as receiving a foreign envoy an act of friendship, or were the accompanying presents a subduing act of paying tribute? The many instances of exchange between Momoyama Japan and the Spanish Philippines in the 1590s did not necessarily ensure diplomatic relations of an overarching friendly nature. What on the surface could appear to be an act of friendship could indeed have symbolized an underlying act of subjugation, persuasion, or intimidation. In retrospect, uncertainties such as these determined the diplomatic practices between Japan and the Philippines during the last decade of the sixteenth century. Prior to the age of commerce, the bulk of state-level contacts were confined to neighboring countries of similar cultural or political backgrounds. The arrival of the Chinese in the first decades of the sixteenth century resulted in entirely new encounters on both a commercial and a geopolitical level. Henceforth, economic aspirations and overlapping ambitions of local and central interest groups demanded changes in state-to-state communication. On a diplomatic level, these encounters have often been considered as clashes triggered by mutual misunderstanding. For a long time, historical research has followed a narrative of a bipolar nature of foreign relations and diverging viewpoints between Eurasia's East and West. The case of the Spanish Philippines and Momoyama Japan between 1591 and 1598 has become known as a particularly fitting example of a lack of a common system of diplomatic exchange. Many scholars believed that an intrinsic incompatibility of European friendship diplomacy and East Asian tributary relations determined the fate of Japanese interaction with the Spanish in the Philippines. These entirely new foreign relations consist of the advances of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) toward Luzon during the early colonial period and Spanish reactions toward them. Providing fitting evidence for anti-Japanese propaganda and clumsy Spanish
defense, this diplomatic episode was part and parcel of what historians like to refer to as kamakura (chief advisor to the emperor, or tenno) diplomacy. Yet the catchy term stresses not necessarily the aggressive elements of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s foreign relations but political calculi. In opposition to previous research that claims that Hideyoshi was not able to objectively grasp the concept of foreign relations, Miki Seichiro has argued that Hideyoshi’s decision to use the military title kamakura in letters to the rulers of Korea, Ming China, Ryukyu, Taiwan, and Luzon reflected his determination to establish independent Japanese diplomatic relations while others have placed it within the East Asian diplomatic sphere of the Middle Kingdom system.

Hispano-Japanese diplomatic activity has to be understood as a series of conscious and intended dealings with the “Other” from a politically and geographically disconnected entity. A closer look suggests that their diplomatic systems differed only on the surface: universal standards across cultural and political borders seem to have enabled quick accommodation and the establishment of hybrid forms in the China Seas. For a better understanding of the diversity and complexity of these encounters, I prefer to speak of “intercultural diplomacy” as the outcome of increasing contacts between different political cultures that initially lacked a uniform etiquette. Diplomacy in this context denotes the correspondence between authorized representatives of a central ruler with the purpose of establishing lasting relations and negotiating trade agreements or political tasks of mutual interest. The term “intercultural diplomacy” is used to emphasize both the diverse aspects and the fluid character of these encounters that gradually stimulated the establishment of more regular diplomatic standards between different political cultures.

Recently, linguistically sensitive historical research has readdressed the question of Hideyoshi’s intentions and consciousness of foreign relations, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter. By and large endorsing Abe Makoto’s conclusions, I propose that focusing on language barriers, discourses, and stereotypes of these first official Hispano-Japanese encounters can teach us a lot about early modern empire building in the macroregion. Diplomatic relations came to play a critical role in both the Spanish Philippines and Momoyama Japan’s quests for proto-national identities and political building. In this chapter, I aim to revisit foreign relations of the 1590s from the point of view of intercultural diplomacy to find new answers to questions of binary diplomatic systems. For the sake of contextualizing, I will start with discussing the theoretical framework and briefly introduce the two counterparts within their diplomatic spaces before analyzing the actual diplomatic exchange against the background of communication issues and altering practices.
contribute to that trend. It aims to show at least two things: first, that not only statesmen pulled the strings based on handbook conventions in this diplomatic communication, and second, that contrary to the more mentioned bipolar nature of diplomatic encounters in sixteenth-century Asia, the negotiating parties from the West were familiar early on with the tributary system while their Asian counterparts had an understanding of friendly relations of “equal states.” On both sides of Eurasia, diplomatic practices included professional diplomatic activities of envoys and the latter’s hospitable treatment in foreign countries.

**Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s Claim for Japanese Sovereignty**

Within the realm of regional diplomatic relations, the Japanese were relatively easy with Chinese leadership over the Confucian society in East Asia. This would not even change when Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa accepted Chinese suzerainty after receiving the symbolic title of “Lord of Japan” in 1402. Thereafter, eleven official missions were sent to China through authorized ships until the middle of the sixteenth century. During that period, Gozan monks familiar with the Chinese court language and the Ming diplomatic protocol drafted Japanese diplomatic documents and certificates. Toward the end of official relations with China, which culminated in trade prohibitions in 1549, a newly awakened self-consciousness vis-à-vis the Ming grew in conjunction with the Japanese warlords’ quest in centralizing the country.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi became known as the second of three unifiers (the other two are Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu) after a century of warfare in large parts of Japan known as the Warring States period. His political efforts altered Japan both politically and socioeconomically. Hideyoshi gained firm control over the country by using the military establishment and establishing a stratified society. His low social background kept him from advancing to an officially acknowledged lord position, such as shogun and thus remained a challenge to his ruling authority. Nonetheless, he could as primus inter pares and head of state in foreign affairs. After Hideyoshi had become kampaku (imperial regent), in 1585, he could count on the patronage of the imperial court and eventually advanced to the position of taike, lord of the lords. In Hideyoshi’s ambitious state-building projects, foreign politics served to strengthen his position against domestic opponents and helped to centralize foreign trade through the introduction of a license system. The reopening of diplomatic relations with China remained a primary concern. Both Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa rulers intended to turn Japan into an independent maritime power in the China Sea region and to redefine its relationship with China. For the ultimate target of restoring official trade relations with the Ming, letters and envoys were exchanged, but to no avail. The two sides kept disappointing each other during continuous peace negotiations until 1596. Two years later, their relations hit rock bottom with Hideyoshi’s second Korea invasion.

**The Spanish Philippines**

In Luzon, regular trade relations with Japan followed the establishment of permanent colonial Spanish headquarters in Manila in 1571. Private Japanese merchants from Kyushu visited Manila as a neutral territory, where they were able to trade with Fujianese merchants after the Ming excluded Japan from official trade with China. Fujianese and Japanese traders not only exchanged silk and silver in Manila but also supplied the young Spanish colony with all sorts of provisions. These exchange patterns were stimulated by the famous Manila galleon trade, itself a monopoly of the Spanish crown.

Through the concept of the territorial colony, which had major ideological and geopolitical implications for future diplomatic conduct, the Philippines differed significantly from sixteenth-century Portuguese trading outposts in Southeast Asia. Despite being the nominal rulers of the Philippines, from a politico-economic point of view, the Spanish were only one among many influential actors on the Southeast Asian seascape. Early intended centralizing efforts failed due to the disunity of the population, ethno-linguistic differences, and a lack of Spanish colonists. Since dominion was only accomplished via collaboration with settlers and incoming traders from China and Japan, the situation in Manila is best summarized as “Asian co-colonialism” with several thousand Chinese settlers, hundreds of Japanese, and a similar number of Spaniards in the 1590s.

The strongest imperialist impulse behind the colonization was the spread of Christianity in Asia. The Catholic mission has often been ideologically linked to the spirits of the crusade and fights against Islam. This explains the strong dependence on the pope’s approval and support from missionaries in both social and diplomatic agendas in the East. Early foreign relations were almost exclusively linked to the proselytizing aims of individuals. In addition, the great distance from the metropolis complicated the decision-making process in foreign affairs. It also meant providing colonial actors with potential excuses for postponing decisions or even abusing their authority while administration and decision making technically remained in the hands of the crown and the Council of the Indies in the motherland. Yet the actual power of decision making was with the governor, the judges and fiscal of the Audiencia (Supreme Court), and the
church dignitaries in the colony. In the vast majority of purely political matters concerning Japan, colonial authorities took independent action, and direct control from the metropolis was virtually absent. Except for enthusiastic military attempts to get a foothold in the spice trade with the Moluccas in 1582, 1589, and 1593, it is crucial to note that only a very small number of Spanish individuals made plans for conquering China, Siam, or Cambodia. Habsburg Spain’s official policy was cautious and defensive: the king, as the head of the overseas empire, strongly opposed adventurous expansionism in the East and urged the building and the maintaining of peaceful relations.

DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES, 1591–1598

Diplomatic correspondence between Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the Spanish colonial authorities in Manila can be considered the first state-to-state encounters between a European nation and Japan. While it is true that the Jesuits and Portuguese traders set out on diplomatic ventures years earlier, their projects never involved both states mutually, nor did central Japanese rulers actively participate in diplomatic exchange at that time. Most of the Portuguese encounters of the sixteenth century took place at the local level, with regional lords (daimyo) from Kyushu. Only after defeating the Shimazu daimyo in 1587 that led to an eventual submission of Kyushu, did Hideyoshi become more closely involved with European issues such as Jesuit missionary work and the Macao-Nagasaki trade.

Informal foreign relations between the Spanish colonial government and Japan date back to the 1580s, when contacts were established at a local level. In 1584, an Iberian trading vessel bound for Macao went astray and landed in Hirado. The island’s ruler, daimyo Matsuura Shigenobu (1549–1614), tried to use this opportunity to establish relations with the non-Portuguese Iberians. In a letter, the “rey [king] of Firoando” assured the governor in Luzón of his friendship and expressed his hope for the future evangelization of his people. Although delighted, the Spanish stayed suspicious because of Japanese pirates’ previous attacks along the Philippine coast. In 1586, Ômura Sumitada (1533–1587), the lord of Nagasaki, sent eleven Japanese to Manila, of whom one merchant was referred to as Pabi Furanda (= Harada) Hiemu (= Kiemon). After they had introduced themselves as Christians, the incumbent governor Santiago de Vera (r. 1584–1590) immediately reported these promising developments to the king in Spain. The fact that the Japanese lord asked for support for the Christian mission in Japan speaks for Ômura’s diplomatic skills in dealing with the Iberians. As a sign of accepting his friendship, Governor Santiago de Vera sent presents to the Christian lord and to two of the leading Portuguese Jesuits. As the governor was fully aware that the Portuguese Jesuits were eager to keep the Castilians out of Japan, such measures may well be considered a bribe. In 1587, other lords from Kyushu followed Ômura’s example and sent letters to Manila requesting the opening of a permanent trading route. Thereafter, rather loose contacts with the Spaniards existed for several years before rivalry among the Kyushu daimyo triggered Hideyoshi’s interest in Luzón.

Thanks to encounters with Iberian friars and merchants in Japan, the Toyotomi regime had a basic understanding of the political structure of the Spanish overseas empire. Nevertheless, Hideyoshi’s idea of Luzón as part of the wider East Asian tributary world differed from both the formal agenda of Spanish officials and from the Spanish notion of a universal Catholic empire. The Spaniards would first experience that in 1592, when Hideyoshi initiated interstate communication. In a letter written in November 1591, Hideyoshi addressed the Spanish governor Gómez Pérez Dasmarias (r. 1590–1593) as head of that territory, asking him to send tribute and symbolically submit to his power.

What is even more striking about his advance is that he even demanded acknowledgement from the king of Spain. His Spanish antagonists Gómez Pérez Dasmarias and his son and successor Luis (r. 1593–1596, d. 1603) also maintain a reputation as aggressive foreign policymakers. The elder Pérez Dasmariñas dedicated most of his term of office to reorganizing the colonial administration, as well as regaining a foothold in the Moluccas. This last agenda eventually cost him his life when Chinese warlords killed him on an expedition to the so-called Spice Islands. His son, in turn, seemed particularly obsessed with the evangelization of the Asian mainland, in particular China and Siam, where the Spaniards expected the least chance of success. In the realm of actual diplomatic correspondence, it is interesting to note that Gómez Pérez Dasmarias exchanged letters with the king of Cambodia in 1593–1594 after having been asked to send military support for the war with Siam.

After 1592, Toyotomi Hideyoshi addressed two more letters of similar content to Manila. However, the style of the official Spanish responses failed to conform with Japanese diplomatic etiquette and was very vague, arguably to gain time. What were the motivations behind the diplomatic effort in Iberian-Japanese relations? Hideyoshi had a strong interest in legitimizing his power as the only official authorized to send state letters, with the ultimate purpose of controlling all foreign relations. For the Spanish, it was important to legitimize their sovereign rule over the Philippines by being acknowledged as the only ruling power that could establish relations with neighboring countries. Speaking of the significant effects of
the Spanish-Japanese diplomatic exchange, fledgling interstate relations altered the Philippines' geopolitical position. In response to Toyotomi Hideyoshi's determined political propaganda, the Spanish colonial government not only improved Manila's fortification but also redefined its image as a colonial power.55

As a matter of fact, Hideyoshi's Luzon agenda coincided with the 1592-1598 invasion of Korea, known as the Imjin War or the Seven Year War in Western sources. From a comparative viewpoint, Hideyoshi's expansionist "madcap scheme to subdue the Philippines, Korea, and China" suggests a peculiarly universal, pre-national elite version,56 an argument that is further supported by the fact that Hideyoshi's letters were addressed to King Philip II of Spain. It is moreover worth considering that both parties had vested interests in Taiwan and wanted to exert a certain authority over it. In 1593, Hideyoshi dispatched a mission to Taiwan. It failed because no legitimate ruler could be found. Nonetheless, Japanese interaction in Taiwan brought it closer to the Philippines and thus further concerned the Spaniards.58

Shortly after the arrival of Hideyoshi's first letter, Pérez Dasmariñas reacted, if only indistinctly, to the Japanese ruler's formal threat to dispatch warships if no ambassadors were sent from Luzon.59 Pretending he and his men could neither trust the envoy (for lacking the qualities of an ambassador) nor read most parts of the letter, Governor Pérez Dasmariñas sent his own ambassador, the Dominican friar Juan Cobo, to Japan. Cobo seemed most capable of serving as ambassador due to his language skills and political prudence, even if he only knew some Chinese.60 Circumstances in Manila continued to cause unrest. After receiving Hideyoshi's bawdy letter, the Spaniards felt increasingly uneasy about the growing number of Japanese in the city, and some officials suggested that the Japanese traders were harmful to the colony and should all be sent home.61 By then, the Spaniards had already faced several violent clashes with Japanese sojourners. In 1592, it was a pirate (sukashio) settlement in Aparri on the northern tip of Luzon, and in 1589 it was rumors about a joint Filipino-Japanese conspiracy in Manila that troubled the Spaniards.62 As a precautionary measure, the governor therefore ordered the Japanese to surrender their weapons before entering Manila. What is really striking with regard to the threat from Japan is Governor Pérez Dasmariñas' suggestion to ally with China against the Japanese.63 For this reason, he kept the original letters from Japan in Manila (instead of sending them to Spain) because he considered them useful for future negotiations with the Chinese emperor.64

In the meantime in Japan, Hideyoshi reportedly treated Juan Cobo like an honorary ambassador.65 Cobo was well received at the kanpeki's military residence in Nagoya in Kyushu (present-day Saga Prefecture), after which they agreed to dispatch a delegation consisting of Juan Cobo and Harada Kiemon back to Luzon; the latter had already been chosen as ambassador to Luzon in 1591 but had to assign the task to his vassal Gaspar (Harada Magoshichiro, the aforementioned mistrusted envoy) due to a sudden illness.66 Luck was not on the side of the second embassy from Japan either: the Spanish-Japanese delegation of Harada Kiemon did not arrive complete. Juan Cobo, who for reasons unknown hastily departed Japan earlier than the remaining party, got shipwrecked and possibly died close to Taiwan. The mysterious disappearance of Cobo and the arrival of a new Japanese ambassador without any credentials further puzzled the Spanish authorities. Neither Harada's letters nor the journey's participants' reports could ease the situation.68 The Spaniards eventually decided to play for time again and sent the Franciscan Pedro Bautista as second ambassador to Japan in the summer of 1593.69 In a new letter to Hideyoshi, Perez Dasmariñas repeatedly lamented the uncertain character of the Harada mission while again proclaiming his interest in friendly relations with Japan.70 Bautista was equipped with the entire exchange of previous letters and a memorial of Harada Kiemon in case of any unpredictable events such as the need to verify what had already been agreed upon or indeed to warrant against forged letters. And for the first time, a trustworthy interpreter, the lay brother Gonzalo Garcia, who was fluent in Japanese, accompanied the embassy.

The official envoy Pedro Bautista met Toyotomi Hideyoshi several times and negotiated a trade agreement beneficial both to Japan and Luzon.72 Bautista's mission also marked the beginning of Spanish Franciscan missionary work in Japan, which would stir up the Jesuit-controlled Catholic mission in years to come. Bautista and his fellow Franciscan brothers were permitted in stay, and Hideyoshi promised to treat them like sons as long as they obeyed him as one obeys his father: a Confucian metaphor easily interpreted to anyone's convenience.73

After members of the Spanish delegation had returned to Manila, word again spread about an invasion of Luzon. This time, it was said that Hideyoshi kept local interest groups from invading by ordering them to wait until he had received an answer from the Spanish king. One year later, in 1594, Hasegawa Sōin Hōgen, a high-ranking officer, sent a message to Dasmariñas affirming that Japan would not send any military expedition but maintain peaceful trade relations with Luzon.74 As early as 1591, Hasegawa was involved in the Philippine case, when Harada Kiemon pledged to him as governor (daikei) of Fushimi to approach Hideyoshi and get the first letter to the Philippines. In the summer of 1594, Luis Pérez Dasmariñas sent Jerónimo de Jesús to Hideyoshi to introduce himself as the new
governor. In a letter written in Satsuma in 1595, the third Castilian envoy to Japan warned the governor that the Japanese ruler indeed showed great interest in conquering the Philippines.76

The seesaw described here shows that agreements remained short-lived.78 Ongoing conflicts based upon the hegemonic aspirations of the Japanese ruler and the unrelenting Spanish missionary zeal culminated in the execution of twenty-six Christians (including the second ambassador, Fray Pedro Bautista) in Nagasaki in 1597. This followed the shipwreck of the Manila galleon San Felipe on the shores of Japan the previous year. In particular, the confiscation of the galleon's goods and the execution of the Spanish friars conflicted with Hideyoshi's previous bilateral assurance to treat people coming from the Philippines well.79 Nonetheless, a further delegation of an even more subduing nature was sent from the Philippines. Shortly before Hideyoshi's death in 1598, an envoy called Luis de Navarrete endowed Hideyoshi with rich presents that even included an elephant.80 While Pérez Dasmariñas had feared in 1593 that the presents Bautista carried to Hideyoshi would be interpretable as "tokens of obedience,"81 during the governorship of Francisco Tello de Guzmán (r. 1596–1602, d. 1603) the colonial government faced much greater obstacles: it could only react and not dictate the terms of its Japan policy.

**Intercultural Issues: Letters, Etiquette, and Actors**

When examining the correspondence between the country where the "sun rises" and the empire where "the sun never sets" from the perspective of intercultural diplomacy, the available multilingual drafts, translations, and official replicas illustrate three major stumbling blocks in the context of Hispano-Japanese diplomatic correspondence. The first, we find in the field of language and semantics; the second, we find when it comes to format; the third, we find in the range of the actors involved.

In the realm of language, terms such as "friendship," "obedience," "tribute," or "treaty" and their Spanish and Japanese equivalents (and improvised substitutes) serve as key words for the linguistic analysis.82 In the complex field of diplomatic communication, the list of inaccurately translated passages is, for a variety of reasons, long. Here we can only address a small number of examples. It should be mentioned that although sufficient trained linguists for such complex translation tasks were not available at the time,83 the bulk of the letters' contents was correctly paraphrased. For instance, the beginning of Hideyoshi's letter, in which he sets out the successful political unification of the archipelago under his reign by a mandate from heaven, matches the Japanese original. Further sections that reflect the Japanese original include the part on Japanese foreign affairs; ships were prepared for Korea, and embassies had been sent from Eastern India that acknowledged his status with tribute. Setting historical facts aside, the passage incidentally demonstrates Hideyoshi's attempt to imitate the diplomatic style of the Middle Kingdom.84 Focusing in detail on the linguistic framework of the letters exchanged between Hideyoshi and rulers in Asia, Atobe reevaluates the context of Sinocentric and Confucian diplomatic correspondence and revisits Miki's thoughts on the terminology of ranks and positions used in addressing the recipient of a diplomatic letter. His conclusions show how Chinese characters allow metaphorical expressions for equal and hierarchical relations.

In the case of diplomatic communication with the Spaniards, Hideyoshi merged the two seemingly different diplomatic concepts of European friendship-diplomacy with the East Asian idea of superior-inferior tributary relations.85 This either attests to Hideyoshi's reputation as a great strategist or suggests that far more similarities exist in the diplomatic cultures of East and West than previously believed. This would also mean that binary concepts were mainly a product of the translation of the time, more specifically, the worldview of both the linguists and the scholars at work.86

Since from a Confucian viewpoint friendship was equal with loyalty as the key concept of tributary relations, we may assume that "tribute" and "friendship" could be used almost interchangeably in the translated versions of the respective letters. With regard to the original Japanese demand for a tribute mission from Luzón, literally "come and subdue" (nairiku),87 these terms do not exactly match with the English translations commonly in use in secondary sources.88 The Spanish version explicitly states the need to "show obedience" and is thus rather close to the original.89 At the same time, terms such as "amistad" and "amigo" were commonly used in Spanish diplomatic correspondence in Asia.90 In the letter delivered by Juan Cobo, Pérez Dasmariñas offered "real friendship and alliance" (verdadera amistad y alianza) between the two (Hideyoshi and his king). In addition, Pérez Dasmariñas claimed that he was and would always be Hideyoshi's friend ("asegurando que soy vuestro amigo").91 The Japanese translator used the Chinese character (友) in this context for friendly relations.92 As for the threats of attacking Luzón ("those islands") on the way to China because no embassy had been sent from Luzón to honor the ruler of Japan, the original Japanese letter used the term heirei, which could be translated "sending grateful greetings." While one finds the terms "amigo" and "amistad"93 according to the Spanish translation of the 1591 letter,94 no equivalent for "friend" can be found in the Japanese original. On another occasion, Hideyoshi allegedly stated that he "received [his] present [and] will never fail in [his] friendship."95
With regard to the external format, writing material was a puzzling matter. The 1591 letter from Japan was written on such fine paper that the Spaniards reason to speculate about Japan's greatness. The Spaniards even compared it with a papal bull. Hence, Pérez Dasmarias assured Hideyoshi to "trust that this matter will result quite to the satisfaction of two so great princes as my king and the king of Japón." Regarding internal formalities, it should be noted that Hideyoshi's first letter does not correspond to the exacting Chinese standards. For instance, sender and recipient are written in the same column, which is against the formalities of diplomatic correspondence. Questions of format are directly connected with translation issues. For instance, Hideyoshi's decision to refer to the islands as Shōryūki (Small Ryūkyū) or simply as "those islands" was deliberately ignored by the Spanish and without further ado substituted with the toponym "Luzón." Ruling titles are treated in a similar way: the ultimate choice of a title was usually adapted to the document recipient's understanding.

A more complex aspect can be found in the clean copy of the first Spanish reply, which was fabricated in Japan. As if to rebuke Hideyoshi for his claims of universal rule, Pérez Dasmarias begins his reply by listing a full inventory of the Spanish kings' global possessions, starting with the territories of the composite monarchy of both the Castilian and the Aragonese crown in- and outside the Iberian Peninsula, including the overseas colonies. The list also includes other diplomatic titles, such as king of England, and hereditary titles from Philip's ancestors, such as king of Jerusalem or archduke of Austria. Some of the honorary titles could be interpreted as downright lies. For instance, the reference to England based on the jure uxoris ("by right of his wife") had already expired in 1558. This sort of exaggerated self-introduction (institución diplomática) was standard for the Spanish crown in its correspondence with foreign rulers. It dated back to the reign of the Catholic kings and was redefined between 1555 and 1556, when Charles I abdicated and passed his territories over to his son Philip II. An accurate translation would have left the Japanese ruler with a lot to take into consideration. Hence, the diplomatically trained Zen Buddhist monk who drafted the clean copy based on a direct translation abridged the introduction without further ado. He only mentioned a few territories and summarized the rest numerically. Moreover, the Spanish reply is comparatively long and descriptive. Hence, in style it was new to Japan and differed completely from the diplomatic norm. Here too, the intellectuals who prepared the ultimate version for Hideyoshi stepped in and shortened Pérez Dasmarias' message.

This already brings us to the third stumbling block: the actors. Actors are the most complex field, and their services have different dimensions; broadly categorized as official and unofficial and as written and oral. They acted in different geographical areas and had diverse functions in the diplomatic process. Some of them constantly switched positions. Next to the policymakers and members of diplomatic missions, they included various intermediaries and go-betweens. If well-educated drafters of diplomatic documents to ad hoc interpreters. By "interpreting" the truth, adding semantic characteristics, and decoding and encoding information, they had a far-reaching impact on the diplomatic process. Given that the errors in this study were not professional diplomats but missionaries or merchants, we may assume that challenges to adapt to new diplomatic protocols must have been particularly high. In a period when immunity was widely unknown and ad hoc diplomats lacked a regular income, personal agencies were more important to them than their ambassadorial duties. While cultural mediation was probably hardly ever intended, oral negotiations seemed to have benefited from personal relationships.

Through the letters from different elite members with unfamiliar titles and apparently high-ranking positions, the Spaniards encountered many different Japanese actors. Since all diplomatic mediators pursued different goals, officials saw themselves confronted with different versions of the diplomatic encounter on Japanese soil in 1592. The two Spanish-speaking commoners Juan Solís and Juan de Cuellar, merchants who happened to be in Japan during Cobo's mission there, spoke very much in favor of Harada Kien and gave a positive account of Cobo's stay in Japan. At the same time, Chinese merchants and residents of Manila such as Antonio Lopez (who assisted Cobo in Japan as a linguist, or so-called sangley ladino) the Spaniards used that term for Asians with sufficient knowledge of Castilian) alleged that the Japanese had bad intentions and reported preparations for a Japanese invasion of Luzón. Harada Kien himself was accused of deceiving the Spanish governor by giving a very positive account of the accomplishments of the Franciscan mission in Japan. He was furthermore reported to have ambitions to become captain of the Japanese settlement in Manila (Dilao) and was suspected of being involved in military coups against the Spaniards.

Natural building trust was also an issue in diplomatic relations. Upon the arrival of the first embassy from Japan, Pérez Dasmarias insisted on a copy of Hideyoshi's letters in his own language. For their Japanese counterparts, this was an entirely new situation since in previous centuries they had always relied on Chinese characters and the Chinese diplomatic etiquette as lingua franca. The following episode illustrates the delicate issue of building trust: Harada Magoshibirō, as the first of Hideyoshi's ambassadors, gave the impression of being a poor vassal and could therefore not be trusted. Consequently, the Spanish disapproved of Magoshibirō's
arrival on an ordinary merchant vessel. With hindsight, both Hideyoshi and Harada Kiemon admitted to Magoshirō's lack of authority. Taking the criticism seriously, Harada Kiemon's ship would thereafter come to Manō with a specific red and white flag. Interestingly, Hideyoshi entrusted his second letter to the Spanish governor to Juan Cobo and not to his own subject.

In these short-lived bilateral relations, both sides not only wanted to be recognized as more powerful, but they also considered themselves ideologically superior. This was a recurring trend in premordial diplomatic relations but not uncommon in later periods, either. While Iberian superiority claims were influenced by Catholicism and hegemonic competition with other European trading nations, Japan adapted Confucian concepts of tributary relations to its needs by justifying political moves with orders from heaven. A complex body of thought developed at the center of the universe and above other nations. Both worldviews and self-perceptions encouraged the denunciation of its diplomatic partners as barbarians. On the other hand, the Europeans too, liked to believe that their conduct and work was superior to that of their non-Christian negotiating partners and criticized unfamiliar practices as barbarian or uncivilized.

Embassies were extremely sensitive to external influences, and agreements therefore remained, to a large extent, contained to a low level of bargaining. Taking advantage of presenting opportunities was thus more appealing to the actors involved than adhering to the terms of previous negotiations. In tune with this notion, we can understand that keeping agreements and contracts was even more important than establishing them.

Having looked simultaneously at two levels of analysis—the empirically based from the viewpoint of intercultural negotiations and the actor-based that integrated diplomatic intermediaries—a greater morality of the whole episode can be identified. In the absence of standards for state-level negotiations, both Spanish diplomatic rhetoric and Asian propaganda were highly influential. Despite the development of a hybrid diplomatic etiquette, the countries' agreements were always unequal yet distinctly different from what was to come in this field at the end of the nineteenth century.

Notes

1. Lately, scholars in the field of international relations and diplomatic history have deconstructed such views. See, for instance, Michael Braddick, Sariya Faroqui, Amy Flichter, Iver Neumann, and John Watkins, whose works attract increasing academic attention.


7. Sixteenth-century contemporaries described such acts of foreign communication as agents, contrariata, amicitia, and truce; seikai, beirei, and naviret.


12. The most relevant contextual source collections for Hideyoshi's diplomatic moves in southeast Asia are Murakami Naokirō, ed., Isho nishiki tsu (Tokyo: Sanshūsha, 1911); Maemori Naokirō, ed., Isho sōforu sōkanseki (Tokyo: Yoshodo, 1966); and Hayashi Akira et al., Isho Rōmuge (Osaka, Japan: Seibundo, 1967).


15. The list of imperial China's tributary partners was long. Since the days of the Han dynasty, frequent visits from all cardinal directions, near and far—Turkish people, Koreans, Southeast Asian tribes—used to introduce their goods and their customs to the Chinese court.

thorn. Therefore the Chinese also did not see foreigners from western countries as superior or even as equals, but rather as barbarians coming from a long distance to either show respect to the 'world' or to be sent away in order to learn proper manners before confronting the 'most civilized' heart of the world.


22. For East Asia, see Shogo Suzuki, Civilisation and Empire: China and Japan’s Encounter with European International Society (London: Routledge, 2009).

23. Several points in this regard have been made in an article by Adam Curley, Tokugawa Japan’s overseas policies. Adam Chulow, "A False Embassy, the Lord of Time and Tokugawa Japan," Japan Studies 30, no. 1 (2010): 23–41.

24. Japanese historians have debated for decades whether the Ashikaga shogunate really accepted the title of "king" and what ramifications it brought to the political status of Muronoshibi. The leading authority in these debates is Imamura Akira, who underestimates the shogun’s substantial power. Imamura Akira, Muronoshibi Shita sei shishin (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobo, 2000). For a concise summary of Sino-Japanese relations under the shogunate, see Csaba Oláh, Römerische Chinesen und türkische Jäger: diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen China und Japan im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert (Weimar, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2009).

25. Tanaka Takeo, Zenkoku ni no nihon to higashi aiga (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1995), 19; Etsuko Hae-Jin Kang, Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Century (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21–33. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu was granted formal relations with Ming China after issuing an appropriate letter (biao) in which Japan accepted Chinese centralism and the Chinese calendar for official correspondence.


27. Respectful title for a retired kankan (imperial regent), a title Hideyoshi set after 1592.


29. Hashimoto Yu, Nihon koku to kongo bōeki (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2013), 23–97. After chaotic negotiations, Hideyoshi refused to become a vassal of the Ming emperor and strongly opposed the title "king" because it implied that the Japanese ruler was inferior to the Chinese emperors.


37. Spanish soldiers led by Blas Ruis de Herán González and the Portuguese Diogo Veloso entered Cambodias and Laos, where they became involved in struggles for succession. A coup with some revolting Cambodian nobles failed despite military support from Filipino-Japanese auxiliary forces that had been sent from Manila. Some of the Spanish generals lost their lives. See Archivo Romanum Societatis Jesu, Phil. 15, 143–146.

38. Antonio de Morga, Historical Events of the Philippines Island: Published in Mexico in 1690 Recently Brought to Light and Annotated by Jose Rizal (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2008), 74–77.

39. This most colorful episode was the Tenhō mission (1582–1590) of four noble Japanese to the king in Spain and the pope in Rome. For central-local dialectics in early modern foreign relations, see my "The Global and the Local: Problematic Dynamics of the Triangular Trade in Early Modern Manila," Journal of World History 23, no. 3 (2012): 55–86.

40. Osakabe Nihon (Shōnin to Seikyōshi: Nanban Bōeki no Shōkai (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010).


42. Archivo General de Indias (hereafter cited as AGI) Filipinas 34, n. 64; Oko, Shōnin to Seikyōshi, 97.

43. AGI, Filipinas 34, n. 63; see also Murakami Naojirō, Bōeki shiho no Hitori (Tokyo: Nikō Gakujutsu Fukyō Kā, 2017), appendices 5–6. The letter and the present sent to Musoro were carried on a Portuguese ship.


46. AGI, Filipinas 6, n. 6, n. 61.

48. AGI, Filipinas 18 A, r. 5, n. 32.

49. Gakushū Nakajima, "The Invasion of Korea and Trade with Luzon: Kató Kiy- 
masa’s Scheme of the Luzon Trade in the Late Sixteenth Century" in The East Asia 
Maritime World, 1400–1800: In Fabrics of Power and Dynamics of Exchanges, ed. Ariga 
Schottenhammer (Wiesbaden: German. Harrassowitz, 2008), 143–168. Kató Kiyoma-
sa (1561–1611), one of the most powerful warlords of the Korea invasion, had aimed at 
changing wheat for munitions in Manila. In 1596, he sent a plea to Governor Tomás 
García de Herrera, “Sankoku kara Gers 
airito e,” in Kōsaitai Seisoku no Seizuku, ed. Arano Yosonori, Ishii Masatoshi, and Mami 


51. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 5.

52. John Newsom Crowesley, Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and the Spanish Philipp 
ines in the Golden Age (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 38.

53. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 4, n. 26. See also Florentino Rodado, España en el Suro 
1540–1939: Una apuntadística de la presencia española en Asia Oriental (Malafie. Con 
sejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997), 6–9.

54. For a concise overview, see Igawa Kenji, "Toyotomi Hideyoshi to Superi 
Nihon Supai Kōyūshi, ed. Kawanami Yō and Bandō Shoji (Tokyo: Nengajō shobō shin 
sha, 2010), 69–83.

55. To the Spanish governor, the threat of the Japanese enmiiei served as a welcome 
opportunity to request money for the poor fortification of Manila and for further defense 
constructions. See AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 2. Emma Helen Blaire, James Aki 
Robertson, Edward Gaylord Bourne, eds., The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898, Explora 
ion by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of 
The Catholic Missions, as Related in Contemporaneous Books and Manuscripts, Showing the Pol 
itical, Economic, Commercial and Religious (hereafter cited as BR), vol. 8. (Cleveland. OH. 

56. Victor Lieberman, Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1800, 
Mainland Mirror: Europe, Japan, China, South Asia, and the Islands (Cambridge, MA: Har 


58. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 7, n. 65.

59. For the Spanish reaction, see AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 7.

60. AGI, Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107; June 1, 1593: "con autoridad plenissima," AGI, Fil 
pinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12.

61. Mesa, Historical Events of the Philippine Islands, 230.

62. Iwao Seichi, Naruyoshi Nibonmichi no sei (Taipei: Taiwan: Taihoiku keikō 

63. BR 7, 126.

64. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 13.

65. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12. He also stated that because of the absence of 
Japanese translators at the court in Spain, only translations were forwarded.

66. According to Spanish accounts, a foreign ambassador had never before been 
treated with such courtesy as Juan Cobo. After his audience with Toyotomi Hideyoshi, he 
was even invited to a traditional Japanese tea ceremony. See BR 9, 36.

67. Different sources give different names for Kitamoto's substitute. In Japanese 
source, Harada Masuyoshi is most common. He is also referred to as Harada Ki 
mon's rival and nephew Gaspar. See AGI, Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107.

68. AGI, Patronato 25, r. 50.

69. Igawa Kenji, "Sei Pedro Bustis a Shokuhō no sai-Nichikai kanri," Me 
shukyōka Ronso 64, no. 10 (2010): 25–44. In this article, Igawa provides archival mater 
ial that shows that Pedro Bustis may have established the contract of licensed 
Japanese trade with Manila when he suggested it to Hideyoshi as a measure against 
piracy.

70. AGI, Filipinas 6 (Letter dated May 20, 1593).

71. BR 9, 57.

72. BR 10, 57. This was indeed one of the accomplishments of bilateral relations. See also 
AGI, Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107. The Spanish asked for a stamp or a license and standards in 
exchange, to help distinguish reliable traders from common people who were coming to 
Luzon and scandalizing Japan.

73. AGI, Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 110.

74. Ibid.

75. José Eugenio Borai, "La colonia de Japoneses en Manila, en el marco de las 
relaciones de Filipinas y Japón en los siglos XVI y XVII," Cuadernos CANELA 17 (2005): 
25–53.

76. Jerónimo de Jesús warned his fellow Franciscan brother Francisco de las Misas of 

77. This view was in particular shaped by Pedro Bustis, who sent regular reports 
from his various places in Japan to the colonial authorities in Manila. Igawa, "Sei Pedro 
Bustis," 25–33.

78. BR 10, 170–171.

79. BR 8, 125.

80. For the linguistic analysis, I have been inspired by the influential article of 
Nancy Fette, "A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Keyword of the US Welfare State.," Signs 
could denote several things in different countries and languages.

(Conference paper, ASCJ 2013, June 30, 2013).

82. Tōku jīden, 29. By asking tribute and submission from a neighboring country, 
Hideyoshi applied a model of Sinocentered foreign relations for the sake of strengthening 
the position against both domestic and foreign challengers.

83. For a synthesis of early modern Chinese foreign relations, see Angela Schotten 
Die Welt 1000–2000, ed. Peter Feldbauer and Jean Paul Lehners (Vienna: Manda 
baum, 2008), 293–334. For the development of Japanese diplomacy based on the Chinese 
model and the importance of diplomatic display of foreign embassies in Japan, see Ronald 
Toby, State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of Tokugawa Bakufu 
between China and Japan are described by Norihito Mizuno, "China in Tokugawa Foreign 
Relations: The Tokugawa Bakufu's Perception and Attitudes toward Ming-Qing China," (Ph.D. 

84. In this respect, the online database titles of Spanish source material (see pares 
males) are misleading as the terminology of twentieth-century scholarship.
85. The original letter is printed in Ikoku ōtsukai, 29–30.
86. The unscrutiny of the fifty-five volumes of the Philippine Islands source collection has certainly contributed to a wrong general picture. The deficiencies have been discussed by several historians, including Gloria Cono, "Blair & Robertson’s the Philippine Islands, 1493–1898: Scholarship or Imperialist Propaganda?" Philippine Studies 56, 1 (2008): 3–46.
87. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12.
88. For instance, in a letter to the Khmer ruler written the same year: AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 4, n. 26.
89. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12.
90. Ikoku ōtsukai, 36.
91. "...suprie que el gobernador es amigo... en señal de amistad." See also Edith Pastell, "Historia General de Filipinas" in Catálogo de los documentos relativos a las Islas Filipinas existentes en el archivo de Indias de Sevilla, ed., Pedro Torres y Lanza and P. Nave de Valle (Barcelona: Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas, 1925–1934), 567–570. Also that the emperador Cambacondon mi señor me envía con título de embajador a V. S. como persona que esta en nombre del Rey Phelipe es a pedir y ligar desde ahora en adelante los paces que el estrecho vínculo de verdadera amistad y fraternidad."
92. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12. Harada was said to have told Hideyoshi that Japanese merchants were treated well.
93. BR 8, 124.
94. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12: "Aunque el parece papel y despacho de un gran príncipe."
95. BR 8, p. 266.
96. For further details I refer to Hashimoto Yu, Nise no goikō shinsetsu (Tokyo: Yshikawa kobunkan, 2012). It is also worth mentioning that Hideyoshi used the letters in Nihonbaka Kanpu to sign the letter. Ikoku ōtsukai, 31.
97. AGI, Filipinas 18 B, r. 2, n. 12.
98. Ibid.
99. BR 8, p. 263.
100. For denominations of the Spanish monarchy in diplomatic correspondence see Ana Belén Sánchez Prieto, "La institución diplomática de los reyes católicos: Una pequeña política y una lección de historia," Jornadas Científicas sobre Documentación en España de los Reyes Católicos 3 (2004): 273–301; Felipe Rúa Martín, La Monarquía de Felipe II (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2003), 185; and Ricardo García Cárcel, La Construcción de la Historia de España (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2004), 65.
101. Ikoku ōtsukai, 35.
104. Next to Hideyoshi’s letter was also a letter from the “king” his treasurer, in general, and one of the roy of Pirando (Hirado).
105. Several examples can be found in the detailed Spanish report on the Hirado mission. See AGI, Patronato 25, r. 50.
108. AGI, Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107: "Con autoridad plenissima para que yo capitulase en V. S. todo lo que para las paces y amistad era necesario me prefiero y obligo que legado en la presencia de mi emperador enviar le las capitulaciones firmada de su propia mano y que es verdad lo firme de mi nombre."
109. BR 9, 35–57 (second letter by Pérez Dasmariñas to Hideyoshi):
Although I had good reason to doubt the authenticity of the embassy as well as the meaning of the words, and I have waited almost a year to receive your statement and reply; and have only received a very short and general letter from Father Cobo, stating that he sailed away from there six months ago, highly favored and with mission expedited by your royal hands, which I kiss therefore... For, although Parama brings me no credentials, yet I cannot believe that a vassal of your Grandeur, and one to all appearance so honored, would dare to appropriate and use your royal name without your order.
110. BR 8, 264.