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Scholasticism in Early Modern Japan

Abstract: In this article, the influence of Western scholasticism to Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is portrayed in detail. The overview of the Japanese Christian literature is provided in the first half of the article. The introduction of Christianity and scholasticism generated much tension between Western thought and traditional Japanese thought such as Buddhism, Shintoism and Confucianism. The structure of the dialogue between Western Christian culture and Japanese culture is analyzed in the latter half of the article by comparing the thought of Alessandro Valignano and Fabian Fukansai. The meeting of two cultures during the Christian Century in Japan gave rise to serious philosophical and theological problems which persist even until today.

Keywords: Japanese Scholasticism, Christian Century in Japan, Jesuit Mission Press, Dialogue of Cultures, Alessandro Valignano, Francisco Xavier, Luis de Granada, Pedro Gómez, Fabian Fukansai.

Resumo: Neste artigo, oferece-se um quadro detalhado da influência da escolástica ocidental no Japão, nos séculos 16 e 17. A visão perspectiva da literatura cristã japonesa é trazida na primeira metade do artigo. A introdução do cristianismo e da escolástica geraram grande tensão entre o pensamento ocidental e o pensamento japonês tradicional, representado por correntes como o budismo, o xintoísmo e o confucionismo. A estrutura dos diálogos entre a cultura cristã ocidental e a cultura japonesa é analisada na segunda parte do artigo, comparando-se o pensamento de Alessandro Valignano e

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de Fabian Fukansai. O encontro de duas culturas durante o Século Cristão no Japão deu origem a sérios problemas filosóficos e teológicos, que persistem até mesmo nos dias de hoje.

Palavras-chave: escolástica japonesa, Século Cristão no Japão, imprensa da missão jesuíta, diálogo entre culturas, Alessandro Valignano, Francisco Xavier, Luis de Granada, Pedro Gómez, Fabian Fukansai.

I. Introduction

The history of the persecution of Christians in early modern Japan is quite well known¹. But the fact that there are left many writings which clearly show the influence of European scholasticism is not much known outside Japan. Many writings were lost as the consequence of the severe persecution, and even when such writings do survive, they are scattered all over the world, mainly in European libraries.

One of the most important points which must be stated at the beginning of the analysis of the influence of scholastic thought to Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the point of view of a «colonial scholasticism» is the fact that Japan was never colonized.

Christianity came to Japan for the first time when Francisco Xavier (*ca.* 1506-1552) arrived at Japan in 1549. Although more than half a million Japanese people converted to Christianity after the arrival of Xavier, the rulers of Japan started to persecute the Christians in the end of the sixteenth century. Communication with Catholic countries of Europe was suspended completely in the middle of the sixteenth century².

Japan had already developed highly sophisticated civilization when Xavier came to Japan. Xavier was much impressed by the intelligence of Japanese people and he repeatedly states in his letters that Japanese people are quite rational and that they do not believe anything unless they are convinced of the rationality of the doctrines that are presented to them. Unlike other parts of the world to which Jesuits went to spread Catholicism, Japan had already developed highly

¹ It is known not only as a historical fact but also in the form of the famous novel by Endō. Cfr. ENDŌ Shūsaku, *Silence*, translated by William Johnston, Taplinger Pub. Co., New York 1976.

² The relationship between the problem of colonization and the persecution will be analyzed in the fourth section of this article.

refined culture when they came there. Such refinement of Japanese culture gave an original tone to the first full-scale encounter between the Western Christian thought and Asian thought.

Most scholars who study the so-called «Christian Century in Japan»³ are historians and linguists⁴. The interpretation of the Japanese Christian texts from the aspect of philosophical and theological speculation is still underdeveloped. Moreover, most of the research products of this field are published in Japanese⁵. The purpose of this article is to introduce such research products to English-speaking world and to present philosophical and theological speculation which might be useful for the intercultural and interreligious dialogues for the global world today.

It is true that there are some excellent studies on this field in European languages⁶. But those studies are performed in the field like Japanese studies and Asian history. There are few previous studies to bring it into the field of philosophy or theology. Although the explanations below on each book written in the Christian Century in Japan depend much on the previous studies by representative Japanese scholars on this field, the attempt of this article to bring Japanese Christian writings into the philosophical/theological dialogue with Western scholasticism is one of the pioneering attempts in European languages⁷.

II. Overview of the Japanese Christian Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century

The person who contributed most to bring about abundant publications of Christian books in the Christian Century of Japan was Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), the Jesuit Visitor of the Province of East India. When he came to

³ The expression “Christian Century in Japan” came to be in use by the famous historian, C. R. Boxer. Cfr. C. R. BOXER, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1951.

⁴ The reasons why linguists study this period intensively will be explained in the next section.

⁵ Although quite dated, the following book by an English diplomat, Ernest Satow, is a pioneering work on this field. Cfr. Ernest Mason SATOW, *The Jesuit Mission Press in Japan, 1591-1610*, Privately Printed, 1888.

⁶ Cf. Andrew C. ROSS, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y. 1994; Kiri PARAMORE, *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*, Routledge, New York 2009.

⁷ Cfr. William J. FARGE, *The Japanese Translations of the Jesuit Mission Press, 1590-1614: De imitatione Christi and Guia de pecadores*, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, N.Y. 2002.

Japan for the first time in 1579, he felt strongly the necessity of training Japanese priests and intended to establish educational institutions (*seminario* and *collegio*) and to import printing machines⁸.

Seminaries were made in Azuchi and Arima. The seminaries accepted dozens of excellent students every year and taught Japanese literature, Latin literature, and music. It was a kind of high school which aimed at training clergymen and leaders among laypersons.

A novitiate and a college were made for those who graduated from the seminaries and wanted to become Jesuits. The novitiate was in Usuki and the college was in Funai. Humanities and philosophy were taught in the college.

Valignano brought a letterpress to Japan in 1590 and soon began to publish various Christian books. The Jesuits in Japan continued to publish Christian books until 1614, when it became impossible for them to publish because of severe persecution to the Christians⁹.

Such an open-minded mission principle of Valignano¹⁰ was in striking contrast to the mission principle of Francisco Cabral, S.J. (1533-1609), who served as the mission superior in Japan. Cabral discriminated Japanese people. He thought that the only way to spread Christianity in Japan was to gain the favor of the «daimyos» (feudal lords) by the profit of the trade with European countries and to use the influence of the *daimyos* to convert the common people. He did not let the European priests study Japanese and did not let the Japanese believers study Latin. He did not have the intention to raise Japanese priests. It can be described as a mission from above.

Cabral was dismissed by Valignano, who had the opposite principle of the mission from below. It is usually described as the principle of «accommodation», which means the appropriate evaluation and respect for the culture of the mission countries. The principle of accommodation is expressed in *Advertimentos e avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão* of Valignano¹¹. He insisted

⁸ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «Kirishitanban», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 415-418, especially p. 415.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Concerning the mission principle of Valignano, see the following studies. Cfr. Joseph Franz SCHÜTTE, *Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze für Japan*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 2 Vols., 1951-1958; J. F. MORAN, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan*, Routledge, London 1993.

¹¹ Cfr. ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO, *Il cerimoniale per i missionari del Giappone: Advertimentos e avisos acerca dos costumes e catangues de Jappão: importante documento circa i metodi*

the importance of the drastic adaptation of the foreign priests to Japanese customs and manners. According to Valignano, it is quite one-sided and ridiculous that the European priests, who want Japanese people to change their traditional way of thinking and acting according to the Christian way, do not change their own customs and continue to act in the way that appears vulgar and barbarous to Japanese people¹². He determined the hierarchy of the missionaries by imitating the system of Japanese Zen Buddhism. And he laid down detailed regulations concerning the behaviors and manners suitable to each rank of the missionaries. Valignano determined the way how to exchange greetings, write letters, invite guests, clothes themselves, communicate with Japanese believers, eat and drink, make a gift, write buildings, etc., in this book.

Valignano esteemed the intellectual potentiality of Japanese people and tried to train Japanese priests. That is why he established the educational institutions, sent four Japanese boys to Europe as an embassy to show them the Christian world with their own eyes, and to import a letterpress to publish Christian books in Japanese¹³.

One of the most excellent scholars on the history of Christianity in Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth century is Ebisawa Arimichi (1910-1992). He wrote many books and edited many Christian texts. In the very end of his life, he wrote *Introduction to Japanese Christian Literature in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*¹⁴. In this section, an overview of Japanese Christian literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth century will be sketched based mainly on the explanation by Ebisawa.

Ebisawa classifies Japanese Christian literature into eleven genres¹⁵: (1) doctrine literature, (2) prayer literature (3) sacrament literature, (4) biblical literature, (5) meditation literature, (6) apology literature, (7) martyrdom literature, (8) epistle literature, (9) research on Japanese literature and creative literature,

di adattamento nella missione giapponese del secolo XVI: testo portoghese del manoscritto originale, versione letterale italiana, ed. critica, introd. e note di Giuseppe Fr. SCHÜTTE, Edizioni di Storia e Letterature, Roma 1946.

¹² Cfr. Hubert CIESLIK, «Kaisetsu», in A. VALIGNANO (ed.), *Nihon iezusukai reihou shishin*, Kirishitan bunka kenkyūkai, 1970, pp. 11-50, especially p. 43.

¹³ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, *Kirishitan Nanban Bungaku Nyūmon, Kyōbunkwan*, Tokyo, 1991, pp. 200-202.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

(10) anti-Christian literature, and (11) modern creative literature on the Christian Century in Japan¹⁶.

Although more than 100 books were published during the Christian century of Japan, only 45 books – including fragments – survive. Although each book of the Japanese Christian literature has various characteristics which enable them to be classified under many genres introduced above, each book will be classified under one genre depending on each book's main characteristic as a matter of convenience.

As is mentioned above, most scholars on the Christian Century of Japan were historians and linguists. Some of the Christian writings in the Christian Century of Japan are written in Roman alphabets even when they are written in Japanese. When Japanese sentences are written in Roman alphabets, which have a different writing system from the Japanese writing system, many clues can be acquired concerning the real pronunciation of old Japanese words.

Moreover, the grammar textbooks and dictionaries edited by the Jesuits and the Dominicans are quite excellent. The grammar books described contemporary Japanese as they really were. Dictionaries included many vocabularies and the explanations of each word were to the point. Moreover, they give the pronunciation of the old Japanese. They are superior to the old Japanese dictionaries edited by Japanese scholars¹⁷. The representative grammar books and dictionaries edited by the Jesuits and the Dominicans are as follows.

Vocabulario de Lingoa de Iapam is a Japanese-Portuguese dictionary edited by the Jesuit missionaries. It was published in 1603 at Nagasaki College. The *Supplement* was published in 1604 also at Nagasaki College. Approximately 32,000 Japanese words were explained in Portuguese. It was published in order that the foreign priests in Japan might study Japanese more easily¹⁸.

Dictionarium Latino Lusitanicum ac Iaponicum is a Latin-Portuguese-Japanese dictionary. It was published at Amakusa Collegio in 1595. It was coedited

¹⁶ Epistle literature includes Japanese letters written by the Japanese Christians to the Pope and the Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Creative literature includes European *mistério* plays arranged into Japanese fashion. Modern creative literature includes novels by modern Japanese novelists like Endō. The detailed explanations of these literatures will be omitted in this article due to the limitation of space.

¹⁷ Cfr. FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, «Kirishitan gogaku», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 410.

¹⁸ Cfr. FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, «Nippo Jisho», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1030.

by the Jesuit missionaries and Japanese believers. The Japanese editors are said to have been Hara Martinão and Francisco of Hyūga¹⁹. It was based on the Latin dictionary (*Cornucopiae*, Reggio 1502) by the Italian lexicographer Ambrogio Calepino (c.1440–1510). About 30.000 words were included in this dictionary.

Dictionarium sive Thesauri Linguae Iaponicae is a Latin-Spanish-Japanese dictionary edited by Diego Collado, O.P. (ca. 1589-1641). It was published in 1632 at Rome. Although it is based on the *Dictionarium Latino Lusitanicum ac Iaponicum*, there exist many words which are not found in the latter²⁰.

De Institutione Grammatica is a Japanese grammar book written in Latin. It was published in 1594 at Amakusa College. It is based on the famous grammar book by Manuel Alvares (1526-1582/1583). It adapted Latin grammar directly to Japanese grammar. It is the first attempt to consider Japanese grammar from the perspective of a foreign grammar²¹.

Arte de Lingoa de Iapam is a book on Japanese grammar. It was edited by Rodriguez Tçuzu (1561/1562-1633), a Portuguese Jesuit. It was published at Nagasaki College from 1604 to 1608. While *De Institutione Grammatica* treated Japanese grammar from the Latin perspective, *Arte de Lingoa de Iapam* is more based on the grammatical structure of the Japanese language. Rodriguez made an abridged edition later and published it in 1620 at Macao. The abridged edition is called *Arte Breve da Lingoa Iapoa*²².

Ars Grammaticae Iaponicae Linguae is also a book on Japanese grammar which was published at Rome in 1632. It was written by Diego Collado, O.P.

*Niffon no cotobani yō Confesion (Confessions in Japanese language)*²³ is a collection of confessions of Japanese believers edited by Diego Collado, O.P. It was published by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in 1632. It is a bilingual edition of Latin and Japanese. As is generally known, it is against the Canon Law

¹⁹ Cfr. FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, «Raponichi Jiten», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 1489-1490.

²⁰ Ibid., FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, «Raseinichi Jiten» in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, p. 1486.

²¹ Cfr. FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, «Alvares Laten Buntun», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 70.

²² Cfr. FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, «Nihon Daibunten», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1062.

²³ In the following, Japanese titles are given in Roman transliterations and English titles are given in the parentheses. When both Japanese title and Latin title exist, the Latin title is given in the parentheses instead of the English title.

for the priests to expose the confessions. In the background of this publication was the conflict between the Spanish Dominicans and Portuguese Jesuits in Japan. The Dominicans tried to justify themselves against the Jesuit slander by showing that they were capable enough to understand Japanese confessions and to lead the Japanese believers to the right path. Thus, this book was published with the approval of the Vatican. It is quite important not only for the knowledge of the contemporary colloquial Japanese but also for the vivid information of the real life of the Japanese believers²⁴.

Esopo no fabulas is a translation of the *Aesop's Fables*. It was published at Amakusa College in 1593. It was edited by the Jesuit missionaries. It was published for the study of Japanese.

Nifon no cotoba to historia uo narai xiran to fossrvv fito no tameni xeva ni yava ragvetarv feiqe no monogatari is a colloquial Japanese translation of the famous Japanese historical story, *Feiqe monogatari*. It was edited by Fabian Fukansai, S.J. (1565-1621). It was published for the foreign priests to study Japanese language and history easier. It was written in Roman letters. It was published at Amakusa College in 1592.

Racvyoxv is a Japanese dictionary for foreign priests. It was edited by the Jesuit missionaries. It was published in 1598. The purpose of this dictionary was to let the foreign priests to know how to read Chinese characters.

Oratio no honyaku (*Translation of prayers*) is a prayer literature. It includes *pater noster*, *credo*, *ave maria*, *salve regina*, etc. It was published in 1600 by Gotō Sōin at Nagasaki. After the persecution became severe, those prayers were transmitted orally among the so-called hidden Christians²⁵.

*Manuale ad Sacramenta Ecclesiae ministranda*²⁶ belongs to sacrament literature. It is a book on liturgy edited by Luis de Cerqueira, S.J. (1552-1614), the bishop of Japan. It was published in 1605 at Nagasaki College²⁷.

²⁴ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «Nihon no Confesion», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1067.

²⁵ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Oratio no honyaku*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 269. Concerning the hidden Christians, see the study by Stephen R. TURNBULL, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan: A Study of their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day*, Japan Library, Richmond – Surrey 1998.

²⁶ Today it is called by the Japanese title, *Sacaramenta*

²⁷ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Sacaramenta Teiy*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 566.

Konchirisan no riyaku (*The Profit of Contrition* or *The Summary of Contrition*) is also a sacrament literature. It seems to have been published in 1603. It describes the guideline of «contrition» (*contrição*). This book was not a translation of European writings. It was an original work written for Japanese believers under persecution²⁸.

Salvator Mundi is a guidebook on confession (*confessionarium*). It was published at Nagasaki in 1598. It is composed of seven chapters. The meaning of confession, the guideline to be observed in confession, the Decalogue, examination of conscience, and the way to live a morally good life are explained in this guidebook²⁹.

Baptismo no sazukeyō (*The Way How to Baptize*) is also a sacrament literature. There is only one copy and the title page is lacking. So, the real title and publishing date are not clear. Nowadays it is sometimes called by the working title of *Byōsha wo tasukuru kokoro* (*The Way How to Help the Sick*). It is presumed to have been edited by Pedro Gómez (1535-1600), the Jesuit Viceprovincial of Japan, under the direction of Alessandro Valignano, S.J. And it is supposed to have been published at Amakusa in 1593³⁰. Under the difficult situation of persecution and the scarcity of the number of priests, it was impossible for the priests to direct the believers sufficiently. That is why this book was edited to instruct the believers how to baptize the sick in the emergent situation, and how to help the sick in the preparation of confession and contrition³¹.

Dochirina kirishitan (*Doctrina Christam*) belongs to doctrine literature. It is based on the catechism for children which was edited by Marcos Jorge, S.J. in 1566. This catechism was quite popular in Portugal. Catechism for children was chosen to explain the basic teachings of Catholicism to people with no previous knowledge of Christianity. There are four versions of *Dochirina kirishitan*. The first version was published in 1591 at Kazusa in Japanese characters. The second

²⁸ Cfr. SUKENO Kentaro, «*Konchirisan no riyaku*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 547-548; Hazama YOSHIKI, «Kirishitan sinkou ni okeru martyrio to ko ni tsuite no ichi kousatsu», *Asia, kirisutokyō, tagensei* 6 (2008) 39-56, especially 50.

²⁹ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Salvator Mundi*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 583.

³⁰ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, *Kirishitan Nanban Bungaku Nyūmon*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1991, pp. 134-135.

³¹ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Baptismo no sazukeyō*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 1100-1101.

version was published in 1592 at Amakusa in Roman letters. The third version, which was in Japanese characters, was published at Nagasaki in 1600. The fourth version, which was in Roman letters, was published at Nagasaki in 1600. The third version and the fourth version are the revisions of the first version and the second version. The versions in Japanese characters were for Japanese believers. The versions in Roman letters were for foreign priests³².

Contemptus Mundi belongs to meditation literature. The Japanese title is the transliteration of the Latin title. It is a Japanese translation of *De Imitatione Christi*. It was published at Amakusa College at 1596.

The complete title of the Latin original by Thomas à Kempis is *De Imitatione Christi et contemptu mundi omniumque eius vanitatum*³³. In Spain and Portugal, this book was usually called «Contemptus Mundi». This might be the only reason why the Japanese translation was called «Contemptus Mundi» too.

Professor Obara, who made a modern edition of *Contemptus Mundi*, proposed an interesting hypothesis. Japanese people had the consciousness of the radical mutability of the world which derived from the teaching of Buddhism. The title «Contemptus Mundi» was able to appeal to such sensibility of the Japanese people. That is why this title was chosen instead of the title «De Imitatione Christi»³⁴. It is noteworthy that the new movement of the *devotio moderna* was already introduced in Japan in the sixteenth century.

Spiritual Xuguio no tameni yerabi atçumuru xuquanno manual (A Manual for Meditations collected for Spiritual Exercises) is also a meditation literature. It is an ascetic and meditative work in Japanese. It was written in Roman letters. This book is composed of the writings by Gaspar Loarte, S.J. and Pedro Gómez, S.J. Loarte wrote “The Meditations on the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary,” and “Teachings on the Way to Meditate on the Passion and the Meditations on the Passion”. After the two writings of Loarte, a collection from the passages of the New Testament is attached. This part can be described as biblical literature.

³² Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Dochirina kirishitan*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 950.

³³ Today the real author of *Imitatio Christi* is thought to be Geert Groote (1340-1384), the founder of *Fratres Communis Vitae*. It was revised by his follower Florence Radewijns and Thomas. Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Imitatio Christi*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 136.

³⁴ Cfr. OBARA Satoru, «Kirishitanban *Contemptus Mundi* ni tsuite», in OBARA Satoru (ed.): *Contemptus Mundi*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 2002, pp. 295-296.

The title of this collection is “Texts of the Passion cited from the books of the four Evangelists”. After those passages of the New Testament, seven writings of Gómez are included. The titles are as follows: “The points of the Meditations of the Days of the Week,” “Meditations on the Four Last Things,” “Meditations on the Season of the Advent,” “Meditations on the Sundays of the Whole Year,” “Some Meditations on the Holidays of the Sacred Church,” “Meditations on the Three Vows,” and “The Seven Virtues of the Religious”³⁵.

Guia do Pecador (*The Sinner’s Guide*) also belongs to meditation literature. It is a Japanese translation of *Guía de pecadores* of Fray Luis de Granada, O.P. (1504-1588)³⁶. The Japanese title is a transliteration of the original title. It was published at Nagasaki in 1599. The original was published at Lisbon in 1556. It was an abridged translation from the Portuguese translation of the Spanish original. It is reputed to be the masterpiece of Japanese Christian literature.

Guia do Pecador is composed of two volumes. In the first volume, the deep desire of men to goodness is aroused both by explaining the reasons why men cannot avoid treading on the road of goodness and by presenting the profits of pursuing goodness. In the second volume, the concrete way of goodness is explained.

More concretely, in the first part of volume one, the love of God is showed, who revealed Himself to the first man and continued to help men even after the corruption³⁷. Ten reasons are shown why men cannot avoid serving God and treading on the road of goodness. The first reason is because God is God, beyond which nothing exists. The second reason is the fact that God is the Creator of the whole world. The third reason is the nurturing care of God. The fourth reason is the awareness of one’s indebtedness to the help of God. The fifth reason is the work of justification by which God leads men from evil to goodness. The sixth to ninth reasons are the so-called four last things, i.e., death, last judgment, the Paradise and the Hell. The tenth reason is the fact that God promises good consequence in this world to those who behave themselves appropriately.

³⁵ Cfr. EBISAWA ARIMICHI, «*Spiritual Xuguio*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 729.

³⁶ Luis de Granada was a popular theologian of Spain. Concerning the life of Luis de Granada, cfr. the following studies: ÁLVARO HUERGA, *Fray Luis de Granada: Una vida al servicio de la Iglesia*, Editorial Católica, Madrid 1988; ORII YOSHIMI, *Kirishitan Bungaku ni okeru nichiou bunka hikaku: Luis de Granada to nihon*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 2010.

³⁷ Cfr. OBARA SATORU, «Kaidai», in OBARA SATORU (ed.): *Guia do Pecador*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 2001, pp. 349-351.

In the second part of volume one, twelve good consequences (profits) which God promises to those who tread on the road of goodness are explained concretely. The first profit is the grace of God by which he guards the good men. The second profit is the grace of the Holy Spirit. The third profit is the light of wisdom by which men distinguishes good from evil. The fourth profit is the inner joy which the Holy Spirit gives to good men. The fifth profit is the joy of good conscience. The sixth profit is the hope which good men can have for their future. The seventh profit is the true freedom of the good men. The eighth profit is the serenity of the heart of the good men. The ninth profit is the fact that God answers the prayers of good men. The tenth profit is the patience by which good men endure difficulties with the help of God. The eleventh profit is the providence of God by which the present lives of good men are sustained. The twelfth profit is the joy of good men at the moment of death.

In the first part of volume two, the reasons why evil men do not yearn for goodness are explained. And finally in the second part of volume two, the way of goodness and virtues are explained concretely. *Guia do Pecador* cites many passages from the Bible, Aristotle and the Church Fathers, especially Augustine³⁸. It is the first full-fledged introduction of Western Christian thought to Japan.

Fides no dōxi (*A Guide to Faith*) also belongs to meditation literature. It is an abridged translation of *Introduccion del symbolo de la fe en la qual se trata de las excelencias de la fe, y de los dos principals misterios dellas que son, la creacion del mundo, y la redempcion del genere humano, con otras cosas anexas a estos dos misterios: repartida en quarto partes* by Luis de Granada. It was published at Amakusa College in 1592. Luis wrote *Introduccion del Simbolo de la Fe* from 1579 to 1581 and published it at Salamanca in 1583. It was composed of four parts. He revised it, added the fifth part and published the revised edition at Salamanca in 1588. The fifth part, “Quinta parte de la introcuccion del simbolo de la fe,” is a summary of the four preceding parts. It is sometimes entitled as *Compendium* or *Sumario*. *Fides no dōxi* is the translation of this *Sumario*. It is composed of four volumes. The title of the first volume is “The First Article of Faith is to Believe the Existence of God”. The title of the second volume is “To Reveal that the Christian Laws are to Revere, Respect and Worship God”. The

³⁸ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Guia do Pecador*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 370-371.

title of the third volume is “The Record of the Mystery of Redemption”. The title of the fourth volume is “God Reveals through the Prophets that Jesus Christ, Our Lord, is the True Messiah”.

Fides no kyō (*A Book on Faith*) is also the translation of *Introduccion del Simbolo de la Fe*. It is the translation of the first part of the *Introduccion*. Although the title of this book has been long known, there was no copy of it available until recently. One copy was found in the Houghton Library of Harvard University in 2009. This fact shows that there might be some hope for new copies of the Jesuit Mission Press to be found in somewhere in the world in the future.

Exercitia spiritualia Ignatii de Loyola was published in Latin at Amakusa Collegio in 1596³⁹. Although the lay believers could not read Latin, this book exerted much influence upon Japanese believers indirectly as the guidebook of spiritual exercise. The foreign missionaries used this book in the training of Japanese Christian leaders and tried to communicate the spirit of this book also to lay believers⁴⁰.

Compendium Spiritualis Doctrinae of Bartholomeu de Martyribus (1514-1590) was published at Amakusa in 1596. It is supposed to have been published for European missionaries, Japanese priests and seminarians, for ordinary believers were not able to read Latin⁴¹.

One of the most important works among the apology literature is *Nihon no Katekizumo* (*Catechismus Japonensis*)⁴² by Alessandro Valignano, S.J. (1539-1606). Although it is called «Catechism», it is not a catechism in a usual sense. It is an apologetic work which aims at refuting Japanese traditional religions. It was written by Valignano from 1580 to 1581 and published at Lisbon in 1586 for the education of Japanese seminary students. Some Japanese brothers who used to be Buddhist monks helped Valignano in editing this book⁴³. The detail of this catechism will be explained in the fourth section of this article.

³⁹ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Reisō*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1513.

⁴⁰ Cfr. Hubert Cieslik, «Kirishitan shūkyō bungaku no reisei», in EBISAWA ARIMICHI ET ALII (eds.): *Kirishitan kyōrishiō*, Tokyo 1993, pp. 461-492, especially p. 474.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

⁴² A. VALIGNANO, *Catechismus Christianae Fidei. In quo veritas nostrae religionis ostenditur, & sectae Japonenses confutantur*, Olyssippone 1586.

⁴³ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «Nihon no Katekizumo», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1067.

Also important as apology literature is the *Compendium Catholicae Veritatis*. It was written by Pedro Gómez, S.J. (1535-1600) for instructing Japanese seminary students⁴⁴. Gómez was born at Málaga in 1535, entered the Society of Jesus in 1553, taught philosophy and ethics at the University of Coimbra from 1564, came to Japan in 1583⁴⁵ and became the Viceprovincial of Japan. He was commissioned by Alessandro Valignano, the Jesuit Visitor of the Province of East India, to write a compendium of theology suited for Japanese people. The Latin version of the *Compendium* was completed in 1593 and was translated into Japanese in 1595.

Compendium is comprised of three parts. The first part is *De Sphaera*. The second part is *Breve Compendium eorum, quae ab Aristotele in tribus libris de anima, et in parvis rebus dicta sunt*. The title of the third part is the same with the title of the whole book and is abridged as *Catechismus Tridentinus*.

Since Francisco Xavier, the European Jesuits in Japan found Japanese people quite intelligent and full of curiosity. So, the Jesuits tried to use a kind of natural theology to convince Japanese people of the existence of the Creator of the whole world. That is the reason why the first part of the theological compendium is comprised of a treatise on astronomy. It is mainly based on *Tractatus de Sphaera* by Johannes de Sacrobosco (ca. 1195 – ca. 1256). It is the first introduction of European scientific thought into Japan.

The second part (*De Anima*) is based on Aristotle's *De Anima* and *In Aristotelis Librum de Anima Commentarium* by Thomas Aquinas. The title of the first volume of *De Anima* of the *Compendium* is "The Treatise on the Soul in General and the Vegetative Soul". The title of the second volume is "The Treatise on the Sensitive Soul". The title of the third volume is "The Treatise on the Rational Soul". There is a short treatise entitled "That the Essence of the Rational Soul is Eternal" in the Japanese version. The Latin version lacks this treatise.

The third part of the *Compendium* (*Catechismus Tridentinus*) is divided into four volumes. The title of the first volume is "On Faith". It is composed of four treatises. The first treatise is "On Faith, its Act and its Object". The title of the second treatise is "On the Person of God and its Attributes which are Described

⁴⁴ *Compendium catholicae veritatis, in gratiam Iapponicorum fratrum Societatis Iesu, confectum per Rdum. Patrem Petrum Gomezium Vice-Provincialem Societatis Iesu in provincia Iapponica*, Vatican Library, Ms. Reg. lat. 426. The interesting fact is that the Latin manuscript of this book was owned by Queen Christina of Sweden, the patron of Descartes.

⁴⁵ Cfr. KAWAMURA SHINZO, «Nihon sisōshi no naka no tamashiiron no tenkai», in *Sengoku shūkyō shakai shisōshi*, Chisenshokan, Tokyo 2011, p. 90.

in the First Article of the Apostolic Symbol”. The third treatise is “On the Articles of Faith which Apply only to God the Son”. The title of the fourth treatise is “On the Four Articles which Apply to the Sacred Person of the Holy Spirit”. Thus, the first volume of the third part of the *Compendium* is constructed on the principle of the Trinity.

The title of the second volume of the third part of the *Compendium* is “On the Seven Sacraments”. The third volume is “On the Ten Commandments of God”. The fourth volume is “On Goodness and Badness”. The title of the first treatise of the fourth volume is “On Goodness and Badness”. The second treatise is “On the Theological Virtues and the Corresponding Vices”. The third treatise is “On the Intellectual Virtues and the Corresponding Vices”. The title of the fourth treatise is “On the Moral Virtues and the Corresponding Vices”. It is clear that the Thomistic virtue theory is applied in this classification of virtues.

Although the Japanese version of the *Compendium* was not available for a long time, it was discovered at Magdalen College (Oxford) in 1995⁴⁶.

Martyrio no siori (*Guidebook of Martyrdom*) belongs to martyrdom literature. It is a collection of three books which were confiscated by the magistrate of Nagasaki in 1789/1800. Although these books were untitled, Anesaki Masaharu (1873-1949), who was one of the pioneers of the study of Christian Century in Japan, named them as *martyrio no susume* (*Exhortation to Martyrdom*), *martyrio no kokoroe* (*The Rules of Martyrdom*), and *martyrio no kagami* (*The Mirror of Martyrdom*). They were edited for the purpose of nurturing the spirit of martyrdom into the heart of the believers under severe persecution. It is mainly based on the selections from the writings of Luis de Granada and Pedro Gómez⁴⁷.

Santos no Gosagyō no uchi nukigaki (*Vita Sanctorum*) also belongs to martyrdom literature. It is a collection of hagiographies of European saints. It was published at Kazusa in 1591. It was not a translation of specific European hagiography. Rather, it was an original work based on several European hagiographies like *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine. Most part of volume two of *Santos no Gosagyō no uchi nukigaki* was a translation of the second part of *Introduccion del symbolo de la fe* of Luis de Granada. Persecution to the Japanese Christians began in 1587. So, martyrdom was an imminent threat. This was one

⁴⁶ The first part is lacking in this manuscript.

⁴⁷ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Martyrio no siori*», in *Nihon kirisutokō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1343.

of the reasons why such collection of hagiographies was edited of the saints, most of whom were martyrs⁴⁸.

Most books described above were the translations of European theological books. The books written by Japanese authors will be described below, most of which are anti-Christian literature.

Myōtei Mondō (*The Dialogue between Myōshū and Yūtei*) is the best apologetic work written by Japanese Christian in the so-called Christian Century of Japan. It was written by Fabian Fukansai, S.J. (1565-1621) in 1605. Fabian was born in 1565, grew up in a Buddhist temple, and was baptized in 1583. He studied at the seminary of Takatsuki and Osaka and entered the Society of Jesus in 1586. He entered the Usuki Novitiate as a novice. He taught Japanese at Amakusa College in 1592 and became a seminarian there. He wrote *Myōtei Mondō* in 1605. He debated with Hayashi Razan, a famous Confucian in 1606. He left the Society of Jesus with a nun in 1612. He wrote an anti-Christian work *Hadaiusu* (*Deus Destroyed*) in 1619⁴⁹. Matheus de Couros, S.J. (1569-1632), the Provincial of Japan, called it «the pest of hell» and banned the Japanese believers to read it. The details of *Myōtei Mondō* and *Hadaiusu* will be explained below in the fourth section.

Haiyaso (*Christ Countered*, 1606) is an anti-Christian literature written by Hayashi Razan (1583-1657). It is a document of the conversation between Razan and Fabian Fukansai before his apostasy.

Kengiroku (*Deceit Disclosed*, 1636)⁵⁰ is an anti-Christian literature written by Sawano Chūan. The original name of Chūan was Christovão Ferreira (ca. 1580-1650). Ferreira was born in Portugal and entered the Society of Jesus in 1596. He studied at Coimbra University and was ordained a priest in 1608. He came to Japan as a missionary and became a deputy bishop of Japan in 1632. He apostatized from Christianity during the severe persecution, became a Buddhist, married a Japanese woman and changed his name to Sawano Chūan, a Japanese name. He cooperated with the *Tokugawa shōgunate* (Japan's feudal government) in its policy to persecute the Christians⁵¹. He criticized the Christian doctrines of Creation, the theory of original sin, Decalogue, the Papacy, the life of Christ, sacraments,

⁴⁸ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Santos no Gosagyō no uchi nukigaki*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 593.

⁴⁹ Cfr. GEORGE ELISON, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, Harvard University Press, 1973.

⁵⁰ There is an English translation of *Kengiroku*. Cfr. GEORGE ELISON, cit., pp. 293-318.

⁵¹ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «Ferreira», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 1193.

last judgment, etc. in *Kengiroku*. It seems that a Japanese scholar of the Chinese classics edited this book based on the dictation of *Chūan*⁵².

Ha kirishitan (*Christians Countered*, 1642-1645)⁵³ is an anti-Christian book written by Suzuki Shōsan (1579-1655), a famous Buddhist monk.

Taiji jashūron (*On Quelling the Pernicious Faith*) is an anti-Christian book written by Sessō Sōsai (1589-1649), a monk of the Rinzai Sect of Buddhism. It describes the history of Christianity of Japan since Xavier, comments on Christian doctrines and ceremonies, criticizes them, and expounds the teachings of Zen Buddhism based on the Buddhist sutras. It is one of the most excellent anti-Christian works in Japanese. It asserts that Christ assumed the teaching of Buddhism secretly and changed it into heretical teaching⁵⁴.

There is a series of anti-Christian popular tales. Although they assume the style of nonfiction novel, they are based on a kind of ideological propaganda against Christianity⁵⁵. Those popular tales aim at implanting terror for Christianity into the mind of common people by stating that the foreign priests are acting as agents for the European countries to invade Japan and by depicting the priests as a kind of magicians. The representative works of anti-Christian popular tales are as follows.

Kirishitan monogatari (*The Story of the Christians*, 1639)⁵⁶, an anonymous book, is a nonfiction novel which describes the Japanese Christian history from the arrival of Christianity to the Shimabara Uprising (1637-1638), a battle between the persecuted Christians and the *shogunate*. What is noteworthy about this book is that it records the Christian teachings of Fabian and his disputations with Buddhist monks⁵⁷.

Baterenki (*The Story of Priests*) is an anonymous historical story which was written as an anti-Christian literature. It describes Christianity as a religion which aims at invasion⁵⁸.

⁵² Cfr. «*Kengiroku*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 490. (There is no name of the author of this item).

⁵³ There is an English translation of *Ha kirishitan*. Cfr. George ELISON, cit., pp. 375-389.

⁵⁴ Cfr. «*Kirishitan monogatari*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 420. (There is no name of the author of this item).

⁵⁵ Cfr. Kiri PARAMORE, *Ideology and Christianity in Japan*, Routledge, New York 2009.

⁵⁶ There is an English translation of *Kirishitan monogatari*. Cfr. George ELISON, cit., pp. 319-374.

⁵⁷ Cfr. «*Kirishitan monogatari*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 420. (There is no name of the author of this item).

⁵⁸ Cfr. «*Baterenki*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 812. (There is no name of the author of this item).

Kirishitan shūmon raichō jikki (*The True Record of the Arrival of the Religion of the Christians to Japan*) is the most read work among the anti-Christian popular tales. It was written in the 18th century⁵⁹.

Nanbanji kōhaiki (*The Record of the Rise and Fall of a Christian Church in Kyoto*) was written early in the eighteenth century. It aims to praise the policy of the Tokugawa shogunate against Christianity and to instill the terror for Christianity into the mind of the common people by impressing the misgovernment of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), a former ruler of Japan, who welcomed the Christians⁶⁰.

Honsaroku, *Shingaku gorinsho*, and *Kana seiri* are books written by Japanese Confucians. They represent *tentō* thought. *Tentō* means the way of Heaven. It is a cosmic principle which governs the ever-changing life of the earth. *Tentō* thought evolved into a kind of monotheistic Creator thought in the seventeenth century. It started to function as a kind of the theory of the divine right of the Japanese rulers. It was impossible for such an absolute system of feudalism to tolerate Christianity. Interestingly enough, although *tentō* thought excluded Christianity, it evolved into a kind of monotheistic theory by the influence of Christian thought⁶¹.

III. Fundamental Problems concerning the Encounter of Different Cultures

The essence of Western scholasticism can be described as the attempt to integrate Greek philosophical thought which is based on rationality and Christian faith which is based on the Bible. While Greek thought gave Christianity an indispensable tool to understand itself and to manifest itself in rational discourses, Christianity actualized the potential capacities of Greek thought by integrating the latter into systematic monotheistic theologies.

When Jesuits came to Japan in the sixteenth century and introduced Western scholastic thought, Japan had already had highly developed philosophical and religious thought like Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism. Was it possible for

⁵⁹ Cfr. « *Kirishitan shūmon raichō jikki* », in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 420. (There is no name of the author of this item).

⁶⁰ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, « *Nanbanji kōhaiki* », in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1009.

⁶¹ Cfr. EBISAWA ARIMICHI, « *tentō* », in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 909; IDEM, « *shusigaku* », in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 660.

the Western Christian thought to have a happy encounter with Asian thought, just like the encounter between the Semitic Biblical thought and Greek philosophical thought? Did Asian traditional thought have a potentiality to be integrated with Christianity and to give a stimulus to form a new kind of global Christian scholasticism⁶²? To the contrary, was it necessary for Christianity to deny and reject traditional Asian thought in order to convert Asian people to Christianity?

The situation was complex. On the one hand, Japanese traditional religious worldviews provided the fundamental framework to situate the Western Christian worldview. On the other hand, traditional thought gave some prejudice which prevented the accurate understanding of the Western Christian thought.

A symbolic example is the problem of the translation of the most basic concept of Christianity, i.e. «Deus», into Japanese⁶³. At first, Xavier used Japanese word «Dainichi» to translate *Deus*. Before he came to Japan, he met a Japanese man whose name was Yajirō. Xavier was impressed by the intelligence and character of Yajirō and decided to go to Japan for mission. Yajirō was acquainted with the Shingon sect of Buddhism. The absolute being (The Supreme or Cosmic Buddha) of the Shingon sect is called «Dainichi». «Dainichi» is a Japanese word. It is a translation of the Sanskrit word «mahāvairocana». «Mahā» means «great» and «vairocana» means «luminous being». Like the sun, *mahāvairocana* or *Dainichi* is the unique supreme being which appears quite similar to the Christian God. That is why Xavier translated «Deus» into «Dainichi». But after two years, he came to notice that *Deus* and *Dainichi* are quite different and stopped using «Dainichi» as a translation of «Deus». He started to use the Latin word «Deus» to explain Christian God to Japanese people.

At first sight, it might seem strange that Xavier made such a basic mistake. However, we have to keep it in mind that the Jesuits did not have enough information about the religious situation of Japan. With no previous information enough to guide them, they had to feel their way through the communication and

⁶² The attempt to use the term «scholasticism» in a broad sense with the cross-cultural and comparative perspectives, cfr. the excellent articles contained in the following book: José Ignacio CABEZÓN, *Scholasticism: Cross-Cultural and Comparative Perspectives*, State University of New York Press, Albany 1998.

⁶³ On the problem of the translation of Christian concepts to Japanese, cfr. the following study: Georg SCHURHAMMER, S.J., *Das kirchliche Sprachproblem in der japanischen Jesuitenmission des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts: Ein Stück Ritenfrage in Japan*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Tokyo 1928.

dialogue with Japanese people and Buddhist monks. They even did not know Japanese very well. They were treading a difficult path of trial and error.

On the part of Japanese people, Buddhist monks identified «Deus» and «Dainichi» and welcomed the Jesuits at first. Christianity was called «Tenjikushū». «Tenjiku» means India. «Shū» means sects. Before Xavier came to Japan, he was in India, the place of the birth of Buddhism. So, the Buddhist monks thought that Christianity was a sect of Buddhism. After Xavier stopped identifying «Deus» and «Dainichi» and prohibited the worship of *Dainichi*, the Buddhist monks became aware that Christianity was a different and dissimilar religion. Thus, when each party noticed the difference, theological and philosophical disputations began between the Jesuits and Buddhist monks. The misunderstanding of the concept of «Dainichi» and the correction of the misunderstanding gave the stimulus to the critical mutual understanding between the Christianity and Buddhism.

One of the most famous disputations between the Jesuits and Japanese Buddhist monks is the disputation by Cosme de Torres, S.J. (1510-1570), one of the companions of Xavier. He disputed with Japanese Buddhist monks and common people several times in Yamaguchi. It is called the disputation in Yamaguchi. Juan Fernandes, S.J., who was very good in Japanese, served as a translator. The content of the disputation is recorded in the letters of Torres and Fernandes to Xavier⁶⁴. They disputed about the Buddhism concept of nothingness, human beings, reason, soul, the existence of God and Satan, salvation, etc.⁶⁵.

As time passed by, the Jesuits in Japan started to describe «Dainichi» as «*materia prima*»⁶⁶. This description is quite strange, for the concept of *materia prima* in the European scholasticism is pure potentiality devoid of any form which specifies something as something. It is almost the opposite of God the Creator who is the pure actuality. The reason why «Dainichi» came to be identified with «*materia prima*» can be speculated in the following way. The Jesuits grasped

⁶⁴ The texts of the Yamaguchi disputation are included in the following books: Georg SCHURHAMMER, *Die Disputationen des P. Cosme de Torres S.J. mit den Buddhisten in Yamaguchi im Jahre 1551: Nach den Briefen des P. Torres und dem Protokoll seines Dolmetschers Br. Juan Fernandez S.J.*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- u. Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Tokyo 1929; *Documentos del Japon*, editados y anotados por Juan RUIZ-DE-MEDINA, Instituto Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús, Roma 1990-1995.

⁶⁵ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «Yamaguchi Shūron», in *Nihon kirisutoky rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1434.

⁶⁶ Cfr. P. Luís FRÓIS, S.J., edição anotada por José WICKI S.J., *Historia de Japam 1 (1549-1564)*, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Lisboa 1976, p. 40.

«Dainichi» as an impersonal cosmic principle which lacked active character and which existed everywhere. Such a grasp of «Dainichi» led the Jesuits to form the understanding of Buddhism as a pantheistic or atheistic religion. Buddhism was grasped as pantheistic insofar as the ultimate being seemed to be omnipresent. It was grasped as atheistic insofar as the personal character of the ultimate being seemed to be lacking⁶⁷.

Such a one-sided grasp of Buddhism as pantheism or atheism may not be wholly accepted from the viewpoint of the present academic study on Buddhism. Almost no scholar of Buddhism today will deem «Dainichi» as «*materia prima*». With all that, it is also true that the scholastic concept of *materia prima* served as a tool for the Jesuits to understand the difference between Catholicism and Buddhism. Thus, while the direct adaptation of the European scholastic concept to Japanese tradition was a useful tool for the initial understanding of Japanese tradition on the one hand, it was also an impediment to the accurate grasp of Japanese tradition on the other hand.

Balthasar Gago, S.J. (1515-83) was one of the companions of Xavier. He established the basic principle to use the original European words for propagating the basic Christian concepts in 1555⁶⁸. Latin was used in prayers and Portuguese was used in theological terminologies⁶⁹. So, in the Jesuit Misson Press of Japan, many European words are used without translation. They use Japanese phonetic characters to transliterate European words quite accurately.

The representative Latin and Portuguese words which are transliterated are as follows: *anjo*, *apostolus*, *baptismo*, *bondade*, *caridade*, *castidade*, *catechismo*, *causa*, *Christandade*, *Christão*, *conscientia*, *contrição*, *confissão*, *credo*, *cruz*, *Deus*, *Deus Filho*, *Deus Padre*, *divina*, *divinidade*, *doctrina*, *ecclesia*, *entendimento*, *escritura*, *esperança*, *espíritu*, *eternidade*, *evangelho*, *evangelista*, *fides*, *gentio*, *gloria*, *graça*, *gratia*, *hostia*, *humanidade*, *humildade*, *igreja*, *immortalidade*, *incarnação*, *inferno*, *infidelidade*, *inspiração*, *irmão*, *iustitia*, *Judeo*, *mandamento*, *martyr*, *martyrio*, *natura*, *obedientia*, *oratio*, *padre*, *paraíso*, *passion*,

⁶⁷ Cfr. KISHINO Hisashi, «Bukki rons », in *Xavier to nihon*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkwan, Tokyo 1998, pp. 211-236, especially pp. 229-230.

⁶⁸ Cfr. FUKUSHIMA Kunimichi, *Kirishitan Shiryō to Kokugo Kenkyū*, Kasama Shoin, Tokyo 1973, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Cfr. EBISAWA ARIMICHI, «Yamaguchi Shūron», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, pp. 420-421.

persona, profeta, providencia, proximo, sacramento, scriptura, spiritual, substantia, tentação, testamento, theologia, virgem, virtudes, virtus, vontade, etc.

With so many Latin and Portuguese words in transliteration, the Christian texts of the Christian Century in Japan give an exotic impression. The precise interpretations of those texts require interdisciplinary skills which include not only the language skill of old Japanese, Latin, Portuguese and Spanish but also the skill to understand scholastic concepts of philosophy and theology. The knowledge of Christian theology is not enough. The understanding of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism is also necessary. Many Buddhist terms are used in the translation of Christian words even after the basic principle concerning the theological terminologies were established by Gago. There also is a need to situate those texts in the global historical context of the reciprocal intercourse between Europe and East Asia.

Although most of the Christian books published in the Christian Century of Japan are translations of European books, they are not literal translations. Rather, they are translations that attempt to be faithful to the spirit rather than the letter of the original books. They are written in refined style Japanese. They are not mere copies of the original European works. Rather, the Japanese versions themselves are a kind of creative works.

Such creative texts as these give huge challenges to the readers. The precise interpretation of these texts which require various skills described above are quite difficult. It means that the readings of those texts themselves can give a kind of intercultural experiences. They have some latent possibilities which can be activated to bear much fruit of intercultural understanding even today. Those texts are not only the outcome of the encounter of two cultures in the past but also are the starting points and models of the more fruitful encounter of different cultures and religions in this age of multicultural and multi-religious global communication. In the next section, the writings of Valignano and Fabian will be analyzed from this aspect.

IV. Two Models of Cultural Dialogue: Valignano and Fabian

Catechismus iaponensis by Alessandro Valignano, *Myōtei Mondō* (*The Dialogue between Myōshū and Yūtei*) and *Hadaiusu* (*Deus Destroyed*) by Fabian Fukansai have a common characteristic in that all of them are a kind of comparative study between European scholasticism and Asian thought. The characteristics of

the thought of Valignano and Fabian will be analyzed below from the aspect of the meeting of two different cultures.

Catechismus iaponensis of Valignano consists of two volumes. In the first half of the first volume, the existence of God the Creator is demonstrated. In the latter half of the same volume, the truth of the Christian doctrines (e.g. the trinity) is elucidated. In the first part of the second volume, the Decalogue is explained. In the second part of the same volume, sacraments and graces are explained. In the third and fourth part of the second volume, eternal life and the last judgment are expounded⁷⁰. The originality of this book is found in the fact that Shintoism and Buddhism are criticized thoroughly in the process of the explanation of the truth of Christian doctrines. The criticisms against Shintoism and Buddhism are not mere appendix to the explanations of Christian doctrines. Rather, most parts of *Catechismus iaponensis* are allotted to such criticisms. The reason of such an arrangement of this book can be explained in the following manner.

The European Jesuits in Japan gradually developed the mission principle suitable to Japan. Professor Jesús López Gay, S.J., explains this strategy by adopting the term «Preevangelization»⁷¹.

When a man tries to convey some new message to another, it is necessary for the former to depend on something common both to him and the latter. If there is nothing common between them, it is quite difficult to have a meaningful communication. It was necessary for the European Jesuits to construct a common ground between themselves and Japanese people before they started to engage themselves in the activity of evangelization. This preliminary step is meant by the concept of preevangelization.

The essential doctrines proper to Christianity like the Holy Trinity and Incarnation were completely alien to Japanese tradition. So, it was necessary for European priests to find something common between the religious tradition of Japan and their own tradition. The existence of something absolute seemed to work as a common ground. Although it turned out that there was a huge difference

⁷⁰ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Nihon no Katekizumo*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1513; There is a detailed study on *Catechismus Iaponensis* by Joseph B. MÜHLBERGER, *Glaube in Japan: Alexandro Valignanos Katechismus, seine moraltheologischen Aussagen im japanischen Kontext*, EOS Verlag, St. Ottilien 2001.

⁷¹ Cfr. Jesús LÓPEZ GAY, S.J., «La «Preevangelización» en los primeros años de la misión del Japón», *Misionalia Hispanica* 19 (1962) 289-329.

between «Dainichi» and «Deus», the existence of something divine was able to work as a starting point of the religious communication between the European Jesuits and Japanese people.

Thus the strategy of preevangelization had three contents. The first point was to teach that no religious sects of Japan had the power to save human beings. Because the «kamis» (gods) of Shintoism – that is, Amida and Fotoque – and Shaka of Buddhism are only human beings, they cannot save human beings. Rather, they themselves must be saved. The second point was to teach the existence of God the Creator. The doctrine of the existence of the Creator of the whole world was completely alien to Japanese tradition. The fact that the Creator can be the only Redeemer was shown in the second point. The third point was to teach that the human souls are eternal and that they can enjoy eternal bliss or they must suffer eternal damnation in the life to come. Such a teaching of the eternity of human soul was alien to Japanese sects of Buddhism, some of which asserted reincarnation and others denied substantiality and eternity of human souls.

These three points were shown rationally in *Catechismus iaponensis* depending on the teachings of European scholasticism. The Catholic doctrines were not imposed upon Japanese people from above in this catechism. Rather, the intelligence of Japanese people was able to be illuminated from inside by the rational arguments which developed in the European tradition of the scholasticism. That is why this book starts with the teaching of the natural light of human soul. Only after then, the doctrines proper to Christianity, i.e. the Trinity and the Incarnation, which depend on revelation, was able to be communicated in order.

Although the severe criticism of Valignano against Japanese Buddhism and Shintoism was largely based on the ignorance of Valignano and his fellow Jesuits, it was an excellent start of the dialogue between European thought which was based on Christian scholasticism and Japanese thought which was based on Buddhism and Shintoism, for the critical disputations are the starting point of mutual understanding even when they include serious misunderstandings⁷².

Let us switch our eyes to the teachings of Fabian Fukansai. As is mentioned above, he wrote both the Christian apologetic work, *Myōtei Mondō*, and anti-Christian work, *Hadaiusu*.

⁷² Cfr. IDE Katsumi, «Higashi indo junsatsushi A. Valignano no nihonjin kan», in *Shisōshi kenkyū Josetsu*, Tokyo: Pelikansha, 1995, pp.90-153.

Myōtei Mondō is a fictional dialogue between Myōshū and Yūtei. Myōshū is a Buddhist nun. Yūtei is a Christian woman. Yūtei leads the dialogue. In Book I, eight sects of Japanese Buddhism are criticized. In Book II, Confucianism and Shintoism are refuted. Then in Book III, the central teachings of Christianity are presented and Myōshū is converted to Christianity in consequence⁷³.

What Fabian states in *Myōtei Mondō* is that the Christian *Deus* is the only God and the deities of Buddhism and Shintoism are mere creatures, i.e., human beings apotheosized. They cannot save human beings because they themselves are only human beings⁷⁴. The irrationality of the polytheistic theogony of Shintoism in the *Chronicles of Japan (nihonshoki)* is severely criticized. Although the ethics of Confucianism is evaluated highly as a kind of natural law ethics, the principle of yin-yang (the cosmic dual forces in Confucianism) is negated to be the real Creator.

Myōtei Mondō is an extremely important work. It is the only book of Christian theology written by a Japanese scholar in the Christian Century of Japan. It is also the first attempt to criticize Japanese tradition from inside based on the viewpoint of scholastic philosophy.

As for *Hadaiusu*, the criticisms against Christianity proceed by seven steps. The first step is the criticism against the scholastic attributes of Christian God. He cites the scholastic attributes of God like *omnipotens, sapientissimus, iustissimus, misericordissimus*, etc. Then he criticizes the Christian concept of God by stating that the act of selection follows the existence of intellect in God, the existence of love and hate follows the act of selection, and that it is against reason that the absolute being shows special favor to someone and does not regard others. The second step is the criticism against the scholastic distinction between the vegetative, sensitive and rational souls. The third step is the criticism against the Christian teaching about Lucifer. He states that the existence of Lucifer is inconsistent with the omnipotent, omniscient and compassionate character of God. The fourth step is the similar criticism against the story of the Fall of Adam and Eve. The fifth step is the criticism against the redemptive activity of God. He states that it is against reason that God failed to create human beings as perfect

⁷³ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, «*Myōtei Mondō*», in *Nihon kirisutokyō rekishi daijiten*, Kyōbunkwan, Tokyo 1988, p. 1375.

⁷⁴ As is clear from the explanation above, this criticism is quite similar to that of Valignano. It was a common point of criticism of the Jesuits against Japanese religions.

beings, let them commit sin, and only then tried to save them. The sixth step is the criticism against the chronology of the Bible and the magical character of Jesus.

The seventh step is the longest and the most important one. The core passage of this step is as follows:

The first commandment [*mandamento*] urges disobedience to the orders of sovereign or father if compliance would mean denial of Deus's will; It entreats one to hold life itself cheap in such a situation. In this precept lurks the intention to subvert and usurp the country, to extinguish Buddha's Law and Royal Sway. Quick, quick! Put this gang in stocks and shackles!

"One does not usually expect to find precepts for attaining to ultimate good outside the realm of morals constantly preserved in the people's daily life." There are a great many divisions within moral law, but they all come within the scope of the Five Social Relationships and the duties they involve. Sovereign and subject, father and child, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, friend and friend what else can a man do if he has performed his duties within these relationships! And if a man deranges these, then what is the iniquity, what the atrocity to which he will not stoop?

The duties of sovereign and subject toward each other are loyalty and reward. The duties of father and child toward each other are filial piety and parental affection. The duties of husband and wife are in the propriety of separate functions. The duties of elder brother and younger brother are in fraternal service and love. The duties of friend and friend are contained in good faith. To bestow upon man a nature consistent with these Five Relationships is the part of Heaven's Will. And here is how you regard all this, you adherents of Deus! If adherence means denial of Deus's will, then cast aside the loyalty of subject to sovereign, repudiate the bonds of filial piety and of fraternal service! – such is your counsel. What greater iniquity than this?⁷⁵

The conflict between the feudal relationship between the sovereign and subject and the Christian teaching of the absolute devotion to God is explained in this text from the perspective of the traditional Confucian teaching. This passage is quite important not only for understanding Fabian's criticism against Christianity but also for analyzing the reasons which prompted the rulers of Japan to persecute Christianity.

There are various interpretations concerning the reason of the persecution. While some scholars emphasize political reasons, other scholars stress the importance of the clash of cultures. Among those who emphasize political reasons, some scholars emphasize the fact that the rulers of Japan were afraid that Japan might be colonized if they continued to accept Western influence. What makes the colonization theory dubious is the fact that Japan was ruled by *samurais* at

⁷⁵ Cfr. FABIAN, *Hadaiusu*, 7. (Citation from George ELISON, cit., pp. 282-283, words slightly modified).

the period and had great military strength. Moreover, Japan is quite far away from the Western countries (two years journey by sea) and it was almost impossible for them to conquer Japan by military means.

The balanced interpretation of the reason of persecution is found in the combination of the political reason and cultural reason. When the Jesuits came to Japan, Japan was in the Warring States period (1467-1568) and was divided into many states.

Some of the feudal lords (*daimyō*) converted to Christianity and such conversions made it easier for the foreign priests to convert the common people in those areas which were ruled by such Christian lords.

But when such Warring States period approached to an end, the rulers started to persecute the Christians. When the domestic political order came to the state of stability as a feudal *samurai* system, the Christian ethical teachings of the absolute devotion to God the Creator came into severe conflict with the feudal relationship of loyalty between the masters and servants. And when the political unity of Japan came to be established, a kind of nationalism and ethnic feelings became stronger⁷⁶. Christians, who were thought to be connected with foreign countries at least in their mentality, came to be deemed as an uncontrollable element in the homogeneous society. Thus, the rulers took advantage of xenophobic feelings of the common people and demonized the Christians to unite Japanese society as a homogeneous whole. The seventh step of the criticism of Fabian against Christianity can be interpreted as one of the clearest expressions of the motivations which prompted the Japanese rulers to persecute the Christians.

At first sight, the difference between *Myōtei Mondō* and *Hadaiusu* seems to be quite large. They seem to be almost the opposite. While *Myōtei Mondō* is an apologetic work which tries to justify Christian positions by criticizing Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism, *Hadaiusu* is an anti-Christian work which criticizes Christianity from the position of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism.

In the text cited above, Fabian tried to relativize and criticize Christian concept of God by the teaching of Confucianism. But we must not forget the fact that the Confucian teaching had already been relativized and criticized by Fabian himself in *Myōtei Mondō*. Fabian does not try to rebut his own criticism against the Japanese traditions almost at all in *Hadaiusu*. There is an ironical situation here. The Christian scholasticism, which had taught Fabian how to

⁷⁶ Cfr. EBISAWA Arimichi, *Nihon Kirishitan shi*, Hanawashobō, Tokyo 1966, pp. 271-275.

perform rational thinking and how to criticize the irrational element involved in the Japanese traditions, started to be examined by Fabian with critical rationality.

In this sense, *Myōtei Mondō* and *Hadaiusu* are quite similar. They both represent the activity of critical rationality against traditional religious teachings. When Fabian criticized Christian teaching from the viewpoint of the Confucian teaching, he already knew that the Confucian teaching itself did not have absolute certainty. He had to become aware that there were no teachings in this world which could endure the critical activity of human reason⁷⁷.

If the two writings of Fabian can be interpreted as a chronological development and deepening of his thought, his last word can be the legitimation of Japanese traditional teachings and the criticism against Christianity. But if we put the two writings synchronically in front of us, his position may be described as a kind of rational relativism which deprives absoluteness from every traditional teaching. Fabian went through all the dialectical processes of the mutual criticism of Western and Asian traditions in himself.

When different trends of thought meet, there happens a process of chemical reaction which never leaves each party unchanged. Even when one trend of thought unilaterally criticizes the other and accepts nothing from it, the former is influenced from the latter, for the former gets the new self-understanding that it is *different* from the other.

Comparative studies of cultures and religions often lead scholars into a simplistic relativism on the one hand, and it sometimes ends in an equally simplistic justification of one's own position against the positions in comparison on the other hand.

Although Fabian's position is not simplistic, his position as a whole can be described as a kind of relativism. Although Valignano had a respect toward Japanese people and Japanese culture, his challenge to Buddhism and Shintoism is too one-sided if we consider it from the level of the academic study on Buddhism and Shintoism today. It is true that his method of accommodation was applied to the outward behaviors and manners of the European priests, but it was not sufficiently applied to the intrinsic understanding of religious traditions of Japan⁷⁸.

⁷⁷ The following studies give much suggestion concerning such interpretation of Fabian's apostasy. Cfr. SAKAMOTO Masayoshi, *Nihon kirishitan no sei to zoku*, Meicho kankoukai, Tokyo 1981; KOBORI Keiichir, *Nihon ni okeru risei no dentō*, Tokyo: Chūō kuron Shinsha, Tokyo 2007.

⁷⁸ The case was different in the case of the Jesuit mission to China. Chinese ritual practices toward the ancestors, Confucius and imperial rites were esteemed by Matteo Ricci, S.J. (1552-1610).

Nevertheless, the attempts of Valignano and Fabian to confront Western Christian scholasticism and Asian traditional thought give us much inspiration as an sincere attempt to make their way ahead in the first full-scale encounter between the Western thought and the Asian thought.

The Christian Century in Japan was too short to give an answer to the huge problems involved in the encounter between Western and Asian civilizations. Rather, the importance of such encounter in the Christian Century in Japan can be found in the fact that it gave rise to serious philosophical and theological problems which persist even until today.

Ricci was one of the disciples of Valignano. It seems that such difference of mission principle in China and Japan was mainly due to the difference of the main trend in each country, namely Confucianism in China and Buddhism in Japan. It must be added that the mission principle of Ricci caused a serious controversy with the Dominicans (Chinese Rites Controversy).