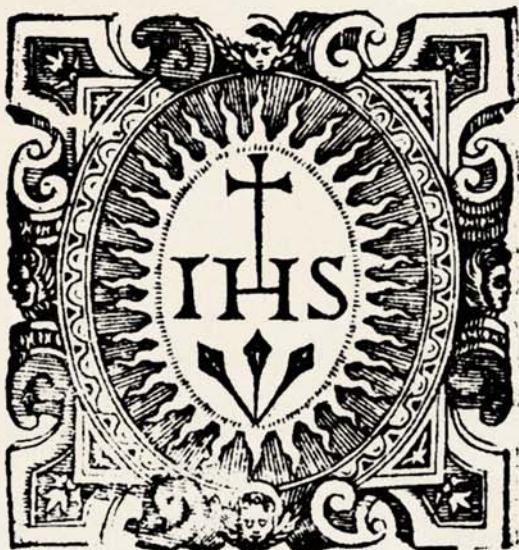


A R T E B R E V E.
DA LINGOA IAPOA TIRADA
DA ARTE GRANDE DA MESMA
lingoa, pera os que começam a aprender
os primeiros principios della.

PELLO PADRE IACOB RODRIGUEZ
da Companhia de IES. Portugues do Bispado
de Lamego. Diuidida em tres
L I V R O S.



C O M L I C E N C A D O O R D I N A R I O,
& Superiores. Em Amacao no Collegio da Ma-
dre de Deos da Companhia de IES V.

A N N O . C I O . C I C . X X .



A Textual Research on Japanese Grammar Published in Macao during the 17th Century

Features and Linguistic Outlook of the *Arte Breve da Lingoa Iapoa*

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INTRODUCTION

During the early modern time of Japan, the 16th and the 17th centuries, Jesuit missionaries contemporary with Matteo Ricci and European interpreters emerged and shouldered the heavy burden as agents of the Western-Eastern cultural and commercial communication in the Edo period. A notable case was the Portuguese missionary João Rodrigues (1561?-1633), who acted not only as an indispensable agent in the Western-Eastern trade, in missionary affairs, and in the import of European artillery to the Far East, but also made an outstanding contribution to the transmission of Japanese culture. He was acknowledged by Japan's linguistic scholars as the first Japanologist in Europe, his two Japanese grammars and the *História da Igreja de Iapam* being monumental achievements.

In 1620, Rodrigues published his *Arte Breve da Lingoa Iapoa* (hereinafter referred as *Arte Breve*) in Macao, using the printing press brought back from Europe by the Kyushu delegates. The long-suffering language students were obliged to wait another dozen years for the extract. This was a far superior work as a grammar; in many ways it was not merely a synopsis of the earlier *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam* (hereinafter referred as *Arte*). It may still have left something to be desired in the light of modern techniques of language teaching, but it is a thoroughly revised, pared down, and improved piece of work. In the preface, Rodrigues admits that:

Explanation of some points in the earlier *Arte* was a little lengthy, and for this reason I have decided to bring out a revised edition. Some places, which people thought were a little unclear, are declared better in this compendium.¹

Nevertheless, the *Arte Breve* was intended merely as an introduction to the language for the European beginners, and advanced students were advised to return to the earlier work, the *Arte*.

Compared with the earlier work, the *Arte Breve* was quite new, edited, and easily understood. Besides, more importantly, there were two explicit features that made it a pioneer work. Firstly, it was independent from

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Latin grammar. Although it remained Latin-based, Rodrigues had thankfully forsaken the restriction of Latin grammar and brought forward his own grammar system which was more suitable for studying Japanese. Secondly, this grammar is intended as an introduction to the Japanese language for the beginner as Rodrigues asserts in his *Arte Breve*, ‘this work is intended to make Japanese learning much easier for the beginner.’²

Based on the analysis of its features, this paper attempts to study Rodrigues’ linguistic outline reflected in the *Arte Breve*.

FEATURE ONE: INDEPENDENCE FROM LATIN GRAMMAR

Rodrigues’ leap forward in the method of grammatical study shown in the *Arte Breve*, the later work of the *Arte*, can be found in three aspects: the recognition of the importance of the Japanese writing, the redefinition of *artigo*, and the conjugation of the preterit auxiliary verb.

In the *Arte Breve*, the importance of the Japanese writing is thoroughly recognised. Although the *Arte Breve* is abridged to 40% of the earlier work, it supplements some embryonic forms of the hiragana such as ‘iroha’ (いろは), and ‘five syllabary’ and gives corresponding Latin Roman letters to the *kana*, the ‘Japanese letters’.³ Moreover, the two grammars differ a lot in construction. In the earlier work, the treatise on writing is given in Book I, and the treatise on pronunciation is given in Book II, while, for the reason that Rodrigues may have recognised the necessity of writing and the ‘five syllabary’, he combines the two parts and places them towards the beginning of the *Arte Breve*. Compared with Alvares’ Latin grammar and the *Arte*, such a combination is a great leap forward.

Contemporary with Rodrigues, grammars of both the European language and the non-European language published followed the same trend. In the first European modern grammar, *Gramática Castellana*, Nebrija, the author, placed the treatise on spelling as its beginning chapter. And in the Portuguese grammar compiled by Barros, spelling was given in the second chapter right after the definition of grammar in Chapter I. What is more, although the Tsupi language has no writing form, Ansyepo placed the writing in the first chapter of the Tsupi grammar.⁴ Above all, such changes shown in Rodrigues’ *Arte Breve* were basically

in accordance with the latest developing trend of the Latin grammar system.

‘Artigo’ means ‘article’ in Portuguese. Tadao Doi transliterated it as ‘kakuji’ 格辞, which usually leads incorrectly to the thinking that it is named after Rodrigues. The artigo is a kind of particle that does not exist in Latin. Despite no case reflection for the artigo in contemporary Portuguese, grammars at that time such as Barros’ Portuguese grammar had a detailed account on the case reflection of the artigo.⁵ Rodrigues made a further development to Alvarez’ plan of Latin grammar, and combined the artigo in Portuguese with the particle of Japanese to form a new definition.

In his *Arte Breve*, Rodrigues took away the particle, *no* and *yori*, from the nominative case,⁶ and *wa* and *ga* from the accusative case.⁷ In a word, Rodrigues’ option of case particles is based on his careful observation of daily Japanese. Although the *Arte Breve* remains Latin-based, Rodrigues is presumed to have made every effort to steer his study towards the practice of Japanese grammar.⁸

Particles in Latin and in Portuguese are not inflected and not case sensitive, in which case it is called a non-changing word. In his *Arte*, Rodrigues sorts the auxiliary verb in Japanese to the particle, and summarises one’s features as follows.

1. To emphasise the verb
2. To change the meaning of the verb
3. To indicate tense and method

Particles can be inflected according to tense and method, which is a particular conjugation different from that of verbs. The innovation of the *Arte Breve* lies on its supplement to the conjugation of the ‘auxiliary verb of past’ (which is sorted to the particle by Rodrigues). According to Rodrigues, particles like *keri*, *tari*, and *ni* are usually used to indicate past tense, for which he provided a schema to illustrate three kinds of conjugation.⁹

radical	past	future
<i>keri</i>	<i>keru</i>	<i>ken</i>

Despite the defect in the schema,¹⁰ Rodrigues’ enterprise to compare the conjugation of particles, which is unimaginable in Latin, to the conjugation of verbs, reflects his profound knowledge of language, and his intention to go beyond the restriction of the

Latin grammar. It is of great significance to define the conjugation of the Japanese auxiliary verbs.

FEATURE TWO: AN INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE FOR BEGINNERS

A beginner-oriented approach was embodied in three aspects. Firstly, the teaching method for Japanese was put forward; secondly, Japanese sample sentences were added with Portuguese translation; thirdly, a general introduction of Japan was also added.

A new chapter on Japanese teaching is supplemented in the beginning of the *Arte Breve*. There are two ways of learning a foreign language, Rodrigues noted. The first is to learn it by what he terms natural habit, that is, by living among the people speaking the language. This is a good method but takes considerable time. The second method involves grammar study. For educated adults who have rich a vocabulary and better understanding, this is a quicker method, but mistakes can be easily made by employing the wrong means.¹¹

Rodrigues also lists three essential elements for Japanese learning: teacher, textbook, and method. He asserts that the teacher must necessarily be native Japanese and well-versed in classical language. Rodrigues is insistent on this point, and maintains that the teachers should not be Europeans as thitherto. It is essential that teachers must know the correct grammar and focus on instructing how to use the grammar flexibly rather than cramming the student with a mass of information. What is more, terms and knowledge widely used in socialising such as the tea ceremony, etiquette, folk dance, *kendo* and *renga*, should be given more attention. Another point in Rodrigues' approach may be noted when he deals with suitable reading for language students. He urges them to read the Japanese classics and not books written in colloquial style like *monogatari* 物語. He provides a list of recommended works which they may read. The teaching method is especially recognised as important by Rodrigues, as Chizuru Kajikazawa points out:

He asserts that the teacher should be patient and scrupulous; and the student should be given more time for practice. He also insists on the importance of a good accent, because 'a little language with good pronunciation is worth more than much language with poor pronunciation'.¹² Rodrigues gives his views on language studies in

the *Arte Breve*, and much of what he has to say is exactly as valid today as it was in his time, which reflects the Jesuits' validity in Japanese instruction.

Another aspect is to add examples given in Japanese with Portuguese translation. Compared with the earlier work, Rodrigues quit a good deal of writing about grammar, but 90% of its examples given in Japanese have corresponding Portuguese translation, which is so perfect that it provides a standard solution to Japanese-Portuguese translation. For example: *Rôyaku kuchini nigaku, Chûgen mimini sacafu.* 良薬口に苦く、忠言耳に逆ふ (A boa mezinha amarga na boca; o bom conselho exaspera as orelhas).¹³

The Japanese examples are translated into Portuguese so simply that it benefits students greatly in practicing writing Japanese.

A general introduction of Japan is given in Vol. III of the *Arte Breve*. Nevertheless, in this work things about literary style are simplified; and the complicated varying systems of weights, measures, and numbers are gone. But Rodrigues devotes more folios to talk about Japanese names, in which he begins with the five comment names in Japan namely *azana* 'child name', *kamyō* (*karina*) 'assumed name', *nanori* (*jitsumyo*) 'real name', *dogo* (*homyo*) 'Buddhist name' and *okurina* 'posthumous title'.¹⁴ He thereafter continues to introduce names of the upper and privileged class like emperor, nobles, and samurais. Then, he comes up with various official titles and concentrates on the structure, origin, and evolution of the state power. At the end, he lists the name of 66 provinces, including the number of their respective districts, and their *tomyo* 'Chinese names'; he even adds entirely new material by including an interesting schematic explanation of the organisation of the Zen sect.¹⁵

In countries in the Far East, especially in China and Japan in which several religions existed at the same time, it was important for missionaries from the West to study these religions. Discussions and debates between the Jesuits and Zen sects took place occasionally right after the Jesuits had landed. Consequently, the *Arte Breve* attaches extreme importance to local culture with which the Jesuits were able to debate with the Zen sect in a native tongue. Michael Cooper asserts hereby:

For the purpose that the Jesuit missionaries are able to spread doctrines to pagans, to remove their prejudices, and to safeguard ones' own beliefs, the *Arte Breve* includes a schematic

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explanation of the organization of the Zen sect, which provides a precious material for studying the relation between the Jesuit and the Zen sect.¹⁶

In fact, no one was more fitted than Rodrigues to compile the grammar with his talents in language and familiarity with Japan. He used all he had learnt to bring out the monumental work for the beginner when he was 59 years old and had reached the acme of his learning. On the other hand, his grammar is an outcome of the Japanese studies supported by the Jesuits. Rodrigues was exiled to Macao in 1610 and never set foot on Japan thereafter up to his death in 1634. With the outbreak

of persecution, the *Arte Breve* unfortunately marked the end of Japanese studies carried out by the Jesuits.

THE LINGUISTIC OUTLOOK
OF THE ARTE BREVE

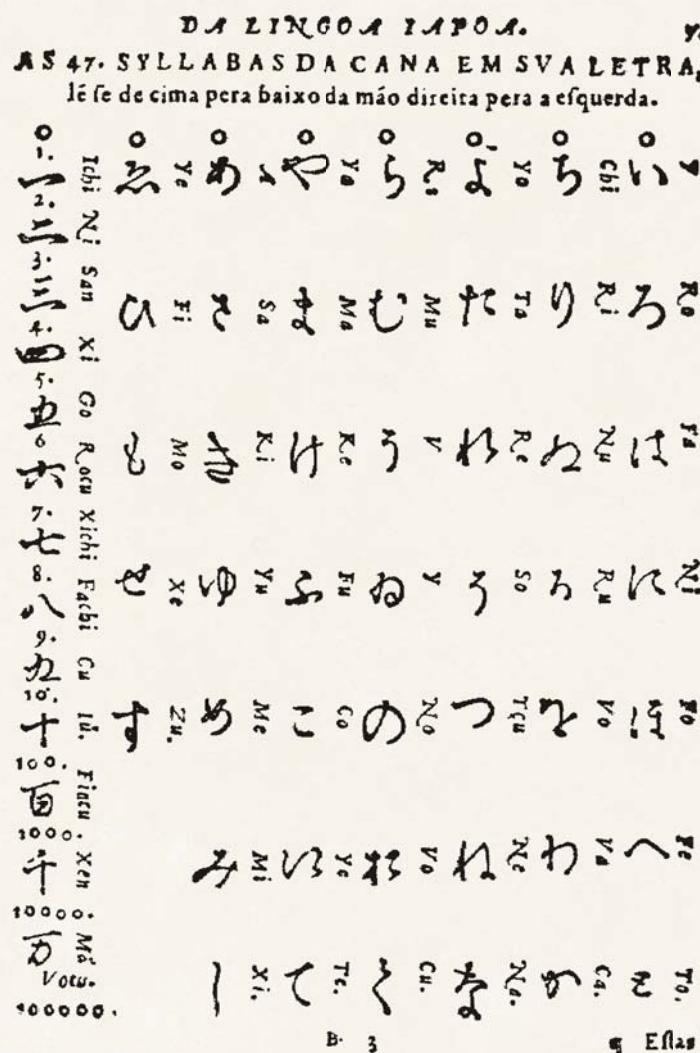
The lexicographic wave started by the Portuguese, and the study of the Japanese language carried out by the Jesuits who arrived in Japan in the 17th century are the motive power of Rodrigues to bring out the *Arte* in Nagasaki and the *Arte Breve* in Macao. Missionaries from Europe who were eager to establish a new Catholic world outside Europe had adopted different preaching

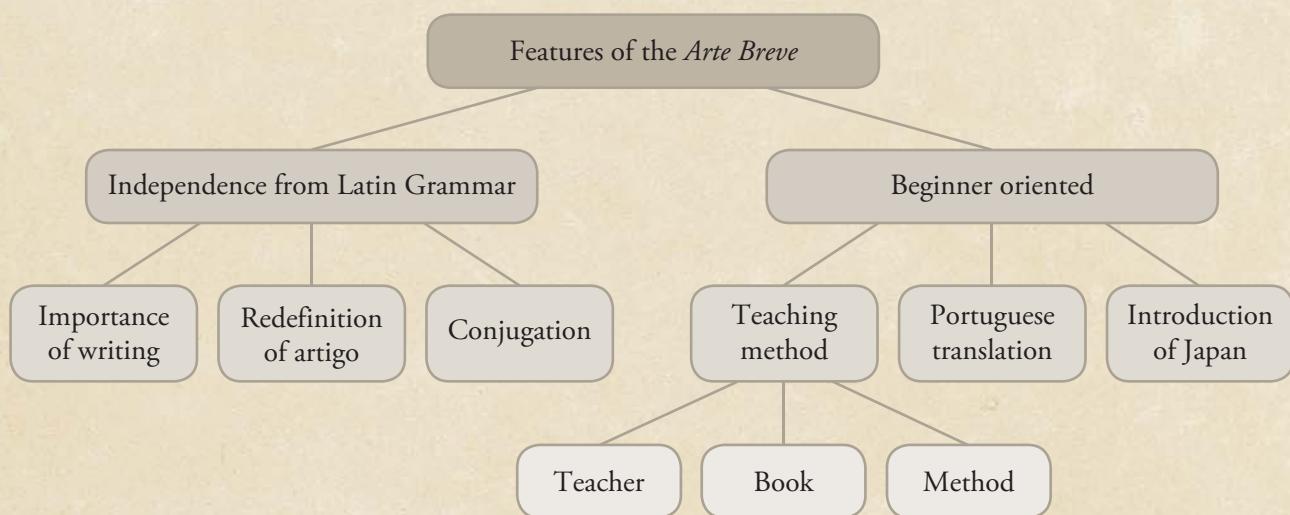
approaches to different peoples. In order to grasp the thinking of the general public and make the Catholic doctrines understood, the Jesuit missionaries worked hard at the local language; studied and summarised their patterns; and compiled grammars and dictionaries. By their unremitting efforts and continual supplementation, a number of high-leveled grammars were brought out.

Arte Breve is not merely a synopsis of the earlier book with some supplements, but it is a quite new piece of work which is easily understood. The leap forward of the *Arte Breve* in linguistic theology can be found in the following three aspects: the recognition of the importance of the Japanese writing, the redefinition of artigo, and the conjugation of the preterit auxiliary verb. The work was intended merely as an introduction to the language for the European beginner who was not able to understand the earlier work. This is shown in the teaching method it introduces, the Portuguese translation it adds, and the introduction of Japan it makes.

Below is a diagram of the features of the *Arte Breve*.

What is more, the *Arte Breve* and the former work show Rodrigues' ideals and pursuits and his linguistic





outlook of Japanese study, which can be best summarised as follows:

1. His foundation of Japanese linguistic outlook is originated from Latin.
2. His unremitting pursuit is elegant and standard Japanese.
3. His suggestion is the most beautiful style and the most native expression.
4. His contribution is standardising the Romanisation of Japanese, regularising the pronunciation of Japanese, and distinguishing the local tongue of Japan.
5. His dream is to speak and express his mind freely as fluent as the Japanese does.

The Japanese themselves had never undertaken a systematic study of their own tongue, and Rodrigues' grammars marked the beginning of the methodical exposition of the spoken language. 'Both Japanese and foreign philologists admit that his works are indispensable for the study of the grammar and colloquial speech of Japan in the early 17th century.'¹⁷

CONCLUSION

Rodrigues received ordination in Macao in 1596, but the complicated situation in Japan spared him no time to carry on the missionary work. The most astonishing feature of the enterprise is that Rodrigues' work as court interpreter and commercial agent still left him time and energy to produce his *Arte* and the later *Arte Breve*. Whatever the shortcomings of the original *Arte* and, to a lesser extent, of the later *Arte Breve*, both

were truly monumental works. By looking back to his growing experience and analysing the elements that made him a successful philologist, one may easily find:

1. Courses of philosophy, theology, and arts that he attended in the seminary enlightened his talent and wisdom.
2. The instruction from Paulo Yōhō, the brilliant writer, brought him infinite knowledge and taught him good manners.
3. Frequent intimate association with local Japanese from his childhood enabled him to speak fluent and elegant Japanese.
4. Dealing with the supreme authority of Japan offered him the rare chance to temper himself.
5. Preaching to the folk strengthened his understanding of the Japanese language and the Japanese culture.
6. The social background and the appointment of the Jesuit gave him the chance and space to show his talent. **RC**



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NOTES

- 1 João Rodrigues, *Nihon Shōbunten*, p. 21.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 The *Arte* is written in Latin, in which no Japanese letter is used. Kajikazawa Chizuru. ‘Rodorigesu “Nihon Shōbunten” no Dokujisei ni tsuite’. *Kokubungaku Ronshu*, no. 27, 1994, pp. 55-72
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 João de Barros, *Grammatica da lingua portuguesa*, 1540.
- 6 According to Rodrigues, *no* is used for the second and the third person to indicates higher status, so its usage is limited. As regard to *yori*, Rodrigues points out that its usage as nominative particle is also limited. João Rodrigues, *Nihon Shōbunten*, p. 58.
- 7 In his two grammars, Rodrigues asserts that the *wa* can be replaced by *woba*, for which, only *woba* is given in the *Arte Breve*. However, as regard to *ga*, it is written in the *Arte* that *ga* is generally used as accusative particle, while such assertion is not adopted in the *Arte Breve*.
- 8 Kajikazawa Chizuru. ‘Rodorigesu “Nihon Shōbunten” no Dokujisei ni tsuite’. *Kokubungaku Ronshu*, no. 27, 1994, pp. 55-72.
- 9 João Rodrigues, *Nihon Shōbunten*, pp. 220.
- 10 Rodrigues confused *keri* with *ken*.
- 11 João Rodrigues, *Nihon Shōbunten*, pp. 32-34.
- 12 Kajikazawa Chizuru. ‘Rodorigesu “Nihon Shōbunten” no Dokujisei ni tsuite’. *Kokubungaku Ronshu*, no. 27, 1994, pp. 55-72.
- 13 João Rodrigues, *Nihon Shōbunten*, pp. 95-96.
- 14 Rodrigues lists the examples that one can combine *taro*, *jiro*, and *saburo* with *ya*, *gen*, and *juro* to produce names like *yataro*, *yajiro*, *yasaburo*, *gentaro*, and *jurojiro*. João Rodrigues, *Nihon Shōbunten*.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Michael Cooper, S.J. *Rodrigues the Interpreter. An Early Jesuit in Japan and China*, p. 235.
- 17 Ibid.

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