

3 **Failed Correspondence: The Vow of Obedience**

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As discussed in the previous chapter, before founding the Society, Ignatius Loyola had already had some disagreements with Church authorities. While he had opted to capitulate, he had not managed to harmonise his spiritual convictions with the commands of the Church.¹ As the common narrative goes, Loyola's initial belief that sanctity had to be measured by the penance he inflicted on his body underwent a change when he understood the importance of "calm indifference:" after Inquisition judges imposed a different dress on him, he decided that he would always want to do what he was ordered to do, "because the habit has little importance" (Câmara 1904, 219-20). The tendency to extreme austerities, characteristic of older religious orders, was thus interpreted as a dangerous impulse that needed to be fought, both in himself and in the other Jesuits. To do so, Loyola resolved to prioritise obedience above his own desires of mortification. This attitude evolved with time to become one of the pillars on which the Society of Jesus was based.

1 For more details on the topic, see also Bonora 2006.

The sixteenth-century spread of Reformed ideas throughout the continent meant that tensions surrounding the concept of obedience in Europe were heightened. Loyalty to the Pope and the Catholic hierarchy was held as paramount and, at its most extreme, obedience was equated with orthodoxy and all independent thinking with heresy (Mostaccio 2014, 44-5; 57). Obedience to secular authorities was likewise intertwined with religious obedience, as the principle of the “*cuius regio, eius religio*” illustrates (Christin 2004, 431).² Exalted and criticised in turn, even by members of the Society, Jesuit obedience came to be one of the fundamental elements of self-understanding for Society members. Therefore, it is not surprising that depictions of heroic obedience and instances of sinful disobedience appear in Francisco Cabral’s descriptions of the unsatisfactory state of the Japanese mission.

This chapter will first consider the defining characteristics of Jesuit obedience in the sixteenth century and how they were transformed in long-distance correspondence when it came to the governance of missions. The reception and development of this concept in the Japanese mission is the focus of the following section, in addition to how it appears in the rhetoric of Cabral’s correspondence. The chapter will then analyse Cabral’s proposed strategies to solve the problems that he perceived were related to obedience, which were continuous visitations by the superior and building a house of probation. The last section will briefly describe the tensions created in this junction by the behaviour of Jesuit Baltasar da Costa and consider Cabral’s strategy for bringing it under control.

3.1 Jesuit Obedience

The character of the vow of obedience was illustrated at length in the *Constitutions*, but it is the numerous letters by Loyola and his secretary, Juan Alfonso de Polanco, that have expounded its meaning in detail (O’Malley 1993, 352). According to the principle of blind obedience, there were three manners of obedience; the most basic of these, obeying an order by an action, could barely be called such. The other two were aspects of virtuous obedience: the obedience of will, in which there was adherence of will with the superior (he recommended to “undress yourself of your will and wear the divine will interpreted by him”, Espinosa Polit 1940, 42); and the obedience of judgment, in which there was total agreement with the superior.³ Loyola only con-

² For an example of the spread of Reformation ideas, including the refusal of obedience, see Firpo 2004, 174.

³ “Un sentir mesmo con su superior” (Espinosa Polit 1940, 43).

sidered the latter as perfect blind obedience; through it, man made himself a complete sacrifice to God (Moreno 2013, 66).⁴ According to the Jesuit way of proceeding, obedience to the superiors was the correct manner of practicing self-denial, in contrast with other practices common at the time among both the religious and the laity (O'Malley 1993, 352). The superior was to be obeyed because he was experienced, prudent, and, most importantly, because he could interpret God's will for those under him (Friedrich 2014, 131). Indeed, Divine Providence would guide his decisions. In his letters, Loyola suggests several methods to develop this kind of obedience in oneself, among which is trying always to find reasons to support the decisions of the superior (Espinoza Polit 1940, 42). The spiritual aspect of obedience (which marked it "holy") emerged clearly in the consultations that Loyola engaged in with God every time he had to make an important decision (Friedrich 2014, 125). The provincials and other superiors were supposed to foster the connection between him and the Society, aiming to move like a single body towards the greater good (131-3). Therefore, through obedience a Jesuit could achieve a better understanding of divine will and exercise a manner of asceticism (O'Malley 1993, 353).

Some provisions were made in case the subject felt the orders he had been given were damaging:

[627] *I. For someone to propose the motions or thoughts which occur to him contrary to an order received, meanwhile submitting his entire judgement and will to the judgement of his superior who is in the place of Christ, is not against this prescription.*

This clause, intimately connected to the Spiritual Exercises with its reference to the "motions",⁵ was to become a key feature in the relationship between a superior and their subordinate. It also represented a fertile terrain for the creation of new answers to the problems of the missionaries' changing world, as the process of dialogue between obedience and the subject's feelings had the potential to be the basis of decision-making in a mission (Mostaccio 2014, 68). However, it was also Ignatius' wish that all the Society members should strive for the indifference that he had reached: a state of suspended judgment regarding all decisions made by the superiors. This would allow Jesuits to report the doubts emerging from their spiritual motions without being too invested in the outcome.⁶

⁴ See also *Cons.*, [550].

⁵ "Motions" here is used as "a technical term. It can mean either inclinations arising on the natural level or spiritual experiences produced by good or evil spirits" (*Cons.*, 279n6).

⁶ "[The subjection of judgment] does not mean that you should not feel free to propose a difficulty, should something occur to you different from his opinion, provided you pray

Even with the complex mechanisms that governed obedience, internal dissension often unsettled the Society.⁷ The Province of Portugal was at the centre of scandals that shed some light on the importance many of its members attributed to blind obedience. In 1553, Simão Rodrigues, the first Provincial of Portugal, was accused of encouraging irregular practices (such as extreme asceticism and general laxity) and, later, of disobedience to the General. The incident caused the province to fracture and the loss of many members, who left the order. It was in response to this crisis that Loyola wrote his 1553 letter on obedience, probably following a request by Luís Gonçalves da Câmara,⁸ who at the time was the confessor of King Dom João III. He requested that the General write to the members of the province about “abnegation, mortification, and obedience, and about the rigor that must be maintained by the superiors [...] because here we do not lack people who can tell [this] truth, but we lack its credence”,⁹ which highlights the elements he believed should be central to the Jesuit way of proceeding. Câmara had developed a specific point of view on Ignatian obedience by virtue of his position as his personal secretary, as delineated in Chapter 1.¹⁰ Câmara, described recently as “apprehensive, impulsive, prejudiced”, believed that nothing less than rigorous discipline would keep the Portuguese Jesuits following the way of proceeding, convinced as he was that they were spiritually weak and prone to heresy (Carvalho 2004, 425).¹¹

Although it appears that Câmara’s influence over the Assistan-
cy of Portugal has never been the focus of any modern study, it was certainly extensive during the third quarter of the sixteenth century.¹² His rigorist approach was influential in terms of the develop-

over it, and it seems to you in God’s presence that you ought to make the representation to the superior. [...] you must maintain indifference both before and after making this representation [...] and go so far as to be better satisfied with, and to consider as better, whatever the superior shall ordain” (Espinosa Polit 1940, 48-9; translation from Young 1959).

⁷ For instance, the controversy *de Auxiliis*, on the relationship between free will and justification. Started with a debate at the University of Salamanca in 1582, it was ended in 1607 by the Pope without reaching an official conclusion. Jesuits and Dominicans were intensely involved during the first stage of the controversy, on both side of the debate (Matava 2016, 16-23).

⁸ On the incident, see Carvalho 2004.

⁹ Luís Gonçalves da Câmara to Ignatius Loyola, Lisbon, 6 January 1553, in Agustí 1900, 41.

¹⁰ Friedrich points out that “even [Loyola’s] closest friends did not always know what to expect” because sometimes he “insisted strongly on obedience, sometimes he was mild and gentle” (2014, 134).

¹¹ More on Nadal’s visitation and Câmara’s fears is in Bangert 1992, 242-4.

¹² For a short biography and additional information on his authority at court, see Alden 1996, 81-5, where he is also compared to Francis Xavier when it came to austerities. See also Wicki 1967, 252.

ment of the concept of obedience in the Portuguese Province, to the point that it is possible to identify a “rigorist party” (Palomo 2012, 223) that supported a government characterised by

superiors leading their subjects, along the road to perfection [...] by punishing their defects and imperfections and by exercising them in mortifications and humiliations of all sorts. [...] Firmly persuaded of man’s weakness, his inclination to evil, his flight from heroic effort, they sought to lead souls to the ideal of self-renunciation and with God by a continual subjugation of the passions and by guidance from without, if necessary. (Schütte 1980, 1: 70)

Câmara’s leadership presents a certain affinity with that of Francis Xavier (Alden 1996, 82), whose initial approach to government was charismatic. Xavier purported a leadership based on love and kindness for subordinates, but his behaviour leaned towards authoritarianism, requiring total obedience. In February 1552, when he had to deal with the defiance of a group of missionaries headed by Antonio Gomes, a charismatic and zealous Jesuit, Xavier’s solution was to order his substitute, Gaspar Barzaeus, to dismiss all who would not obey him, even if they were gifted missionaries (Schurhammer 1973, 4: 531). Xavier appears to reject any charismatic authority among the missionaries in India, except for his own. Behind the “great zeal” that made the missionaries desire new apostolic fields instead of following their orders, he saw the machinations of the Devil (Županov 2005, 75-6). As was the case with the Society in Europe, the governance in Asia also slowly became more bureaucratic, and the process of institutionalisation of the Society of Jesus drastically reduced the acceptance of uncontrollable zeal and increasingly focused on hierarchy (Mostaccio 2014, 65). Overall, this rigorous leadership style, which had characterised some periods of the Portuguese Province, had influenced other parts of the Assistency, and its influence could be felt in Asia as well.

These tensions between obedience and autonomy can be traced back to the Jesuit way of proceeding itself. Jesuit education prepared men to be “active in the world”, and their training was not likely to produce workers who would base their behaviour on blind obedience (Martin 1973, 35).¹³ Even if Loyola himself called for blind obedience, he undermined it both with his actions and his words (Evennett 1968, 130). He also favoured the quality of discretion, especially in his brethren who had decision-making power. Together with experience and prudence, discretion was exalted by Loyola as the correct tool to direct zeal and charity and considered a necessary quality for all Jesuits,

¹³ See also O’Malley 1993, 351-2.

especially superiors, as it allowed them to be trusted to independently make the correct decisions.¹⁴ The instructions of the *Spiritual Exercises* and *Constitutions* also contributed to these tensions, as they made it the duty of the Jesuit to inform the superior of any scruple he might have regarding any order, provided said scruple had been subjected to the discernment of the spirits (Mostaccio 2014, 75-6). Generally speaking, the multilayered nature of the way of proceeding made a bureaucratisation process necessary for the Society of Jesus and its concept of obedience, which stabilised under Acquaviva (Rurale 2005).

3.2 Obedience through Written Correspondence

In the first years of the Society, attempts at maintaining unity took different forms, as Loyola understood the importance of connections that could surpass differences and distances. Obedience was one of them, as it reaffirmed the ties among the members of the Society and encouraged unity of action (Friedrich 2014, 132). The practice of holy obedience was thus a cornerstone of the Society of Jesus in more than one way. When personal interaction was not possible, it was substituted by a methodical epistolary exchange between the Jesuit Curia in Rome, the secondary centres in Europe, and the various peripheries of missions.¹⁵ Historian Markus Friedrich has named this correspondence “lettered governance” (Friedrich 2014, 135). Written correspondence quickly became an important vehicle of obedience, facilitated by the itinerant ministry that was one of the Society’s staple activities. The practice of the Curia, to circulate the most important and interesting letters in all provinces, made correspondence a connecting element that went beyond the simple organisation of the practical aspects of the missions; letter writing facilitated a spiritual union in the communal search for the will of God, becoming praxis unto itself (Torres Londoño 2002, 17; Palomo 2005, 59).

The Jesuit letters could be either public and edifying, or administrative and for the internal use of the Society (*hijuelas*).¹⁶ The first

¹⁴ Discretion is to be understood here in its political connotation of “discern[ing] flexibly what to do in certain and highly specific circumstances” (Friedrich 2014, 133-4).

¹⁵ According to regulation, the European rectors and other relevant figures were to write at least a trimestral letter to the General and a weekly letter to their father provincial; the provincial was supposed to reply every three months, and the General every six. Correspondence between the provincials and the General was monthly, while the answer was supposed to be bimonthly. The situation in the extra-European provinces depended on the availability of ships for mailing, and, while initially less regulated, with time it was subjected to increasing numbers of rules. It was understood, however, that the Asian provinces were different from their European counterparts and were allowed more elasticity. See Ferro 1993, 140-3.

¹⁶ “Annexes [to the main letter]”. For more information, see Friedrich 2014, 138.

were written with extreme attention to the content so that they could be printed and read by the public. Aiming to be edifying and attract patronage for the activities of the Society, letters from the extra-European missions were often copied in volumes made for the Jesuit houses and colleges and read during meals, to build and reinforce the collective image the Jesuits had of themselves. By contrast, the *hijuelas* were less elaborated and not focused on edification. They contained the practical concerns of the mission, specific requests regarding the ministries or other matters that could not be publicly divulged. In doing this, the Society was imitating existing forms of control exercised by metropolitan kingdoms on their colonies and building similar archives and networks of information (Torres Londoño 2002, 19-22; Palomo 2005, 58-9). However, the practice of letter writing differed from its theoretical underpinning in more than one aspect. The well-organised bureaucratic machine of the Society was put to the test with the extra-European missions. Loss of letters was common due to deterioration during travel, shipwrecks, sequestration by authorities, and piracy (Ferro 1993, 147; Alden 1996, 45-50).

Moreover, even if it suffered no accidents, correspondence needed extended time to travel between Asia and Europe. For instance, in East Asia, a letter could take two years to reach its recipient, and four to receive a reply. A letter leaving Goa in December or January would arrive in Lisbon, providing it did not have a delay somewhere along the route, between June and September of the following year. The reply could depart in March at the earliest, and arrive between August and October, still assuming it caught the monsoon and did not need to winter in Mozambique, delaying its arrival by one year. In addition to such long timing, it must be included the frequent possibility of the correspondence being lost, in both directions. A system of copies was instituted to try to limit the impact of such events: a letter was often sent in multiple copies and through different routes (*vias*), generally three. Even so, the missionaries often lamented the lack of replies to their missives.

Among the consequences of these difficulties was a strain on obedience due to the lack of response to the missions' problems by the European headquarters. The provincials and local superiors connected the General and the Society but were also supposed to find the best solutions to problems that could not be solved by the central authority, whose inability was generally attributed to a lack of information on the precise context in which the dilemmas arose (Friedrich 2014, 131-3). While waiting for instructions that were not forthcoming, the superiors could take matters into their own hands. Indeed, the fixed residence of the General in Rome, in contrast to the mobility of the heads of other orders, such as the Dominicans, did not allow him to make visitations to control the state of the provinces personally. This made him reliant on his subordinates to select the men

who would fulfil the most important roles in mission and reduced his authority in decision-making, often obligating him to delegate (Clossey 2008, 56-8; Rurale 2005, 29-38). Some form of control could be taken back by sending an inspector, called a visitor, who would act on the General's behalf, outranking all the other Society members in the province where he was carrying out his visitation.¹⁷ The appointing of visitors to the extra-European provinces was not uncommon. Even they, though, needed to report back important matters to the General, which could make for painfully slow exchanges, delays in taking action, and frequent changes in policies.¹⁸

3.3 Rhetoric of Obedience

While preserving the link of obedience between Asia and the European headquarters of the Society was not easy, relations among the missionaries of the Indian mission did not fare any better. The South Asian seas were difficult to navigate, and often ships were sunk or dragged off-course by storms, carrying with them the missionaries and their correspondence. The difficulty of travel also hindered the visitations that the Provincial was expected to undertake. Additionally, in the initial years of evangelisation, the tension between the obedience expected from the Jesuits and their missionary zeal and charisma proved to be difficult to manage.¹⁹ In Loyola's understanding, too much zeal caused the growth of self-importance and therefore represented an obstacle to perfect obedience. It made the subjects unable to exercise indifference towards the orders of the superiors. While these fervours had common roots in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Loyola believed they could push some practitioners towards a dangerous social and psychological instability (Županov 2005, 141-3).

From the point of view of obedience, the narrative presented by the Jesuits in Japan did not stray much from an edifying ideal. This virtue was mentioned often when a Jesuit wanted to exalt the character of his brethren, signalling that they were proper Jesuits and missionaries. To state and describe how they were acting under holy obedience meant to underline the religious abnegation of the missionaries' exploits. Obedience was so central to Jesuit self-understanding that, for instance, the dōjuku Damião was not an official

¹⁷ On the figure of the visitor, see also Brockey 2014, 11-16.

¹⁸ See, for example, the discussion on Japan's missionary policy between Acquaviva and Valignano, in Moran 1993, 23-4.

¹⁹ While the problem was particularly acute during Xavier's superiorate, it did not completely disappear with time; some examples of later, similar contrasts are in Brockey 2014, 103-12.

member of the Society of Jesus but, according to Juan Fernández, he seemed one in his behaviour and, most importantly, “in his virtue of obedience”.²⁰ A similar, dramatically rendered example comes from Gaspar Vilela at the time of his visit to Enryaku-ji:

Since the Lord allows it, and holy obedience orders me, I lower my head, offering my soul and body to death, cold and injuries and many adversities that are assured, over land and sea. I put much hope in your prayers, dearest [brothers.] Following both my orders and my will, I will go straight to [...] Hiei-no-yama, which means ‘hillock of fire’ [...] So don't be negligent in recommending me to God, because I have trusted the holy obedience with hope and faith, [so] that the Devil will be revealed for who he is, and the law of God will be manifested and received among [the monks].²¹

This attitude was common in missionaries of different religious orders deployed around the world; among the Jesuits, who attributed so much importance to correspondence, it evolved to become a literary topos of their letters.²² Francisco Cabral did not escape this trend. He often emphasised how he closely followed the orders of his superiors and the rules of the Society, such as those that expected him to do regular visitations. This tendency is particularly evident in his correspondence after he left Japan, when he changed his narrative about his years in the country, making it also more cohesive.

An example is Cabral's 1583 letter to the General, written while overseeing the mission in China, with the main aim to criticise Alessandro Valignano's reform (JapSin 9, II, 186r-188v). The latter believed that the previous superiorate had been a failure and held a negative opinion of Cabral's leadership.²³ While Cabral admitted to not being fit for government any longer,²⁴ he was still keen to defend

²⁰ Juan Fernández to the Brothers of the Society of Jesus, Bungo, 8 October 1561, in *EVORA*, 1: 77v.

²¹ Gaspar Vilela to the Jesuits of Goa, Funai, 1 September 1559, in *DJ*, 2: 148-50.

²² Županov 2005, 52. This tendency to display the respect for holy obedience, however, did not always obtain the desired outcome of edifying the reader. Congruent with Francis Xavier's opinion that it was better to be blindly obedient than right (142) Melchior Nunes Barreto, future Visitor of Japan, commented in 1555: “I wanted more to err by being obedient, than to be right following my own will”. This statement, printed in a letter, caused the strong reaction of a fellow Jesuit in Spain, Diego de Santa Cruz, who believed it was evidence that the Society was full of “Pharisees” who did not understand that complying with an order that went against their conscience was heretical (Moreno 2013, 70-1).

²³ Alessandro Valignano to the General, Usuki, 27 October 1580, in Jap-Sin 8, I, 298rv, transcribed in Schütte 1958, 487-90.

²⁴ Francisco Cabral to the General, Kuchinotsu, 30 August 1580; originally in JapSin 8, I, 283r-5r; transcribed in Schütte 1958, 497-502.

his past actions. His focus on the initial years of his superiorate is a sign that he felt much more secure about his work then, compared to the second half of it, which he meaningfully changed the interpretation of in the 1580s.

Cabral's narrative established that his work in Japan was undertaken for obedience's sake; he described his own success in this impossible endeavour as evidence to support this interpretation: "If God had not assisted me in this obedience, I am not sure I would have any hair left on my head" (JapSin 9, II, 187r). Cabral presented his will on the matter of silk as secondary and himself as practising indifference on the outcome; his only aim being to carry out his orders as he had received them. It is not difficult to see where he stands, with his agitated indignation and strong belief that the way of proceeding he had learned in Goa would be apt universally. As he describes it, his indifferent position, together with the regard for holy obedience and the awareness of the elasticity of Jesuit decision-making, makes his actions technically unassailable from a formal point of view. Cabral's visitation to Japan thus becomes an exercise in blind obedience. Moreover, the juxtaposition of his determination to follow obedience and the disregard of it by the mission at large contributes to aggrandise his virtue, while highlighting the unreasonableness of the other missionaries. With this stance, Cabral possibly aimed to avoid accusations of insubordination as he moved against Valignano. In the same vein, while protesting Valignano's decisions, Cabral reassures the General on the qualities of the Visitor. He states that Valignano simply lacks experience with Japan and that he personally does not carry any grudge against him:

Believe, Your Paternity, that I am not saying this to condemn the Father [Visitor], because really his [nomination to the position] gratifies me, [because of] his [respect of God's] laws, his virtue, his prudence, and in the many gifts that Our Lord has given him [...] but the love and obligation that I have for the Society requires me to inform Your Paternity. (JapSin 9, II, 186v)

This statement also follows the prescribed attitude that a subordinate should have towards his superior, as presented by Loyola when he suggested different dispositions that would aid one in being obedient. Cabral thus frames his attempt to influence his superiors as enabled by the *Constitutions'* imposition to report one's feelings on any order received, as long as they were born from prayer and the discernment of the spirits. Cabral, however, does not explicitly evoke any superior power, preferring to leave that implied; what he mentions various times, instead, and uses to support his authority on the matter, is experience of the missionary field, either his or the people he consults. How much this affection and respect for Valignano might cor-

respond to Cabral's feelings in 1583 is impossible to ascertain. The relationship would certainly worsen in the following decades, when the two were locked in long-distance arguments on various issues.

The narrative Cabral built in his 1572 letter to Provincial Quadros also strove to present his own virtues as a Jesuit. It went without saying that Cabral was powerless to force any brethren of his to obey: his attempts at persuasion fell flat, he could not afford to expel them, and he had no alternative way of controlling them. Moreover, he was forced to take into consideration the objections of the other missionaries, on the basis that they had more experience with Japanese culture than him. To Quadros, however, he framed his behaviour as a practice of obedience on his part. Cabral had to build his arguments from different sources of information: he thus conferred with Japanese men of authority, rhetorically neutralising his brethren by presenting opposing arguments from sources endowed with more knowledge and experience. In the episode with Sancho Sanga, the Japanese Christian lent his authority to Cabral's argumentation, but also his prudence, a virtue Loyola found desirable in superiors.²⁵

The narrative highlighted Cabral's prudence during his meetings with Nobunaga and the Shōgun, as well. The opinion of Nobunaga, in particular, is taken into consideration not only because it would have been a political blunder to ignore it, but also because he could hold authority over the local daimyō who, according to the other missionaries, would not have agreed with the new policy. The narrative of the events surrounding the change of garments is built to display the qualities of Cabral as superior: his capability to consider the feelings and doubts of his brethren; his indifference towards the outcome balanced with his desire to obey the Visitor; his prudence in acquiring the correct information when he lacked direct experience; and finally, his discretion in making a decision after considering the whole affair.

²⁵ He introduced Sanga as “an old man of much experience, [...] prudence and good sense” (Cabral to Antonio de Quadros, 23 September 1572, Nagasaki, in RAH 9/2663, 94v).

3.4 Cabral's Strategies of Control

At the beginning of their enterprise in Asia, the members of the Society of Jesus expected correspondence to effectively substitute personal interaction and therefore foster an efficient system of communication.²⁶ Initially, Cabral did not explicitly negate the usefulness of writing letters even if he realised that the information transmitted from Japan to India was lacking. For instance, he appeared alarmed that news on the use of silk had not arrived in India through the proper channels, which would have allowed maintenance of the connection of obedience. However, he attributed this lack of information to an order that prescribed the writing of edifying things only (ARSI, JapSin 7, I, 23rv). While this was “a good thing [when writing to] the fathers and the brothers, [Cabral believed that] one should write the truth about the good things and the bad to the superior, so that he would be able to order according to the greater glory of God Our Lord” (JapSin 7, I, 23v). Although some extant examples show that Cabral still kept in contact with his brethren throughout Japan through letters,²⁷ as time went on and he was confronted with the open disobedience of some of them, he began mistrusting their willingness to be truthful in writing. In his quest to keep the Japanese mission free from temptations, Cabral came up with two solutions to ensure that obedience was respected: continuous visitations, and a house of probation.

3.4.1 Visitations

Visitations were, for Cabral, the most obvious answer to the problem of obedience: compared to other solutions, they were allowed by the *Constitutions* and were not particularly expensive. While it was the Provincial's duty to visit the residences under his jurisdiction, to improve both discipline and edification, the geographical and political specificities of certain provinces allowed for a change of this rule, as it happened in the Indian province. The much smaller Japanese mission still was affected by the country's political instability and the consequent difficulties and unsafety when travelling.

While he had not yet grasped the difficulties of conveying information in writing, Cabral had already understood that a written

²⁶ Valignano's defence of his policy for Japan, for instance, was based on disproving this expectation of the Jesuit Curia (Friedrich 2017, 14).

²⁷ Many examples are extant of this internal correspondence: for instance, *EVORA* (1: 428r-430v) contains a letter from Frois to Cabral, dated October 1578, from Usuki to Hyūga; a letter by Cabral (Francesco Caprale), written in Kuchinotsu on the 23 September 1577 and addressed to Giovanni Battista de Monte (Giovambattista Montano), is reproduced in Italian in Maffei 1589, 397v-399v.

correspondence between the different residences of Japan was not going to grant him the order and obedience he desired. As Pedro La-ge Reis Correia argued,

Cabral saw itinerancy as a fundamental concept for exercising the office of Superior. In 1571 he immediately wrote to Rome stating that: 'the superior in these parts should not stay in one house but should visit all the residences every year.' In Cabral's opinion, direct contact with the missionaries was vital for renewing the internal life of the Society. (2007, 53)

Cabral had experienced first-hand how difficult it was to control missionaries from a distance and was aware that his predecessor, Cosme de Torres, had encountered the same complication. The Miyako mission had proved particularly hard to guide: the complex nature of its cultural and political milieu combined with its distance from the main Jesuit centres in Kyūshū meant that local missionaries had both reason and occasion to change their evangelisation policies. The independence shown by the Jesuits in Japan, both during Torres' period and under his own superiorate, had impressed Cabral with the necessity of continuous control. He was troubled by the disregard that met his orders. As he emphasises again the need for a strong leadership, Cabral echoes Luís Gonçalves da Câmara's preoccupations with the lack of virtue among his brethren.²⁸ Cabral found in visitations the solution to this problem: he had apparently concluded that, if the Provincial could not visit Japan, and the visitor appointed in Rome was not forthcoming, it fell to the universal superior of Japan to do the visitations. He carried them out with zeal and, in the end, managed to bring the use of the silks mostly under control, apparently. He kept this habit after leaving Japan, too; during his time as Macao's superior, the difficulties in entering China did not prevent him from making a visitation to the mainland mission. He upheld his duty of visitation even in his old age, and he visited (or attempted to) both the south and the north of India at various times, because the visitor was, according to him, ineffective.²⁹

Indeed, Cabral's conviction that visitations were the most immediate solution to any problem of disobedience in the Society became stronger in time. In 1583, he presented this practice as vital:

²⁸ His suspicions against his brethren worsened in time and he left Japan with a very negative opinion of them, as this 1583 passage shows: "even if some virtuous ones do not enjoy them and do not want the honours [bestowed on priests by Valignano's reform], others, who **are imperfect**, and **are generally the majority**, find in this a reason to become proud" (JapSin 9, II, 187v; emphasis added).

²⁹ Francisco Cabral to General Acquaviva, Goa, 20 November 1595, in *DI*, 17: 221-2.

One of the most important things for the growth of Christianity and the spiritual wellbeing of ours, is that the viceprovincial of Japan did not live in a specific house, but was always visiting the houses and residences. You need to know, Your Paternity, that nothing is so important as this [practice], for the great goods that come from it, and for the evils that it thwarts. (JapSin 9, II, 187r; 188r)³⁰

This passage not only reiterates Cabral's belief that the only way of obtaining precise information and understanding it correctly was to be present in person, but also his wish to persuade the General of it. He assured the General that he himself had tested this practice, never staying in the same residence for more than two months, and that his experience corroborated his idea. Just as he had done with missionary activity, he presented his continuous travels for visitations as a sacrifice of holy obedience. Then, using the same strategy he had adopted with the matter of silk, to back up his assertions, Cabral presented the testimony of an unnamed Japanese man of Shimonoseki:

[One of the] principal lords [...] asked one Christian who travelled with me, "where does the Father reside?" The Christian answered, "the Father does not have a particular house, nor residence, but is always visiting the Christians and the other fathers". Hearing this, the gentile was silent for a while, nodding. In the end he said, "tell the Father that, even if it is a hard labour, if he wants to propagate his Law in Japan, he needs to always keep doing it. Because if the Laws of Japan are now destroyed and corrupted as he can see, he needs to know that it is because of that (?). As long as the bonzes lived well, were zealous of the Laws and had superiors that controlled this and visited them, the Laws thrived. But since the bonzes became more and more disordered in their lives, and there was nobody who did visitations, and looked after them, immediately they also forgot the Law. So, slowly, the Laws of Japan degenerated into the bad state in which they are now. This is the reason why I always strive to visit the Churches and believe me, Your Paternity, when I say that it is exactly like this". (JapSin, 9, II, 188r)

In this long passage, Cabral did not, for once, attribute the disordered behaviour of the monks to the fact that they were Buddhist. The idea he is keen to illustrate here is that any religious would fall into a state of sin and confusion if there was not a superior to control them. Again, this kind of reasoning worked in his favour, adding a

30 The ARSI pagination swaps *recto* and *verso* of folio 187; this sentence therefore starts at the bottom of folio 187r and ends at the top of folio 188r.

Japanese support to the experience Cabral had accumulated to make his point stronger. The fact that the idea is elaborated by a Japanese nobleman gives it the weight of authority, but since the speaker is not Christian, it would be easy to justify whether it draws an unwanted parallelism between Jesuits and Buddhist monks.

3.4.2 House of Probation

In 1571, Cabral suggested founding a special “college” to General Mercurian, where the disobeying missionaries could be restored to conformity. Even if he used the term “college”, the institution that he proposed had little in common with the colleges of the Society of Jesus at large (Correia 2007, 54). Of the three official types of Jesuit buildings,³¹ it resembled more a house of probation.³² Cabral’s description of a place “for three or four fathers to always reside, and as many brothers, to live in poverty and obedience, and respect the rules of the Society” (JapSin 7, I, 23v), evokes some practices of the Jesuit probationary house.³³

Cabral’s correspondence sometimes stated that he longed for a life in a calmer place, such as a college. His longing in this case had less to do with the wish for asceticism and refusal of the world³⁴ than the desire for the familiar (i.e., Portuguese and Jesuit) way of life offered by a college situated in a safer land, where the authority of a superior would not be challenged. The desired house of probation would be the correct place to re-establish and perfect Jesuit virtues in disobedient subordinates.

In Europe, the Society had devised different solutions to deal with those who deviated from the norms. The punishments included fasting, menial tasks to increase humility, being transferred to other residences or colleges, being sent on pilgrimage, and, if the infraction was serious enough, even dismissal from the Society. In Japan, however, it was not easy to follow this general example. The lighter

31 They are the professed house, the probation house, and the college.

32 Cabral’s use of Jesuit technical vocabulary often lacks clarity; he seems to care little for the difference between colleges and houses in other letters. It is also true that at the beginning the function of the house of probation was carried out by the professed houses and the colleges (*Cons.*, 76n 8; 165n18). Still, when possible, they were not supposed to be one and the same (*Cons.*, [289]).

33 These practices do not seem particularly extreme, at least when compared to the early Society in Portugal. Before 1555, for example, Portuguese “novices generally between the ages of 14 and 20 were being put through a thirty-day retreat immediately following a brief first probation; during the retreat, they did not leave their cubicles except to go to Mass. Not surprisingly, they often emerged from the experience ‘sick in the head’ and incapable of the Society’s ministries” (Endean 2001, 51).

34 As suggested by both Elison (1988, 20) and Correia (2007, 54).

punishments required a supervisor, who was not always available. Sometimes, missionaries were sent back to Macao or India, as had happened to Vilela. Apparently, Valignano was fond of this method of reassignment, to the point that Cabral complained to the General about it in 1593.³⁵ Outright dismissal in Japan in those years was practically impossible, as the missionaries were too few, and thus there was the risk of leaving the mission without manpower. As the usual solutions applied by the Society, therefore, were not effective, Cabral felt that a house where the Jesuits could repeat their probation would be more functional for the context than other solutions.

Cabral's hope was that living in a community would counteract the isolation and independence in which the missionaries generally worked and reinforce their *esprit de corps*, conformity, and obedience. In this way, the house of probation would complement the visitations, when disobedient Jesuits could be kept under control, and not simply return to their habits once the superior left. It would also limit the arrogant behaviour that Cabral perceived from some of his brethren (with all probability, Baltasar da Costa), attributed to their lack of fear of consequences:

Even if I am present, there is little consideration for [the obedience and poverty of the Society] even if I command it in *virtute sanctae obedientiae* [...] because they know that I must suffer their presence for the need we have [of them] and for being so scattered. They know that they cannot be expelled because there is nobody who can substitute them, and if they are removed [...] the Christians risk many dangers and scandals, being alone. If there was this house, when they did not do what they are supposed to, they could be sent there, where they would exercise their obedience and poverty, and the respect of the rules of the Society until they amended their ways [...] in this way, those who do not want [to be obedient] for virtue, at least will do it for fear of being sent to this house.³⁶

The final lines of this paragraph reiterate the proximity of Cabral's opinions on his fellow Jesuits to those of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara.

³⁵ Cabral to General Acquaviva, Kochi, 15 December 1593, in *DI*, 16: 522.

³⁶ Cabral to the Provincial, Antonio de Quadros, 20 October 1571, in *JapSin* 7, I, 319r.

3.4.3 The College and the Seminary

This initial idea of Cabral to build a house of probation evolved to the point that, in 1573, this “manner of college” had become an institution that not only corrected the behaviour of unruly missionaries but could teach young European Jesuits the Japanese language.³⁷ Cabral was indeed vexed by what he described as the “lack of cleanness and tendency to other abominations” of the Japanese *dōjuku* and wished to train the European Jesuits so that they could preach: “If we could have some brothers, to learn well the language, even if they will not be useful soon, they will be in seven or eight years, and we’ll be able to clean this foulness” (JapSin 7, I, 319v). Although he used this very negative language to refer to the Japanese members of the mission, in the following paragraph, he requested permission to accept one of them in the Society of Jesus:

Among the Japanese of the house, there is one who has been here for six years, and in all of them he has given a very good example and has served much Our Lord. Among his good qualities, he is chaste, which for Japan is a miracle. The others cannot drag him [down] to their [sinful practices], but he even loathes and reprehends them. He desires very much to become a Jesuit brother, and take his vows, and we desire it as well [...] I do not have a licence to admit anyone in the Society [...] but if Your Reverence believed it could be of service to Our Lord, I believe the superior of Japan should have this power. (JapSin 7, I, 319v)

Cabral then specified that this would be allowed for a limited number of brothers, which he identifies as special cases, while the rest he deemed. He added that when the Japanese were not allowed to take vows and become Jesuits, even if they were good missionaries, they became disillusioned and left. Therefore, due to its own restricting policies, the mission lost more than one good worker. For this reason, Cabral wished to have the power to accept those Japanese who were deemed worthy of it.³⁸

After some consideration, Cabral had concluded that some Japanese *dōjuku* needed to be accepted into the Society and trained. Although Cabral was never very precise when using technical terms of the three types of Jesuit buildings allowed by the *Constitutions* and it was not uncommon to use the expression “manner of college” to

³⁷ Cabral to the Provincial, Antonio de Quadros, 1573, in JapSin 7, I, 319v.

³⁸ It might be that Cosme de Torres had already requested this permission, as Diego Mirão had exhorted the missionaries via letter to work to prepare the Japanese helpers to be received in the Society, probably in reply to one of Torres’ letters (JapSin 7, I, 319r).

simply refer to a college, the following wording here seems more intentional than that and suggests that Cabral did not want the new building to be fully a seminary; that is, he was not keen to allow the Japanese to study theology. In 1575, even as he started using the term “seminary”, he justified his idea for this institution in this way:

I remind Your Paternity that in no way will things proceed if a house is not made here that is like a seminary for those of the land, without whom we can do little, because it is they who preach and catechise. Those few whom we have are sick for the continuous travails, and some die. If this [problem] is not solved, soon nobody will be left. So it is necessary that Your Paternity, if believing it [good] *in Domino*, gives the authorisation to build this seminary, for sufficiently good youths to be received, reared in virtue, and instructed for the needed purpose; and with this, I have no doubt that everything will proceed well. (JapSin 7, I, 264v)

As another letter to Goa explained, the “needed purpose” to which he referred here was being interpreters (“lenguas”). In the same seminary, he wrote to the Indian Provincial, it was possible to train the Japanese brothers in this manner and that the European brothers, “fifteen to eighteen-year-old” young men, could learn the Japanese language.³⁹

In the same 1576 letter in which he celebrates the arrival of Valignano in Asia, Cabral keeps pitching his idea to the General:

My conscience now compels me to remind Your Paternity of this, for the experience I have of many years spent in these parts: seeing during them how much service of God Our Lord is lost and how many thousands of souls are not saved [for the] lack of preachers, who are not raised among the natives. Your Paternity should know that, among the fathers who came from Europe and are here, there can be not even two who could preach to the gentiles in so many years. Even if some know the language it is already much if they can preach to the Christians and confess them, but not to the gentiles who have some culture. So, if we don't take native people, we cannot maintain the gentiles well, nor they can be catechised properly. To this end, it is necessary that, at least, there was a college in these parts, with a probation house that could also accept [students]. [...] I have been crying out about this for eight years now, both to India and Europe, and nothing has been done about it. (JapSin 8, I, 12rv)

39 Cabral to the Provincial, Manuel Teixeira, in JapSin 7, I, 321r.

As this passage illustrates, the way Cabral presented the situation implied, every time, that he did not believe he could decide on the matter by himself and simply proceed with the creation of the institution, even if the fervour that characterises his pleas gives the impression that he was invested in the project. Moreover, while he had a general idea of the kind of pedagogical institution he wanted to create, he displayed a certain lack of coherence on the specific roles that the Japanese brothers would then be called to carry out. Another sign of this uncertainty was that by the time Valignano arrived in Japan, Cabral changed his mind again and, according to the Visitor, declared that it was impossible for the Europeans to learn Japanese and that the *dōjuku* should not be admitted in the Society (Schütte 1980, 1: 246). As will be seen below, once back in India, Cabral also declared that he had always been opposed to the idea of admitting Japanese members to the Society of Jesus. Cabral's inconstancy in this matter has been recorded by Schütte, while Alexandra Pelucía has pointed out, in her profile of Cabral, "[his] ideas [...] on this matter were not always coherent" (Schütte 1980, 1: 246; Pelucía 1994).

3.5 Baltasar da Costa, the Disobedient Jesuit

As he began to consider the future of the mission more broadly in 1573, Cabral admitted that, although it appeared to be in a better state, the situation was still dire; in May of the following year, he wrote to Quadros:

Compared to the past, there is a reasonable improvement; compared to what Your Reverence has ordered, there are many faults [...] about which I do not know what to do, except to recommend ourselves to Our Lord.⁴⁰

At the end of his three-year long work to extirpate the silks, Cabral had interpreted the perseverance of his brethren to keep them as a temptation into which they had fallen. In his view, the luxuries, be it silks or servants, were "the cape that the Devil was using, to cover up the evils that silk garments entailed".⁴¹ But if this intervention of the Devil caused the Jesuits to forego humility and therefore obedience, it was not just in relation to the use of kimono. Cabral also mentioned officially sanctioned luxury and honours, such as the provision of two servants who were supposed to escort every Jesuit when he went visiting Christians. As there were seldom enough servants to accompa-

⁴⁰ Cabral to the Provincial, Antonio de Quadros, 20 October 1571, in *JapSin* 7, I, 320r.

⁴¹ Cabral to Francis Borja, [Kuchinotsu], 10 September 1573, in *JapSin* 7, I, 166Av.

ny each missionary, Cabral believed that this was used as an excuse to refuse to go out on missionary endeavours when sent by superiors (JapSin 9, II, 187v). Therefore, by directly boosting their vainglory with honours and luxury, the Devil had overridden the missionaries' wish for the salvation of other souls as well. In Cabral's perception, the Devil was trying to sabotage the entire mission, making it not only lose internal cohesion and God's approval by jeopardising two Jesuit fundamental characteristics: the vows of poverty and obedience, but also persuading the missionaries to abandon their aims of converting people to Christianity.

Francisco Cabral appears to have carefully followed the rules of lettered governance, not just those regarding frequent writing but also those on content. After having recognised that it was necessary to inform their superiors about the problems of the mission if there was any hope to solve them, he tried to follow his own advice in his correspondence with Rome and Goa. If anything, he sometimes overshared, in the few letters addressed outside the Society.⁴² Most of his surviving letters are private and directed to the General, the Indian Provincial, or various superiors in Europe. They tend to be similar to the *hijuelas* – in spirit, if not in name. In these documents, Cabral wrote details that are generally lacking in more public correspondence, specifying names and places, providing interpretations of the events he witnessed, and suggesting solutions to standing problems.

Still, a certain reticence with Rome is detectable in Cabral's letters at various points of his career, especially between the years 1573 (the death of Álvares) and 1576 (before receiving news from Rome for the first time since landing in Japan). Specific information about the situation of the mission in these years is provided only by his letters to the Indian superiors. It was Valignano who had partial copies made of these missives and sent to the General, possibly worried by their content.⁴³ This bundle of badly preserved letters gives a good overview both of Cabral's tendency, in his correspondence, to skirt what he deemed the worst offenses of the mission, and of his slow descent into anguish regarding its future. As time went on and he received no answer from Goa, Cabral's depiction of the same problems became more and more detailed in the hopes of letting his superiors understand the gravity of the situation. This cry for help, however, went mostly ignored, as both provincials had died by the time the

⁴² See for instance his 1572 letter to the layman, Estevão Lourenço da Vellar, a man close to capitão-mor, Manuel Travassos, where Cabral boasted about his zeal during the debacle of the silk kimono (JapSin 7, III, 99r; printed in *EVORA*, 1: 338).

⁴³ Two copies are available of these letters: the first in JapSin 7, I, 319-22v; and the second in JapSin 7, I, 323-6v. I am very grateful to Mr Dario Scarinci, administrative assistant at for his help in procuring a high-resolution copy of these manuscripts.

missives had reached India, and nobody else appears to have taken any action in its regard.

Among other matters, this correspondence returns a vivid, if short, portrait of missionary Baltasar da Costa. A brief analysis of his activities helps shed some light on the internal issues of the Japanese mission. Costa had already appeared in Cabral's previous letters in a negative light: in one case, he had greeted the incoming Portuguese carrack wearing a purple kimono and a golden fan; he had then refused the invite to embrace one of the merchants, adducing that the familiar Portuguese practice would have caused scandal among his Japanese entourage. In another, together with Melchior de Figueiredo, he had attempted to hide a Japanese sleeping gown of green damask and some silk pillows at his residence in Hirado (JapSin 7, I, 23rv).⁴⁴ These events dated back to 1571. Valignano's copies accused him of further straying from the way of proceeding already in 1572:

Father Baltasar da Costa came here this year without permission, with some luggage that he had prepared to leave [for India]. Even after seeing the letters from Your Reverence and from the Visitor, he nearly left. I dissimulated⁴⁵ with him and did what he wanted [...] because I have no other recourse, so I leave him be so that he does not leave the Society, until the Father Visitor [Álvares] arrives.⁴⁶

Cabral admitted therefore his inability of finding a solution when one of his few workers determined to leave the mission: the missives of the superiors were useless as a tool of obedience. The only solution Cabral felt he had left was to disassemble and persuade Costa not to leave because the need for workers was so great that an unruly priest was better than no priest at all. This compromise worried Cabral, as he wrote the following year:

[my] power to dismiss [Jesuits from the Society] seems very insignificant to me in these parts: I wish Your Reverence would take it away because [...] I would rather not use it, even if there were great culpabilities, to not take upon me such great weight.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ One cannot help but wonder if Cabral mentions them together in relation to this scandal because they were probably of Indian descent (Hesselink 2016, 36), of which Cabral held a negative opinion.

⁴⁵ Early modern Jesuits had various tools at their disposal to navigate "the distance between words and things, between truth and reality", among which dissimulation; Cabral here might be referring to a verbal form of the latter, mental reservation. This practice was deemed licit by Jesuit theologians as long as it was for the greater glory of God (Tutino 2017).

⁴⁶ Cabral to the Provincial, Antonio de Quadros, 1572, in JapSin 7, I, 319r.

⁴⁷ Cabral to the Provincial, 1573, in JapSin 7, I, 319v.

He also lamented that Costa persisted in wearing silk garments, and sometimes a gold ring; he was not only risking his own salvation but the work of evangelisation by causing scandal. The mission at large apparently believed that the only solution was to dismiss him and send him back to India (JapSin 7, I, 319v-320r). No action in this sense was taken, however, possibly due to the drowning of the Visitor the following year and the chaos it generated in and outside the mission. In the missive of 1574, Cabral's morale was worsening. He could see no solution to the problems of the mission except praying to God to help them: he believed that his efforts to do more were proving useless (JapSin 7, I, 320r). As he lamented his "lack of talent and strength to carry out [his] obligations" and begged to be relieved of his responsibilities towards the mission, he added: "It is not possible to say everything in letters" (JapSin 7, I, 320v).

The conclusion of Costa's story comes in the copy of Cabral's 1575 letter, addressed to the new Provincial of India, Manuel Teixeira. The disobedient missionary was caught putting aside a small treasure to escape Japan, and his refusal to follow the expected Jesuit lifestyle was evident in his breaking all three of the religious vows. He allegedly had money, silver, clothes, and rich pieces that he had stolen from the Church and gained in trade, and hid them in the houses of the Christians "to their great disedification".⁴⁸ Regarding obedience,

he upheld it only when he wanted, and openly declared he had no superior in Japan; he said what he wished about his superior and his brethren to the Japanese, and worked to discredit them [...] he threatened the Father who was his superior, scandalizing [outsiders]. Regarding the other vow [i.e., the vow of chastity], he abandoned it, as he was living together with a woman who had a husband in China, and this was publicly known among those inside and outside the Society. He also made use of boys for the wicked sin [i.e., sodomy] and, among them, one was even from the [Jesuit] house. It was them who informed us of this. (JapSin 7, I, 321rv)⁴⁹

Costa apparently denied the accusations, but many eyewitnesses testified against him. Cabral referred in passing to other transgressions, but still he did not lay them out: "I have seen some Jesuits thrown out the Society, but I have never seen anyone who carried half his offences, nor who was so obstinate", he wrote as explanation. Once more missionaries arrived, in 1575, Costa was sent back to Goa, where Va-

⁴⁸ Cabral to the Provincial, Manuel Teixeira, 2 September 1575, in JapSin 7, I, 321r.

⁴⁹ The passage regarding the vow of chastity appears materially different from the rest of the copy; it is written by a different hand, in smaller and disordered letters. It might have been added later to avoid exposing the copyist to such disedifying news, which would suggest that breaking this specific vow was considered particularly sinful.

lignano ordered him to Rome, unofficially expelling him; he apparently died during the voyage (Schütte 1980, 1: 216).

In this situation, the Jesuit missionaries in Japan agreed that somebody needed to go to Rome to inform the General of the needs of the mission, especially funds and manpower (JapSin 7, I, 321v). Lettered governance had failed them, the lack of funds and manpower was jeopardising the whole enterprise; Cabral, lacking strength and resources to carry out his reform, could only recommend them to God and request to be recalled to India (JapSin 7, I, 321r).

3.6 Conclusions

Under the influence of its founder's philosophy and life experiences, the Society of Jesus developed a complex practice of obedience, evolved in a context of perceived threats to orthodoxy. The enterprise of the Society of Jesus was organised to depend on the hierarchical structure that had been built from the premises laid down in the *Constitutions* and Loyola's writings. The Jesuit extra-European missions did not escape this process of bureaucratisation that pushed obedience to the forefront, starting already in the 1540s. The Asian missions were also shaped by the example of Francis Xavier, who was a charismatic leader but who, at the same time, required perfect obedience from his subjects. These two different approaches caused tension in both India and Japan between religious zeal and hierarchical organisation. Additionally, the missions under the Portuguese Assisancy were influenced by the strict interpretation of obedience that had emerged in Lisbon and Coimbra, under figures such as Luís Gonçalves da Câmara.

The relevance of obedience in the Jesuit self-understanding is seen clearly from the sixteenth-century Jesuit letters from Japan, where it was mentioned often and used to build edifying depictions of the missionaries. However, this was especially true of the public letters, to be read by people outside the Society. The private letters for the superiors display the internal tensions and cracks in the works of the mission. Distance created continuous difficulties that worked as loopholes for a missionary who felt inclined to follow his own impressions instead of blind obedience. One of them was familiarity with the field; the deeper the experience that a Jesuit could claim, the stronger the argument he could make against the decisions of the headquarters.

Francisco Cabral, like Xavier and Luís Gonçalves da Câmara, expected perfect obedience from his subordinates. When persuasion did not work, he elaborated two solutions for the Japanese mission: the first was to control the single residences through continuous visitations; the second was the creation of a house of probation, where the disobeying missionary could live until he saw the error of his

ways. Cabral always maintained that visitations were the most effective tool against disobedience and also applied it to the Indian province when he became its Provincial.

The way Cabral presented his actions aimed to create an unassailable defence of his actions. He displayed a knowledge of the process of the negotiation of obedience that had been developing in the Society, both in Europe and in the missions, and worked to fill any possible loophole that might be found in his actions. He often highlighted his obedience to orders from above but also worked to collect reliable information that could supplant his lack of experience in the first years of his permanence in Japan. He then used it to block any attempt at negotiating by his subordinates, applying a strict understanding of obedience. When he moved back to Macao and India, he still tried to influence the decisions of his superiors about Japan, presenting his long experience in the missionary field as a credential.

The general behaviour of Cabral in this first part of his stay in Japan, and the way he proceeded to solve the problems of the mission, show how his way of proceeding was to prioritise faith in the Grace of God. Human means and their solutions came second, as they represented an inferior solution that could fail at any time in a land like Japan that was characterised by sudden changes. In this sense, Cabral dutifully heeded Francis Xavier's exhortations to always put one's faith in God first.