



**HAL**  
open science

# Neither Apostates nor Martyrs. Japanese Catholics Facing the Repression (1612-Mid-Seventeenth Century)

Martin Nogueira Ramos

## ► To cite this version:

Martin Nogueira Ramos. Neither Apostates nor Martyrs. Japanese Catholics Facing the Repression (1612-Mid-Seventeenth Century). Alexandra Curvelo; Angelo Cattaneo. Interactions between rivals: the Christian mission and Buddhist sects in Japan (c.1549-c.1647), 17, Peter Lang, pp.361-392, 2021, Passagem, 9783631667163. <halshs-03712028>

**HAL Id: halshs-03712028**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03712028v1>**

Submitted on 2 Jul 2022

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire HAL, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



HAL Authorization

Martin Nogueira RAMOS

## Neither Apostates nor Martyrs. Japanese Catholics Facing the Repression (1612–Mid-Seventeenth Century)

### Foreword: What about the 99 Percent Left?

When Japan ended its policy of isolation, for many Westerners this country was associated with the bloody memory of the persecutions held by the Tokugawa 徳川 regime during the first half of the seventeenth century. This image was kept alive in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the many authors in Europe who had written plays or books related to the Japanese Church.<sup>1</sup>

The primary sources of these authors were the published (and fairly censored) reports of the last missionaries present in the archipelago after 1614, the year that marks the beginning of the ban on Christianity. These documents, whose main purpose was to edify Western readers and to praise the work of the missionaries, were centred on those who, having refused to give up their faith, had endured martyrdom.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, very few pages were devoted to those who had “fallen”, the so-called apostates. However, if the number of martyrs is important, a vast majority of the Catholics did not die for their faith. Indeed, the martyrs made up no more than a tiny minority of the estimated 300,000 Japanese who belonged to the Church on the eve of the ban.<sup>3</sup>

The attitude of the latter toward the repression was more complex than choosing between martyrdom and apostasy; a large number of believers kept practicing the

- 
- 1 Concerning the cultural production around these martyrs in Europe, see Omata Rappo, *Des Indes lointaines aux scènes des collèges: les reflets des martyrs de la mission japonaise en Europe (xvi<sup>e</sup> – xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2020.
  - 2 The writings of the Company related to the missions were elaborated following a complex discursive strategy that was well analysed for Brazil (Castelnau-l’Estoile, *Les ouvriers d’une vigne stérile. Les jésuites et la conversion des indiens au Brésil (1580–1620)*. Lisboa; Paris: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, 2000) or China (Girard, *Les religieux occidentaux en Chine à l’époque moderne. Essai d’analyse textuelle comparée*. Lisboa; Paris: Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian / Commission nationale pour les commémorations des découvertes portugaises, 2000). On the mission of Japan in the sixteenth century, see Pinto, *Uma imagem do Japão: A aristocracia guerreira nipônica nas cartas jesuíticas de Évora*. Macau: Instituto Português do Oriente; Fundação Oriente, 2004.
  - 3 For some statistical evidence, see Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549–1650*. Manchester: Carcanet, 1993, p.448.

religion of the missionaries after their formal apostasy. At the beginning, these “false” apostates might have outnumbered the “true” apostates (and certainly the martyrs). My essay will focus on these Christians who decided to secretly continue the practice of their religion. My aim is to understand how they perceived the religious policy of the shogunate and the formal obligation they had to renounce Christianity and become Buddhists.

Apart from the apologetic works related to the martyrs<sup>4</sup> and the pioneer studies of Okada Akio 岡田章雄,<sup>5</sup> until recently, very few scholars had paid attention to the behaviour and the beliefs of the Japanese Catholics; more generally speaking, the commoners were barely mentioned in the studies on the “Christian Century.” Since the beginning of the millennium, Higashibaba Ikuo 東馬場郁夫<sup>6</sup> and Kawamura Shinzō 川村信三<sup>7</sup> have again shed light upon the Catholic commoners and offered stimulating insights about the acculturation of this faith in Japan. Their studies have rectified the idea, held in the past by many scholars as well as rooted in the Japanese collective imagination, that the Christian community radically differed from the local religious substratum. The renewed interest for popular Christianity can also be observed among specialists of China.<sup>8</sup>

Higashibaba mostly focuses on the second half of the sixteenth century: only one chapter of his book is related to the period of repression. He considers “false” apostasy as the “most reasonable and practical conclusion if people wanted to continue their faith.”<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, very few of his sources are direct accounts from commoners. As for Kawamura, he focuses on the reasons that could explain the quick success of the Church at the end of the Sengoku period. He points out two principal causes: the capacity of the missionaries to introduce swiftly, in the countryside and the cities, brotherhood organizations adapted to

---

4 Kataoka, *Nihon kirishitan junkyōshi* 日本キリシタン殉教史. Tōkyō: Jiji Tsūshinsha 時事通信社, 1979; Laures, *The Catholic Church in Japan: A Short History*. Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1954.

5 Okada’s main studies were published in six volumes. See *Okada Akio chosakushū* 岡田章雄著作集. Kyōto: Shibunkaku Shuppan 思文閣出版, 1983–1984.

6 Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice*. Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill, 2001.

7 Kawamura, *Kirishitanshintososhikinotanjōtohenyō* キリシタン信徒組織の誕生と変容. Tōkyō: Kyōbunkan 教文館, 2003; Kawamura, *Sengoku shūkyō shakai shisōshi: Kirishitan jirei kara no kōsatsu* 戦国宗教社会思想史—キリシタン事例からの考察. Tōkyō: Chisen Shokan 知泉書館, 2011.

8 See, for example, Laumann, *Christian Heretics in Late Imperial China: Christian Inculcation and State Control, 1720–1850*. London; New York: Routledge, 2006; Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009; Harrison, *The Missionary’s Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013.

9 Higashibaba, op. cit., p.155.

Japanese customs and social structures; and the appeal of monotheism among the Japanese during an era of wars, political instability, and natural calamities.

I will sustain my essay with documents that mainly concern the peninsula of Shimabara 島原 between 1612 and 1638. The history of this domain is closely linked to Catholicism. Arima Yoshisada 有馬義貞 (1521–1576) was one of the first feudal lords (*daimyō* 大名) to convert to the new creed. His son, Arima Harunobu 有馬晴信 (1567–1612), known in the Portuguese sources as *Dom Protásio*, actively supported the propagation of Catholicism among his retainers and subjects. The “Western religion” particularly took root in the southern half of the peninsula. However, the 20,000 or so Catholics of Shimabara were also the first to endure harsh repression from 1612 to 1615 when their new lord, Arima Naozumi 有馬直純 (1586–1641), renounced his faith. Furthermore, they were the initiators, along with peasants from Amakusa 天草 of a large-scale revolt of Christian inspiration in 1637–1638.



Map 1: Kyūshū

I will use sources written by missionaries, the authorities and lay Catholics. We have an important number of letters, reports and texts directed to the lay believers (brotherhoods' rules, doctrinal books and exhortations to martyrdom) written by the missionaries after 1614, especially about Shimabara: between 1615 and 1625, the region was (relatively) safe for the clergy; it provided shelter to many Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans. As for the officials of the Bakufu 幕府 and the domains, they produced different kinds of sources related to Catholicism like inquiry reports or prescriptive documents. The voices of the lay Catholics are more difficult to retrieve. We mostly have at our disposal indirect accounts: for instance, the transcript of interrogations led by the warriors or documents elaborated under the control of missionaries. A couple of documents from the rebel armies of Shimabara and Amakusa have survived. As we shall see, they give us precious insights about the religious mentality of the Catholics in the first half of the seventeenth century.

## The Antichristian Measures: Between Relentlessness and Permissiveness

Before studying the reactions of the believers against the religious measures of the Tokugawa, it is first necessary to evaluate their efficiency and pervasiveness. Until the 1980s, Japanese scholars studying the repression of Christianity were focusing on martyrs. Most of these scholars were Christians themselves. As primary sources, they used, sometimes uncritically, the annual reports written by the Jesuits. Therefore, their views on the topic were in accordance with those of the Church. The suffering of the martyrs was a demonstration of the faith of Japanese Christendom.<sup>10</sup> There were non-apologetic works before the 1980s, but they focused on the causes of the ban rather than on its concrete application.<sup>11</sup>

Since the 1990s, other scholars, who are usually not linked with the Church, have recused the martyrdom-centred view of repression. Their objective is to understand how repression was carried out on a local or regional scale and to determine its evolution in the long term. These authors have brought to light that the ban on Christianity was not uniformly applied across Japan. They have pointed out regional differences and the political motives beyond the execution of Christians.

---

10 As a representative example, see the five volumes edited by Kataoka Yakichi 片岡弥吉 on the regional history of Catholicism in Japan: *Kirishitan fudoki* 切支丹風土記, Tōkyō: Hōbunkan 宝文館, 1960.

11 See, for instance, the last chapters of Boxer, op. cit., and Elison, *Deus Destroyed. The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.

Recent studies have even defined stages in the religious policy of the domains and the shogunate.<sup>12</sup>

For instance, Ōhashi Yukihiro 大橋泰幸<sup>13</sup> compared religious inspection in forty-four domanial or shogunal territories from Tōhoku 東北 to southern Kyūshū 九州 and established three stages. In the 1620s–1630s, a few territories irregularly inspected the religion of their subjects; Buddhist monks were generally not in charge of this task, which was entrusted to officers. After the revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa in the 1640s–1650s, the situation evolved, and a majority of territories examined the religion of their subjects and used the Buddhist clergy for it. In the 1660s, after the discovery of hidden Christian communities in Ōmura 大村 (1657), Bungo 豊後 (1660) and Owari 尾張 (1661), the system of religious inspection was universally applied in Japan.<sup>14</sup>

Shimabara's case shows us the application of the ban was extremely irregular (Fig. 1); its intensity greatly varied depending on the villages, the social status and the period. As stated above, Arima Naozumi, who had been allowed to succeed his father despite the behaviour of the latter,<sup>15</sup> initiated a large-scale fight against Catholicism, demanding his retainers to deny their faith. However, many refused. As a result, between July 1612 and January 1615, sixty-three Catholics, mostly samurai living in villages of the south of Shimabara Peninsula, were killed or “led” to death by the authorities.<sup>16</sup> The devotees did not hesitate to demonstrate their support to the “criminals” by organizing processions or public prayers. It appears that the agitation in the villages was such that the Bakufu decided to move Naozumi from Shimabara to Hyūga 日向, a province situated on the east coast of Kyūshū. In

12 Ōhashi, *Kirishitan minshūshi no kenkyū* キリシタン民衆史の研究. Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō Shuppan 東京堂出版, 2001, and Murai, *Kirishitan kinsei no chiiki teki tenkai* キリシタン禁制の地域的展開. Tōkyō: Iwata Shoin 岩田書院, 2007 are representative studies of this trend.

13 Ōhashi, *Ibidem*, pp.100–131.

14 For a presentation of these episodes, see Ōhashi, “Seitō itan kirishitan: Kinsei Nihon no chitsujo to kirishitan kinsei 正統・異端・切支丹—近世日本の秩序とキリシタン禁制”. *Waseda Daigaku Kyōiku Gakubu gakujutsu kenkyū chiri-gaku rekishi-gaku shakai kagaku-hen* 早稲田大学教育学部 学術研究 地理学・歴史学・社会科学編, no. 54, 2005, pp.11–26; for Ōmura and Murai, *Kirishitan kinsei no chiiki teki tenkai*, pp.52–58, for Bungo and Owari.

15 Arima Harunobu was involved in a rather obscure corruption affair with Okamoto Daihachi 岡本大八, the retainer of a *rōjū* 老中 (Elder) of the Tokugawa, in order to retrieve lands he had lost in the sixteenth century. In 1612, he was tried and condemned to death by the Bakufu. On the life of this Christian lord, see Gonoi (Ed.), *Kirishitan daimyō: Fukyō, seisaku, shinkō no jissō* キリシタン大名—布教・政策・信仰の実相. Kyōto: Miyaobi Shuppansha 宮帯出版社, 2017, pp.193–211.

16 The figures I give for the martyrs come from the martyrology of Japan elaborated by Juan Ruiz-de-Medina (*El Martirologio del Japón 1558–1873*. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1999).

1616, the domain was entrusted, by Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616), to Matsukura Shigemasa 松倉重正 (1574–1630), one of his trustworthy vassals.<sup>17</sup>

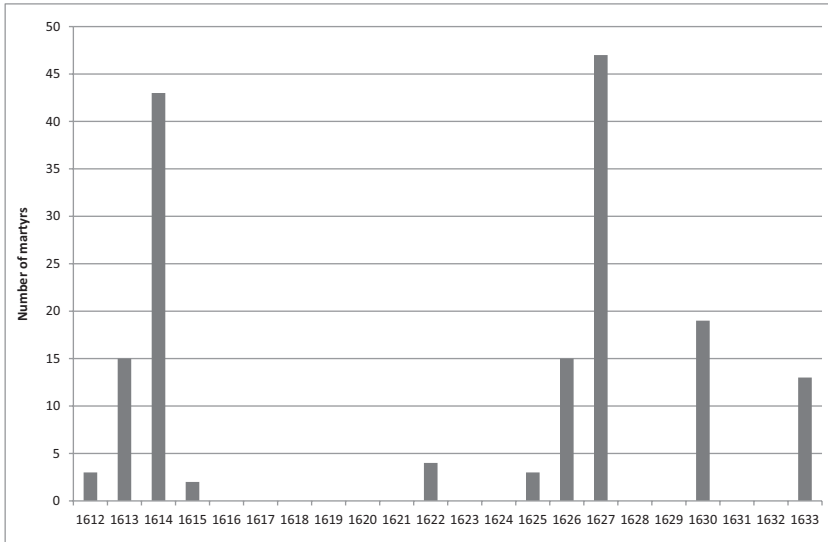


Fig. 1 Martyrs in Shimabara between 1612 and 1633

This statistical table uses the figures given by Ruiz-de-Medina (see note 16). I only took into account the persons who were arrested by the authorities of Shimabara. I excluded some dubious cases Ruiz-de-Medina considers as martyrs, in particular the priests who died from overwork.

Under the new lord, the situation of Christianity within the domain improved. Until December 1625, virtually no Catholic was killed or persecuted. As far as we know, only four people, one Jesuit and three laymen, were executed in November 1622. Even in that case, Shigemasa was apparently, following a letter of the Spanish Jesuit Baltasar de Torres (1563–1626), presented with a *fait accompli*.<sup>18</sup> In their letters and reports written between 1616 and 1625, missionaries predominantly

17 For a convenient overview of Shimabara's anti-Christian policy in the 1610s, see Ebisawa, *Kirishitan no dan'atsu to teikō* キリシタンの弾圧と抵抗. Tōkyō: Yuzankaku Shuppan 雄山閣出版, 1981, pp.179–189.

18 Jap. Sin. 38, f. 251–252v, March 3, 1622.

pointed out the safe situation of the Church in Shimabara in comparison with other regions of Japan. The Portuguese Jesuit Mateus de Couros (1568–1632?) wrote in March 1621 the community was enjoying a “great calm” (*grande quietaçam*). According to him, Shigemasa behaved this way for practical reasons: Catholics lived peacefully and paid taxes (*rendimentos*) without complaining. Repressive measures might have changed their attitude.<sup>19</sup> For this reason, many missionaries were stationed in the domain. In March 1623, there were six Jesuits: the *Provincial*, four fathers and one brother.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, we know that missionaries from the mendicant orders were active in the region. The lord turned a blind eye to the missionaries as long as they acted carefully and in secret.

The explanation of Couros seems to be accurate: Shigemasa needed stable income. Between 1618 and 1625, he was trying to turn the small town of Shimabara into a proper siege for his domain, i.e., a “castle town” (*jōkamachi* 城下町). Under the Arima, the majority of the retainers lived in their own lands. Only a few of them lived with their lord.<sup>21</sup>

Material considerations could explain why many lords were reluctant to brutally apply the ban on Christianity. In the beginning of the early modern period, they faced new expenditures generated by their long stays in Edo<sup>22</sup> and the maintenance of numerous vassals for the “military service” (*gun'yaku* 軍役).<sup>23</sup> Both expenditures were required by the Tokugawa regime. Generally, they had to increase taxes and to clear new lands. However, the commoners were not as docile as we would imagine. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the peasants, who did not hesitate to leave their lands in great numbers in order to find fortune elsewhere, were particularly mobile. They were called *hashiri byakushō* 走百姓, “runaway peasants”, in the sources.<sup>24</sup> As we will see, some Western and Japanese documents lead us to believe Catholics tended to flee from regions where persecution was harsh. Therefore, we can imagine that in Shimabara, a domain where the Christian population was high, such measures would have severely lowered income.

This favourable situation dramatically changed in December 1625. Three Jesuits, including the *Provincial* of the Japanese mission, were arrested with their

19 Jap. Sin. 37, f. 196–197v, March 15, 1621.

20 Jap. Sin. 34, f. 156–157v, March 7, 1623.

21 Nagasaki-kenshi Hensan Iinkai 長崎県史編纂委員会 (Ed.), *Nagasaki-kenshi: Hanseihen* 長崎県史一藩政編. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 1973, pp.242–244.

22 On the “alternate attendance” in Edo (*sankin kōtai* 参勤交代), see Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.

23 Héral (Ed.), *L'Histoire du Japon des origines à nos jours*. Paris: Hermann, 2009, pp.634–636.

24 For more information about the “runaway peasants”, see Miyazaki, *Nigeru hyakushō o' u daimyō: Edononōminkakutokugassen* 逃げる百姓、追う大名—江戸の農民獲得合戦. Tōkyō: Chūō Kōron Shinsha 中央公論新社, 2002.

catechists (*dōjuku* 同宿), helpers (*komono* 小者) and the families who provided them shelter. According to Baltasar de Torres, his fellow missionaries were not careful enough; since the fact that they were hiding in Shimabara was now known by many people, Shigemasa, who at that time was in Edo, could not pretend to ignore them anymore. He had to act swiftly in order “not to jeopardize his position” (*por não pôr a risco seu estado*).<sup>25</sup>

From that time, the number of martyrs increased considerably. Between December 1625 and 1633, we know from the Jesuit sources that around one hundred people from Shimabara died due to the repression. The situation was so extraordinary that lengthy reports were dedicated to this domain. For example, the famous Portuguese Jesuit Cristóvão Ferreira (c.1580–1650) wrote a document of 148 pages about the situation of Shimabara in 1627.<sup>26</sup> In that year, around fifty people died for their faith. The missionary gave many vivid and precise details about the anti-Christian measures of the fief and how the devotees had reacted to them.

At the beginning of the document, it is said the *daimyō* hardened his policy because of the pressure exerted by the shogunate. After the arrest of missionaries in December 1625, Shimabara still sheltered a large Catholic community (f. 124). For the first time, the village headmen (*shōya* 庄屋) and elders (*otona* 乙名) had to establish lists of Christians (f. 125). According to Ferreira, the village elite and the retainers (*criados*) were the main targets of the Matsukura clan: it was believed their apostasy would show the path to the rest of the population (f. 126). Besides these two groups, only people with a certain social status were examined and sometimes tortured when they hesitated. Women and children were generally, but not always, spared. The officers of the lord organized the persecutions. Seemingly, in 1627, the Buddhist clergy had a minor role (or no role at all) in the anti-Christian policy.

This situation evolved swiftly. In a report about Kyūshū mission in 1629 and 1630 also written by Cristóvão Ferreira, the role of the Buddhist clergy is emphasized.<sup>27</sup> As is known for other ancient Christian domains like Ōmura<sup>28</sup> or the city of Nagasaki 長崎,<sup>29</sup> after 1614, numerous temples and shrines were built to replace the churches. In the meantime, monks of different schools sat themselves in these promising lands. To all appearances, Shimabara knew the same phenomenon: the commoners were forced to give lands and houses to the monks, to entrust them

25 Jap. Sin. 37, f. 274–275v, February 25, 1626.

26 Jap. Sin. 63, f. 123–197v, January 28, 1628.

27 Jap. Sin. 62, f. 1–77v, August 20, 1631. On the region of Shimabara, see f. 40–59.

28 Kudamatsu, *Kirishitan denraichi no jinja to shinkō: Hizen no kuni Ōmura no ba'ai* キリシタン伝来地の神社と信仰—肥前国大村の場合. Ōmura: Tomatsu Jinja Saikō Yonhyaku-nen Jigyō Iinkai 富松神社再興四百年事業委員会, 2002, pp.208–223.

29 Arano (Ed.), *Edo bakufu to Higashi Ajia* 江戸幕府と東アジア. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 2003, pp.75–78.

with funerals and to clear out all Christian objects from their houses. Ferreira wrote that Catholics, especially the householders, had to “idolize” (*idolstrar*) Buddhas (*fotoque*) in front of the monks and the officers. From the low number of martyrs during these two years and what is said by Ferreira, we can infer that abjuration was the priority of the lord. Those who refused to deny their faith would be tortured until they had given up Christianity.

It is a very difficult task to determine with precision how carefully anti-Christian measures were applied. Presumably, during the first decades following the ban, the Christians and the authorities gradually built up a *modus vivendi*. The warriors, in most cases, pretended that the threat of Christianity had faded away, while the practice of the remaining Christians would become increasingly discreet: the latter could believe whatever they wanted as long as they complied formally with the laws.

From 1638 until 1658, in the aftermath of the Shimabara-Amakusa revolt, Inoue Masashige 井上政重 (1585–1661), a “great inspector” (*ōmetsuke* 大目付) of the Bakufu and a trustworthy vassal of the Tokugawa family, was given the responsibility to supervise the fight against Catholicism on a national scale; thus his prerogatives went beyond the boundaries of the territories directly governed by the shogunate.<sup>30</sup> A compilation of texts written by him was elaborated by his successor Hōjō Ujinaga 北条氏長 (1609–1670): the *Kirisuto-ki* 契利斯督記 (Notes on Christianity).<sup>31</sup> Its reading allows us to get a good grasp of the reality of the anti-Christian measures and the progressive adaptation of the Christians to them. One of its items reveals that control of the forbidden religion was irregular in some domains:

#### Quote 1

Among the lords, some carefully control Christianity; others do not. In the domains where religious measures are not carefully planned, it is easy to hide. In these domains, there are certainly Catholics. It is necessary to watch over, with meticulous care, how temple parishes inspect [their parishioners]. [...] There are some domains where, after ordering farmers, merchants and craftsmen to sign Japanese or Southern barbarian oaths and to affiliate to a temple parish, religious inspection is abandoned for one or two years. It is obvious that a lot of Catholics are hiding in places where there is such carelessness.<sup>32</sup>

30 On the life and methods of Inoue Masashige, see Murai, *Bakuhan seiritsu to kirishitan kinsei* 幕藩成立とキリシタン禁制. Tōkyō: Bunken Shuppan 文献出版, 1987, pp.47–65.

31 I follow the edition established by Hiyane Antei 比屋根安定: ‘Kirisuto-ki’. *Nanbanji kōhaiki hoka ni hen* 南蛮興廢記他二篇. Kirishitan Bunko 吉利支丹文庫, vol. 2. Hiyane Antei (Ed.). Tōkyō: Keiseisha Shoten 警醒社書店, 1926, pp.45–143 [abb. KK].

32 KK, pp.75–76. In this article, all translations are mine. The original texts can be found in the appendix.

During his mandate, Inoue Masashige urged the lords of Japan to introduce measures in their domains, which would allow a regular inspection of the religious beliefs of their subjects. According to the above-mentioned theses of Ōhashi Yukihiro, we can say he was quite successful. However, the task of the authorities was considerably hardened by the behaviour of the Christians who tended to increasingly conceal their religion.

This attitude was, to a certain degree, admitted and encouraged by the Jesuits who distributed booklets, which indicated how Catholics should behave during the ban and how to prepare for martyrdom. One of these texts, which bears no title and was probably written around 1620, was confiscated from the hidden Christian community of Urakami 浦上 at the end of the eighteenth century by the magistrate of Nagasaki (*Nagasaki bugyō* 長崎奉行).<sup>33</sup> A passage in the document detailed six acceptable behaviours from the viewpoint of the Catholic Church: (1) Christians did not need to declare their faith if they were not asked to do so; (2) they could flee if they believed they could not stand firm in the faith (Jp. *hītesu* ヒイテス/L. *fides*); (3) they could hide themselves or (4) dissimulate religious objects; (5) to behave like a gentile (Jp. *zenchiyo* 前知与/P. *gentio*) was strictly forbidden but Christians were allowed to act “neutrally”, “as if they did not seem to have any particular religion” (*izure no shūshi tomo miezaru yōni* 何の宗旨とも見へざる様に); (6) lastly, with their masters, they could show restraint about religious matters.

The *Kirisuto-ki* clearly shows Christians did not follow the limits established by the missionaries: “Originally, when they were asked if they were Catholics, they absolutely did not try to conceal [the truth]. Currently, they conceal it as much as possible.”<sup>34</sup> Many interesting examples of concealment are described: Catholics hid pious images (*imase* イマセ from the Portuguese *imagem*) in the hilt of their short swords (*wakizashi* 脇差) or ashes of priests who had died at the stake inside their pillows or incense boxes;<sup>35</sup> they also took advantage of the negligence of the Buddhist clergy in order to “christianize” the coffin of the deceased.<sup>36</sup>

After their formal apostasy, many Christians continued to secretly possess devotional objects. In 1645, a woman in Hasami 波佐見 (Ōmura) was accused of

---

33 Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治, who transcribed and published the text (*Kirishitan shūmon no hakugai to senpuku* 切支丹宗門の迫害と潜伏. Tōkyō: Dōbunkan 同文館, 1925, pp.162–169), gave it a title: *Maruchiriyono kokoro* マルチリヨの心得 (Understanding Martyrdom). For more information about the documents confiscated in Urakami, see Shimizu, “Urakami ichiban kuzure ni okeru Nagasaki bugyōsho no kirishitan-kyō shorui shūshu o megutte: ‘Yaso-kyō sōsho’ to no kankei to Urakami sonmin no jiko ishiki 浦上一番崩れにおける長崎奉行所のキリシタン教書類収取をめぐる「耶穌教叢書」との関係と浦上村民の自己意識”. *Meiji Gakuin Daigaku Kirisuto-kyō Kenkyūjo Kiyō* 明治学院大学キリスト教研究所紀要, no. 46, 2014, pp.131–160.

34 KK, p.69.

35 KK, p.70.

36 KK, p.75.

having Christian objects of piety. For this reason, the officers of the domain interrogated her:

**Quote 2**

Twenty years ago [c. 1625], I went to Nagasaki [from Hasami]. During the ten years I stayed in this city, I joined Zen Buddhism. Afterwards, I came back to Hasami. The religious inspections against Christianity were so harsh I trod upon a Christian object and joined Shingon Buddhism. However my heart was still Christian. I am hiding many Christian objects, statues made of wood and other things. [...] This is true, I showed the statue made of wood to Otaku [another woman in the village]. She is the only person to whom I showed it. I do not know anybody else who has a Christian heart [in the village]. Even if you tortured or killed me I would have nothing else to say.<sup>37</sup>

This behaviour was not the prerogative of the hidden Christians. In the domains of Hitoyoshi 人吉 and Satsuma 薩摩 on the island of Kyūshū, Shin Buddhism (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗) was forbidden from the sixteenth century until the Meiji era; the believers used subterfuge to conceal their faith and religious objects.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the efforts of Inoue Masashige and the generalization of religious inspection across the whole country from the 1660s, hidden Christians were in many domains tolerated by the authorities who turned a blind eye to their secret practices. The *Ōmura kenbunshū* 大村見聞集 (Record of things heard and seen in Ōmura), a compilation of historical documents from the past centuries elaborated in the 1830s by the domain of Ōmura, shows that deep inquiries were generally avoided.<sup>39</sup>

In this fief, after the arrest of more than five hundred hidden Christians in 1657–1658 in Kōri 郡 and around this village,<sup>40</sup> religious inspection was greatly reinforced: villagers were expected, for example, to organize in groups of five families (*goningumi* 五人組), to show before cremation – which also had become mandatory – the corpse of all the deceased to the Buddhist clergy, and to receive religious certificates (*tera'uke tegata* 寺請手形) from their parish temple. They were also asked to clean the shrine of their village (*chinju* 鎮守) and to actively participate in its religious festivities (*matsuri* 祭り).<sup>41</sup>

The influence of the authorities on the beliefs and practices of their subjects should not be overestimated. The warriors only controlled their formal compliance

37 Fujino; Shimizu (Eds.), *Ōmura kenbunshū* 大村見聞集 [abb. OKS]. Tōkyō: Takashina Shoten 高科書店, 1994, p.183.

38 Concerning the ban on Shin Buddhism in Satsuma, see Chilson, *Secrecy's Power: Covert Shin Buddhists in Japan and Contradictions of Concealment*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014, pp.62–100.

39 Regarding the elaboration and the historical context of the *Ōmura kenbunshū*, see the introduction by Shimizu Hirokazu 清水紘一 and Fujino Tamotsu 藤野保 in the compilation: OKS, pp.i–xviii.

40 The main documents concerning this episode were compiled in the volumes 39, 40 and 41 of the *Ōmura kenbunshū*.

41 OKS, p.648.

with the law. In 1660, a round of inspection was organized in Sotome 外海, a region located north of Nagasaki where large hidden Christian communities went through the Edo period. A report based on this round was written; it shows the religious behaviour of the villagers was considered satisfactory by the retainers of Ōmura clan. The following excerpt concerns Mie 三重, a village where many hidden Christians “reconverted” to Catholicism during the Meiji era<sup>42</sup>:

**Quote 3**

Village of Mie

– It is said that the inhabitants of this village and of the coast really believe [in the gods and Buddhas]. They visit temples and shrines without any laziness. Every month, without exception, they go to the temple and chant the *nenbutsu*. We learnt this from the monk [of the village]. The shrines are extremely clean.

– The harvest of the paddy fields will not be worse than last year; the harvest of the other fields will be better than in the other villages. We heard that during the sixth and seventh months of this year it rained heavily.

This village is situated in the lands of Ōmura Chūzaemon, Asada Samon and Sawai Zenzaemon.<sup>43</sup>

It is true that, at first sight, it was impossible to distinguish hidden Christians from “normal” Buddhist peasants. However, this concealment certainly did not fool anyone in Ōmura. The report of 1660 gives much more detailed and varied information about the harvests than about the religious life of the commoners, which is described with very similar terms in the twenty-one villages. Warriors and monks do not appear to have had interest in carrying out in-depth investigations. For the former, peace assured stable income. Economic reasons might have also partially dictated the behaviour of the monks. Around 1640, 80 percent of the temples could not survive on only their land holdings; they needed the pecuniary support of their parishioners.<sup>44</sup> Also, “purity of faith” was perhaps of no importance for most of the Buddhist clergy. This attitude explains why only a few hidden Christian communities were denounced until the end of the ban in 1873.<sup>45</sup>

---

42 For the geographical spread of Catholicism during the 1860s and 1870s, see chapters 2 and 3 of Ramos, *La foi des ancêtres. Chrétiens cachés et catholiques dans la société villageoise japonaise (xvii<sup>e</sup>-xix<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Paris: CNRS éditions, 2019.

43 OKS, p.682.

44 Hur, *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007, p.2.

45 The most detailed study concerning the (few) inquiries conducted by the authorities about hidden Christian communities, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, can be found in Ōhashi, *Kirishitan minshūshi no kenkyū*; the death penalty was never used and sanctions were generally mild.

## Salvation Amidst the Turmoil: The Dread of the Christians toward Their Sins

The authorities, who showed leniency for the beliefs of the now hidden Christians, were generally satisfied with the nominal respect for the law. To put it simply, the domains and the Bakufu, whose aim was not to sound out the heart of their subjects, were rarely thorough in their investigations. For example, it would be misleading to compare the Japanese anti-Christian measures to the Iberian inquisitions.

It was recently argued the missionaries, especially the Jesuits, tolerated nominal apostasy for the lay believers; martyrdom was only expected for the clergy.<sup>46</sup> It is true that those those who had weakened were very swiftly forgiven. But, the Japanese and missionary accounts of the seventeenth century indicate that nominal apostasy was not considered an easy choice by the Christians: by treading on an image of Christ, by joining a Buddhist temple or by swearing to relinquish Catholicism, many feared their behaviour was infuriating God and believed it would imperil the destination of their soul in the afterlife.

The fear engendered by apostasy is described in various documents. In the *Kirisuto-ki*, it is written that “when [the officers] ask old women, [and more generally speaking] women, to tread an image of *Deus* (*Deusu no fumie* デウスの踏絵), their faces turn red; they throw out their headdresses, breathe heavily and sweat.” Inoue Masashige added that some of the women revered these images far from prying eyes.<sup>47</sup> Missionaries also described the anxiety of their flock when they had to renounce Christianity publicly. In the aforementioned annual report of the Kyūshū mission for the years 1629 and 1630, Ferreira depicted the reaction of the Christians of Shimabara to the obligation they had to venerate the Buddha in front of monks as follows:

### Quote 4

The poor Christians were in great despair and anxiety because, on one hand, even if it was feigned, they knew the great offense they made to God by venerating the Buddha and, on the other hand, they deeply feared the pain of the torture usually used by the cruel tyrant on those who refused to obey; they felt that they did not have the spirit to endure the suffering and could not succeed in hiding. There was no means or road to escape. Finally, the majority was defeated by fear and weakness. They got together in the house of the Buddhist priest as they were told to. Some of them, a minority, [openly] venerated [the Buddha]. Most people, since they did not venerate, remained silent.<sup>48</sup>

46 Asami, *Kirishitan jidai no gūzō sūhai* キリシタン時代の偶像崇拜. Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 東京大学出版会, 2009, pp.284–286.

47 KK, p.70.

48 Jap. Sin. 62, f. 1–77v, August 20, 1631 (f. 42v and 43 for the quote).

Confession was the best means to “erase” one’s sins. Nevertheless, meeting a priest was becoming more and more complicated. Missionaries normally did not indicate the precise number of apostates, but it seems the reintegration of those who had nominally rejected Christianity was a crucial and time-consuming activity. Like the so-called *lapsi*, those who had renounced Christianity during the persecutions led by the Roman Empire, the verb “to fall/to lapse” (*caer* in Spanish, *cair* in Portuguese) was frequently used in the letters or reports of the clergy to designate the apostates; the first task of the missionaries was to “pick up” (*alevantar*) these people. The same idea, which is taken from a letter of Baltasar de Torres from October 1620,<sup>49</sup> can be found in many documents written after 1614; it shows missionaries were constantly on the move to recuperate their “lost sheep”:

**Quote 5**

[The Provincial] sends the fathers to accomplish different missions in all the kingdoms [of Japan]. We have accomplished more missions during the suppression than during peace. Since we have no houses or determined places to settle, we are forced to travel all over these regions and to face great dangers. But, [this situation] bears many fruits and is beneficial for the Christians. We hear the confession of many people and there are always new baptisms. Others, who had fallen because of the fury of the suppression, got up again.

Jesuits and friars from the mendicant orders who were, despite the precarious position of the Church in Japan, struggling with each other, gathered and sent to Rome testimonies from their supporters in order to defend their action. In 1617, Couros collected the accounts of seventy-five communities scattered all over the archipelago, from the north of Honshū 本州 to the south of Kyūshū.<sup>50</sup> Each account, which was presented as an oath made on the Gospel (*Ewanseriyo* ゑわんせりよ), bore the signatures of important laymen from the community: village headmen, brotherhood leaders and samurai. The Japanese Catholics used similar words to those of Torres’ letter to describe the work of the fathers. For instance, the representatives of Urakami wrote:

**Quote 6**

We do not mention the facts before [the ban]. After Lord Daifu [Tokugawa Ieyasu] started the repression against the Christian community, a father of the Company stayed for a long time in Urakami. [The Jesuits] hear the confessions of the Christians, give the sacraments, pick up those who had gone against the faith and convert gentiles. They spare no effort when they help the Christians. For their neighbour, they

49 Jap. Sin. 38, f. 240–241v, October 21, 1620.

50 This document was published and described by Matsuda Kiichi 松田毅一: *Kinsei shoki Nihon kankei nanban shiryō no kenkyū* 近世初期日本関係南蛮史料の研究 [abb. NSK]. Tōkyō: Kazama Shobō 風間書房, 1967, pp.1022–1145.

are ready to endure one hundred torments and one thousand dangers, or even give up their life.<sup>51</sup>

In 1622, the Dominican Diego Collado (1589–1641) imitated Couros: he gathered documents from Christian communities in Nagasaki, Ōmura and Shimabara, which aimed to prove the heroic behaviour of the friars during the repression; he also sent Jesuit documents (confraternity regulations or personal letters) which allegedly revealed the monopolistic attitude of the Company in these regions. Their supporters recounted the action of the friars with words similar to those of the inhabitants of Urakami.<sup>52</sup>

Of course, such documents, which were written under the scrutiny of the missionaries, should not be taken at face value. Nonetheless, despite their excessive laudatory tone for the order they support, these texts all point out the lack of fathers and the growing number of apostates who regretted their behaviour and feared dying without confession. In the testimonies gathered by Collado, we can read the following words from the leaders of a Dominican brotherhood in the villages of Chijiwa 千々石 and Ōtsuru 大津留 in the peninsula of Shimabara:

**Quote 7**

Any priest, whatever his branch, is a representative of the only God. He spreads the real teaching of the Holy Church which is unique. This fact is absolutely certain. Thus, whatever the branch of the priests who will be wandering around our villages, we are determined to give them hospitality and to ask them to sustain our souls.<sup>53</sup>

This lack of priests, which was already obvious before the ban, worsened after 1614. In November of that year, about a hundred fathers and brothers left Japan for Macao or Manila. There were around thirty Jesuits in the country between 1615 and 1622, but their number declined steadily until 1632. In 1633, eleven of the seventeen survivors were caught by the authorities, and in the 1640s, the presence of missionaries in the archipelago was completely over.<sup>54</sup>

Before 1614, the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, commonly called confession, had great success among the Japanese Christians.<sup>55</sup> The missionaries, who tried to follow the instructions of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), exhorted their flock to confess once a year. However, they were not enough to satisfy the numerous and scattered Christian population of the archipelago. This is why in

---

51 NSK, pp.1085–1086.

52 These documents are comprised in NSK, pp.1146–1221.

53 NSK, p.1171.

54 For a discussion about the number of missionaries after 1614, see Schütte, *Introductio ad historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia, 1549–1650, ac proemium ad catalogos Japoniae edendos ad edenda Societatis Jesu monumenta historica Japoniae propylaeum*. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1968, pp.348–366.

55 Higashibaba, op. cit., pp.109–117; Kawamura, *Sengoku shūkyō shakai shisōshi: Kirishitan jirei kara no kōsatsu*, pp.268–276.

1603 the Jesuits published a short opus titled *Konchirisan no riyaku* こんちりさんのりやく (The merits of contrition).<sup>56</sup> Contrition is the sincere pain the Christian endures after having offended God; it is also the first of the three steps (contrition, confession, and satisfaction) in the sacrament of confession. The author of the text explains that anyone who sincerely regrets his sins, promising to confess to a priest as soon as possible, receives absolution. It seems the Christians considered it a great help, especially after 1614. Indeed, along with books of prayers and calendars, this is one of the few documents produced by the missionaries that was copied during the two hundred and fifty years of the ban. Many hidden Christian villages, which “reconverted” to Catholicism during the Meiji era, had copies of the text.<sup>57</sup> Some leaders, for whom its content was mostly incomprehensible because of the many Portuguese and Latin words, were able to recite it completely. In 1869, the priests of the Paris Foreign Mission Society published a corrected version and distributed it among their new flock.<sup>58</sup>

With the missionaries fast disappearing, Christians had to find means other than confession to get the absolution of their sins. It is very likely that remorse caused by apostasy prompted them to increase the number of prayers or fasting days, or to practice mortification. Such a phenomenon is widespread among groups who need to secretly practice their religion and to outwardly behave as the followers of a legal cult; this was the case, for instance, of the hidden Jews (*Marranos*) in Spain and Portugal.<sup>59</sup>

We know from Jesuit documents that before 1614, Japanese Christians considered scourging as an efficient way to obtain the forgiveness of God.<sup>60</sup> This kind of behaviour was not peculiar to the Catholic community. In Japan, sins, or better-said, impurities (*tsumi* 罪), are often seen as a burden that needs to be lightened by one’s efforts or those of someone else.<sup>61</sup> In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many

---

56 For more on the elaboration and the success of this booklet among the Christians, see Kawamura, *Ibidem*, pp.233–298. The text can be consulted in Ebisawa; Cieslik; Doi; Ôtsuka (Eds.), *Kirishitan sho Hai-ya sho* キリシタン書・排耶書, *Nihon shisô taikai* 日本思想大系, vol. 25. Tôkyô: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1970, pp.361–380.

57 I discussed elsewhere the importance of these texts for hidden Christians joining the Catholic Church in the second half of the nineteenth century: see chapter 4 of Ramos, *La foi des ancêtres. Chrétiens cachés et catholiques dans la société villageoise japonaise (xvii<sup>e</sup>-xix<sup>e</sup> siècles)*.

58 The reissue of the *Konchirisan no ryaku* 胡無知理佐无之略 can be found in different collections of texts. See, for example, Shinmura (Ed.), *Kaihyô sôsho* 海表叢書, vol. 1. Kyôto: Kôseikaku 更生閣, 1927 (no pagination).

59 Muchnik, *De paroles et de gestes. Constructions marranes en terre d’Inquisition*. Paris: Éditions de l’EHESS, 2014, pp.219–222.

60 Debergh, “Les pratiques de purification et de pénitence au Japon vues par les missionnaires jésuites aux xvi<sup>e</sup> et xvii<sup>e</sup> siècles”. *Journal asiatique*, no. 272, 1984, pp.167–216.

61 This question is discussed in-depth in Gorai, *Nihonjin no jigoku to gokuraku* 日本人の地獄と極楽. Kyôto: Jinbun Shoin 人文書院, 1991.

lay followers (*monto* 門徒) of Shin Buddhism, in contradiction with the teaching of their school, thought the sole reliance on the mercy of the Buddha Amida 阿弥陀 was not enough to guarantee their rebirth in the Pure Land (*Gokuraku* 極楽). As a matter of fact, seclusion from the world (*tonsei* 遁世) or asceticism (*kugyō* 苦行) were widely practiced.<sup>62</sup>

At the beginning of the ban, it appears that lay confraternities, or brotherhoods, developed swiftly in local society, especially in regions where Christianity had taken root.<sup>63</sup> These organizations, whose basis lay on the material and spiritual aid between the members, were seen by Christians as a solution to accumulate merits and *in fine* to obtain salvation, and as a means to control Christian communities by missionaries.

In Shimabara, confraternities were numerous and their role in the organization of local communities was important. Among the eighty-one Christian headmen of the region who officially supported the Jesuits in 1617,<sup>64</sup> fifty-one indicated they were brothers (*kumijū* 組中), leaders of a brotherhood (*kumioya* 組親) or representatives of a group of brotherhoods (*sōdai* 總代). The others gave their official position in the organization of their village or town: village headmen, elders or town officers (*bettō* 別当). But, as written in many Portuguese documents, local elites were generally also members of a confraternity. These eighty-one people represented seven localities: Arima 有家, Futsu 布津, Fukae 深江, the town of Shimabara, Yamadera 山寺, and Mie 三会. The documents gathered by Collado in 1622 prove that there were confraternities organized by the Dominicans in other villages of the peninsula. It is important to note that these villages all played a central role in the Revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa. It was even argued that confraternities facilitated the mobilization of the peasants.<sup>65</sup>

There are few detailed comments on the confraternities in the letters and reports of the missionaries; only their rules allow us to understand rather precisely their function and the religious practices of the members. As for the brotherhoods established by the Jesuits, three regulations – two in Japanese and one in Portuguese – have survived.<sup>66</sup> The texts in Japanese were written in 1621 and concern villages in Shimabara: *Sesuzu no o-kumi no reikarasu* 世須々乃御組のれいから須 (The rules of the Confraternity of Jesus) was written by

62 Kanda, *Ikkō ikki to Shinshū shinkō* 一向一揆と真宗信仰. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 1991, pp.113–121.

63 On the brotherhoods in sixteenth and seventeenth century Japan, see Kawamura, *Kirishitan shinto soshiki no tanjō to hen'yō*. In his study, Kawamura especially focused on the province of Bungo.

64 NSK, pp.1076–1085.

65 Nakamura, “Shimabara no ran to sakoku” 島原の乱と鎖国. Asao Naohiro 朝尾直弘 (Ed.), *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi 9 – Kinsei 1* 岩波講座日本歴史9 近世1. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1975, pp.227–262.

66 I will not discuss the text in Portuguese which was transcribed by Kawamura Shinzō: *Kirishitan shinto soshiki no tanjō to hen'yō*, pp.422–430.

Giovanni Battista Zola (1575–1626) and *Konfurariya no hitobito kokoroeraru beki jōjō no koto* こんふらりやの人々心得らるべき條々の事 (The rules the members of the Confraternity [of Mary] need to keep in mind) by Jacome Antonio Giannone (1577–1633).<sup>67</sup> These texts are known because they are part of the documents sent by Collado to Spain in 1622. Indeed, in the regulations, the Jesuits forbade their flock to have contact with missionaries of the mendicant orders.

Their content shows it was very easy to join a confraternity. The brother needed to know the *Ave Maria*, the *Pater Noster*, the Credo, and the Ten Commandments, and of course not be a compulsive sinner to be admitted by the leader of the organization. The gatherings were frequent: one or two Sundays per month and for the main celebrations of the liturgical calendar. Apparently, the rules were directed to villagers with a certain social status: the members of the two confraternities were asked to gather the people of their household on Sunday in order to pray in front of a Christian image (*miei* 御影).<sup>68</sup>

Individual duties were mentioned: to say one's prayers on getting up and at bedtime, to fast and prepare oneself for confession, etc. However, the regulations emphasized the collective facet of the confraternities; they were presented as an answer to the ban on Christianity and the spiritual losses it provoked. For example, in the regulations of the Confraternity of Jesus, we can read as follows:

#### Quote 8

The ban [on the clergy] is now so strict, you understand you cannot go to the church, attend mass, listen to sermons or meet with the fathers and brothers [of the Company] anymore. It is thus extremely important that, at intervals, Christians get together here and there, and exhort one another to work for their salvation and fortify their faith. Therefore, you need to constantly encourage each other and meet on determined dates. It goes without saying that such behaviour will truly make you earn, for each of you, many merits [from God]. You have to understand that supporting your neighbour is an extraordinarily meritorious deed.<sup>69</sup>

Apostasy was not directly mentioned but there was an allusion to those who went against the will of God:

---

67 The first rule can be found in NSK, pp.1147–1151, and the second in Schütte, “Futatsu no komonjo ni arawaretaru Nihon shoki kirishitan jidai ni okeru ‘Santa Mariya no onkumi’ no soshiki ni tsuite 二つの古文書に現はれたる日本初期キリシタン時代に於ける『さんたまりやの御組』の組織に就いて”. *Kirishitan kenkyū* キリシタン研究, no. 2, 1944, pp.135–147.

68 The shortage of devotional objects was a recurrent problem of the Japanese mission. Scholars think that only the Christians with an important role in the community were in possession of such images. On this question, see, for example, the third chapter of Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542–1773*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

69 NSK, p.1148.

**Quote 9**

Recently, the Devil is leading the Christians to the path of evil; he makes them lose their faith, and he tries hard to make them fight the laws of God. This fact is without any doubt. Christians, who are the servants of God, must unite their heart, strengthen their faith and exhort piety. You need to do your best for the laws [of God] to become more and more prosperous. Constantly remind those who are under your direction that behaving in this way confers many merits in front of God.<sup>70</sup>

Their aim was not the spiritual improvement of a devout elite, like the confraternities established by the Jesuits or the mendicant orders in Europe,<sup>71</sup> but to maintain the Catholic community and the possibility to save one's soul under repression. Prayers were depicted as an efficient practice to redeem sins: in the Confraternity of Jesus, every time one of the brothers died, all the members had to recite the rosary once and seek indulgences so that to transfer their merits to the deceased (*ekō* 廻向); during each reunion, they recited five *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster* for the souls in Purgatory. In addition, the majority of the indulgences granted concerned mutual help. For example, a brother received a partial indulgence each time he said fifteen *Pater Noster* or *Ave Maria* for the redemption of a Christian who had committed a mortal sin, or when he helped a dying person to prepare his soul in his last moments.

Jesuits often complained to Rome that, instead of opening new missions, Dominicans and Franciscans were expanding their brotherhoods in the strongholds of the Company like Shimabara or Nagasaki.<sup>72</sup> This success can be explained by the fact that Christians perceived these organizations as collective insurance for the afterlife. In one of the testimonies gathered by Collado, Christians wrote they were attracted by the indulgences given by the Pope to the Dominican confraternities.<sup>73</sup> Some may even have tried to be members of more than one brotherhood to accumulate more merits. In the rules of the Confraternity of Mary, it is written that a brother should not belong to another *kumi* 組, i.e., a brotherhood controlled by the Dominicans.

## The Revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa: Apocalypse and Messianic Hopes

In a way, we can describe the piety of the Catholics during the first decades of the ban as “compensatory”; they repeatedly needed to have a guarantee that their

---

70 NSK, p.1150.

71 See Froeschlé-Chopard, *Dieu pour tous et Dieu pour soi: histoire des confréries et de leurs images à l'époque moderne*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007.

72 See, for example, Jap. Sin. 34, f. 156–157v, March 7, 1623, a collective letter signed by eleven Jesuits.

73 NSK, p.1168.

sins, especially the one of apostasy, were forgiven by God. This alternation of apostasy and compensatory acts was nevertheless precarious. Many wished the ban would end with divine intervention. The revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa, on which there are numerous historical documents,<sup>74</sup> allows us to analyse how religious mentalities had evolved at the end of the 1630s. I argue that the remorse of apostasy was an essential feature of the revolt, and even one of its principal triggers: the aim of the insurgents was to find new means to make peace with God and, therefore, to guarantee salvation.

Before starting the examination of the sources, some facts about the revolt have to be shared.<sup>75</sup> In November 1637, peasants who, for the majority, used to be Christians, started to gather around a young charismatic leader Masuda Tokisada 益田時貞 (1621?–1638), better known under the name of Amakusa Shirō 天草四郎. Swiftly, the rebels attacked the domanical armies. At its peak, it is said that 37,000 men and women, led by former samurai (*rōnin* 浪人), village headmen and probably brotherhood leaders, participated in the revolt. They came from villages in the southern part of Shimabara Peninsula and the east islands of Amakusa archipelago. The revolt was a failure. It ended on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1638 with the massacre of the insurgents in the castle of Hara 原. The causes of the revolt are still discussed today by Japanese historians. If, in the past, socioeconomic elements were privileged,<sup>76</sup> since the 1980s, many have pointed out the religious motivations of the movement.<sup>77</sup>

---

74 A local historian, Tsuruta Kurazō 鶴田倉造, published, in 1994, the most comprehensive collection of documents related to the revolt: Tsuruta (Ed.), *Genshiryō de tsuzuru Amakusa Shimabara no ran* 原史料で綴る天草島原の乱 [abb. ASR]. Hondo 本渡 [Amakusa]: Hondo Municipality, 1994. The 1592 documents of this collection are classified in chronological order. In-text, I give the number of the document quoted.

75 The sequence of the events is well known. See, for instance, Ōhashi, *Kenshō Shimabara-Amakusa ikki* 検証島原天草一揆. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 2008, pp.12–17.

76 See, for example, Sukeno, *Shimabara no ran* 島原の乱. Tōkyō: Azuma Shuppan 東出版, 1967.

77 Irimoto, *Shimabara no ran* 島原の乱. Tōkyō: Kyōikusha 教育社, 1980; Kanda, *Shimabara no ran: Kirishitan no shinkō to busō hōki* 島原の乱ーキリシタンの信仰と武装蜂起. Tōkyō: Chūō Kōron Shinsha 中央公論新社, 2005; and Ōhashi, *Kenshō Shimabara-Amakusa ikki*, are representative studies of this trend.



**Map 2:** Main villages and towns involved in the revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa.

The first known document produced by the “rebels” is a call to the revolt. It was written on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1637 and bore the name of Kazusa Juwan (João) かづさじゅわん. Kazusa 加津佐 is a village situated on the west coast of the peninsula:

**Quote 10**

We declare as follows: a celestial being came down from heaven. God will judge the gentiles with fire. Anyone who chooses Christianity has to join us rapidly. Village headmen and elders must do the same. You need to spread this message in the islands. The monks of the gentiles will also be forgiven if they become Christians. Lord Amakusa

Shirō is a celestial being. He is summoning us. Those who in Japan will not become Christians, God will throw them by their left foot in hell. You need to be conscious of this. 10<sup>th</sup> month, 13<sup>th</sup> day, Kazusa Juwan.<sup>78</sup>

We find in the words of Juwan three central elements: (1) the revolt was a means for Christians to obtain God's forgiveness and salvation; (2) Buddhism was the enemy. It could not lead to paradise: on the contrary, all the "gentiles", whose behaviour infuriated God, would suffer his judgement and fall into hell; (3) a messiah, who acted as an intermediary between God and men, had come down from heaven. I will develop my argumentation around these three facets.

In the first month of the revolt, many testimonies lead us to think the insurgents believed God was sending them messages through miracles or natural phenomena. Two weeks after the call of Juwan, a relative of Amakusa Shirō, Watanabe Kosaemon 渡辺小左衛門 (1610–1638), also the district headman (*ōjōya* 大庄屋) of Ōyano 大矢野, an island located in the east of Amakusa archipelago, was arrested by samurai of the Kumamoto domain. We have the text of his first deposition:

**Quote 11**

– [Here is what I can say] about the Christian uprising which broke out recently in Shimabara. In Hinoe, a locality of Shimabara Peninsula, there was an old image of a divinity whose edges were torn up. We secretly wished to restore it but that was impossible. However, around twenty days before the events, the image was like new. Nobody knew how such a thing had happened. We were astounded. People from the surroundings heard about this fact and many came to venerate [the image]. At the moment of this extraordinary event, the one who is called "Gaspar the Blessed" preached and said marvellous things. The deputy learnt of this and arrested Gaspar. This is the reason why everything started.

– Around the 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> of the 10<sup>th</sup> month, the Christians of Amakusa started their uprising. They had heard about the Christian miracles, which had happened in Shimabara and thought they should venerate the image [*or God?*] [...].<sup>79</sup>

For an inhabitant of Ōyano (who might possibly be the same person, Watanabe Kosaemon), these signs sent by God were interpreted as an order to come back to the open practice of Christianity. When this man was arrested trying to sneak in the domain of Kumamoto, he spoke as follows:

**Quote 12**

I am a village headman of Ōyano Island in the archipelago of Amakusa. We are unmistakably of the religion of God. We came to spread the fire in the province of Higo. Recently, the Christian religion is flourishing in Arima. Since the ban on this religion, because we feared what people thought, it was impossible for us to make sacred images of our main divinities. However, in the space of one night, a splendid image

---

78 ASR-1.

79 ASR-95.

was elaborated. It is the work of God. The news of this marvellous fact spread and all of those who had lapsed corrected their religion as it used to be [i.e., came back to Christianity].<sup>80</sup>

The words used by this Christian are interesting: the verb *korobu* 転ぶ, which means “to fall/to lapse”, clearly refers to apostasy; *naosu* 直す signifies “to correct a mistake” or “to return to a good/correct situation” and certainly means the inhabitants of Ōyano, who regretted their behaviour, had decided to stop the concealment of their beliefs. In other words, the signs sent by God were believed to have the redemptive virtue of confession. By answering his appeal, the contrite Christians thought they would be forgiven for their sins.

After less than two months of battles in the countryside of Shimabara and Amakusa, the leaders of the revolt decided to entrench their troops in the castle of Hara and started to exchange messages with their enemies; the Bakufu wanted to understand what the deep motivations of this army of peasants were. The first message of the insurgents was transmitted on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February:

**Quote 13**

Do you think we entrenched ourselves in this castle in order to take control of the domain or to stir up a revolt against our lords? [Our aims] are completely different. As you have known for a long time, Christianity strictly forbids [its followers] to join another religion. But the Shogun reiterated many times the ban on [our religion]. This confused us. Those who thought it was impossible to consider the afterlife with disdain did not change their religion; this is why they had to endure harsh examinations. [The authorities] used inhuman means by covering them with shame and driving them into a state of utter destitution. Then, they were killed for the Lord of Heaven. The others [i.e., us], even those who continued to be faithful [to God], complied with the law on several occasions; while holding tears of blood, they changed their religion. They behaved this way because they were attached to the flesh or because they feared punishment. Recently, thanks to the miraculous action of God, [the faith] of the inhabitants [of the region] has revived [*another possibility*: everything went up in flames]. We do not wish to seize the domain. We do not act out of lust. If we behave like before and if there is no change in the ban, it will be difficult for us to endure the examinations and, by mental or physical weakness, we will [again] neglect the Almighty God. Behaving this way would mean we assign too much importance to our ephemeral life in this world. We would have been pathetic if we had not collaborated with the great work [of God]. This is why we are acting like this now. What we are doing is not wicked. [...]<sup>81</sup>

This document sums up the feelings of the common Christian – i.e., the majority who had repeatedly apostatized and regretted it – during the two first decades of the ban. The remorse of apostasy is strongly emphasized: indeed, about half of the text is dedicated to it. The martyrs are portrayed as heroes who were able to remain

---

80 ASR-338.

81 ASR-1053.

firm in the turmoil. Nevertheless, as the text above shows, the others, those who still had faith, were convinced God had not abandoned them. They clearly stated their aim was to obtain the withdrawal of the ban, which was considered a great obstacle for salvation.

An internal rule of the rebels, allegedly written by Amakusa Shirō, gives us other details about their beliefs and practices; it was found and copied by the troops of the Kumamoto domain. The document was distributed three weeks before the end of the siege, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, when the defeat seemed ineluctable. Military duties were compared to religious obligations (prayer, fasting or mortification) and as the only means for the repentant Christians to save their souls. Half of the eight articles of the document concern that question:

**Quote 14**

1– You who have joined this castle, by committing many sins, you had disobeyed [God?]. Therefore, your salvation in the afterlife was uncertain. But, thanks to a particular blessing, you have been called to serve in this castle. Do you understand the greatness of this benefit? It is not necessary to say it but accomplish your duty keeping this in mind.

2– Do not limit yourself to prayers, fasting and mortification of the flesh. Here and there, you must help repair the castle and defend it against the heretics. Prepare the weapons. All of this is part of your duties.

3– Your stay in this world is temporary. You, the people of this castle, know that your time [in this world] is about to end. Day and night, constantly repent for your past, do your daily duties and focus on prayers.

[...]

5– The sin of idleness might spread [among you]. We are experiencing a crucial event, especially now because it is Lent. Keep your post rigorously and serve day and night. Some of the occupants of the castle shut themselves away in their hut and lounge carelessly. This is intolerable. Remind all the people [of the castle].

[...]<sup>82</sup>

Faced with the imminence of defeat and death, men and women of the castle were urged to consider their last days in this world as a period of penance. Since this is a prescriptive document, it is hard to determine if it reflects a widespread attitude among the insurgents. The existence of this kind of document and the threats directed to those who did not cooperate (articles 4, 6 and 7 of the rule) indicate there were some tensions in the camp. However, the fierce defence of the rebel troops until the very last moment of the siege shows this rule certainly mirrored the beliefs of a significant number of the occupants of the castle.<sup>83</sup>

---

82 ASR-1236.

83 The archeological excavations organized in Hara Castle testify to the Christians' fierce resistance until the very last day: see the various articles included in Hattori; Senda;

The justification of violence by a divine will is, in Japan, not as common as in Europe during the same period.<sup>84</sup> However, it is not a completely absent feature in Japan history. One century before, the armies of the Ikkō leagues (*Ikkō ikki* 一向一揆), whose official purpose was generally to protect Shin Buddhism against its enemies, were also told by the clergy that their participation to combat was an act of loyalty toward the Buddha Amida and the founder of the school, Shinran 親鸞 (1173–1262). Those who died fighting were guaranteed they would be reborn in the Pure Land.<sup>85</sup>

In the villages controlled by the Christians, Buddhas and native gods were considered obstacles toward salvation; they were clearly designated as the enemies. As is often the case in a context of persecution, religious groups, which are forced to practice in secret, tend to strengthen their identity and perceive the religion of the oppressor with increased hostility.

The insurgents took back the space, which they had lost because of the ban, by christianizing it, and reasserted their belonging to the Catholic Church by their clothes or the ostentatious use of specific religious objects. This attitude was enhanced by the fact that in Shimabara and the Amakusa Islands, where the missionaries had been allowed in the past to spread the Catholic creed in-depth, numerous inhabitants were Christians by birth and were certainly convinced that gods and Buddhas were the creation of the Devil. Following the words of a Portuguese Jesuit, João Rodrigues Girão (1559–1629), they had been nourished with “the milk of the Company’s doctrine” (*o leite da doutrina da Companhia*) (f. 161).<sup>86</sup>

As was shown for the domain of Ōmura, at the end of the sixteenth century, Christians, influenced by the exclusive message of the clergy, tended to abandon the use of the amulets distributed by the itinerant priests of the Ise 伊勢 Shrine and to rely on the objects of piety furnished by the Church.<sup>87</sup>

Dutch and Japanese sources point out the destructive behaviour of the Christians. Nicolaes Couckebacker, the director (*opperhoofd*) of the Dutch East India Company in Japan, who was in Hirado at the end of 1637, wrote in his diary,

Miyatake (Eds.), *Hara-jō to Shimabara no ran: Arima no shiro-gaikō-inori* 原城と島原の乱-有馬の城・外交・祈り. Tōkyō: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha 新人物往来社, 2008.

84 Concerning “God’s warriors” in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, see, for example, Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion (vers 1525– vers 1610)*, 2 vols. Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1990.

85 For more information about the Ikkō leagues, see Kanda, *Ikkō ikki to Shinshū shinkō*, or Tsang, *War and Faith: Ikkō Ikki in Late Muromachi Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

86 Jap. Sin. 61, f. 132–165v, March 28, 1627.

87 Kudamatsu, *Ōmura-shi: Koto-no-umi no jitsugetsu* 大村史-琴湖の日月. Tōkyō: Kokusho Kankōkai 国書刊行会, 1994, pp.85–88.

on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, the peasants had burnt “Japanese churches” (*Japansche kercken*), i.e., temples and shrines, and built new places of worship where they had erected statues of Jesus and Mary. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January, he reported the rebels, like penitents, all wore white clothes and bore crosses on their forehead.<sup>88</sup> At the end of the revolt, Sekido Mokuemon 関戸 奎右衛門, an inhabitant of Ōyano Island, who had remained loyal to the lord of Amakusa, declared to the authorities the Christians had burnt the “gods” (*kamigami* 神々) of his village.<sup>89</sup>

The “born-again” Christians did not limit themselves to a symbolic war. Many Japanese documents show the insurgents tried to convert Buddhists by force. Those who refused to submit to the religion of *Deus* had to flee or to face death. Three weeks after the beginning of the event, seventy-three inhabitants of Iwaya 岩家, a village located on Ōyano Island, fled to Misumi 三角, a territory controlled by the domain of Kumamoto. They declared to the officers that Christians had threatened to kill them if they refused to convert. However, as followers of Shin Buddhism, they had preferred to escape. The same had happened to the Buddhist clergy of the island.<sup>90</sup> By physically and symbolically attacking followers of the native gods and Buddhas, it seems the insurgents were trying to reconcile with God, whose judgement they feared, and avenge themselves from those who endangered their salvation.

The last important religious facet of the revolt is the figure of Amakusa Shirō. Numerous documents from his “flock”, non-Christian commoners or Tokugawa armies, mention him. However, we do not have many documents about the “real” Shirō. One exception is the account of his mother; she was captured in Kumamoto domain at the beginning of the revolt. According to her, Shirō came from Ōyano Island; his real name was Tokisada and he was the son of Masuda Jinbei 益田甚兵衛 (?–1638), an ancient retainer of the Christian lord Konishi Yukinaga 小西行長 (c.1555–1600). He learnt to read and write, and studied in Nagasaki. Apparently, nothing distinguished him from the other youngsters from the upper sectors of the peasantry.<sup>91</sup>

His followers portrayed him in a completely different manner; for them, he was thought to be some kind of messiah or prophet. He proclaimed the conversion of Japan to Christianity in the near future, performed miracles and taught his knowledge

---

88 The diaries of the directors of the Dutch East India Company were partially edited by the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tōkyō (Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensan-jo 東京大学史料編纂所). The entries related to the revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa can be found in Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensan-jo 東京大学史料編纂所 (Ed.), *Oranda shōkan-chō nikki: Genbun* オランダ商館長日記一原文, vol. 3. Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku 東京大学, 1977, pp.84–142.

89 ASR-1590.

90 ASR-60.

91 Ōhashi, *Kenshō Shimabara-Amakusa ikki*, pp.114–115.

to those who wanted to listen. The most detailed account was made by Yamada Emosaku 山田右衛門作, a painter from Kuchinotsu 口之津 and one of the generals of the rebel army until his betrayal, who was captured on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1638 by the shogunal army. His life was spared. According to him, five inhabitants of Ōyano were spreading a prophecy before the revolt, which would have been first told by a priest in 1614, when he was expelled from Japan. The prophecy can be summarized as follows: twenty-six years after the ban, people in the region would witness marvellous phenomena and the appearance of a virtuous man (*zennin* 善人) endowed with extraordinary skills.<sup>92</sup> Some argued the revolt leaders had used Shirō to “accomplish” the prophecy and therefore to provoke the uprising of the peasants.<sup>93</sup> This is possible; however, their readily acceptance of the prophecy and Shirō indicates that they met some of their religious needs and expectations.

Shirō was perceived as a religious leader who could fulfil the principal duties of a Catholic priest. The miracles he allegedly accomplished convinced the peasants he had the required skills. An inhabitant of Shimabara town, Mokuzaemon 柰左衛門, who fought against the Christians, reported some deeds attributed to the young man. For instance, it was said he was able to walk above water or that he had, in front of witnesses, received a religious text (*kyōmon* 経文) from a bird!<sup>94</sup> According to Yamada Emosaku, some Christians thought he was immortal because he could not be reached by the weapons of the enemies.<sup>95</sup> A man who had deserted Hara Castle recounted, during his interrogation with the Tokugawa armies, that Shirō was considered by the insurgents to be superior to the abbot of the Honganji 本願寺, the head temple of Shin Buddhism.<sup>96</sup> Multiple examples could be given.

Shirō’s coming was not only predicted by a missionary; he was even seen as a kind of priest. The few descriptions we have of Shirō’s appearance indicate he was dressed as a foreigner: a non-Christian itinerant merchant, who was doing business in Amakusa, had met him and described him as wearing a white ruff and baggy trousers tight around the ankles.<sup>97</sup> Another witness, who had escaped from Hara Castle, even reported he had red hair. He also added that, during the siege, Shirō virtually never left his headquarters.<sup>98</sup> The aim was perhaps to convince the insurgents they were led by a foreign priest.

His resemblance to the foreign priests was not only physical: he was also able to cure the souls of the living and the dead. A retainer of the Matsukura clan, Sano

---

92 ASR-1526.

93 Sukeno, *Shimabara no ran*, pp.158–159.

94 ASR-3.

95 ASR-1526.

96 ASR-1001.

97 ASR-519.

98 ASR-902.

Yashichizaemon 佐野弥七左衛門, wrote in a memoir that peasants had been to Ōyano in order to meet Shirō. There, they had received his instructions and had been raised up to the rank of priest (*bateren* 伴天連). Later, endowed with this new legitimacy, they had come back to their village and had preached.<sup>99</sup> Yamada Emosaku depicted Shirō as a priest who was able to confess to his flock, ashamed of having apostatized, and to re-establish the Christian cult:

**Quote 15**

[The village leaders] discussed and decided to make Shirō their religious chief. After long talks, people from different villages sent messengers to Shirō in order to declare to him that they regretted their apostasy in the preceding years and also to raise him to the rank of general of the Christians whose task was to re-establish the religion.<sup>100</sup>

Dōke Shichirōemon 道家七郎右衛門, a samurai of Kumamoto domain, who was in Shimabara at the beginning of the revolt, reported things he had heard from the insurgents about Shirō:

**Quote 16**

The one the insurgents call lord Shirō is a young man of seventeen or eighteen years. They pretend he came down from heaven. They say the deceased cannot reach any further enlightenment because the Christian ceremonies for them are not held recently and that, in heaven (*tenjiku*), their master is extremely angry (*gekirin*). They tell the people to rejoice for the coming [of Shirō]. The apparition of fire above the sea and of crosses encouraged the people from the coasts to venerate him [*or God?*].<sup>101</sup>

The vocabulary used makes this excerpt rather obscure and hard to understand. It is nevertheless plausible the peasants thought their young leader had the capacity to save the souls of the deceased. This might be an indirect reference to the mass for the dead offered, in the past, by the Catholic clergy. The meaning of *tenjiku* 天竺 and *gekirin* 逆鱗 is unclear. *Tenjiku*, which originally means “India”, could relate, in the collective imagination of the seventeenth century, to a very distant country, almost fictitious, or even to heaven. *Gekirin* designates the anger of a superior who, in that case, could be God or the missionaries.

\*

The two main arguments developed in this essay – the tacit toleration of the officers, who focused their attention on external behaviours, regarding Christians’ beliefs and the great religious anxiety felt by the latter because of the ban – are seemingly quite contradictory. The few testimonies left by seventeenth-century Christians show us that this contradiction was only apparent.

---

99 ASR-2.

100 ASR-1526.

101 ASR-46.

There is no doubt many officers, especially in ancient strongholds of the missionaries, demonstrated an unwillingness to strictly implement Tokugawa anti-Christian measures and generally restrained themselves to a formal control of appearances; progressively, this control became annual and extended to the whole population.

This situation was not considered as the lesser evil by the followers of the missionaries. The growing impossibility for the majority of them to avoid multiple apostasies and to receive sacraments from a priest, in particular the sacrament of confession, provoked a deep feeling of apprehension. Their reluctance to become outwardly Buddhist indicates that the Christians had integrated the exclusive religious stance of the Catholic Church and the main benefit promised to those who were able to remain loyal to God: salvation in the afterlife.

Secrecy, which could be viewed, at first sight, as the most rational choice for those who wished to continue practicing Christianity without putting their lives at risk, was thus extremely painful. It encouraged the Christians to compensate for their sins by increasing individual and collective rituals. However, as the accounts of the insurgents of Shimabara and Amakusa reveal, all these compensatory acts were considered insufficient: only God's intervention could permit the abolition of anti-Christian measures, allow the believers to properly practice their cult and, therefore, guarantee their salvation.

## Appendix

### Quote 1

一、国主吉利支丹宗門の仕置善悪有之、宗門の考へ悪しき仕置の国には、隠れ候こと紛れ易きにより、其国には必ず吉利支丹宗門あり、切切旦那寺の改め念入る可きなり。[...] 農人町人職人等に日本の誓詞、南蛮の誓詞を致させ、寺請をとり、其後は一年も二年も改めの沙汰無之さし置かるる国あり。左様にて油断有之候へは、必ず吉利支丹かくれ有之こと多く候由

### Quote 2

一我等廿ヶ年以前ニ長崎へ参、十ヶ年余居申候内ニ禅宗ニ罷成候而、波佐見村之様ニ罷歸りきりしたん御改稠敷御座候付、きりしたん道具をふミ申、真言宗ニ罷成候得共きりしたん心残り候而、今ニきりしたん道具・木像・其外色々隠し申候[...]右之もくさうおたくニ見せ申候事実正也、別ニ見せ候者無御座候、殊ニきりしたん之心御座候者一人も不存候、此上は責殺被成候共、可申上儀無御座候

### Quote 3

三重村

一村中浦懸共弥信心ニ御座候由、宮寺参も無懈怠仕、毎月念仏号所之寺ニ而無油断仕候由、坊主咄ニ承候、宮々之掃除も別而きれいニ御座候

一当年之田作、去年ニはおとり不申候、畑ものも余村方はよく御座候、此所ニは今月六日・七日頃夕立雨降申候由承申候  
右は大村忠左衛門・浅田左門・沢井善左衛門内也

#### Quote 4

Viamse os pobres xpãos em summa afflicçam e aperto, por que por huma parte conheciam a gravissima offensa que cometião contra Ds adorando o Fotoqe ainda que fingidamente por outra temião grandemente a crueldade dos tormentos com que este cruel Tyranno custuma atormentar os que se lhe não rendem. E não sentião em si animo pera os sofrer ; esconderse não podia ser de effeito ; fugir não avia meyo nem caminho pera isso. Em fim venceo pola maior parte o temor e fraqueza ; ajuntaramse na caza do Bonzo como lhes era mandado adorarão alguns e forão os menos ; os mais posto que não adorarão, calaramse [...].

#### Quote 5

[O Provincial] manda os P<sup>es</sup> a diversas missões por todos estes reynos, e mais missões se tem feito nesta perseguçam que no tempo da paz porque como não temos casas, nem lugares determinados em que estar, a necessidade nos obriga a discurrir por todas partes com m<sup>to</sup> perigo mas com m<sup>to</sup> fruto e apeitamento destes xpãos, confessase infinita gente, sempre ha baptismos de novo, e se levantão outros que com a furia da perseguçam tinham caydo.

#### Quote 6

一 此以前乃事ハ不申及別而内府様日本乃き里し端たあてに對しへるせきさんを発し給ひて後こんはにやの伴てれ一人浦上在郷に久敷御滞留なされ諸き里し端のこんひさんを聞貴きさからめんとを授けたまひてすを背きたる者を立揚たまいせんぢよをき里し端になしたまひ惣而貴理志端に御合力なしたまふ事に少もおこた里たまはず節々此許を御見舞なされほ路しも乃為に百苦千難は不申及御命をも惜ミたまハさる者也

#### Quote 7

何れの御門派のはてれ衆も、御一体のてうすの御名代として、二ツとなきさんたゑけれしやのまことの御法を御ひろめ被成候事、聊うたかひなき儀と致納得候間、いつれの御門派にても、此所御徘徊之御出家衆をハ、随分御馳走申上、あにまの御合力を頼ミ可申覚悟ニ候

#### Quote 8

一当時逼塞稠敷に付き、恵けれ志屋へ参詣し、ミいさを拜ミ、談儀をきゝ、伴天連入満に参会是なき見きりなれハ、折と各きりしたん衆中こゝかしこに相集り、後生のつとめをはげまし、ひるで須信心をそたてらるへき事尤肝要なり、然ハ無油断やうにすゝめ、相衆会に定りたる時分にハおこたりな

く可相集、是まことに面とのくどくハ不及沙汰、ほろしものあにまに力をそゆる道なれば、はなはだふかきくりきなりと心得らるへき事、

#### Quote 9

一てんぐハ此節に当て、きり志端衆を悪道に引入れ、ひるですをうしなわせ、Ds の御掟をせめたいらげんと力をつくす事、うたかいなけれハ、Ds の御ひくわん成きり志端ハ、何れも心をあわせ、ひるてすをかため、信心をもよをし、ますく御掟御繁昌あるやうに、面との力及ぶほどなげかるへし、是Ds の御前におゐていかにもふかきくりきなりといふ事を、能といひきかせらるへし、

#### Quote 10

態申遣候、天人天下り被成、ぜんちよの分ハてうす様より、ひのぜいちよ被成候間、何の者成共、貴利支丹ニ成候ハ、爰元へ早々御越可有候、村々の庄屋をとな、はやく御越可有候、嶋中へ此状御廻可被成候、ぜんちよの坊主成共、貴利支丹ニ成申者御ゆるし可被成候、天草四郎様と申ハ、天人にて御座候、我等儀被召出候者にて候、きりしたんに成申さぬものハ、日本国中の者共、てうす様より、左の御足にていんへるのへ、御ふみこみ被成候間、其心得可有候  
十月十三日 かつさじゅわん

#### Quote 11

一、今度島原の切支丹起り申候事ハ、島原の内ひのへと申在所ニ、古キすその破申たる御影御座候由、内々表具など仕度存候得共、不罷成候処、此廿日中以前二人も不存ニ俄ニ新ひやうぐ出来申ニ付驚申候、是をあたりの者聞付大勢参拜ミ申候、加様なる不思議有之内ニべやとがすはると申ものだんぎなどと不思議を申候を彼所の御代官御聞被成御しぱり被成候、此意趣よりおこり申候事、

一、十月廿七八日の頃、天草の切支丹起申候儀ハ右島原領ニきりしたんの不思議ども御座候を承及、拜ミ可申と申 [...]

#### Quote 12

我等天草大矢野之庄屋ニ而御座候、不紛大うす宗にて候、肥後へ火を付ニ参候と為申由候、今度有馬へきりしたん宗誇之儀者、彼宗御法度之時分より、本尊之表具を仕儀、世上ニ恐て不罷成候処、一夜之間ニいかにも結構ニ表具出来候、是者でいうすの御作にて候、難有之由申渡、それより前ころびたる者共も、皆々もとのやうニ宗を直したる由候

#### Quote 13

今度、下々とゞ及籠城候事、若国家をも望ミ、国主をも背申様ニ可被思召候歟、聊非其儀候、きりしたんの宗旨ハ従前々如御存知、別宗ニ罷成候事不成教にて御座候、雖然、従天下様数ケ度御法度被仰付、度々致迷惑候、就中、後生之大事難遁存ル者ハ、依不易宗旨、色々御亂明稠敷、剩非人間之作法、或現恥辱、或極窘迫、終ニ為後來対天帝被責殺候畢、其外志御座候者も、惜

色身、恐呵責候故、乍押紅涙、数度随御意改宗門候、然処ニ今度、不思議之天慮難計、惣様如此燃立候、少として国家之望無之、私欲之儀無御座候、如前々罷居候ハハ、右之御法度ニ不相替、種々様々之御糺明難凌ても、又匡弱之色身にて候へハ、誤て背無量之天主、惜今生纒之露命、今度之大事空敷可罷成処、悲歎身ニ余候故、如此之仕合候、聊以非邪路候 [...]

#### Quote 14

一、今度此城内ニ御籠候各、誠此中如形、罪果数をつくし背奉り候事ニ候へハ、後生のたすかり不定の身ニ罷成候処ニ、各別之御慈悲を以、此城内の御人数に被召抱候事、如何程の御恩と思食候哉、乍不及申無油断心のおよび、御奉公無申迄候事、

一、おらしよ・ぜじゆん・じしひりいな等の善行のミに限申間敷候、城内そこその普請・扨又ゑれじよふせく手立、成程武器の嗜可被入御念事も皆御奉公に可成事、

一、現世には一旦の事と申候中に、此城内之人数は弥見しかき様ニ存候間、昼夜おこたりなく、前々よりの御後悔尤、日日の御礼、おらしよ等の御祈念専ニ可存候事、

[...]

一、不用油断の科ニも可罷成候間、大事之時分と言、殊今程くわれすまの内と申、我々の持口に駢相詰、夜白御奉公可被申候、人により小屋くに引入、すこしのすきにくつろきのみ見え申候、是無勿体儀ニ存候間、下々迄銘々に右の通可被仰聞候事、

[...]

#### Quote 15

[...] 其後相談仕候ハ、四郎守立、宗門之司ニ可用之由、皆々談合きわめ、天草四郎所へ村々より一人宛使をたて申候ハ、先年宗門ころひ、後悔ニ存候間、今度四郎をきりしたんの大将ニ仕り、宗門取立可申由、四郎方へ申遣候事、

#### Quote 16

一、四郎殿と申て十七八ノ人天より御ふり候が、此中切支丹のとふらひヲ不仕候ニ付、死人共うかひ不申候、てんちくよりも殊外御けきりんにて候、やかて迎を被下候間忝存候へと申ふれ申候、其内ニ海ニ火か見え候がくるす有之候ニ付、浦々のもの拝候由申候事、