9. *Some Confirmatory Light from Japanese Sources upon the Records of Kirishitan Missions.*

V. *Documents and Legends from Mino and Owari.*

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Owari is the native province of Nobunaga, a great patron of the Kirishitan missionaries, though never baptized himself; Mino was once the site of his stronghold Gifu and then the territory of his son and grandson. Although a missionary attempt was made in Mino as early as 1560 and followed by several minor ones, a solid foundation was laid by Frois, when he visited Gifu in 1569 under protection of Nobunaga, to be followed by other missionaries and to be rewarded by the conversion of nobles and common people.

The missions in Owari had another start, quite independent of Nobunaga's influence. The man who worked there with missionary zeal was Constantino, native of Hanamasa in Owari (Frois, 428-29). Years after his conversion in Yamato he went back to his native place in 1571 and succeeded in establishing a Christendom of 600 converts in the course of about ten years.¹⁾

Certainly there was progress of the missions in these two provinces but only fragmentary stories are known in the following fifty years. Then is heard the first sign of persecution in 1624 (Pages, 583), besides a few martyrs in about 1629 (P. 714n). About two years later a Paul Hioyemon, his son Simon, and two others were burnt alive at Ichinomiya in Owari; nearly at the same time there were eighteen martyrs at Nagoya and Takagi in Owari (P. 743n). This indicates a respectable success of the propaganda but at the same time is the end of the missionary records concerning Owari. Now documents and legends are brought to light showing that there were a great number of Kirishitans, martyrs and apostates, in these two provinces, and the case of Hioyemon stands clearly in the history of persecution. Though his end is not told in the legends, his missionary activity is told repeatedly in 1627-28, while Takagi, his native place, produced many martyrs whose memory is kept in a mound called Kirishitan-zuka.

1) One can imagine how Fukushima Masanori (Tayu-dono), later a protector of Kirishitans in Hiroshima, born at Hanamasa in 1561, was in his boyhood acquainted with Constantino or his followers.

The stories of the measures taken against Kirishitans are as follows :

- 1644.** A cook in the household of the Lord of Nagoya, Owari, together with his mother and sisters, imprisoned.
A physician at Kurisaki in Mino arrested and sent to Yedo.
A chamber maid in service of the lord's daughter imprisoned.
Kirishitans at Marubuchi, Mitsui, Ichinomiya, in Owari, and at Horado in Mino arrested and sent to Yedo.
- 1647.** A Kirishitan detected at Takagi.
- 1657.** Another evangelist arrested there.
- 1661.** 24 from Shiwo and Katabira in Mino arrested and sent to Yedo, besides many arrested, among whom there was a "Padre." The court diary of Yedo confirms this.
Search made throughout Mino.
More arrests at Takagi.
- 1663.** About 70 persons arrested at Takagi detained for four months, some of them apostasize (a list preserved).
- 1664.** Several teens from the north parts of Owari decapitated on the embankment of the Kiso river outside the town of Kasamatsu. A mound exists still bearing the name Daius-zuka, the tomb of the Deus-worshippers.
About 40 persons arrested at Takagi detained for three months and another group of 50 detained for 45 days, some of them apostasize.
About 200, among whom more than 100 men, decapitated.
- 1665.** Kirishitans in the northern parts of Owari forced to leave home. (This documentary record probably mean the same as a legend of two entire village communities, upper and lower Hannya, massacred or banished)
- 1667.** About 2000 men and women arrested, many of them decapitated, the place of execution was in the city of Nagoya and is commemorated by a Buddhist temple Eikokuji.
- 1697 (?)** 35 or more from Shiwo and Katabira decapitated at Kasamatsu.

These fragmentary records alone tell how wide and rigorous were the persecutory measures. But more definite summary notes exist recording the village communities where Kirishitans were found. They amounted to 246 villages in Mino and 12 in northern Owari, beside several others mentioned in other connections. All these, so far as identified, are indicated on the accompanying maps, together with others mentioned in the missionary records and other sources.

A.
Parts of Owari and Mino bordering on the banks of the Kiso River.

Villages:

1. Shima, Majima
2. Takegahana
3. Iigara
4. Minaminokawa
5. Fuwa-Ishiki
6. Tenno, Kurino
7. Oguma
8. Sakai
9. Koarai
10. Shiku, Ichiba, Sugumichi
11. Yanaizu
12. Tokuda
13. Yakushiji
14. Enjoji
15. Tomida
16. Hibo
17. Oiri
18. Kusai
19. Fukuzuka

B. The Counties of the Province of Mino, indicating the number of the village communities where Kirishitans were discovered and persecuted (the numbers in brackets).

In reviewing these data it can be seen that the missions spread out of the centres, such as Gifu, Kiyosu, Nagoya, Ichinomiya, to the whole valleys of the Kiso river and its tributaries.¹⁾ The strongest part was in the surroundings of Gifu and on the banks of the great river,—Futayberi (Fuseya-bara), where Frois baptized more than 100 in a small village in 1582, being nearly in the centre of the district. The mountain districts were not much affected, except the eastern parts of Mino up along the stream of Kiso, where are located Shiwo and Katabira among the hills, and other villages further up in the County of Ena. This indicates a similar direction of the migration of the persecuted from the plain to among the hills as seen in many other cases. Finally it is to be noted that the rigorous execution of the proscription in these provinces in the sixties of the 17th century falls with similar cases in other provinces, particularly in Bungo.

1) In the lists of the Province of Japan (Jesuit) in the sixteenth century, Gifu in Mino and Kiyosu in Owari stand conspicuously, with residences and churches. *Kiti* in Pages, A 429, is derived from Qifu, i.e. Gifu.