

On the decay, preservation and restoration of imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary in the Kyushu district of Japan since the 16th century¹

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Prispevek predstavlja zgodovino razkroja, ohranjanja in obnove prevzetega portugalskega misijonarskega krščanskega besedja v okrožju Kyushu na Japonskem, in sicer od 16. stoletja naprej. (1) Raba skoraj vseh besed je upadla; (2) deli besed se uporabljajo kot splošni samostalniki z diskriminatornim pomenom; (3) nekateri ljudje še vedno poskušajo ohraniti te besede v nasprotju z vodstvom katoliških duhovnikov; (4) deli teh besed so se nedavno začeli uporabljati kot imena nekaterih alkoholnih pijač in sladkarij. V okrožju Kyushu raba teh besed ponovno narašča, zato lahko govorimo o obnovi besedja, prevzetega od portugalskih krščanskih misijonarjev.

The aim of this paper is to elucidate the history of the decay, preservation and restoration of imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary in the Kyushu district of Japan since the 16th century. In conclusion, the following can be pointed out: 1) almost all words have generally decayed. 2) parts of the words are used as general nouns with discriminatory meaning. 3) Some people still try to preserve these words against the guidance of Catholic priests. 4) Recently,

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parts of the words have started to be used as the names of some alcoholic drinks and sweets. Thus, in this district, the number of people who use these words has been increasing again. This is the restoration of imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary.

Ključne besede: razkroj, ohranjanje, obnova, japonsko okrožje Kyushu, geolingvistika

Key words: decay, preservation, restoration, Kyushu district of Japan, Geolinguistics

1 The history of the acceptance Christianity in Japan between the 16th and 19th centuries.

In 1549, Francisco de Xavier disembarked at Kagoshima. Xavier was a Jesuit monk. This was the opening of Christian missionary work in Japan. After this, Christianity was enthusiastically accepted all over Japan. Some of the feudal lords in the provinces of Kyushu district came to believe in Christianity. The Society of Jesus actively propagated Christianity, and the majority of the missionaries were Portuguese. Therefore, a large vocabulary of Portuguese words entered Japanese. Examples of such are the words ‘padre’ (father), ‘Christão’ (Christian), ‘contas’ (Rosary), ‘gentio’ (pagan), etc.

For almost 100 years prior to Xavier’s arrival, Japan had been in a state of almost continual warfare as rival regional lords, or *daimyo*, fought for power. The second half of the 16th Century, however, saw the beginning of the reunification of Japan under three powerful lords. The first, Nobunaga Oda (1534–1582) achieved a substantial expansion of the territory under his control in central and eastern Japan. His successor, one of Nobunaga’s generals, Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1537–1598) further extended his power into the west of Japan establishing his authority across much of what is now modern Japan. Hideyoshi Toyotomi was in turn succeeded by Ieyasu Tokugawa (1542–1616) consolidated power, was appointed *shogun* and established a dynasty that would rule the entire archipelago until 1868.

Nobunaga Oda recognized the Christian missionary work. However, in 1587 Hideyoshi Toyotomi declared that Christianity was “a pernicious doctrine” and made a law named <伴天連追放令> (Edict expelling missionaries) to deport Christian missionaries. After this, Christian missionaries and believers were publicly subjected to persecution and oppression. Many missionaries were executed. The last missionary in Japan was executed in 1644. Thereafter there was no missionary presence in Japan for about 220 years in Japan.

From Nishioka (1964), we can perceive the fact that there were a considerable number of Christians throughout the country in 1693 (Christianity was accepted widely in Japan). Between 1587 and 1873, Christianity was regarded

as an evil religion, so that cruel suppression and persecution were ordered.² In addition, the government forced people year after year to stomp on the images of Jesus and Mary with their feet to demonstrate that one was not a Christian. If a person was found out to be a Christian, he or she was severely punished or executed.

As the consequence of such policies of the government, Christianity in Japan suffered a devastating blow, resulting in the virtual extermination of Christianity up until 1873 when Christian missionaries and the Christian belief were again permitted. However in the Kyushu district, there were people who secretly held their beliefs in the absence of missionaries. They are known as KAKURE KIRISHITAN (Hidden Christians).

2 Christian missionary work using the Japanese language after 1873 in Japan

In 1868, the period of Tokugawa's (*Tokugawa-ke's*) rule of Japan ended and rule by a new government (*Meiji-Seifu*) was inaugurated. In 1873, the Meiji Government once again permitted Christian missionaries and the Christian belief. Since that event, the number of Christian has continued to increase gradually up to the present. Christian missionaries in the 16th century conducted their propagation activities using much Portuguese vocabulary. In contrast, the mainstream of missionary work today is done through the use of Japanese. The Portuguese words still in use today are only a few including /iezusu kirisuto/ and /maria/. Those used in the 16th century are translated into Japanese for practical use, e.g., 'padre' into /siNpu/ (Father), 'cruz' into /zjuRzika/ (Cross), 'oratio' into /inori/ (Prayer), and so on.

3 Decay of imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary

Because Christianity was prohibited for a long period and Christians suffered severe persecution, Christianity in Japan experienced an annihilative condition for over two centuries. Consequently, much imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary accepted in the 16th century has declined to the brink of extinction. From the linguistic map in Ogawa (2007a), we can perceive the fact that the Virgin Mary is not known in southeastern Kyushu. On the other hand, Mary is known also to non-Christian people in the Nagasaki district and /santa maria/ which is an old word used since the 16th century is used by a small number of people living in the island area but is about to vanish. Words like /deusu/ (God), /orasjo/ (prayer), /paraiso/ (paradise), etc., are in a similar trend.

² The government prohibited Christianity because it considered "Christian propagators harbored colonialist ambitions and attempted to invade Japan" (Suuden et al. 1608–1655).

In the same manner, although the terms ‘inferno’ (hell), ‘contrição’ (contrition), ‘confissão’ (confession), etc. were used in a variety of literature printed and published in the 16th century in Japan, today there is no one who uses these terms according to a survey conducted by the author.

The Portuguese missionaries and the merchant that often accompanied them also introduced many new words to Japan that were not related to religion. Many of these words are still in common usage. For example the Japanese word for bread /pan/ <パン> derived from the Portuguese ‘pão’, the word /kaQpa/ <合羽> is used to describe a raincoat from Portuguese ‘capa’ and the Japanese word /zjuban/ <襦袢> which refers to the garment worn under a woman’s kimono is derived from the Old Portuguese word ‘jibão’. Interestingly, pumpkins were first imported into Japan in the middle of the 16 century from Southeast Asia by Portuguese trading vessels. Pumpkins were called ‘Cambodia abóborá’ (Cambodian Melon) in Portuguese of the day. The dialect forms of pumpkin used about 50 years ago (survey conducted in 1957–1964) are shown in Kokuritsukokugokenkyujo (1970). From the linguistic map, we can perceive the fact that the object and nomenclature were simultaneously imported into Japan and known as /kabotja/, /boRbura/ and so on, up to the present. It is clear that pumpkin has been accepted all over Kyushu district and the Portuguese terms ‘Cambodia’ and ‘abóborá’ also have continuously been used up until the present. This fact contrasts sharply with the near extinction of the imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary.

4 Preservation of imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary

4.1 Imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary as general nouns having discriminatory meaning.

Parts of imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary are used as general nouns with discriminatory meaning. For example, ‘amen,’ ‘gentio,’ ‘padre.’

amen

‘amen’ is the utterance frequently made in Catholic prayers. Please see Fig. 1. “●” indicates /aRmeN/ used to mean Catholic. As shown in Fig. 1, “●” has wide distribution throughout the Nagasaki area. Mainly Buddhists use ‘amen’ in this connotation. In addition, a sense of discrimination against Catholics by Buddhists is contained in that figure of speech. For instance, there is an expression /aRmeN soRmeN hijasoRmeN/ teasing Catholics. /soRmeN/ and /hijasoRmeN/ are the names of food.

gentio

‘gentio’ was introduced by missionaries to designate people who not Christian. It was used mainly by Christian. However, please see Fig. 2. You’ll notice that in the Nagasaki area, Buddhist children used this word as a term “making fun of Christian children” in two points. As shown in Fig. 2, ‘gentio’ in its original meaning had been used by many Christians in Nagasaki Prefecture (however, Christians native to the areas where ‘gentio’ was in use stated, “Today, nobody uses this word. It’s an antiquated term.”).

padre

‘padre’ is the term meaning priest or father. ‘padre’ was written in Japanese Kanji as <伴天連>. It is pronounced /bateren/. From the linguistic map in Ogawa (2007b), we can perceive the fact that /bateren/ is used as a term having several meanings such as – father, sister, Catholic believer, foreigner, eccentric, tomboy, and stylish person. In this manner, a variety of meanings were created from /bateren/. These are used even today. The process of the changes in meaning will be the subject of future consideration.

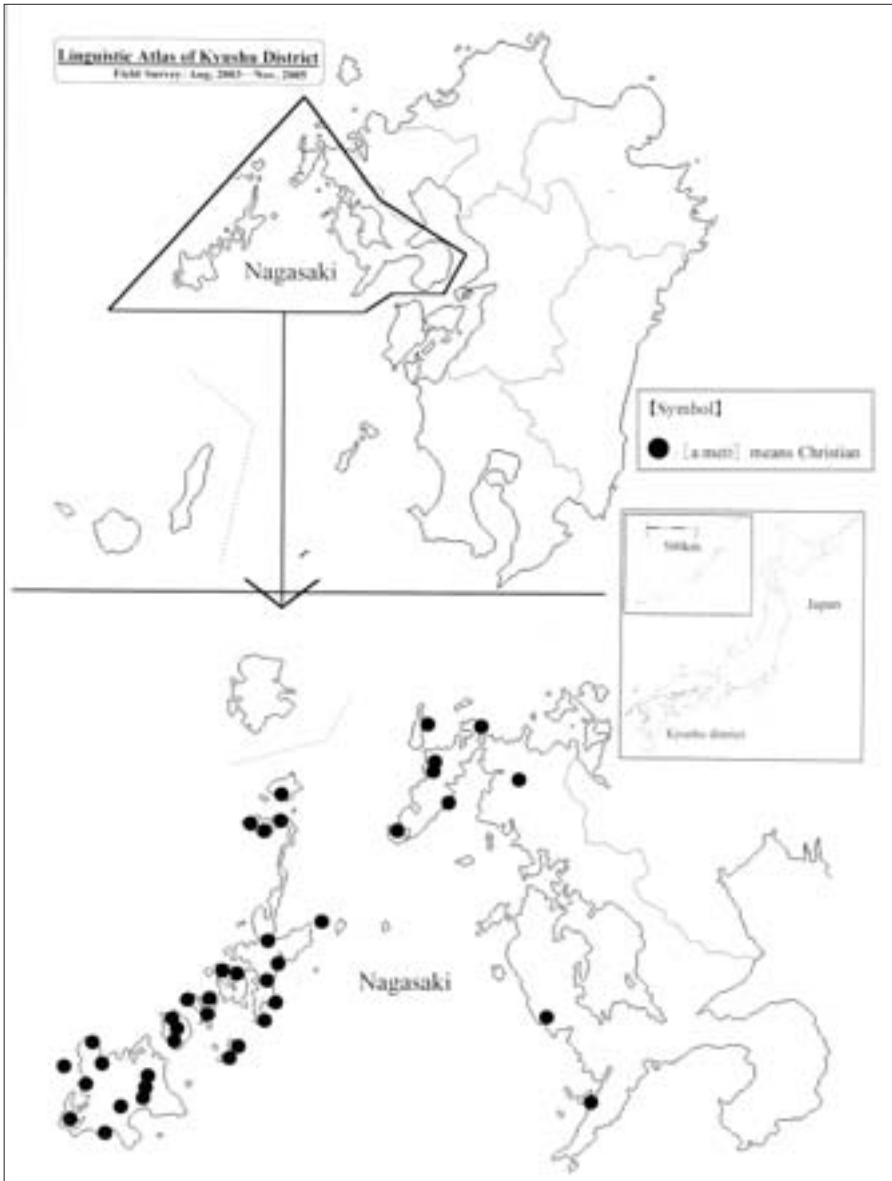


Fig. 1. Christian (Amen)

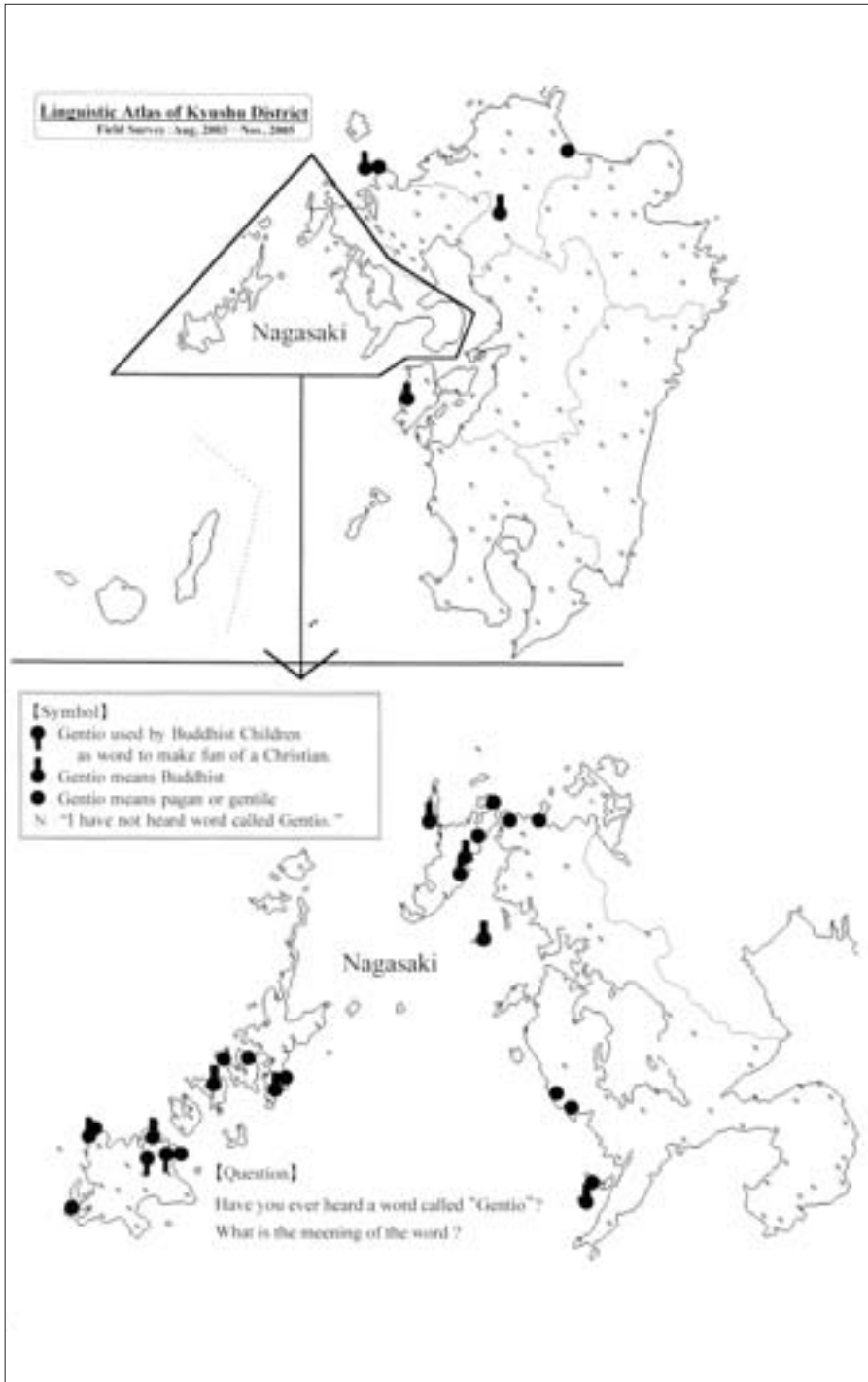


Fig. 2. Pagan, Gentile

4.2 *Contas* or *Rosary*?³

As mentioned in 3, almost all Christian vocabulary is on the verge of extermination. However, ‘contas’ (Rosary) has had strong life force and survived up to the present. Catholic churches of Japan specify /rozarío/ as the official designation and have conducted missionary work using this word since 1873 up to the present. Consequently, those who used ‘contas’ have come to use /rozarío/ instead of ‘contas’. Nevertheless, a Catholic of Amakusa area declared the following: ‘Contas’ is a tool and a word handed down from our ancestors. Although priest recommended calling it /rozarío/, I should like to honor the word inherited from our ancestors. I will continue to use ‘contas’.

Up to the present, the idea “People in rural areas will accept new words introduced from urban areas unsophisticatedly because urban vocabulary carries the prestige of urban culture” has been generally accepted in the circles of dialectological research in Japan. Of course, studies and reports have been presented thus far concerning the fact that people in rural areas have mastered the standard language thanks to well-developed mass communications centered around TV, radio, (and most recently Internet) enabling them to change their manner of speech to suite the occasion depending on the scene of the conversation (official or private), party of conversation (family of stranger), etc. However, the person who declared to me “I will continue to use *contas*” will avoid using the standard term /rozarío/ knowingly out of strong determination of her own. In addition, she declared to refuse to abide by the Catholic Father’s guidance: “Rosary would be more normative expression,” etc., despite the fact that she herself is an enthusiastic Catholic.

In the Amakusa area where she lives, Catholic belief has endured in secrecy in total absence of missionaries from 1644 when the missionaries were subjected to deportation through 1873 when Christian missionary work and belief were again permitted. In other words, it is the area where KAKURE KIRISHITAN was present. Furthermore, it is said that the belief of KAKURE KIRISHITAN underwent a modification and turned into a folk belief due to the absence of missionary for over 200 years. In the mean time, the rosary itself became the object of belief in the process of handing down, from generation to generation, the rosary given by a missionary in the 16th century; and it is known that in some places the rosary was called /okoNtatusama/ and worshipped as a god or an idol. /o/ and /sama/ in /okoNtatusama/ are the polite honorific expression of Japanese.

That is, in the Amakusa area where she lives, ‘contas’ is not merely a tool used for prayer but an important device and word that narrate the history of hardships over 200 years. Looking once again at her explanation, she stated

³ Ogawa (2010) discussed in detail the history of reception of ‘contas’ and ‘rosario’ in the Kyushu District of Japan after the 16th Century.

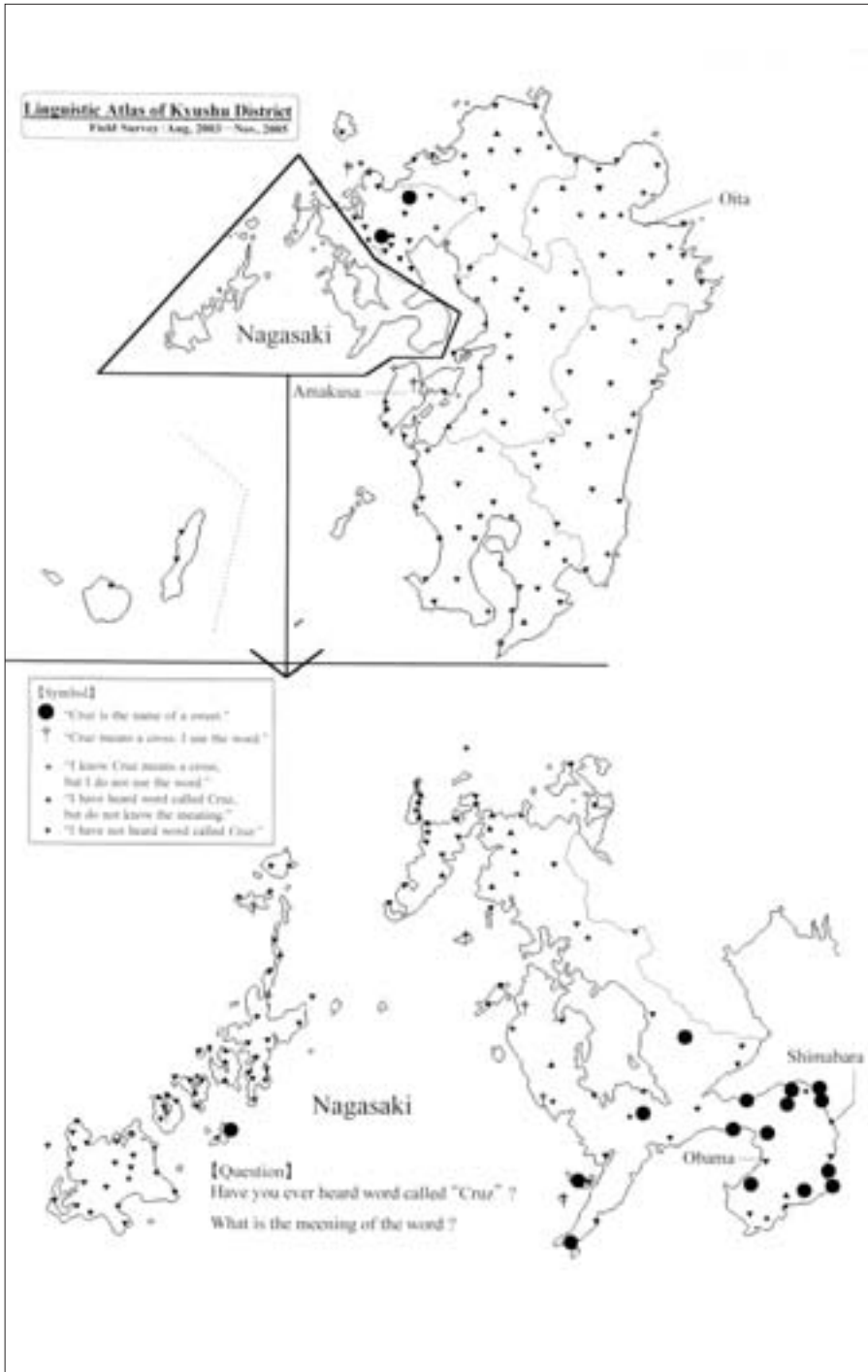


Fig. 3. Cross

clearly that “I’d like to cherish the word inherited from our ancestor. I will continue to use ‘contas’.”⁴

5 Restoration of Christian vocabulary

As mentioned in 3, many Christian vocabulary items have already become extinct or are on the verge of extinction. Several words discussed in 4 alone are today used in limited areas. However, it is hardly possible to conclude that these words will be handed down through generations. On the other hand, lately an interesting incident related to Christian vocabulary was discovered in the Kyushu district. Recently, parts of the imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary have started to be used as the names of some alcoholic drinks and sweets. Thus, in this district, the number of people who use imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary has been increasing again.

Please see Photo. 1. A cake named /kurusu/ is shown on Photo. 1. As shown, this cake has a crisscross pattern and has ‘cruz’ written in Portuguese. And, this cake was packaged in the box which also has a label ‘cruz’ in Portuguese. A number of crisscross patterns are also printed on it. In addition, the box was wrapped up with the wrapping paper on which sisters and Portuguese merchants of the circa 16th century are depicted. Please see Fig. 3. “●” indicates persons who know the cake named /kurusu/. This cake was developed in 1964. The cake is manufactured in Obama. In short, the Christian vocabulary item ‘cruz’ was restored in Obama in 1964 and a new propagation started centered on the confectionary factory.

There are similar examples to this. Shown in Photo. 2 is an alcoholic drink named /bateren/. The alcoholic drink was developed in Shimabara in 1973. As in the case of ‘cruz’, Portuguese merchants of circa the 16th century are depicted. Both ‘cruz’ and ‘padre’ are words deeply involved with Christian belief. However, the persons who developed these products were not Christian. They gave their products impressive names in an attempt to get tourists visiting Nagasaki to buy them. It was not their intention to preserve the imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary. To sell products well means that the product is excellent. In addition, the name of the product should be attractive and well-sounding. The developers of the cake ‘cruz’ and the alcoholic drink ‘padre’ gave attention to the fact that Nagasaki Prefecture has an international port open to overseas trade⁵ and that Christianity is popular there.

In Nagasaki Prefecture, there are many Portuguese words and products developed in relation to Portuguese merchants of the 16th century. Kumamoto

⁴ Ogawa (2006) reported the existence of the people who are not going to accept an urban new word /teNgoku/ (heaven) because they want to use old words /gokuraku/ or /zjoRdo/. This is similar situation.

⁵ Puccini’s opera “*Madama Butterfly*” is the story of a Japanese woman who kept waiting at the port of Nagasaki for her husband in the service of the American Navy.



Photo. 3. Namban taruto



Photo. 1. Cruz



Photo. 2. Padre



Photo. 4. Xavier

Prefecture in the neighboring area has similar merchandise. Shown in Photo. 3 is the cake named /nambantaruto/ developed in Amakusa. This product also has illustration of the Portuguese merchant of circa the 16th century.

Shown in Photo. 4 is the cake named /zabieru/. A cross is depicted also on this cake. The product was developed in Ooita Prefecture in 2001. This was named after Francisco de Xavier⁶ who visited Japan in 1549 and conducted full-fledged Christian missionary work for the first time in Japan. Xavier stayed in this region over an extended period devoting himself to his missionary activities.

As mentioned above, some of the imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary items are reawakening through their utilization in the names of cakes and alcoholic drinks. Recently, the image of the KIRISHITAN, if not their values and beliefs, is being effectively utilized in commercialism and tourism⁷.

6 Conclusion

Each word has a unique history of its own. Imported Portuguese Christian missionary vocabulary is not an exception. There are words which have already become extinct for example ‘inferno’ (hell), ‘contrição’ (contrition), ‘confissão’ (confession), and those on the verge of extinction such as ‘Santa Maria’ (Virgin Mary), ‘Deus’ (God), ‘oratio’ (prayer), ‘paraiso’ (paradise). On another front the word ‘contas’ (rosary) has been continuously used. Others such as ‘padre’ (father) and ‘amen’ (the utterance frequently made in Catholic prayers) are used with connotations modified from original meanings. And, there are still other words such as ‘cruz’ (cross) and ‘padre’ (father) that have been reawakened only recently.

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⁶ He is the most famous foreign missionary in Japan.

⁷ Presently such activities are positively promoted in an effort to inscribe a number of Catholic churches dotting the Nagasaki Prefecture on the list of World Heritage sites. This is to praise the ancestors who maintained their beliefs for a long period with toil and tears against persecution and oppression. What is more, designating the churches as World Heritage sites is expected to attract many more tourists to Nagasaki. The situation is interpreted as “Churches, as the symbol of persecution and oppression, are about to be utilized as material for commercialization;” which is considered a phenomenon similar to the cases where ‘cruz’ and ‘padre’ were used as trade names.

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O RAZKROJU, OHRANJANJU IN OBNOVI KRŠČANSKEGA BESEDJA V JAPONSKEM OKROŽJU KYUSHU OD 16. STOLETJA

Gre za predstavitev zgodovine razkroja, ohranjanja in obnove besedja, ki so ga portugalski krščanski misijonarji od 16. stoletja širili v okrožje Kyushu na Japonskem. Širjenje krščanstva se je začelo sredi 16. stoletja, pri tem pa je bila zelo aktivna Družba Jezusova. Večina misijonarjev je bila Portugalcev, zato je bilo v japonščino prevzetih veliko portugalskih besed, npr. *padre* 'oče', *Christão* 'kristjan', *contas* 'rožni venec', *gentio* 'pogan'. Avtor je raziskal 300 točk v okrožju Kyushu na Japonskem in izdelal lingvistični atlas. Vsaka beseda ima svojo enkratno, lastno zgodovino. Besede, prevzete od portugalskih krščanskih misijonarjev, niso nikakršna izjema. Interpretacija atlasa ponuja sledeče ugotovitve: nekatere besede se ne uporabljajo več, na primer *inferno* 'pekel', *contrição* 'kes', *confissão* 'izpoved', druge so izjemno redke, kot npr. *Santa Maria* 'Devica Marija', *Deus* 'Bog', *oratio* 'molitev', *paraiso* 'paradiž'; beseda *contas* 'rožni venec' se uporablja neprekinjeno. Nekateri besede, npr. *padre* 'oče' in *amen* (izraz, pogosto uporabljen v katoliških molitvah), se uporabljajo s spremenjenimi konotacijami glede na izvorni pomen. Besede, kot npr. *cruz* 'križ' in *padre* 'oče', so ponovno pogostejše v rabi šele v zadnjem času.

Portugalski misijonarji in trgovci, ki so jih pogosto spremljali, so v japonščino uvedli tudi mnoge druge besede, ki niso bile povezane z religijo, in mnoge med njimi so še vedno v splošni rabi. To dejstvo je v ostrem nasprotju s skoraj izginulim besedjem, ki so ga uvedli portugalski krščanski misijonarji.