St. Francis Xavier's Discovery of Japanese Buddhism

A Chapter in the European Discovery of Buddhism

(PART 1: BEFORE THE ARRIVAL IN JAPAN, 1547–1549)

URS APP

Introduction: Conversions

ON A STOPOVER in Malacca on the way to Japan, reports by Portuguese traders greatly encouraged expedition leader Francis Xavier and his fellow Jesuit missionaries. Some Portuguese men, the report said, had been offered to stay at a ghost-infested house in some Japanese town. Having managed to chase away one ghost by means of a cross, servants installed crosses at various places, especially near doors. When the neighbors got wind of this new and powerful exorcist technique, crosses made of paper, wood, and other materials popped up at the doors of almost every house in town. Spurred on by such good tidings, Xavier exclaimed: "Thus I hurry [to Japan] in joyful hope, and my soul jubilates in trusting anticipation of the bountiful harvest that awaits us there."[1] Indeed, if the sole sign of the cross could sweep a whole town, the Good News was surely destined to sweep the country!

Not long after their arrival in the Southern Japanese city of Kagoshima on August 15 of 1549, Xavier's interpreter and assistant Anjirō[2]

[1] Hans Haas, *Geschichte des Christentums in Japan*. Tokyo: Ostasiatische Gesellschaft, 1902, vol. 1, p. 83.

[2] Since "Anjirō" sounds a little strange as a Japanese name, this man has been renamed in various ways (Yajirō, Kanjirō, Hanshirō, etc.). In the Western sources he appears as "Angero" (Xavier and Lancilotto), "Angiroo" (Mendez Pinto) and "Anjiró" (Frois). See Paul Gen Aoyama, *Die Missionstätigkeit des hl. Franz Xaver in*

visited the nearby castle of the ruler of Satsuma, Shimazu Takahisa. The *daimyō* was delighted to meet Anjirō, a unique source of information on the customs, firearms, and trading potential of the Portuguese. *The* researcher of Xavier's life, Georg Schurhammer, describes this meeting as follows:

> When Anjirō showed him a very touching altarpiece of Mary with the Christ Child [. . .] Takahisa was greatly taken with it. He knelt down and reverenced it with much respect and ordered all those present to do the same.[3]

The *daimyō's* mother was so struck by the image that she requested a copy of it and a written account of the teachings of Christianity. After several days' work, Anjirō sent her an abstract of Christian doctrine.[4] On September 29, Xavier went with Anjirō to pay a visit to the castle. This happened to be the day of Michael, the archangel, under whose wing Xavier put the whole missionary venture in Japan.[5] Xavier's keen eye quickly discovered the coat of arms on the *daimyō's* belongings; as he had earlier heard from his interpreter Anjirō, it clearly showed a white cross in a circle. Was this a sign of the Lord, a proof that at some point in the past, Christianity had been brought to Japan?[6] Interested in the treasures of the foreigner, the *daimyō* was shown a beautifully illuminated Bible and a *Glossa ordinaria* commentary. The word of God did not fail to impress the *daimyō*, as Xavier reported to Europe:

> On the day of St. Michael we spoke with the *duque* of this land, and he honored us greatly by saying that we should very well guard the books of the Christian law and that the devil would have to suffer much through this law, if it were true

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Japan aus japanischer Sicht, St. Augustin: Steyler Verlag, 1967, p. 25; Haas 1902, vol. 1, p. 57; and especially Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times.* Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1982, vol. 3, pp. 269–270.

[3] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 4, p. 62. See also Haas 1902, vol. 1, pp. 85–86, and Aoyama 1967, pp. 66–67.

[4] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 4, pp. 62–63.

[5] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 4, p. 93; this information stems from Xavier's letter of November 5, 1549.

[6] Georg Schurhammer & Josef Wicki (eds.), *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta*. Roma: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1944/45, vol. 2, pp. 270–271.

> and good. Few days later he gave his vassals the permission to become Christians if they wished so.[7]

After a few days' stay, Xavier brought in a rich harvest: he baptized not only the administrator of the castle and his young daughter but also the wife and children of the *daimyō* plus some others, about fifteen persons in all,[8] and thus saved them from the certain eternity in hell that awaits all heathens.

Now let us, for edifying purposes, convert this story. The *daimyō* of Satsuma, the fifteenth regent of the Shimazu family, whose crest had the shape of a round bitpiece of a horse with its cross-like shape in the middle,[9] had heard of some strange-looking Buddhist *bonzes*[10] who had come directly from *Tenjiku* 天竺,[11] the homeland of Shaka 釋迦[12] and thus of the source of all traditions (*shū* 宗) in Buddhist teaching (*buppō* 佛法[13]). They had apparently brought along all sorts of interesting things that nobody had ever seen—maybe even some of those firearms that were creating such a stir among rival *daimyōs*.[14] The

[7] Xavier furnishes "this very joyful news" at the end of his letter "for your consolation and that you may thank God our Lord." Schurhammer & Wicki 1944/48, vol. 2, pp. 210–211.

[8] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 4, pp. 115–116.

[9] Haas 1902, vol. 1, p. 88.

[10] The Portuguese word "bonzo" stems from the Japanese *bōzu* (坊主 or 房主). This term was originally employed for the monks' dwelling (Jap. *sōbō* 僧房, Skt. *vihāra*), but gradually the meaning that is current to this day, i.e., that of "Buddhist monk" or "Buddhist priest," became prevalent. Since European monks had similar robes and tonsure, the term *bōzu* was, after their arrival in Japan, also used for European missionaries.

[11] The Chinese from early times called India *Tianzhu* 天竺, which is a transliteration of *Sindhu, Hindhu* or similar words that all have their origin in the name of the river Indus. See Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology. Philosophy and Origins,* Tokyo: Kōsei, 1997, p. 193. See also my remarks below.

[12] Shakyamuni Buddha. See Schurhammer 1982, vol. 4, p. 109.

[13] On the use of the word buppō 佛法 by Christians see Georg Schurhammer, *Das kirchliche Sprachproblem in der japanischen Jesuitenmission des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,* Tokyo 1928, p. 81. In the early years of their Japan mission, the Jesuits often used this word as an equivalent of the word "religion." See my remarks in the second part of this article on the important Daidōji 大道寺 document of 1551 where the word is used in just this way.

[14] The *Teppōki,* a Japanese history of the introduction of firearms into Japan, places the first arrival of a Portuguese ship on the island of Tanegashima on September

Japanese Anjirō, who had returned home on the same boat, had become the talk of the town in nearby Kagoshima. He was reported to not only speak the language of the monks from *Tenjiku* but also to be able to read their *o-kyō* 御経[15] and to translate their *buppō*. So the ruler invited Anjirō to his castle to learn what all the fuss was about. He questioned him about his travels and wanted to see some of those fascinating objects everybody raved about. Having foreseen this, Anjirō obliged by showing him an image of the Virgin with child that had so struck him when he first saw it. Sitting on his knees in the formal posture and leaning forward to see the object up close,[16] as one does for example when admiring a precious tea bowl, the ruler was stunned: though this was a picture painted on wood, it looked so very *real!* The *daimyō's* mother immediately wanted to own this image of Kannon, the bodhisattva of mercy,[17] and she was determined to find out more about this new transmission (*shū* 宗) of the *buppō* from *Tenjiku*. The abstract of this teaching, written by Anjirō, explained that the monks were bringing the new *buppō* of *Dainichi* 大日,[18] the maker of all things who is also called *butsu* or *hotoke* 佛,[19] and that they were transmitting the law of the eternal *tamashii* 魂[20] which will either go to *jōdo* 淨土, the Pure Land, or to *jigoku* 地獄[21] where it is going to be tortured most horribly by the *tengu* 天狗.[22]

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23 of 1543. See C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549–1650,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951, p. 26.

[15] *Sūtras,* holy scriptures.

[16] See Aoyama 1967, p. 67.

[17] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 4, p. 62, suggests that "Takahisa probably took the painting for a representation of Kannon."

[18] Until the summer of 1551, the word "God" was translated as *Dainichi* (see Schurhammer 1928, pp. 24–33); from then on, the Latin term *Deus* or its Portuguese equivalent was preferred. However, even after 1551, the word *hotoke* (which is written with the same character as *butsu*) was employed in the meaning of "God" (see Schurhammer 1928, p. 86).

[19] On the use of the word *hotoke* for "God" until Baltazar Gago's language reform of 1557 see Schurhammer 1928, pp. 67–68.

[20] On the use of this word for the *anima* or eternal soul of the Christians see Schurhammer 1928, pp. 69–73.

[21] On the use by the missionaries of the terms *jōdo* and *jigoku* see Schurhammer 1928, pp. 73–75.

[22] Until Gago's language reform and beyond, the Japanese word *tengu* 天狗 was used for the Satan of the Christians. See the example from Diego Collado, *Ars Gram-*

The subsequent visit by Francis Xavier left little doubt that his *jōdomon* 浄土門[23] constituted a new transmission (*shū* 宗) of the *buppō*. The foreign bonzes from *Tenjiku*, the homeland of *Shaka* 釋迦, wore long black robes, had a partly shaved head, were said to have no intercourse with women, refrained from eating animal meat,[24] and kept speaking of the very things Buddhist priests were so fond of: *jōdo* and *jigoku*, *hotoke* and *tengu*, *buppō* and *jōdomon*. So why should he not allow them to spread their *buppō* and let both his vassals and his family profit from the merits of the new transmission?

If the foreign monks' teaching was not very new, their rituals certainly were: that magic sign the monk kept making, sometimes even with fingers wetted by a magic potion that was rumored to be the most powerful of all medicines, accompanied by the spells his mouth uttered. Why not do what he demanded with such desperate insistence: make the solemn vow to believe in *Dainichi*, to hate the *Tengu*—and then have him pour some of that magic potion over your head while uttering those strange, powerful mantras[25] that assure the fulfillment of

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maticae Japonicae Lingoae, Roma 1632, cited in Schurhammer 1928, p. 102.

[23] Literally, "the gate to the Pure Land." In the protocol by Fernandez of the disputes in Yamaguchi of the summer of 1551, this word is used as follows (I use Schurhammer's translation of 1928, pp. 74–75, inserting the Japanese terms instead of his sometimes tendentious translations and substituting *jōdomon* for Schurhammer's *shōdōmon*): "Because the *tamashii* was born in order to pursue the *jōdomon,* it knows good and evil; and if it [. . .] uses this knowledge well by following on this *jōdomon,* it will, when it separates from the body, return to the *hotoke* who created it. But when the *tamashii* decides to act against reason, it abandons the *jōdomon,* and by delivering itself to evil it makes itself evil. When it [. . .] separates from the body in this state, it cannot enter *jōdo* which it threw away by making itself evil. And so the evil ones stay chained to evil, and the place where they are confined is *jigoku*."

[24] Lancilotto's report on Japanese religion that was based on Anjirō's information informs: "These religious eat nothing that can die; and he says that they do this in order to weaken the body so that it is not eager to sin; and this abstinence is common to all the religious of that land." Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 483. Based on this information, the Jesuit missionaries decided to refrain from eating meat or fish while in Japan: "It was therefore decided that it would be better to maintain a severe diet there [in Japan] than to be a cause of annoyance to anyone." Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 474.

[25] In Japanese, these are called "true words" (*shingon* 眞言), the very term that is used to designate the sect which puts Dainichi, the Great Sun Buddha, at the center of its veneration.

wishes, protection by invisible *tennin* 天人,[26] healing of illnesses, and especially eternal pleasures with the *tennin* and *hotoke* in the *jōdo* after death!

This might seem to be a pretty farfetched interpretation of a minor event in the Japanese discovery of Christianity. However, before we discard it, we might consider the report of Luis d'Almeida who next visited this lonely flock of baptized Christians thirteen years later. While preaching, he was suddenly interrupted: "Is the *Dios* of which you speak the same as *Dainichi* about whom Father Magister Francisco [Xavier] taught us and whom he told us to worship?"[27]

Now the worried reader might ask: what on earth has this to do with Francis Xavier's discovery of Japanese Buddhism? Well, it so happens that the Japanese discovery of Christianity and the European discovery of Japanese Buddhism have an identical set of protagonists. Furthermore, they constitute discoveries of a very similar kind. So their stories might actually have quite a few things in common. Let us look at another story:

> Xavier had mixed feelings for Zen. His first reaction was negative: 'Among the nine sects, there is one which maintains that the souls of men are mortal like that of beasts [. . .] The followers of this sect are evil. They were impatient when they heard us say that there is a hell.' However, Xavier's respect for Zen increased after his encounter with the abbot of the Fukushōji, 'Ninxit'.[28]

This account contains fragments of the biography of St. Francis Xavier by Schurhammer[29]—probably the greatest *scientific* hagiography ever—and lines them up in the wrong order. Xavier met Ninxit in 1549, shortly after his arrival in Japan. The "first reaction," however, represents his feelings about Japanese religion in 1552, i.e., *after* hav-

[26] Until replaced in Gago's language reform by the Portuguese *anjo,* the word *tennin* was the term for "angel." Schurhammer 1928, p. 106 lists *anjo* among the words from the confessionary *Salvator Mundi* of 1598.

[27] Schurhammer 1928, p. 27.

[28] Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 16.

[29] Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times.* Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1982 (4 volumes).

ing left Japan. This simple fact suggests that we are here in the fascinating realm of fiction. To allow more conscious juggling of fact and fiction, I will in this two-part article present some of the available evidence pasted on a bit of background information and supplemented by a concise chronology.

The Report by Jorge Alvares[30] (1547)

Stories of the Jesuits' encounter with Buddhism usually start with the meeting between Xavier and the Japanese refugee Anjirō in Malacca around December 7 of 1547.[31] However, at that time Anjirō spoke little Portuguese[32] and could hardly furnish much information. Moreover, Xavier had already around April of 1547[33] met the Portuguese captain Jorge Alvares who had informed him that Japan would be a much more fruitful soil for the Christian faith than India "because its people is superior to others on account of its willingness to learn."[34] Although Xavier had gained some earlier information on Japan from the Spanish captain Pero Diez, who had visited Japan in 1544,[35] the missionary's first detailed impressions of the country's religions are likely to stem from a report that Alvares wrote on Xavier's request in the first half of December of 1547 and sent to Rome on January 21, 1548, a week after his return to India.[36] Alvares was the captain of the ship that had saved

[30] For information on the namesakes of this man and on available sources see Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 260.

[31] This date is established by Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 269, note 2.

[32] Aoyama 1967, p. 38 quotes his statement from *Documenta indica* 339: "Ya antan entendía alguna cosa de portoges y hablava alguna palabra" [I already understood some Portuguese and spoke some words]. Anjirō was probably more aware of his knowledge than Xavier who in his letters to Europe often exaggerates others' linguistic knowledge. He wrote about Anjirō: "He can speak Portuguese rather well, so that he understood everything what I said to him and I what he said" (Schurhammer 1928, p. 14). Schurhammer's study contains many examples of Xavier's exaggerated portrayals.

[33] See Haas 1902, pp. 59–60 for discussions about the date and place of this meeting.

[34] Ibid., p. 59. Xavier wrote this in a letter to Rome dated Cochin, 21 January, 1548.

[35] Kapitza, Peter (ed.) *Japan in Europa. Texte und Bilddokumente zur europäischen Japankenntnis von Marco Polo bis Wilhelm von Humboldt* (*Band I*). München: Iudicium, 1990, p. 61. See also Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 265. Diez, who had also been in China (ibid., p. 264), noted that the Japanese "were pagans like the Chinese and employed the latter's script" (ibid., p. 265).

[36] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 273, note 1 furnishes detailed information on the ex-

Anjirō[37] from his pursuers in Japan and had initially brought him to Malacca; he was thus crucial in spurring Anjirō's interest in the Christian faith.[38] However, during that first trip, Anjirō's insufficient knowledge of Portuguese makes it unlikely that he passed much information to Alvares about Japanese religion.

Alvares reports[39] that the Japanese are very devoted to their idols; they even have some in their house[40] and pray to them every day for worldly benefit and protection. They use rosaries both at home and at pious houses, of which there are two kinds.[41] Each *padre* (called *bonzo*) has his own cell and his books.[42] In addition to rosaries, the *padres* use many Chinese books. During their daily prayers (midnight, Matins, Vespers, and Compline) and rituals they strike drums that Alvares had already observed in China, leading him to the conclusion

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tant versions of this report as well as its translations. Schurhammer's own annotated translation is given on pp. 273–281. While the original report is lost, no less than ten different versions are extant, and already in 1549 there were three Italian manuscript translations (Kapitza 1990, p. 61).

[37] See the dramatic account of this by Mendez Pinto in Haas 1902, vol. 1, pp. 51–52.

[38] During this first visit to Malacca, Anjirō wanted to be baptized, but the bishop's vicar Martinez made the salvation of his soul dependent upon his renunciation of further intercourse with his heathen wife—a condition Anjirō would not accept. He decided to return to Japan unbaptized, but a storm near the Chinese coast and his meeting with Alvaro Vaz led to his return to Malacca where he met Xavier in December of 1547. See Haas 1902, pp. 58–59.

[39] This report, *Informação das cousas de Japão,* is translated in Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, pp. 273–281. On the various manuscripts see note 1, p. 273, and Georg Schurhammer, *Die zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und seiner Nachbarländer zur Zeit des hl. Franz Xaver (1538–1552)*, Leipzig 1932, p. 234. The text translated by Schurhammer is found in Schurhammer & Wicki 1944/45, vol. 1, p. 392 ff.

[40] Presumably, Alvares refers to the *butsudan* 佛壇 or *kamidana* 神棚 that he observed in Japanese homes.

[41] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 278, equates these two kinds of pious houses with Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. However, the report is somewhat confusing in this respect; while it mentions this distinction, it is not entirely clear which items of the description belong to each kind. Alvares may have wanted to distinguish between monasteries (with cells occupied by monks) and community temples that were often occupied by a single priest.

[42] In contrast to their Chinese counterparts, Japanese monasteries usually have no individual cells with books, etc., as Alvares writes. His description of four prayer times is also inspired by European monasticism.

that this religious order must have its origin in China. These *padres* are by threat of execution required to be celibate but engage in sodomy with boys. They do not eat meat or fish and are mendicants; however, they also are the people's doctors and command such high respect that even kings obey them. They can offer asylum for a limited time to criminals with the exception of robbers.[43]

The pious houses have great and well-kept gardens. Their prayer hall is empty in the middle, with cushions arranged on the sides where priests line up for prayer. Lay people come too, particularly on Tuesdays. The idols are covered in gold, and "the head of their god is like that of a Kaffir,"[44] ears pierced like those of the idols of Malabar,[45] and diadems. Other idols resemble Catholic confessors and martyrs such as St. Lawrence or St. Stephen.

Several kinds of *padres* are distinguishable by their dress,[46] but all go shaved with a razor. They wear a stole (*kesa*) held by a wooden ring over their breast. All have the same beliefs and read and write Chinese but do not speak it. The *padres* perform marriage ceremonies[47] and elaborate funeral rites.[48] Women have their own nunneries and have no intercourse with men; they often come from good families, dress like their male counterparts, and also shave their hair.

There is also another kind of *padres* with other idols; this appears to be the indigenous order.[49] These *padres* are called *Shō*. They store their

[43] Alvares was no doubt familiar with this since he had allowed Anjirō to flee the country on his ship after the latter had killed someone and his temporary asylum in a Buddhist temple had expired.

[44] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 279. In the same report, Alvares also reports about the veneration that Japanese people exhibit for blacks: "They are a people who are very glad to see blacks, especially Kaffirs, so that they came fifteen and twenty leagues to see them. They show them great honor for three or four days" (Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 277).

[45] Such perceptions of the Buddha's marks of perfection led many Europeans to speculate on the African origins of the Buddha.

[46] Alvares' description of the dresses worn by monks are not all too clear. He speaks of white robes over which black linen clothes are worn but also says: "Of this order there are whites and greys" (Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 279).

[47] "They are married by *padres*. They are severely punished if they are not married by the *padres* of the land." Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 276.

[48] Alvares' detailed description of these rites (Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 280) would indicate that he observed a Japanese funeral.

[49] While the distinction made between the two kinds of "pious houses" was not very

small idols in tabernacles in groves outside of town and take them out only on festive occasions.[50] Alvares describes the attire of these priests and their ritual implements in detail; his description of these "great magicians" fits what we call *Yamabushi* rather than Shintō priests. However, the rituals for the sick and dead that Alvares also describes feature dances by women priestesses (*miko*) that hold spindles with bells.[51]

In sum, Alvares thus informed the Jesuits of two reigning heathen cults in Japan, one probably imported from China with numerous and large idols and various pious houses, and the other an indigenous cult focused on magic with small idols in tabernacles in the countryside. In both cults, funerals are said to be important. In the course of the year 1548, while this report was on its way to Rome, Xavier reached the decision to travel to Japan in order to propagate his faith. While the report by Alvares might have played some role in this decision, the observation of Anjirō and the knowledge gained from this first native informant about Japanese religions appear to have been a major inspiration.[52]

Anjirō's Bearings

For Europeans, the second earliest source of information about Japanese religion was the Japanese refugee Anjirō[53] whom Xavier met

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clear, that between the imported (Buddhism from China) and indigenous cult (Shintō, though not mentioned by name) is clear. However, the description of the *frades* of the latter fits the order of the Yamabushi which in many ways bridges Buddhism and indigenous beliefs and rituals.

[50] This appears to describe Shintō shrines.

[51] See the annotated translation of Shintō-related passages from Alvares' report in Georg Schurhammer, *Shin-tô. The Way of the Gods in Japan*. Bonn & Leipzig: Kurt Schroeder, 1923, pp. 161–164. Such rituals can even today be observed at Shintō shrines.

[52] In the letter dated January 14, 1549, Xavier's decision to travel to Japan was conveyed to Rome. Fully aware of the dangers ahead, he decided to proceed even before getting the official go-ahead, justifying his resolution by the high hopes for the propagation of Christianity that Paul (Anjirō) had kindled in him. See Haas 1902, pp. 72–73.

[53] Some information about this man was collected by Hans Haas, "Der Samurai Anjirō. Quellen zur Geschichte des ersten japanischen Christen," *Die Wahrheit* 2 (1901): 105–110, 122–127, 155–158, 170–175, 186–190, 209–213, 225–229, and 249–253. For more recent information see for example Aoyama 1967, p. 24 ff. and Schurhammer

in December 1547 in Malacca and then sent on to India. He received intensive instruction from the Jesuits both before and after his baptism on the name of Paulo de Santa Fé (May 20, 1548). He reportedly had quickly gained considerable knowledge both of the Portuguese language and the Christian faith. In an introduction to his report on the information gained from Anjirō, the Jesuit missionary Lancilotto explains:

> Even though he [Anjirō] did not receive higher education in the religion of his country and it appears that he relates things which stem from the views of the common man rather than their texts, I send this report because it contains many things worth knowing.[54]

Xavier blamed Anjirō's ignorance not just on his lack of higher religious education but on his inability to read religious scriptures when he wrote on February 2 of the same year:

> The religions of the Japanese are handed down in certain recondite letters unknown to the vulgar,[55] such as among us are the Latin. On which account Paul, a *homo idiota* [uneducated man] and quite plainly unschooled in such manner of books, states that he is not equipped to give evidence on the religions of his native land.[56]

The Jesuits should have believed Anjirō's confession of ignorance. But instead they pressed on, and Anjirō informed Xavier that the *law* (Por-

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1982, vol. 3, p. 268 ff. In note 1 on pp. 268–269, Schurhammer provides a survey of available sources and accounts about this man.

[54] Georg Schurhammer, *Das kirchliche Sprachproblem in der japanischen Jesuitenmission des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,* Tokyo, 1928, p. 20.

[55] Xavier was not yet clear about the provenience of these letters; they are the Chinese characters in which the texts of the Chinese Buddhist canon that was also used in Japan were written.

[56] Xavier to P. Simon Rodriguez in Portugal (2 Feb. 1549), cited after George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 32 . The original is found in Georg Schurhammer and Josef Wicki, *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta.* Roma: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1944/45, vol. 2, no. 79, 71. While it is certain that Anjirō was unable to read Buddhist texts, the question to which extent he could read and write Japanese is disputed. See the extensive discussion of this in Aoyama 1967, pp. 28–34.

tuguese: *ley*) of the Japanese was imported from a land called *Chengi-co* (*Tenjiku* 天竺) which is "situated beyond China and behind *Tartão*."[57]

The word *Tartão* ("Tartary") is a symptom for a problem whose dimensions will soon become clearer. Of course, Japanese geography does not know any such region;[58] and even for the Europeans it was still a hardly explored wonderland. The famous *Typus cosmographicus universalis* world map of 1532[59]—which features *Zipangri* (Japan) as an island just to the West and about one-third the size of the *Terra de Cuba* (North America)—situates *Tartaria Magna* in the vast expanse Northwest of the *Regnum Cathay* (China). Its frontiers are unclear, but it roughly corresponds to today's East Siberia, Mongolia, and Northwestern China, while it possibly may reach as far south as what we now call the Taklamakan desert or even Tibet.[60] On this map of 1532, "behind *Tartão*" would mean some region in central Siberia where, at the time, the huge expanse of *Scythia* was located.[61]

For the Europeans of the Middle Ages, Tartary had been the fabled land of Prester John, the king of enormous masses of Christians that, it was hoped, would help defeat the Saracens (Muslims). For the Japanese, on the other hand, *Tenjiku* was the land of origin of the *buppō* 佛法, the Law or Teaching of the Buddha. Corresponding roughly to what we call the Indian subcontinent, *Tenjiku* had been described in detail by Chinese pilgrims such as Xuanzang. But such descriptions

[57] Schurhammer & Wicki 1944/45, vol. 2, p. 11.

[58] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 474 correctly notes that *Tenjiku* refers to "India, the land of the Buddha"; but the following assertion that "*Tartan* is the Japanese form of Tartary" is of course only true on the level of pronunciation and thus does not signify more than the statement that *Tartan* is the Spanish form of *Tartão*.

[59] Johann Huttich & Simon Grynaeus, *Novus orbis regionum*. Basel 1532.

[60] The fact that even many decades later, in 1626, the Jesuits could still stage a publicity coup by portraying Andrade's discovery of Tibet as that of "Grand Cathay" shows how hazy Central Asian and Far Eastern geography still was for the Europeans. See Hugues Didier, *Les portugais au Tibet. Les premières relations jésuites (1624–1635)*. Paris: Chandeigne, 1996, p. 13. In this respect, the *Typus cosmographicus universalis* was far ahead of its time, as it clearly identifies Marco Polo's "Cathay" as China with the city of "Cambala" (Cambaluc; today's Beijing) as its capital.

[61] Indeed, this is the conclusion that Lancilotto came to in his third report. Schurhammer (1982, vol. 3, p. 574) summarizes: "Cencico, the homeland of Shaka, Lancilotto suspected was in the neighborhood of Scythia."

were out of Anjirō's reach since they formed part of the Chinese Buddhist Canon and thus of the *ley*[62] that he felt unable to explain in detail. So, while standing right in *Tenjiku*,[63] poor Anjirō had to somehow locate this important land on the maps of the Portuguese. Since everybody was telling him that they were now in *India oriental* and the maps showed not the slightest trace of *Tenjiku*, he simply put it in some place that his mentors were also unacquainted with, somewhere "beyond Tartão." Unaware of such problems, Xavier reported back to his superiors in Rome:

> According to the report of Paul [Anjirō], the *ley* that is taught in *Tenjiku* is also prevalent in the whole of *Tartão*, China, and Japan. But since he does not understand the language in which the *ley* is written, which his countrymen possess written in books, and which corresponds to our Latin, he is also unable to give us complete information about that *ley* as it appears *en sus libros de inpressión* [in their printed books].[64]

Anjirō was probably less concerned about the exact location of *Tenjiku* than his Jesuit teachers. But, while he learnt soon after his return to Japan that he had actually been in *Tenjiku*, it would take the know-it-all Europeans another 300 years until they finally realized that the Buddhist religion had originated in India.[65] Meanwhile, Xavier and An-

[62] Portuguese for "law" (Jap. *hō* 法, Skt. *dharma*). Since this paper is, on one level at least, about words and their meanings, the reader will excuse the occasional strange word from a strange world.

[63] It is likely that Anjirō only realized that he had been in the fabled *Tenjiku* when educated inhabitants of Kagoshima figured this out after the arrival of Anjirō and the Jesuits on August 15, 1549. This discovery must have greatly enhanced his status; being the first Japanese to visit *India oriental* was of course incomparably inferior to being the first to have been in *Tenjiku,* the homeland of Buddhism.

[64] Schurhammer & Wicki 1944/45, vol. 2, p. 39. Book printing in Asia is far older than in Europe, where, at the time of this letter, printed books were still quite costly and comparatively rare. In the Far East, the earliest woodblock prints of Buddhist prayers date from the mid-8th century, and from the 9th and 10th centuries more and more Buddhist texts were distributed in printed form. In the 12th and 13th centuries, various large-scale publication projects of Buddhist texts were carried out. Over 80,000 double-sided printing plates of one of these projects, the mid-13th century printing of the Chinese Buddhist Canon in Korea, are still stored at the Haeinsa monastery in Korea.

[65] While there were earlier indications and guesses, this fact was for the first time co-

jirō assumed that *Tartão* and *Tenjiku* were two large pieces of a single puzzle that we call "the world." Little did they know that they were not dealing with *one* but rather with *two* puzzles: two world views so fundamentally different that conflicting codes such as *Tartão* and *Tenjiku* were just the tip of the iceberg: at stake were not just some countries on a rapidly expanding globe, but rather the whole universe with sun and moon, paradise and hell.

Anjirō had lost his bearings in more than just the geographical sense. Having murdered a man prior to his escape from Japan, he was extremely interested in redemption. Xavier reported the following observations about Anjirō and his servant to the founder of the Jesuit order on June 22, 1549:

> I often asked them what they found best in our *ley*. They always replied that it was confession and communion, and it seemed to them that nobody in his right mind could refuse to become Christian. And after our Holy Faith was explained to them, I heard Paul of the Holy Faith [Anjirō] say with many sighs: "O ye people of Japan! You unfortunate ones, worshiping creatures as Gods that were created by God to serve man!" I asked him why he said that, and he told me that he said it because his countrymen prayed to the sun and the moon, ignorant of the fact that the sun and the moon are, as it were, just servants of those who know Jesus Christ, since their only function consists in lighting up days and nights so that men can, bathed in their light, serve God by praising his son Jesus Christ on earth.[66]

Xavier related such events with pride to Rome, explaining that these Japanese were not only very devout but also unbelievably rational. Indeed, they did not simply learn the ten commandments by heart in ord-

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herently and irrefutably proved in the pioneering work of Eugène Burnouf: *Introduction á l'histoire du Buddhisme Indien,* Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1844. The spelling of the name of this religion was at the time still unstable; in French it was soon to change from "Buddhisme" to "Bouddhisme," and in German from "Buddhaismus" to "Buddhismus." For examples mainly from the English-speaking world see Philip C. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[66] Quoted with slight changes from Schurhammer 1928, pp. 18–19.

er to recite them like some stupid Indian *mantra:* rather, they kept asking questions and did not accept anything unless it satisfied their sharp intellect.[67]

For Anjirō and his teachers, language instruction was the vehicle for the most important things man ought to know: the creation of the world in six days by an almighty God, man's fall from paradise, the great deluge, the Tower of Babel, the salvation through Jesus, the mystery of trinity, and of course the existence of an *anima* that arises with each person and is eternal, either to rejoice in heaven or fry in hell—that horrible place deep below ground. Unlike in modern language instruction, the process had a certain one-way nature: since there were no dictionaries and no third languages to resort to, everything depended on Anjirō's capability of grasping the ideas correctly. His adaptation seems to have been quite thorough; two extant letters of Anjirō are "completely Christian both in expression and conception"[68] and show hardly any trace of the heathen Japanese.

While the Jesuit *padres* were surprised and enchanted by the fast progress their Japanese disciple made with regard to the Christian world view, the enthusiastic adoption of it by this Japanese *Paulus* might also have made them wonder whether there was, so to say, anything left of *Saulus*. . . . In concrete terms: in view of the surprisingly large regions that purportedly adhered to the *ley* that had its origin in *Tenjiku* and was also prevalent in Japan, the Jesuits were of course interested in reliable and detailed information about it. Now let us examine what they learnt from Anjirō, the first native informant about the *ley* from *Tenjiku*, during the instruction before the baptism between January and May of 1548.[69]

Information on Japanese Religion Gained from Anjirō (1548–49)

During this instruction period, the Italian Jesuit Lancilotto questioned Anjirō on Japanese religion, custom, and the country in general. From

[67] Also, Xavier was quite disappointed with progress in India; on January 12 of 1549 he wrote to Ignatius of Loyola that the Indians, on account of their great sins, were not at all inclined to become Christians. See Aoyama 1967, pp. 40–41.

[68] Schurhammer 1928, p. 23.

[69] The information from this report that is in the following thematically arranged and presented in abbreviated form is drawn from Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, pp. 480–

Lancilotto's letter we can gather the context in which this information was gained:

> He [Anjirō] has been instructed thoroughly in the mysteries of our faith and subsequently became Christian. In a brief compendium he translated the main tenets of our faith into his language. He diligently devotes himself to prayer and meditation, calling and sighing to our Lord Jesus Christ, and his attitude is indescribably good. When we asked him at the time of catechism instruction, he reported to us [. . .] about the religions of his land.[70]

This information about Japanese religion[71] made its way to Europe in a variety of forms and languages. On the basis of extensive research of all traces of extant and lost copies, Schurhammer established that Lancilotto wrote three different Japan reports.[72] Lancilotto's *first* Japan report contains sixteen sections and was written for Goa governor Garcia de Sá;[73] the *second* adds ten sections;[74] and the *third* rearranges the

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488 and 573–574. Haas 1902, pp. 280–300 was also consulted. Only information on Japanese religion is mentioned, and topics that concern Buddhism are captured in somewhat greater detail than customs of folk religion or Shintō.

[70] Schurhammer 1918, p. 16.

[71] See the next two footnotes.

[72] See the stemma in Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, pp. 634–635. Schurhammer calls the different reports "drafts," which could lead to speculations about a "final" report. In order to avoid unnecessary confusion, I will simply call them Lancilotto's first, second, and third Japan reports.

[73] Lancilotto wrote this report in Italian on the basis of Anjirō's Portuguese words. It was then translated by Xavier into Spanish and from there into Portuguese, since it was compiled for the Portuguese governor of Goa. Xavier's Spanish version was fitted with an introduction and a conclusion by Cosme de Torres who sent it from Goa to Europe on November 25, 1548. See references and additional information in Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 480.

[74] Two copies of the lost Italian original as well as a Latin translation with corrections and an Italian abstract are extant. Another Latin translation with many errors became rather popular and forms for example the basis of the German translation of Haas (1902, vol. 1, pp. 280–300). Xavier sent his Spanish translation of Lancilotto's "first Cochin report" to Simon Rodriguez in Portugal (Cochin, January 1, 1549); this was from 1553 used for reading in Jesuit refectories. These and more references are found in Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 480; the added sections are translated in the

entire information while adding a single section at the end.[75] Only the third report is extant in its original Italian from Lancilotto's hand.[76] The fact that all translations by Anjirō are lost[77] makes these reports by Lancilotto even more valuable.

When reading Lancilotto's reports, the context in which they were gained must not be overlooked: Anjirō was answering questions posed by the Jesuit Lancilotto, one of his teachers of Christian doctrine, who was of course familiar with Alvares' report and surely focused on some of the points raised in it. This may explain, for example, Anjirō's confusing attempt to distinguish between Japanese *padres* by the color of their dress—a distinction appropriate for European monastic orders with their distinctive garbs but hardly for Buddhist monks who often wear robes of different colors and designs depending on occasion and status. Furthermore, these questions and answers were part and parcel of Anjirō's preparation for baptism. Anjirō was trying very hard to understand Christianity in preparation of this rite—an effort that involved translating what was unfamiliar into something familiar—for example, Christian hell into Japanese *jigoku*, or more generally, Christianity into Japanese religion. At the same time, Anjirō was also aware

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same work (pp. 572–573). According to Henri de Lubac, *La rencontre du Bouddhisme et de l'occident,* Paris: Aubier, 1952, p. 53, a copy of this second report got into the hands of Guillaume Postel who then translated and published it together with his commentary in his *Des Merveilles du Monde,* 1552 of which a single copy is extant at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Postel's book thus was the first avenue by which information about Japanese religion reached the common European public.

[75] See Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, pp. 480–481 (notes 1 & 2) as well as pp. 634–637 on all lost and extant sources. The information which was only included in this "second Cochin" report is summarized in Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 574, where an interesting additional paragraph on the death of Shaka is also translated.

[76] Bibliotheca Nazionale in Rome, manuscript *Fondo Gesuitico* No. 1384, n. 2.

[77] Schurhammer 1928, p. 22, mentions four such translations: 1) a brief catechism with the major prayers and teachings such as the ten commandments, probably finished before Xavier arrived in Japan; 2) a compendium of the Christian faith, written by Xavier for the mother of the *daimyō* of Satsuma shortly after his arrival in Kagoshima; 3) seven psalms for the Friday service, a litany (probably the litany of all saints), some other prayers, a baptism instruction, and a calendar of church festivals; 4) an extensive compendium of Christian faith which Xavier wrote during the winter of 1549/50 in Kagoshima. This compendium took over one hour to read and was the main means of instruction. Xavier and his helpers read from it in the streets and also during meetings with notables and interviews of curious people.

of his mentors' plan to missionize Japan—which was the reason for Lancilotto's questions. This necessitated a translation in the other direction: just as *Tenjiku* needed to be translated into a place found on a European map, Japanese religion had to be translated into Christianity. This latter translation defines the overall character of Anjirō's report.

Anjirō mentions three kinds of Japanese *padres* who all conform to the three vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and live in monasteries situated in towns or forests.[78] Those in towns do not marry, live on alms, shave hair and beard, and refrain from eating meat. Their cassocks look almost like those of the Jesuits, and like them they eat in refectories and fast many times. They observe five regular prayer times, one of which is at midnight when they get up to pray and sing. The *padres* that are dressed in black are selectively admitted, very learned, obedient to their superior, and enjoy a good reputation;[79] but though they praise chastity, they commit dreadful sins with boys whom they teach in their monasteries.

Other priests wear robes of ashen color; they also stay celibate. But next to their monasteries are those of nuns who are dressed in the same way and devoted to similar practices. They are rumored to have intercourse with the monks while preventing conception by some means. A third kind of *padres* is also dressed in black and follows severe ascetic practices. They pray three times per day.[80] On one mountain there are 5,000 very rich *padres* with servants and nice clothes who observe chastity so strictly that no woman must approach closer than 3,000 feet.[81] Describing how the Japanese people do penance, Anjirō gives a

[78] The second report states: "Their religions have the profession and the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and they are exercised in humility before their entrance into the order." Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 572.

[79] This description—which is strangely reminiscent of the Jesuit order—would appear to fit several sects, but Anjirō was probably thinking of the Zen or Shingon *padres* prominent in Kagoshima.

[80] It is probably futile to seek actual sects that conform to these descriptions; rather, one may assume that Anjirō was made familiar with Alvares' information and had to answer questions about topics brought up by Alvares. Anjirō quite obviously had little knowledge about the Buddhist sects of his country; he does not mention a single one by name, and the teachings he attributes to them are mostly of a very Christian flavor.

[81] This appears to refer to the sacred Mt. Kōya. Women were commonly excluded from "entering" such mountains because of well-founded fears that the mountain god-

detailed description of some austerities that we now associate with the Yamabushi.

Anjirō told his questioners that the Japanese believers pray with folded hands like Christians, cued by bells and using rosaries with 108 beads representing the 108 sins; those who can read also use small booklets. In the morning they pronounce nine words and make signs in the form of the Andreas cross to protect themselves from demons. The *padres* pray in a language the people do not understand, just like the Latin of Christian priests. They preach often and move their audiences to tears. So far so good. But what is the essence of the teaching of these Japanese monks?

> They preach that there is only one single God, the Creator of all things. They also preach that there is a paradise, a place of purification,[82] and a hell; and they say that all souls when they depart from this world, go to the place of purification, both the good and the bad; and from there the good are sent to the place where God is and the evil to the place where the devil is. They also say that God sends the devil into this world to punish the bad.[83]

When reading this explanation, one might think that missionizing such people might not be worth the risk of a long and dangerous journey; but, probably cued by a question about the custom of sexual intercourse with boys at these god-fearing Japanese monasteries,[84] Anjirō volunteered another proof of his flawless adoption of Christian values:

> He said that these religious would be leading a very good life except for the fact that they are known for that most ugly of all sins: they have, that is, many boys for instruction in the monastery, although they preach to the people that this is an

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dess might become jealous and wreak havoc.

[82] This is, of course, the Christian purgatory. Schurhammer (1982, vol. 3, p. 574) on Lancilotto's third report: "Purgatory is a kind of customhouse where the good and evil souls go after death; and the evil are sent from there to hell, and the good to heaven."

[83] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 483.

[84] Alvares' report already mentioned this: "They engage in sodomy with boys whom they instruct" but immediately adds: "As a rule they are not reproached for this" (Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 279).

extremely serious sin, and they praise chastity.[85]

Anjirō's explanations of Japanese religious rites thus have distinct Christian hues: the faithful pray for redemption of sins, give alms, make pilgrimages, and fast at different times of the year.[86] They sing and pray in front of an altar and ring bells to call for worship, prayer, and sermon. When a child is born, it is immediately washed; if it dies before that, the parents think they have committed a grave sin. When someone dies, they assemble with burning candles to bury or cremate the corpse. Priests burn incense on an altar-like stone while reciting prayers. The prayer-houses have sculpted or painted images of saints of both sexes, adorned with halos and crowns. One image, called Quaneuoa (Kannon 觀音), represents a woman with a child. Although people pray only to one God, namely, Dainichi,[87] the creator of all things whom they represent with one body and three heads, they also address prayers to the saints in order to make them intervene with God.

Anjirō also told his Jesuit mentors the story of a man called *Xaqua* (Shaka) who is revered like a saint. Born in a country to the West of China called *Chengico* (*Tenjiku*) in miraculous circumstances which are explained in some detail, the baby boy could already walk after three months. Advancing three steps he pointed one hand toward heaven and the other toward earth and said: "I am the only one in heaven and the only one on earth." From age 18, instead of marrying according to his father's wish, he led the life of a hermit for six years and subsequently preached to the people. He became so revered and influential that he changed the laws of the country and taught the peo-

[85] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 483. Of course, just having boys at monasteries is not what this sin is about. The sin in question is often called "unspeakable," but Lancilotto's third report spells it out. Schurhammer (ibid., p. 483) chastely cites just the Latin version: "Omnes notantur de turpissimo Sodomorum vitio, nam omnes nobiles dant illis filios suos instruendi gratia, quibus sine freno abutuntur." The theme of the bonzes not doing what they themselves preach was to become an often evoked one; but in this case, inspection of the premises in Japan revealed that the bonzes did not preach against this sin but rather were quite unashamed of it.

[86] The second report states: "To obtain the remission of sins for the living and the dead, they make use of prayers, alms, pilgrimages, and fasts, and this many times during the year; and when they fast, they eat at the time we do, but their fast is stricter than ours." Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 572.

[87] This name is spelled variously, for example, *Doniche* or *Dinicho* or *Denychy*.

ple how to pray to God. His 8,000 pupils imitated his way of life, and some of them went to China where these teachings were also accepted. When the teaching of Xaqua was introduced from Chengico (*Tenjiku*) via Tartary and China to Japan 500 or more years ago, idols were destroyed, so that to this day fragments of old idols are found like in Rome. But what was this very influential man's teaching? Lancilotto explains:

> This Shaka taught all these peoples to worship one single God, the Creator of all things; and he ordered that he be painted, as has been said above, with one single body and three heads.[88]

Apart from that most important teaching, he also gave five commandments: 1) Thou shall not kill; 2) Thou shall not steal; 3) Thou shall not fornicate; 4) Thou shall not get aggravated over things that cannot be changed; and 5) Thou shall forgive insults.[89] Furthermore, he wrote many useful books about virtues and vices, wherein he taught that people should behave according to their status. He prescribed frequent fasting and taught that castigation of the body is very pleasing to God and powerful for the absolution from sins. He also taught that the souls of people were tortured in hell by devils and roasted in eternal fire; and he spoke of a purgatory and of angels in paradise who are busy adoring the glory of God. Japanese people believe that angels, created from a different substance, protect them, which is why they carry pictures of these angels on them.

Anjirō's mind set while he divulged all of this information to Lancilotto is described as follows:

> He says it seems to him that the whole of Japan would be glad to become Christian, for they have written in their books that at some time there will be only one law, and none can be imagined better than ours. And he is therefore very happy, since

[88] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 485. On p. 262 of an early article ("The Early Jesuits and Zen," *The Month* May (1962): 261–274), Michael Cooper makes the following remark about Anjirō's understanding of Buddhism: "He gives a fairly accurate description of the Buddha and other deities."

[89] Anjirō probably could not remember number four and five of the Buddhist commandments which prohibit lying and ingestion of intoxicating substances.

> it seems to him that God is granting him a great grace in that he will be the means for bringing people to Japan to preach this holy law. And although he is married, he has offered to go from two to four years in the company of the priests who will sail there, until Christianity has made a good beginning in that land and the priests have learned the language very well.[90]

Indeed, Lancilotto's report paints the picture of a religion that is surprisingly similar to Christianity in many respects, particularly in the fundamental belief in a God (*Dainichi*) who is represented as a kind of trinity. This faith was preached by a saint from *Tenjiku* by the name of *Xaqua* and introduced a long time ago from Tenjiku to China and Japan, eliminating the old idols that were previously venerated.[91] The teaching of *Xaqua* looks rather like a thin carbon copy of Christian doctrine, comprising everything from a creator God to the devils and from the purgatory to angels. In the third report, the founder of the religion of Shaka even gets his well-deserved resurrection and ascension to heaven:

> This Shaka, who gave laws to these people of China and Japan, ended his life as follows. He called all of his disciples and the people in general together and preached to them and said at the end that he would soon die. And he stepped into a marble tomb which he had ordered to be built and died before the eyes of all. His disciples then burned his body, and as they were placing his ashes in the same tomb, Shaka himself, in the presence of all, appeared in the air above a white cloud with a cheerful countenance and a marvelous aspect and thus went up to heaven and was seen no more. He was ninety years old.[92]

[90] Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 487.

[91] Methods of missionizing typical for monotheistic religions are here ascribed to Shaka's religion: "They say that more than fifteen hundred years ago the idols in the kingdom of Cengico [Tenjiku], from which one passes through China and Tartan [Spanish for the Portuguese Tartão] to Japan, and also on that island, were destroyed through the teaching of Shaka." Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 572.

[92] This unique new version of Shakyamuni's death, cooked up by Anjirō and his friends in the Jesuit seminary in Goa, is cited from Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 574.

As described by Anjirō, the Japanese ritual also bears major marks of Catholicism: bells and rosaries, monasticism and veneration of saints, baptism and candle-lit burial. Judging from this report, one can conclude that the knowledge of Buddhist doctrine of Anjirō and his two Japanese companions was hardly commensurate with their fervor to become good Christians. Only the biography of Shaka and some Yamabushi rituals are described in any detail. No Buddhist sect is mentioned by name, and of the myriad buddhas and bodhisattvas, etc., only Kannon and Dainichi appear—though in rather strange roles.

Whatever the Jesuits might have thought about all this: it certainly fit right into their world view and plans. Almost everything Anjirō reported about the religion of Japan indicated that these people must once have been in the possession not just of faith in God—which of course all people of Asia originally embraced since, according to the European view of history, all are descendants of Noah's son Sem—but even of the true Christian faith. Anjirō gave further evidence supporting this idea when he reported, as mentioned in the introduction, that a ruler of Japan had a cross in his coat of arms.[93] So the conclusions to the report are hardly surprising:

> The Japanese do not distinguish between foods and do not have circumcision.[94] It seems that the Good News was already preached there but that its light first dimmed because of their sins and then was removed entirely because of a heretic like Mohammed. While I wrote this, an Armenian bishop came by who has spent over forty years in these regions. He told me that he had read that at the beginning of the Church, Armenians had preached in China and had converted the country to Christ. However, it would be very good if the light of the true faith were once again brought to these countries.[95]

The task of missionizing Japan, then, would consist in reawakening that old holy knowledge buried under the heresy of the prophet from *Tenjiku* named *Xaqua* (Shaka) and his clergy. The Jesuits thus pre-

[93] Haas 1902, p. 86.
[94] This signifies, of course, that there are no telltale signs of the Jewish faith.
[95] Haas 1902, p. 299.

pared themselves not so much for slashing and burning, as for example in Central America, but rather for gently interrupting the slumber of the True Faith in Japan and even studying its holy scriptures with a glance toward China. This might involve some problems with the clergy of the false prophet *Shaka,* true, but the basis was already laid through the apostle Thomas or Armenian missionaries or some unknown other route. The task of formulating the wake-up call, however, was destined for the author of all this information, Anjirō.

A Glimpse of Zen

Before setting out from Malacca to Japan, Anjirō, who had undergone the severe meditations reserved only for the hardier characters in Jesuit seminaries, volunteered a piece of information to Xavier that was of such great interest to him that he included it in a letter to Europe. This information shows that Anjirō (and possibly his companions) was to some extent familiar with the practices at the large Sōtō-Zen temple called Fukushōji 福昌寺 in Kagoshima:

> Paulo de Santa Fee, the Japanese, our companion, told me one thing which consoled me much; and what he told me is that in the monastery of his land, where there are many *frades* and a school, they have among them a practice of meditating which is as follows: he who has charge of the house, their superior, who is the most learned, calls them all together and addresses them in the manner of a sermon; and then he says to each one of them that they should meditate for the space of an hour on the following: When a man is dying and cannot speak, since the soul is being separated from the body, if it could then speak in such a separation and withdrawal of the soul, what things would the soul say to the body? And also, of those who are in hell or purgatory, if they would return to this life, what would they say? And after the hour has passed, the superior of the house examines each one of them on what he experienced during that hour when he meditated; and if he says something good, he praises him; and, on the other hand, he reproaches him when he says things which are not worth remembering.

APP: FRANCIS XAVIER'S DISCOVERY

Concise Chronology of Events

1544	Pero Diez sails from the Chinese Ningpo Islands to Japan; later met Xavier on Ternate island and told him of his Japan visit (Schurhammer 1982, vol. 3, p. 265; Schurhammer is henceforth abbreviated as SH)
1546	Jorge Alvares spends some time in Japan (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 269, note 4)
1546	At the end of the year, Anjirō meets again Alvaro Vaz (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 270)
1547	Alvares welcomes Anjirō and a servant on his ship in Yamagawa harbor near Kagoshima and sails with them to Malacca (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 270)
1547/04	Xavier meets Alvares and hears about Japan (Haas 1902 vol. 1, pp. 59–60)
1547	Anjirō fails to get baptized in Malacca, wants to return to Japan but meets in China captain Alvaro Vaz who takes Anjirō back to Malacca where he meets Alvares again (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 271)
1547/12/07	In Malacca, Alvares introduces Anjirō to Xavier (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 269, note 2)
1547/12	Alvares writes his Japan report for Xavier in Malacca (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 273)
1547/12/15	Xavier sails from Malacca to Cochin in India (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 273)
1547/12/15	Anjirō sails from Malacca to Cochin in India (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 273)
1548/01/20	Xavier writes a series of letters to Europe; writes about Anjirō (p. 273, note 1; Epistolas S. Francisci Xaverii I, 390–392) and mentions plans to have him translate the entire Christian doctrine (p. 336); considered going himself to Japan (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 337)
1548/01	After arrival in Goa, Anjirō, his servant, and another Japanese are instructed in Portuguese language & Christian faith (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 473)
1548/05/20	The three Japanese receive baptism in Goa (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 473); but instruction is continued by Lancilotto, Torres and Xavier
1548	Summer: Lancilotto writes his *first Japan report* on the request of the Portuguese governor of Goa, Garcia de Sá. Xavier trans-

lates this report into Spanish and Portuguese (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480; Portuguese title as published by Pires is "Informaço sobre Japão" [Bourdon 1993, p. 128])

1548/11/25 Cosme de Torres sends Xavier's Spanish translation of Lancilotto's *first Japan report* to Europe, with his own introduction and conclusion (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480); Portuguese translation of this in Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, JapSin 4,18–21v.

1548/11/29 Anjirō's first letter to Europe (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480, note 1)

1548? Lancilotto sends his *second Japan report* ("Informazione dell' Isola chiamata Giapan," Bourdon 1993, p. 127) in Italian to Rome (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480). A copy of this report is in Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, JapSin 4, 4–8

1548/12/26 Lancilotto sends his *third Japan report* in Italian to Europe (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480). This report is extant (Bibliotheca Nazionale Roma, Fondo Gesuitico 1384, no. 2)

1549/01/01 Xavier sends a second copy of his Spanish translation of Lancilotto's *first Japan report* to Ignatius of Loyola in Rome (copy of this extant in Bibliotheca Nazionale Roma, Fondo Gesuitico 1482, no. 32 (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480)

1549/01/01 Xavier sends his Spanish translation of Lancilotto's *second Japan report* to Simon Rodrigues in Portugal (SH 1982, vol. 3, p. 480)

1549/01/12 Xavier sends Lancilotto's *second Japan report* to Ignatius of Loyola (Bourdon 1993, p. 127; Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii II, p. 12)

1549/04/15 Voyage of Xavier, Torres, Rodrigues and three Japanese incl. Anjirō from Goa to Malacca (SH 1982, vol. 4, p. 3)

1549/05/31 Arrival in Malacca

1549/06/22 Xavier sends to Europe information gained from Anjirō about meditating *frades* in Japan (SH 1982, vol. 4, p. 68)

1549/06/24 From Malacca on a Pirate junk to Japan (SH 1982, vol. 4, p. 68)

1549/08/15 Arrival in Kagoshima; soon afterwards, Anjirō visits the *daimyō* Shimazu Takahisa in Ichiuji castle near Kagoshima

1549/09/29 Visit of the *daimyō* at Ichiuji castle by Xavier and Anjirō

1552 A French translation of Lancilotto's second report with a curious commentary is published in Guillaume Postel's *Des Merveilles du Monde,* 1552 and thus becomes the first publicly accessible report on Japanese religion in the West.