

# Good Faith and the Proprietor's Lot:

Jesuits and the Uncertainties of Slavery in Early Modern Japan (16-17 c.)

Rômulo da Silva Ehalt

18:00-19:30, Dec. 12th, 2019 / Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University

This lecture discusses the involvement of the Society of Jesus with the enslavement of Japanese individuals. While one commonly associates the phenomenon of slavery with the image of Black Africans being forcibly taken to the United States, a growing number of researchers have shown that the early modern notion of “slave” often hid a wide array of different forms of labor, mostly marked by various degrees of freedom and dependency. Since some local varieties of labor in Japan were identified as slavery by European merchants, Jesuit missionaries realized that the ownership of these individuals could bring about grave religious and moral problems for Portuguese and Japanese Christians alike. Nevertheless, Jesuits justified and supported the enslavement of Japanese people for decades. What were the bases for the justification of their enslavement? What was the influence of the ideas developed after the Council of Trent in Europe? How did Japanese authorities react to the export of enslaved Japanese people? What did theologians of the Society of Jesus out of Japan have to say regarding the phenomenon and the attitudes of their fellow Jesuits in the country? How did the Roman Curia react to the phenomenon? The goal is to read the history of slavery in early modern Japan against the grain of the history of key institutions of the early modern world such as slavery, colonialism, and philosophy showing how this phenomenon has deeper levels that go beyond diplomatic or trading issues.



Rômulo da Silva Ehalt majored in history at the Rio de Janeiro State University in 2006 and has been living in Japan ever since. He received his Ph.D. from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in March 2018, with a dissertation on Jesuit missionaries and their relation with slavery and the slave trade in early modern Japan from the perspective of the history of moral theology. He is currently a JSPS post-doctoral researcher at Sophia University.

No prior registration necessary / Lecture in English / This talk is organized by Professor Noriko Murai (FLA)