Prologue

In 1928 a 'friendship testimonial' in the form of an obelisk was erected in the Japanese town of Onjuku in Chiba (see Figure P.1).[1] The obelisk stands at the presumed site where the Spanish colonial official Don Rodrigo de Vivero (1564–1636) stepped ashore after being rescued from a shipwrecked journey from the Philippines to Mexico in 1609. This Prefectural Historic Monument, known as the Mexico Commemorative Tower, manifests historical ties with Chiba's sister city Acapulco across the Pacific.[2] A year after the construction of the obelisk, historian Murakami Naojirō (村上直次郎, 1868–1966) published a Japanese translation of Vivero's memories of Japan.[3] Murakami, a prolific scholar and part of the Japanese academic establishment, had used Vivero's report for the Spanish king and other sources from the Spanish archive a few years earlier to historicize Japan's seventeenth-century transpacific exchange.[4] In this process, he moreover framed the encounter between the stranded Spanish nobleman and the Japanese ruler Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) as an act of friendly state relations and the beginning of Japan's official diplomatic negotiations with Mexico and Spain. Hence, his research laid

[1] My translation for 'yūkō no akashi' (友好の証).
[2] Sister-city relations were established in 1978.
[3] Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku Shiryō Hensangakari 東京帝國大学文学部史料編纂掛, ed., 大日本史料 *Dai nihon shiryō* (Japanese historical materials), vol. 12/6, vol. 12/2 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku, 1906). Murakami contributed to various issues of volume 12. Other source collections dealing with what came to be interpreted as the earliest incidents of bilateral relations between Japan and Spain, and Japan and Mexico respectively, were included in Murakami Naojirō, ed., *Ikoku nikki shō*. *Ikoku ōfuku shokanshū* (Tokyo: Sanshūsha, 1911). Murakami even chose to open the *Ikoku nikki shō* edition with the translation of a letter from Vivero as interim governor general in the Philippines to Japan. Toward the end of his career, Murakami edited a source edition combining the accounts of Rodrigo de Vivero and Sebastian Vizcaíno: *Don Rodorigo nihon kenbunroku; Visukaino kingintō tanken hōkoku* (Tokyo: Sunnansha, 1929).
[4] Murakami, 'Nihon bōekishi jō ni tokuhitsu taisho subeki Kazusa no kuni Iwada kō' (12/1926). This article appeared in a pamphlet published for the inauguration of the monument commemorating relations between Spain and Japan in the seventeenth century. For full bibliographic details of Murakami's writings, see 'List of Murakami's Publications.'

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Figure P.1 Onjuku Japan–Spain–Mexico Commemorative Tower (日西墨三国交通発祥記念之碑). The monument was erected in 1928 to commemorate the rescue of the capsized Spanish galleon *San Felipe* on its way from Manila to Acapulco.
https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/日西墨三国交通発祥記念之碑
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the foundation for the lavish trilateral commemorations in Japan, Mexico, and Spain between 2009 and 2014.

Celebrating 'four hundred years of friendship' in 2009, Onjuku's mayor Ishida Yoshiro stressed that the prosperity of both Pacific countries started with the encounter in the 1600s, while Mexican ambassador to Japan, Miguel Ruiz Cabañas Izquierda, emphasized that the Mexican people would never forget the heroic actions of local fishermen and female divers (*ama*) in rescuing the 317 shipwrecked passengers.[5] What most historians would intuitively debunk as myth-building was a powerful act of cultural diplomacy. Communities, nation-states, and civil actors use historical memory to engage target audiences and ultimately influence which aspects of the past are remembered and how.[6] As historical memory overlaps with tourism, new meanings enter globalized memory regimes.[7] In the case of the anniversary of bilateral friendship in 2009 and the 2013–14 biennial (*año dual* in Spanish official jargon), commemorative initiatives were approved by the heads of the Japanese and Spanish governments at an official meeting in Tokyo.[8] Hundreds of thousands visited museums and libraries in Seville, Madrid, Valladolid, Sendai, Mexico City, Osaka, and Tokyo, where

[5] One of the many outcomes of cultural diplomacy was a sculpture conspicuously entitled 'el abrazo' (the embracement) by Mexican artist Rafael Guerrero Morales (1934–2006). It is located next to the memorial of 1928. See www.town.onjuku.chiba.jp/content/files/old/kikakuzaiseika/kikaku/400/400kinensi.pdf (accessed September 12, 2019). To commemorate the meeting between Tokugawa Ieyasu and the high-ranking Spanish official Rodrigo de Vivero, an Association of Japanese-Mexican friendship was founded. A logo including the words 'Spain Onjuku Mexico 400 aniversario' served as soft power branding. As part of an information campaign, the Japanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MOFA) underlined the importance of the encounter between Ieyasu and Vivero for international diplomacy. See also Alicia Girón et al., *La Misión Hasekura: 400 Años de Su Legado en las Relaciones Entre México y Japón*, vol. 1 (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015).

[6] David Clarke, 'Theorising the Role of Cultural Products in Cultural Diplomacy from a Cultural Studies Perspective,' *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 2 (2016): 147–63. Cultural diplomacy is often associated with soft power, which describes the efforts of persuading foreign publics and thereby pushing one's own agenda in a noncoercive way. See Joseph S Nye, 'Soft Power: The Evolution of a Concept,' *Journal of Political Power* 14, no. 1 (2021): 196–208.

[7] Rafiq Ahmad and Anne Hertzog, 'Memory, Tourism and Place in a Globalizing World,' *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 13, no. 1 (2014): 201–5. For a survey on how the art of memory has become integrated with historical thinking, see Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[8] See www.accioncultural.es/es/a_o_espa_a_japon and www.es.emb-japan.go.jp/relaciones/400_japon_espana.html (Año Dual España-Japón) (both accessed September 12, 2023). The event used to have its own website (www.esja400.com/), but the content has been removed. For an overview of the activities and events held in Spain and Japan, see www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/TOKIO/es/espanajapon/Paginas/inicio.aspx (accessed August 12, 2023).

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diplomatic documents from the early 1600s were displayed. In addition, exhibition catalogs, online blogs, and stage performances contributed to the legacy of the past encounter and created new archives and sites for commemoration. Japanese policymakers encouraged visitors to study the history of friendship (*yūkō*, 友好) between Japan, Spain, Mexico, and the Philippines.[9] The language of 'friendship,' 'relaciones diplomaticas,' 'relaciones amistosas,' or *heiwa gaikō* (peaceful foreign relations) has become ubiquitous in this historicizing process. Yet, while seemingly source terms, none of these catchy phrases appeared in archival records of the seventeenth century. They were instead semantic and linguistic creations that originated in the mid-nineteenth century and were made available through archival diplomacy.

[9] Onjukumachi kokusai kōryū kyōkai, ed., 日本とメキシコの友好４００年未来に向けて *Nihon to mekishiko no yūkō 400nen mirai ni mukete* (400 years of friendship between Japan and Mexiko) (Onjukumachi: Onjukumachi kokusai kōryū kyōkai, 2011), 3; 38. See also Ángel Nuñez Ortega, *Noticia Histórica de las Relaciones Políticas y Comerciales Entre México y el Japón Durante el Siglo XVII*, Archivo Histórico Diplomático 2 (México: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1923). For Onjuku, see www.town.onjuku.chiba.jp/sub4/3/mexico_kinentou1.html (accessed July 23, 2024).

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