine, military science, and Buddhist learning. The former was taught to Katsushiro as he had come from courtly society even though adopted by the warrior Chikakata.

Concerning the latter Ashikaga-gakko (estudos), this name was introduced abroad by way of missionaries, and Fróis himself wrote on this. The above mentioned «Biwahōshi Tobias, went to the country of Ecchu, where he met a noble youth who had been adopted by the brother of feudal lord Toshiie Maeda. The youth was the son of a Zen priest who converted to Christianity» (1-p. 160) (II-88). The story goes that he had gone to Ashikaga-gakko in Bando district to study Zen, but when he heard Tobias' sermon he became interested in Christianity. He then went to the capital and after discussion with Irmão Vicente over five or six days converted to Christianity under Organtino.

### **1. 8. Yamabushi and Koyahijiri: 1578**

Fróis also referenced relatively minor performers on the stage of that time. «The legitimate son of the Lord of Bungo, in accordance with the old customs, made contributions to Kumano-gongen shrine every year, and a Yamabushi came to receive it» (7-p. 149) (II-4).

A Yamabushi is a Buddhist monk who walks throughout the mountainous areas in earnest training. Travelling on foot through the sacred mountains, the Yamabushi performs ascetic practices such as confession, standing under a waterfall, walking over fire, and meditation, etc. in order to access the spiritual power of nature. In

order to communicate with each other they carry an instrument made of the shell of a conch.

Then Fróis extended to the Koya-hijiri: «A type of Buddhist monk, roamed the country like vagrants, selling their services to ward off evil» (7-p. 153) (II-4). Koya-hijiri refers to wandering monks of the Middle Ages who belonged to Mt. Koya. They went to various districts of Japan, receiving contributions for their temple, advocating sutra, and performing funeral ritual such as the interring of bones in graves, etc.

The aforementioned legitimate son declared his worry over the prospect of people killing them as shamans and not being held accountable for it. He wanted to convert to Christianity, and tied to distance himself from these religions.

### **1. 9. Odori: 1578**

When a chief retainer had a Jesuit priest as his guest, he entertained him with two teams of dancers; «one, a dance of village youths, and the other by noble boys of Ariie, that I (Dias) have never seen. They wear the clothes similar to Buddhist priests, and have very long swords. One of the boys danced very skillfully and lightly. (From the letter of Alvaro Dias from Ariie)» (11-p. 118) (II-104).

The dance mentioned may be Furyuodori by decorated young men or Nenbutsuodori (dance with singing sutra); dances which are distinguished by their inclusion of dancing with long swords. We can see such dancing in the pictures from the period.



*Fig. 3 - Odori (painted by Naganobu Kano)*

### **2. The music and plays that missionary brought**

Along with the coming of the missions came the music of religious ritual, and hymns that were accompanied by instruments were taught in the seminaries founded in some districts of Japan.

*Japanese performing arts known by missionary priests within the intercultural milieu of the 16th century*



## **2. 1. Sacred songs and musical instruments**

The cravo, the viola de arco, and the organ were the instruments brought to Japan. Below I summarize the articles of earlier days (1152~1562) and that Fróis wrote about in "Historia de Japam" (1563~).

The chronological summary is as follows: 1 = place; 2 = occasion; 3 = song; 4 = instrument.

- 1552. 1.Yamaguchi. 2. Mass. 3. Mass song by Torres & Gago.
- 1553. 1.Yamaguchi. 3. Mass book in Japanese was edited.
- 1555. 3. Mass song by Japanese.
- 1562. 1. Funai. 2. Seminario founded, songs and instruments taught.
- 1563. 1. Ikitsuki. 2. The Cross built by Armeda. 3. Litany, Laudate Dominum by Torres, Fernandes, a thousand Christians (9-p. 20) (I-42).
- 1563. 1. Yokoseura. 2. Mass; 3. Catechismus by children, Lord Sumitada Omura was in attendance (7-p. 17) (I-47).
- 1563. 1. Yokoseura. 2. Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. 3. Vesperas by boys, Oratio by Luis Fróis; 4. Viola de arco was taught to Japanese & Chinese boys by Sanches (9-p. 88) (I-48).
- 1564. 1.Funai. 2. Easter by Joan Baptista. 3. Hymn of Deus by boys displaying a cross on the chest, a garland on their heads, and carrying a candle in their hands. 5. Viola played skillfully by boys who were raised in the priest's house (7-p. 27) (I-53).
- 1564. 1.Takushima. 2. When Fróis & Fernandes stayed at the island, boys were reciting. 3. Dochirina, Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, Salve Regina, Law of the Ten Commandments and the Church of Deus, The prayer series of Saints, Psalm, Hymn of the Sacraments of Eucharist and the Holy Spirit, Summary of the Mysteries of the Mass, the Passion (9-pp. 157-158) (I-52).
- 1565. 1.Hirado. 2. Holiday of no original sin. 3. Fernandes taught children Catechismus, reciting in Latin, Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, Salve Regina. 2. Burial of the dead. 3. Miserere, Veni Creator Spiritus (9-pp. 181-182) (I-63).
- 1565. 1.Capital. 2. Funeral of Saemonnojo Yuki. 3. Catechismus by Japanese in Latin (1-p. 312) (I-66).
- 1570. 1.Kuchinotsu. 2. Seeing Luis de Almeida off on the boat. 3. Psalm by boys (7-p. 32) (I-93).
- 1578. Hirado. 2. Arriving of Antonino Bredistino. 3. Psalm, Benedictus by Japanese Christians (10-p. 113) (I-116).

- 1580. 1. Usuki. 2. Holy day of St. Francisco. 4. Valignano came and had mass, playing the organ for Sorin Otomo, the Lord of Bungo (7-pp. 301-302) (II-22).
- 1581. 1. Takatsuki. 2. Valignano performed a ceremony of the Holyweek for Lord Ukon Takayama. 3. Sacred songs. 4. Playing the organ (3-p. 102) (II-30).
- 1587. 2. Funeral of Lord Sorin Otomo. 3. Responsorium (8-pp. 249-250) (II-95).
- 1588. 1. Oyanojima. 3. Laudate Dominum, Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo by children on the road (letter of Gregorio Fulvio) (11-p. 189) (II-113).
- 1588. 1. Goto. 2. Seeing the priest off on the sea. 3. Sacred songs in Japanese once taught by Irmão Paulo Ubukata (11-p. 236) (II-118).

Here we see an abundance of examples in Fróis, and more are likely to be found in other missionary reports. That the Japanese are 'naturally' inquisitive about the newly come, as well as love of ritual, contributed to the success that this music achieved. Thus it was that children were able to familiarize themselves with Latin, as well as the songs and instruments.

As for the mission side, Organtino said in his letter to the Jesuit minister, «There is no doubt, if the organ and other instruments are established along with the choir, within a year all of Kyoto and Sakai will become Christian» (Valignano; Matsuda, 1973: 297). Therefore Valignano, the inspector of Jesuit missions came to Japan having brought organs.

## **2. 2. Sacred plays**

Fróis also described the sacred plays that were held. The chronological summary is as follows: 1 = place; 2 = occasion; 3 = the contents of the play.

- 1563. 1. Ikitsuki. 2. Epiphany. 3. Adam, Shepherd, Angel, Sibylla, The Judgment, Visit of the Three Kings from the East, The talk of Virgin Mary, An incident between Herod and a Sage, by Christians (9-pp. 21-22) (I-42).
- 1563. 1. Yokoseura. 2. Christmas. 3. The Story of the Bible, by Paulo (translator of Almeida) and Christians, through night (9-p. 23) (I-42).
- 1565. 1. Kuchinotsu. 2. Easter. 3. Sacred plays (9-p. 198) (I-68).

- 1576. 1. Arima. 2. Holy day of St. Andre. 3. Drama and performance, through night, for Don Andre (Lord Arima) by Cabral (10-p. 49) (I-109).

As for the last article, it is not clear whether it is a Japanese play or a sacred play.

### **3. Intercultural situation**

We have seen above that Japan and Europe encountered, and naturally there were examples of the cultures of both intermingling.

#### **3. 1. Examples**

- 1565. Japanese dance and music were performed for a Jesuit priest beside a church during a Japanese Buddhist festival (9-pp. 172-173) (I-62).

- 1570. On the baptism of Don Bartholomew (Lord Sumitada Omura) by Francisco Cabral, there was held a sumptuous banquet, around which there was dance, round dance, and music. These would have been Japanese performances ( 9-p. 309) (I-92).

- 1588. At Christmas, Japanese entertainment was enjoyed. In Shimabara and Mie, Japanese Christians changed the Buddhist festival or Shinto festival centering on a god, and which included singing and dancing in homage to Deus (11-p. 194) (II-114).

- 1593. The dance of Kafr. When Capitan mole, Gaspar Pint da Rocha visited Hideyoshi in Nagoya (in Kyushu), he brought Kafr people (from Egypt) who carried golden spears for his personal guard. These people wore red clothes and brought with them drums and flutes. Hideyoshi requested that they dance with an accompaniment of the music of the drums and flutes. As Kafr people naturally enjoy dancing, the dance was entertaining to the point that the spectators were said to have held their sides with laughter. Additionally, two Chinese officials made an appearance riding white horses, accompanied by 70 attendants who played flutes and cymbals (3-p. 317) (III-41).

#### **3. 2. Tensho<sup>6</sup> Ken-o Shonen Shisetsu**

As far as intercultural events go, perhaps the most important was Tensho Ken-o Shonen Shisetsu in which a mission of four boys and others were dispatched to Rome in 1582 (Fig. 4). This mission, acting for the Christian feudal lords, Yoshishige Otmo, Sumitada Omura, and Harunobu Arima, had an audience with Felliipe II (1584)

and Pope Gregorius XIII (1585), and returned to Japan in 1590. Fróis, of course, wrote about this return in detail. I would like to introduce his writing concerning music and performance.

- 1590. «The company played various instruments and sang, everybody was very pleased, and surprised at the consonance as well as the suitability of the many instruments» (11-p. 333) (III-1).



Fig. 4 - The Tenshō embassy<sup>7</sup>

- 1590. «When the four noble youths came home to Arima, Don Protajio (Lord Harunobu Arima) treated them with great honour. As in such a case, in accordance with the custom in Japan, he ordered people to prepare plays and dances, and he himself attended the party in masquerade costume» (11-p. 336) (III-1). «On the occasion of the four noble youths returning, the church of Arima held a solemn mass presided over by Valignano, and monks of the seminario performed ritual accompanied by the organ and other instruments» (12-p. 63) (III-20).

- 1591-2. When Valignano stayed in Muro, some feudal lords witnessed the four noble youths playing instruments elegantly (5-p. 64) (III-13).

- 1591-2. Fróis wrote in detail about the day when Valignano and the four youths were invited to Hideyoshi's luxurious palace. There was a gorgeous ritual with a banquet, and in the presence of Hideyoshi, the four played the instruments: Cravo, Alpa, Laude, Lavechina, song, Viola de arco, and alegio (5-pp. 105-106) (III-15).

Recent research, suggests that one of the pieces they played might have been “La Cancion del Emperador (Mille regretz)” (Wakakuwa, 2008: 343).

#### 4. Comparison of music and plays between Europe and Japan

In “Tratado em que se contem muito sucinta abreviadamente algumas contradicções e diferencas de costumes antre a gente de

Europa e esta provincial de Japao” (1585), Fróis wrote about the difference between the two throughout its 14 chapters. Among these chapters, the 13th chapter, “Japanese Plays, Comedy, Dance, Song and Instrument”, is remarkable. I summarized the contents of Fróis’ viewpoint separately in music, dances, and plays.

#### **4. 1. Music**

Key: 1 = European music; 2 = Japanese music

- Impression of sound: 1. Beautiful, comfortable; 2. Simple, noisy, horrible.
- Vocalization: 1. Trembling voice; 2. Not trembling.
- Sound of instruments: 1. Cravo, viola, organ, dosein, pleasant melodies (for Japanese, unpleasant).
- Chords: 1. Chords and harmony is important (for Japanese, chords are noisy, unpleasant); 2. No chords.
- Music of nobleman: 1. More beautiful than that of lower class; 2. Hard to listen to, sailor’s music is pleasant.
- Pitch: 1. Boys sing in an octave higher than adults; 2. All in one scale, roaring, no soprano.

Fróis says, for European people, Japanese music is, besides simplistic and noisy, horrible. This however may be an impression gained from listening to Noh music. Fróis further pointed out that Japanese music does not utilize chords.

#### **4. 2. Dances**

Should we put a Key: 1 = European dance; 2 = Japanese dance

- With song: 1. With drum, no song; 2. With drum, singing.
- Holding item: 1. Bell; 2. Fan.
- Motion: 1. Advance straight; 2. Like searching for a lost thing on the ground.
- Using legs: 1. Move frequently, jumping, striking a tambourine (for Japanese, it is extremely strange); 2. Chiefly using hands.
- Time: 1. In the daytime; 2. At night.

Historically speaking Japanese dancers don’t jump. Dance is called “mai”, however, dance which does include jumping, is called “odori”. Even so the so-called ‘jumping’ is not as vigorous as in European dancing and is merely the taking of rhythm by way of one’s foot. Further Fróis talks about the bell of European, but Japanese also hold a bell when dancing in an old shamanistic Noh play called “Okina”. The bell is used to still the evil spirit of the earth.

#### 4. 3.Plays

Should we put a Key: 1 = European plays; 2 = Japanese plays

- Time: 1. At night; 2. Day and night.
- Characters appearing: 1. A man with a mask, solemnly; 2. 2~3 persons, lightly, acting chicken-like (Kyogen: writer note).
- Contents: 1. Always new number; 2. Unchangeable.
- Words: 1. Verse; 2. Prose.
- Scene: 1. One; 2. Two or three.
- Appearing place: 1. A house unseen; 2. Back of a curtain on the stage.
- Performing construction: 1. Dialogue; 2. Singing & dancing.
- Audience: 1. Making noise is unwelcome, criticizing; 2. Shouting is praising.
- Mask: 1. Covering all the face; 2. Very small, beard (of man) is seen even if playing the role of a woman.
- Music: 1. Elegant music accompanying comedy or tragedy; 2. Glass-like drum, drum with two sticks, bamboo flute.
- Attitude of audience: 1. Not drinking or eating; 2. Always with sake and side dish.

As for the Japanese instruments mentioned here, they are for Noh-play music and are found also in “Nippojiho (Vocabulário da Língua do Japão)” (1603-4). Also nowadays four instruments, the hue, tsuzumi, okawa (big tsuzumi), and taiko, are used in Noh plays, but “hue” equals fuye; the pronunciation was not “f” but “h” today.

Nippojiho	Nippo-jiho (Portuguese)	Fróis
Fuye	Flauta	Flute: píffaro
Tçuzzumi	Tabaquinho, ou Tamboril	Little drum for hands: Atabaringno
Taico	Vôquina Tçuzzumi, Tambor	Drum with two sticks: Atabare

*Table 1. Instruments of Noh*

As to the general attitude related to enjoying the theater, Valignano also said in his “Il Cerimoniale per i Missionari del Giappone” that the fifth evil of the Japanese is «indulgence in drinking, festivals, and banquets» (Vallignano; Matsuda, 1973: 19).

#### Conclusion

Thanks to Fróis, we can gauge the lively mood of the age when the two worlds encountered each other. As we know, at the

beginning of the 17th century, Christianity was prohibited in Japan, and the root of Christian culture was effectively cut. The musical instruments that Valignano and Organtino brought with much effort to Japan, as well as the music itself died out. However, we might say that the intercultural encounter survived deep down in the 'groundwater': Examples include the Oratio of the Edo period clandestine Christians, which remains with us today. The "Sakaramenta-teiyo" (sacrament epitome), the score of which we still have. According to recent study, we know that "Rokudan", a Koto (Japanese stringed instrument) piece composed in the 17th century, was influenced by Gregorian chant (Minagawa, 2006). And, aside from a still undiscovered part, we are able to read today the complete Japanese translation of "Historia de Japam".

Finally, I would like to mention my initial interest in reading this long work. I wanted to investigate the claim that there existed Noh with a Christian theme based on the Bible, which is thought to have disappeared due to the ban on Christianity. This would be impossible to investigate merely from the Japanese historical material because of the same reason. I imagined that Fróis' descriptions, being particular and specific would include such observations if he had witnessed them; that is, if he saw such a Bible influence Noh play he would have had to write about it. In "Historia de Japao", we find the articles on plays based on the Bible; the sacred plays of Jesuit drama. There are no indications that they were Noh plays. However as the plays of chapter IV have the characteristics of Noh and Kyogen, we are sure that Fróis saw Noh Plays. The question remains why did he not write about Noh in detail as he did on other topics? The reason was probably the music of Noh. He had said that the simplistic 'noise' of the flute (Nohkan) was horrible. Therefore his appreciation of Noh was probably not in comfort. I surmise though that if there had been a direct relationship to the Bible he would have written about Noh.

That is to say, there were no Christian Noh plays. If however we are to say that there were intercultural plays born of the encounter of Europe and Japan, they would have to be in terms of Jesuit Drama, the well-known Ukon Takayama (and other lords) 'Japanese Christian as Hero' plays held in Europe in the 17th century.

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**<sup>1</sup> Los espectáculos musicales japoneses y el intercambio cultural que vieron los misioneros en el siglo XVI –¿Vió Fróis el Noh Cristiano?**

<sup>2</sup> Society of Asiatic Music (Japan).

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<sup>3</sup> The playing style and melody of "Heike Monogatari" (the13th century) sung by Biwahoshi. The story of the rise and fall of Heike clan.

<sup>4</sup> Its origin is in the late Middle Ages, telling the story of Princess Joruri. Now it means puppet plays accompanied with the shamisen and singing.

<sup>5</sup> The volume and the chapter of Fróis' copy; Vol.1 - Ajeda library book: Cód. 49-IV-54, Vol. 2 & 3- Portugal Overseas History Archives: Cód. 1659, and Lisbon National Library: Cód. 11098 (Macau Diocese Sourcebook), edited by Matsuda.

<sup>6</sup> Tensho is the name of an era of Japan: 1573-1592.

<sup>7</sup> Top, from left to right: Julião Nakaura, Father Mesquita, Mancio Itô. Bottom, from left to right: Martinho Hara, Miguel Chijiwa (German newspaper: 1586; possessed by Kyoto University Library).