

# Christian Mission in Japan. A Crossroad of faith, Japanese politics, and Catholic narratives.

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During the so-called «Christian Century», (1543-1645) the Japanese political attitude towards Christianity changed over time, according the military unification and political centralization processes. In 1603, with the unification under Tokugawa authority, the idea of Christian's peril started definitely to emerge, carrying to the harassment of Christians, and later on, to the persecution and the execution, or to apostasy. The common attitude among European missionaries in relation to this persecuted converts was to perceive and describe them as “genuine Christians,” that is, as martyrs who persevered in the Christian faith until death. It was in this conceptual framework that the news of their endurance against the Japanese persecution was presented and circulated through Catholic Europe, in the seventeenth century. This paper will consider the evolution of Christian mission, and it will be focused on different questions around missionary discourse on martyrdom. What were the reasons behind the widely publicized literature of martyrdom? Was it simply a new practice belonging to the Jesuit “way of proceeding”, or an attempt at creating cultural connections?