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Introduction

The cultural impact that resulted from the Portuguese presence in Japan during the “Christian Century” was multifaceted. This included a secondary and popular aspect, which left its mark on Japanese clothing and gastronomy in a manner that is still visible even today. It also included the transmission of technologies and a certain number of objects that, in a limited way, influenced the commercial and creative activities of the Japanese. However, there is no doubt that the most important aspect of this encounter between these two cultures was the transmission of a new vision of the cosmos that was totally novel to the Japanese, a process that was realized by the missionaries.

This vision of the cosmos consisted of two completely different but inseparable elements that, to use a metaphor of that period, were like a lady and her housekeeper: the religious component was represented by Christianity and the scientific element consisted of natural Aristotelian thought and Ptolemaic astronomical theory. These two elements were inseparable not just because the agents that transmitted them were one and the same, but also because, in the process of transmission, these two elements were introduced simultaneously and were interconnected. Science was not only a means by which the missionaries could acquire influence in order to subsequently be able to preach the Gospel more effectively. It also served to destroy and undermine faith in the mythological fables upon which the Shinto-Buddhist syncretism that the majority of the Japanese population followed was based. And, in the Japanese psyche, European science and Christianity became interconnected to such an extent, that the mere fact of expounding Ptolemaic theories was considered to be a sure sign of adherence to the Christian faith and was punishable by death, as the case of Hayashi Kichizaemon (?-1616) demonstrates¹.

¹ James R. Bartholomew, The Formation of Science in Japan (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1989) presents a brief study of the manner in which the Japanese authorities identified European science with Christianity.
The transmission of religious ideas is generally the most difficult aspect of any encounter between two cultures, however, it is also the most profound. These difficulties can be caused by various factors amongst which one can cite the lack of an adequate terminology to impart ideas and concepts that, prior to this, were non-existent. Another important obstacle hindering the acceptance of the new religion could arise from the necessity of having to, perforce, adapt or abandon some habits and customs, which were often secular, upon which the very foundations of the social and political life of the country are based. This can result in a host of other problems, such as the hostility of political authorities and opposition on the part of religions that are already established in these areas. In the case of the introduction of Christianity in Japan during the 16th and 17th centuries, all these factors were present.

If, on the one hand, it is undeniable that, from an institutional and quantitative point of view, Christianity failed in Japan during the 17th century, in that it failed both to achieve its evangelical ends and also to manage to maintain the continuity of the Hierarchical Church, on the other hand, there is no doubt that it had a profound impact upon the Japanese nation. One can even state that the Japanese reaction to Christian evange-
lization in the 16th and 17th centuries was so intense, that it would be extremely difficult to find any comparable examples in other regions of the Old World, at any point of time, where Christianity had such an undeniably profound and powerful impact.6

The Fides no dôxi held an immense attraction for a large number of Japanese, from all classes, from daimyôs6 to mendicants7, spanning bushi8, scholars9, Buddhist monks10, farmers and peasants11, merchants12 and, almost surely, pariahs: in the words of a 17th century Buddhist monk, “The people

5 C. R. Boxer, in The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650 (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1951), makes the following appraisal: “It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find another highly civilized pagan country where Christianity had made such a mark, not merely in numbers but in influence”.
6 Among the politically and economically more powerful daimyôs who converted to Christianity, one can cite Otomo Yoshishige (Dom Francisco, 1530-1587), Takayama Ukon (Dom Justo, 1552-1615) and Gamô Ujisato (Dom Leão, 1556-1595), feudal lords in regions as different as Kyûshû, Kinki and Northern Honshû. Apart from these individuals, whose conversions can be considered to have been of great importance due to the influence they had upon Japanese society at the time, one knows the names of many other daimyôs, of lesser social stature, who were baptized. As an interesting fact of curiosity value that perfectly illustrates the vicissitudes of the process of history, one can further cite the daimyô Oda Hidenobu (1580-1605), who had been secretly baptized by Organtino in 1595, who was declared the successor to Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) by the Council of Kiyosu.
7 The most famous example is undoubtedly that of Brother Lourenço, the first Japanese to become a lay brother of the Society of Jesus, who, before meeting Xavier, earned his livelihood as a biwa-hôshi, or wandering minstrel, which would place him squarely amongst the upper strata of the mendicant class. For more information about the remarkable life of this exceptional individual, see Arimichi Ebisawa, “Irmão Lourenço: The First Japanese Lay-Brother of the Society of Jesus and his Letter”, Monumenta Nipponica (1942) 5, 225-233, or Kataoka Yakichi, “Life of Brother Lorenço”, The Japan Missionary Bulletin, Vol. III (1949), pp. 12-25. For further details about the role played by the biwa-bôshis in the evangelization of Japan, see the paper presented by Juan Ruiz de Medina in this conference, “El papel de los trovadores ciegos en la misión de Japón”.
8 Many samurai converted at the time of the baptism of their feudal lord, however, only a very small proportion of these warriors are mentioned individually in the accounts that have survived to our times. Others converted without any influence on the part of their lords. To exemplify Christians of this class, we can cite two examples here: Miki Handayû, who was converted by Brother Lourenço, and who was the father of Saint Paulo Miki, one of the twenty six martyrs of Nagasaki, and Miguel of Ichiku, whose efforts to preserve the Faith of the members of his community during the missionaries’ absence is described in the paper presented by Hisashi Kishino at this conference, “Xavier and his Ichiku Mission”.
9 For example, Yûki Yamashiro  and Kiyohara Geki, two Confucian scholars renowned for their anti-Christian stance, who were nominated by Matsunaga Hisahide in 1563, to judge if the Christian doctrine would be prejudicial for the state. Representing and defending Christianity during this inquiry, Brother Lourenço, the biwa-bôshi, achieved what was humanly impossible: not only did he confound the arguments of the scholars, at the same time, he won their hearts and converted them.
10 There are accounts of a not negligible number of bonzos of various factions, including Zen and Hokke. Amongst members of the former school who converted, we can cite the examples of Kyozen (Paul) and Sen-yô (Barnabas), who belonged to the Tônomine monastery in Yamato, and both of whom later became very effective catechizers. Cf. Luís Fróis, S.J., História do Japam (Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, 1976-1984).
11 Farmers and peasants normally don’t leave a trace of their individual names for posterity. However, the farmers and peasants of Shimabara who were, for the greater part, Christians who were persecuted religiously and oppressed economically, have collectively left their mark on history in one of the most famous peasant revolts in the history of Japan, the Shimabara Revolt (from 11th December, 1637 to 12th April 1638).
who converted on this occasion are as numerous as the [stalks of] hemp and millet in the fields”. Nevertheless, apart from the fascination that the Christian faith held for the Japanese, it also provoked strong sentiments of rejection that were to prove to be so violent, that the almost 300 years of history that followed the 1587 Decree by Hideyoshi\(^\text{13}\) can be defined as a total repudiation of the Christian doctrine. The causal effect between Christianity and innumerable internal and external political measures of the Bakufu is undeniable. During the course of more than two centuries, measures taken as a reaction against Christianity would affect the policies of the Shogunal government in areas as diverse as regulating the population by means of the gonin-gumi system and controlling relations with the outside world\(^\text{14}\).

The influence of Christianity upon various aspects of the social and cultural life of Japan, its customs and politics, art and science and technology have already been analyzed at length\(^\text{15}\). However, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, an area that has not been studied in such detail, although not totally virgin territory, is that of Buddhism’s intellectual resistance to the Christian

12 Many merchants converted to Christianity, scattered throughout the country. As an example, one can cite two of the most prominent names: Fukuda Hibiya Ryôkei of Sakai, a model of Christian virtues, and the exceedingly rich and corrupt but reformed Murayama Tôan (Anthony, ? - 1619) of Nagasaki, martyr and father of martyrs.

13 This Decree by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), which is probably the oldest Japanese anti-Christian text that we know of, has been reproduced in Ôkubo Toshiaki, Kodama Kenji, Yanai Kenji and Inoue Mitsusada, Shirô yô m youn Nihon no ayumi, Vol. 3, (Tokyo, Yoshikawa Kôbunsan, 1951-1960), p. 51. A Portuguese translation dating back to the same period that is preserved in the Archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome has been reproduced in Matsuda Kiichi, Taikô to gaikô (Tokyo, Tôgensha, 1966), p. 65. The most accessible version would probably be the English translation that is to be found in Boxer, op. cit., p. 148.

14 These themes have been explored in the conference by Annibale Zambarbieri, “Kakure Kirishitan in Tokugawa Period”, and in the papers by Valdemar Coutinho, “O Bakufu e os missionários no Japão entre 1614 e 1640” and Peter Nosco, “State Policies Towards Christianity in 16th and 17th Century Japan”, presented at this Conference.

doctrine. It is generally well known that the Buddhist clergy initially reacted to the preaching of St. Francis Xavier and his successors, with kindness, but subsequently with violence\textsuperscript{16}. But, if on the one hand there is a wealth of analyses of the bonzo’s political intrigues against the missionaries and there are many descriptions of their role as instruments of the Shogunal government in their anti-Christian repression, there is a dearth of studies which explore the doctrinal reaction of Japanese Buddhism to the evangelization of the missionaries during the 16th and 17th centuries. One could attribute part of the lack of investigative activity in this area to the limited examples of primary source material which provide us with information about what the Buddhists thought of Christianity in philosophical and theological terms.

The fact that the Buddhist clergy, normally so prolific in terms of philosophical and theological speculations, both important and secondary, was so reticent when it came to putting down in writing their refutation of a newly arrived religion that was incapable of doctrinal compromise and was fiercely proselytizing, and whose rapid expansion affected them in such a direct manner, not only intellectually but also materially, would seem to indicate a lack of inspiration more than a lack of motivation\textsuperscript{17}. This impression is further reinforced when we take into consideration the fact that the Confucian literati, who had adequate motivation\textsuperscript{18} for this, managed to find sufficient inspiration to produce a considerable number of refutations of Christianity\textsuperscript{19}.

Nevertheless, the limited number of anti-Christian works of a Buddhist origin during the 16th and 17th centuries does not completely explain the lack of investigation in this area. Of the extant refutations only one has been studied to a reasonable degree\textsuperscript{20}. The purpose of this paper is to

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\textsuperscript{17} Although he refers only to the period following the beginning of the persecution, George Elison, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 230, offers a somewhat different opinion: “Japanese Buddhist monks may have assiduously tried to live up to their charge by watching out for Kirishitans, but until the Bakumatsu period hardly any were stirred to try their pens in anti-Christian intellectual exercise. That may imply a lack of need more than a lack of wit.”

\textsuperscript{18} Even though the motivations of a political nature of both Confucianism and Buddhism in the context of Christianity were very similar and, in practice, coincided during this historic juncture, the motivations of an ideological nature were, as is evident, very different. Being manageable and serving to persecute Christianity, Buddhism was utilized. When, with the advent of the Meiji, it ceased to serve this purpose, Buddhism itself became the object of persecution.

\textsuperscript{19} For example, \textit{Ha-Yaso} and innumerable epistles by Hayashi Razan, \textit{Ha Daisu} by Fucan Fabian, Kengiroku attributed to Sawano Chuan (1580-1650), also known as Cristóvão Ferreira, which is, however, considered by Masaharu Anesaki, “Japanese Criticisms and Refutations of Christianity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries”, \textit{Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan}, Ser. II, Vol. VII (1930), p. 12, to be the joint work of a Confucian and Chuan, and Samidare-shô by Miura Baien (1723-1789), amongst others.
draw attention to this area of the Luso-Japanese cultural encounter that is almost completely unexplored and to present a preliminary analysis of the contents of an anti-Christian treatise known as the Taiji Jashû-ron, written by the Buddhist monk Sessô Sôsai. We have two main objectives in this analysis. Firstly, to see which parts of the Christian doctrine had been learnt and which aspects of the Christian evangelization appear to have had a greater impact. And subsequently, to see what kind of argumentation was used by a Buddhist to refute this doctrine.

Before introducing the text, it would be useful to frame it within the context of the prevailing Japanese society and culture of the era. To this end, it would be appropriate to provide, albeit briefly, some descriptions of Buddhist theology, the theological and moral impact of Christianity in Japan, the catechetical methods that the missionaries followed, and the subsequent process of rejection of Christian culture, as well as to delve in some detail into issues directly related with the Taiji Jashû-ron, such as the content of the Christian catechization, the choice of terminology used in the course of preaching to the Japanese, and the debates that took place between Buddhists and Christians. Space constraints oblige us to omit reflections in these areas and grapple directly with the central theme of this paper. After presenting a detailed profile of the available information that we have about Sessô Sôsai, the author of the treatise, we shall subsequently provide a brief description and analysis of the text.

1. Sessô Sôsai

Very little is known about Sessô Sôsai, the author of the Taiji Jashû-ron, as there are few direct references to him. Thus, for example, we know neither the date nor place of his birth and death. Nevertheless, one can form a more substantial image of this individual by using indirect references.

Thus, it is known that he was probably a disciple in the Nanzenji monastery, in Kyoto, of the Zen monk (of the Rinzai sub-faction or branch) Ishin Sûden21 (1569-1633) who was an important figure in the religious and political scene during the first three decades of the Edo Period (1603-1868). Knowing the traditional importance given to the master-disciple relationship in Japan, one can approximately evaluate the social and religious prestige of the disciple by the social and religious stature of his master. And of Sûden, one knows that he was a personage of great importance in political and religious
circles in Japan during the first quarter of the 17th century. With regard to his importance in religious circles, we have evidence that, in 1605, he was made Abbott General of Nanzenji, the most important Zen temple in Japan at the time. Shortly thereafter, he began to actively intervene in affairs of State, when he succeeded his master, Saishô Shôtai, who was a counsellor to Hideyoshi, and the de facto author of the Edict of 1587, in his political career. As a political and diplomatic advisor to the first three Shoguns of the Tokugawa regime, Ieyasu (1543-1616), Hidetada (1579-1632) and Iemitsu (1604-1651), Sūden was one of the main figures responsible for the setting up of feudal institutions. Apart from being the author of innumerable legislative measures, he was directly responsible for the Shogun’s diplomatic correspondence, controlled the system of the concession of licenses for overseas commerce, known as the shuinsen and, a fact that is more relevant in the context of this article, from 1612 onwards, he was responsible for the religious policies of the Shogunate. In that year, he was nominated supervisor of all Buddhist organizations and it is known that he was the author of the Persecution Edict of 27th January, 1614. In 1626, he received the title of Kokushi or Master of the Nation.

The fact that Sessô belonged to the Rinzai branch of Zen Buddhism is also directly confirmed by Echu. This 17th century scribe refers to a visit, “by the monk Sessô of Bungo”, to the Hōryûji temple, that is hierarchically “subordinate to Kanzan”, that is to say, the Rinzai branch of Zen.

It is also known that “the famous Sessô Sôsai” lived in the Tafukuji temple in Usuki, the province of Bungo when, in 1647, at the invitation of the Governor of Nagasaki, Baba Saburōzaemon, he went to preach a series of twenty one sermons “against the pernicious doctrine” at Kôfukuji, a temple in Nagasaki built by the Chinese community.

22 Shuinsen was the name given to the ships operated by Japanese or by foreigners resident in Japan who had received authorization from the Shogunal government to visit foreign ports. For more information about this trade and its social and economic impact consult, for example, Iwao Seichi, Shuinsen Bôek-shi no Kenkyû (Tokyo, Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1985), or Ogura Sadao, Shuinsen Jidai no Nihonjin: Kita Tōman Aja Nihon-machi no nazô (Tokyo, Chuô Kōronsha, 1989), as also Iwao Seichi, Shuinsen to Nihon-machi, (Tokyo, Shibundô, 1966).

23 Although there is a strong consensus in favour of attributing the draft of the Edict to Sûden - for example, Ebisawa Arimichi “Hai-Kirishitan Bun” in Ebisawa Arimichi, H. Cieslik, Doi Tadao, Ōtsuka Mitsunobu (Ed.), Nihon Shisô Taikei, Vol. 25 (Tokyo, Iwanami Shouten Kankô, 1970), p. 636, Masaharu Anesaki, op. cit., pp. 1-2, and Hubert Cieslik, S.J., “Das Christen-Verbot in Japan unter dem Tokugawa-Regime”, Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft, Vol. VI (1950) - due to the elevated level of Confucianism in the text, two Western authors, James Murdoch, A History of Japan (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949) and Johannes Laures, The Catholic Church in Japan: A Short History (Tokyo, C. E. Tuttle, 1954) attribute it to Hayashi Razan. Boix, op. cit., p. 318, expresses a more equivocal opinion that both Sûden as well as Razan are the joint authors of the text: “Probably both had a hand in it, since it is a curious medley of Buddhism and Confucian ideas, with a few passing allusions to Shinto”.

2. The Taiji Jashû-ron

The Taiji Jashû-ron (Refutation of Malignant Teachings) was written in 1648, shortly after Sessô went to preach at Nagasaki. However, it has already been noted that the Taiji Jashû-ron does not have a sermonizing character but, rather, is of an explanatory nature, which would indicate that the direct origin of the text would not be found in the preparatory notes for the aforementioned sermons. This is a plausible argument which does not, however, take into account the explanatory character of the majority of Buddhist sermons.

It seems that the text was aimed at the members of the Buddhist clergy, who had been entrusted with the onerous task of ensuring compliance with the anti-Christian laws. The text is difficult, which greatly limits its readership and, thus, would have excluded the vast majority of Buddhist laymen as a target audience. This was due to two main reasons. Firstly, because it is written in Kanbun, which immediately restricted its readership to the limited segment of the population that was capable of comprehending texts written in this style. Kanbun is a style that is the complete opposite of Kanazoshi in the Japanese literary spectrum of the period. While Kanazoshi, or literature in “simple Japanese letters” is, by its very nature, a vernacular style that is accessible to all, even those who only possess the rudiments of written Japanese, Kanbun, or literature in “difficult Chinese letters”, is a foreign style, heavy and erudite, that is only accessible to a very small segment of the population. Apart from this factor, the text itself is also difficult because it abounds in citations from the sutras, which required a familiarity with concepts of Buddhist theology and philosophy that went well beyond what almost the entire class of Buddhist laymen and a not insubstantial percentage of the clergy would have possessed.

To this, one must further add the length of the text. The Taiji Jashû-ron consists of approximately 11,000 characters. This number greatly exceeds the length of other anti-Christian treatises written in Kanbun. For example,

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25 A heterodox activity and at the very least somewhat curious for a Zen practitioner if, to go by G. B. Samsom, op. cit., p. 117, “the leaders of the Zen sect, (....) rejected all conventional forms of religion and held that the truth could not be learned from books and sermons, but only by looking into one’s being”.
26 The information and citations in this paragraph are taken from Shinmura Izuru, Nanban Köki (Tokyo, Iwanami Shouten Kankô, 1925).
27 George Elison, op. cit., p. 231.
the *Hai-Yasu* by the Confucian Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) has less than 1,300 characters. Even when compared to texts written in the vernacular (i.e. in the Japanese spoken at that time, in which a small number of Chinese characters are to be found diluted in a large number of phonetic characters - *kana* - of Japanese origin) the *Taiji Jashū-ron* seems lengthy. For example, the *Hai-Deus* by the apostate Fucan Fabian (1565?-1621?) who converted to Neo-Confucianism, has less than 14,000 characters (including *kana*).

There currently exist nine copies of the manuscript\(^{30}\) in Japan, eight by the name of *Taiji Jashū-ron* and one with the title of *Jakyō Taii* (Summary of the Malignant Religion). From amongst the manuscripts that bear the name *Taiji Jashū-ron*, small differences in the text are to be found, all of which are unimportant, i.e., alterations in isolated characters with the same phonetic value but with slightly different meanings. Representative of these small differences is the use of two different characters in the title: for *shû*, one of two characters is used by the different manuscripts, that represents “religion” or that signifies “to conclude”. It is worthy of note that one of these manuscripts is included as part of Volume 15 of the famous compendium of anti-Christian literature, the *Sokkyohen*, compiled by the scholars of the School of Mito. Apart from these copies, the *Taiji Jashū-ron* is also to be found in the *Hekijakan Kenrok* collection (Edo, 1861) edited by the modern anti-Christian pamphleteer, Kiyū Dōnin\(^{31}\). The *Jakyō Taii*, that is an abbreviated version of the *Taiji Jashū-ron* in medieval Japanese, apart from the manuscript mentioned above, is also to be found in a collection edited by Kiyū Dōnin, *Nanbanji Kōhaiki* (1868).

In what one can consider to be the first part of the treatise, the *Taiji Jashū-ron* begins by presenting a brief historical sketch of the introduction of Christianity in Japan. Although inaccurate it is, however, bereft of the delirious fantasy of other anti-Christian works such as, for example, the *Kirishitan Monogatari*\(^{32}\). From amongst the missionaries it makes reference to Xavier and Gaspar de Vilela but incorrectly describes their missionary activities. For example, it presents Vilela as having left Japan to go and recruit more missionaries for the Japanese mission, instead of Xavier. It also makes mention of Brother Lourenço and to his extraordinary ability to make conversions,

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30 For the locations in which they are to be found, consult: *Kokusō Sōmokuroku* (Tokyo, Iwanami Shōten Kankō, 1996-1998).
31 One of the pseudonyms of Ugai Tetsujō (1818-1891). Modern in this context refers, as is evident, not to the philosophy nor to the anti-Christian arguments of Kiyū, but to the period in which he lived.
32 This fable, penned by an anonymous author in the mid-17th century, is to be found reproduced in *Zokuzoku Gunsho Ruijū* (Tokyo, Kokusō Kankōkai, 1907) and has been translated into English in Elison, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-374.
only to err in confusing him with Yajiro, when it states that it was he who accompanied Xavier upon his arrival in Japan.

“Investigating the origins [of the arrival of the Kirishitan], it took place in the last year of Tenmon[33], with the arrival of some merchants from Rôma[34], the capital of Itaria[35], in the Western Barbarian lands. Their ship having arrived in Bungo[36], enquiries were made about the route which they took. [To which was answered that] after navigating in the Southern direction in the Western Sea one headed North to arrive in Japan. For this reason, the Japanese called them the Barbarians from the South.

An inspection of the ship revealed about 200 persons[37], including merchants and crew, amongst whom one encounters two figures that stand out from the group. One of them is called San Furanshisuko Shabieru[38] and the other Gasuparu[39]. These two are called bateren[40], which we translate here as bonzo. They were
accompanied by an individual called Rorenso, who was an iruman, which we translate here as shuza. This man is supposed to have been born in Yamato in Japan, his real name being Ryôsai. From Kagoshima he proceeded to Rôma, where he studied Catholicism, later having returned to Japan. This is the religion that is called Christianity.

Well now, substituting the bateren, this Rorenso began to preach Catholicism and make conversions, that numbered about one hundred people. Shabieru, in order to expand the faith remained in Japan for some time, while Gaspar returned to Rôma the following year to send some more bateren.

In the meanwhile, Shabieru finally succeeded in converting the Lord of the region. He built a temple and continued to preach. The people who converted on this occasion are as numerous as the [stalks of ] hemp and millet in the fields.”

In a second part, Sessô later describes the methods of evangelization: public and private sermons, a judicious choice of Japanese helpers to assist their preaching, and charity works. He accuses the Christians of beginning their sermons by defaming other religions, even before expounding upon their doctrine, making comparisons with Christianity so as to demonstrate the superiority of the latter. This accusation is repeated throughout the text, that the Christians would begin by comparing their religion with the others, from which fact one can gather, perhaps, just how odious these comparisons would have been for Sessô, and for the Buddhist clergy in general. He also accuses the Christians of recruiting Buddhist monks to reveal the main doctrines of their factions to them and affirms

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39 Gaspar. Without doubt, this refers to Gaspar Vilela, who arrived in Bungo in 1556 and began to preach in Kyoto in 1559, where he was to become very well known. For more information about Vilela refer to H. Cieslik, “Gaspar Vilela, The Apostle of Miyako”, Monumenta Nipponica, Vol. VIII (1954), pp. 111-121.
40 Father.
41 Lourenço.
42 Brother.
43 We have translated tenshukyo as Catholicism. Although the Christians in Japan in the 16th and 17th centuries did not call their religion by the term tenshukyo, this was the official designation of the Catholic Church in China. In Japan, this expression spread amongst the educated sections of the populace from the beginning of the 17th century onwards, by means of the influence of books imported from China. From the 19th century onwards and until the middle of the 20th century, this was also the official designation of the Church in Japan. In his treatise, Sessô would subsequently seek to demonstrate that Christianity not only stole Buddhist doctrines but also stole this nomenclature.
44 One finds a very interesting comparative analysis of the Jesuit methods of evangelization in Japan and in India, in the paper by Silvana Remédio Pires, “A evangelização em Salcete: Um contraponto indiano à experiência no Japão”, presented at this Conference.
that this was done by means of presents. He also mentions that the missionaries equated Buddhism with Nihilism, that they criticized the Buddhist clergy and accused Buddhism of not being clear with regard to a future life.

“During the next three years, eleven bateren arrived at the island of Hirado, in Bizen, in merchants’ ships. From then on, they began to preach the malignant doctrine⁴⁶, to criticize the Gods and the Buddhas and to attract people from all walks of life with their charity works in Ômura, Shimabara, Nagasaki, Amakusa, Hakata in Chikuzen, Kokura in Buzen, Osaka in Settsu, Fushimi in Yamashiro, in the Western districts of the Capital and everywhere.

In the meanwhile, they go about choosing talented disciples and mustering bonzos who are not attached to temples, giving them presents⁴⁷. In a deceitful manner, they ensure that [they] describe the Buddhist teachings, the principles of the Confucian disciples and the Shinto ceremonies in honour of the Gods and ancestors⁴⁸. Then they make them iruman and relate the general principles of their doctrine to them.

⁴⁶ It is known that in the course of preaching the “malignant doctrine” to the people, sermons which had been previously prepared in Japanese, with a reasonably constant content were read by a missionary or by lay assistants. The content of these sermons is described by Fróis as consisting of four main themes: proof of the existence of God and of the soul; a refutation of the beliefs of the sects to which their audience belonged, an exposition of the Christian doctrine according to the nexus of the Sacred Story; and an explanation of the Ten Commandments: “A maneira que, por ordem do Pe. Mestre Francisco, ficou em Japão para se catequizar os gentios, era: primeiramente provar-lhes que havia um Criador do universo, e que o mundo teve principio, e não foi ab eterno (como alguns delles sentem), e que o sol e a lua não são seus deuses, nem criaturas viventes; e como a alma apartada do corpo há-de viver para sempre, e a diferença que há da alma racional à sensitiva, cuja distinção elles ignorão. Entendido isto se lhes responde a muitas e varias duvidas, que alguns delles põem, e perguntas que fazem acerca das couzas naturaes. Depois se lhes propoem as seitas do Japão, especialmente a cada hum aquella que segue, para que, cotejando-a com o que athé alli tinha ouvido, vejam a diferença de huma e outra couza, e por razões claras se lhes confutão suas opiniões, mostrando-lhes a falsidade de cada huma dellas. E entendido isto, se lhes declara o mysterio da Santissima Trindade, segundo suas capacidades; a criação do mundo, a queda de Lucifer e o peccado de Adão. E daqui se lhes vai tecendo a vindo do filho de Deos ao mundo, sua sagrada paixão, morte e resurreição, ascensão; e a virtude dos mysterios da cruz, juizo final, penas do inferno e gloria dos bem-aventurados. E feito destas materias entendimento, por certas e determinadas pregações, que para este effeito em sua lingua estam feitas, se lhes declarão antes do baptismo os des mandamentos da ley de Deos, e como hão de detestar os ritos gentilicos em que primeiro vivião, e perseverarem em a ley do Senhor, e terem contrição de seos pecados; e com isto os baptizão declarando-lhes tambémb a necessidade deste primeiro sacramento, e os misterios délles”. (Luís Fróis, S. J., Historia do Japam, Vol. II, Part I, Chapter 57, Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, 1976-1984, pp. 16-17; my thanks to Silvana Remédio Pires, who graciously assisted in providing this extract).

⁴⁷ Fróis also refers to the practice of offering presents to facilitate the conversion of the bonzos. The fact that some conversions were made in this manner would, in subsequent centuries, constitute a basis to criticize the Christian missionaries. For example, M. Paske-Smith in Japanese Traditions of Christianity: Being Some Old Translations from the Japanese, with British Consular Reports of the Persecutions of 1868-1872 (Kobe, J. L. Thompson, 1930), p. 104, mentions an anonymous pamphlet written in 1868 that accused the missionaries of the following: “[f]o make converts by giving money to the poor, by performing miracles to those who love wonders, or by appealing to the passions of the people.”
Using deceitful strategies they defrauded the people in the following manner. In the first place, they never begin by expounding their theories, but commence by criticizing the teachings of other religions. By techniques of charity works and using gentle words they incur the gratitude of the people. At that moment, surreptitiously and stealthily they begin to extol their religion and denigrate the others. When their listeners reach the stage at which they are dithering between believing or not believing, they tell them the following: “Let us compare the doctrinal superiority of Christianity as opposed to the other religions, let us hear the origin of the Law of Buddha. If you do not consider our doctrine adequate for your hearts, try defending the teachings of your religion. If, by chance, you can appreciate the origins of our religion, convert”. If one tells them, “Sure, I would like to listen willingly”, they tell the person that it is an extremely profound and secret doctrine, and closing the door in such a fashion that the others cannot hear them disclosing the doctrine, they explain their catechesis to him in secret during the course of one week. The first day is the lecture of the zenchiō. Here, they interpret the other religions, reject the three teachings, and insult the Gods. In particular, great emphasis is laid upon criticizing Buddhism. The reason for this is the fact that Buddhism preaches future salvation and infernal condemnation, in which aspects it is similar to their doctrine. They are artful in their defamations of Buddhism.”

48 The need to obtain reliable information about the prevailing religions in Japan was recognized by Xavier at a very early stage, when he realized his error, induced by Yajiro, in identifying God with Dainichi.
49 It seems that the first attacks on Buddhism appeared after Xavier publicly announced that the terms God (Deus) and Dainichi did not refer to the same entity and the bonzos began to designate “Deus” as “dai-uso” (the great lie): “when they preached, they used to interpret the name of God as they liked, saying that Deus and “daiuzo” are one and the same thing. Daiuzo in the language of Japan means “great lie”, and it was for this reason that one should shun our God. And they uttered many other blasphemies against God”. [“quando pregavão interpretavão o nome de Deus como eles querião, dizendo que Deus e “daiuzo” são de huma mesma cousa. Daiuzo em limgo de Japão quer dizer “grande mentira”, por iso que se guardasem de nosso Deus. E outras muitas blasffemias dizião contra Deus”], Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta, Vol. II, Georg Schurhammer S. J. and Josef Wicki S. J. (Ed.), Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 68 (Rome, 1945), No. 96. It wasn't just in the sermons and debates that the missionaries began by criticizing the doctrines and ethics of the Buddhists. The same thing happened in Christian literature. For example, Vagnano dedicated the first part of his Catechismus Christianarum Fidei to describing the main points of the Buddhist doctrines and comparing them to the Christian doctrine, and in Myōtei Mondō, Fabian Fucan makes a refutation of Buddhism in the First Book, subsequently dealing with Confucianism and Shintoism in two parts in the Second Book and, finally, it is only in the Third Book that he expounds upon the Christian truths.
50 Gentile.
51 This refers to Buddhism, Shintoism and Confucianism.
The lack of doctrinal unity in Buddhism, so strongly criticized by the missionaries, is indirectly acknowledged and regretted.

“The six religions of Nanto are not practiced very much. [The followers of] Tendai and Shingon only busy themselves with casting spells. Thus ignorant in all manners, they have never heard of the dignity of this religion, nor do they know its practices. Consequently, they have even less knowledge of the sutras and their interpretation and do not have any discernment of what they can obtain from them. As for Zen-shû, Amida-butsu-shû and Nichiren-shû, these three religions are frequently practiced nowadays, and there are many people from all walks of life, men and women, aristocrats and plebeians, who profess these as their religion and live in peace. People see Buddhism as a doctrine that solely concerns itself with a future life. And knowing this, they stop there. However, although it may appear to be an accessible doctrine, it is, in fact, a doctrine that is difficult to comprehend.”

He also makes indirect, but oft repeated, references to the extensive use of European science by the missionaries and to the amalgamation of these

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52 Christmas Humphreys succinctly describes Buddhism’s lack of doctrinal coherence in very general terms: “The field of Buddhism may be considered in three concentric circles; the original Message, its development, and additions to it. Considering first the additions, all arise from the excess of tolerance which Buddhism displayed from the first. As it gently flowed into country after country, whether of a higher or lower culture than its own, it tended to adopt, or failed to contest the rival claims of, the indigenous beliefs, however crude. In this way the most diverse and debased beliefs were added to the corpus of “Buddhism”, and embarrass the student today. Thus in Ceylon, Burma and Siam the worship of nature-spirits continues side by side with the later teaching, while in China and Japan the Confucian, Taoist and Shinto beliefs have modified the entering steam of Buddhism. (....) Several of the additions, however, came from internal weakness, and might be described as degenerations as distinct from developments.” (op. cit., pp. 12-13).

53 This refers to Nara. The six religions mentioned refer to the six Buddhist factions, that originated in China, and were introduced in Japan during the reign of the Empress Suiko (554-628) under the patronage of the Prince Regent Shôtoku Taishi (572-621), that became the religion of the aristocracy during the Nara Period (710-794). These factions were, Sanron-shû, Jôjitsu-shû, Hossô-shû, Kusha-shû, Kegon-shû and Ritsu-shû. Later factions, with the exception of Zen, were founded by Japanese and were greatly influenced by the national character.

54 Buddhist faction founded by Saichô (767-822) who had studied Buddhism at the Mount T’ien-t’ai Monastery, in China. The religious system of Saichô was fairly complex, but it accepted that everyone could achieve salvation. In Tendai one finds the first signs of a syncretic effort to conciliate Buddhism with Shintoism.

55 Buddhist faction founded by Kûkai (774-835), also known as Kôbô Daishi. Shingon is characterized by its complex pantheistic philosophy and is known for having realized the first Shinto-Buddhist syncretic system by identifying the traditional Gods of Shintoism with the incarnations of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas.

56 This refers to Buddhism.
sciences with the Christian doctrine, referring, for example, to the fact that the Paradise of the Christians was to be found located beyond the tenth celestial sphere.

“The Christian doctrine is based on asking Deusu\(^57\) that after death one be born in Paraizo\(^58\) with an indestructible body and there one receives innumerable pleasures. Further above the tenth Heaven, there exists yet another, called Paraizo. In this Heaven there is a Lord called Deusu. This is an entity without beginning and without end, the Creator of the Universe and everything contained therein. Fount of Knowledge, Fount of Compassion, Fount of Justice, the Lord of All Virtues, completely free and self-sufficient. They call the body [of this entity] supiritsu\(^59\). Which we translate here as That Which Is Not Born and Is Indestructible.”

In turn, in the third part of the treatise, the author dedicates himself to making a comparative analysis of the two religions. The principal idea is that Buddhism and Christianity are not very different. By Sessô’s reasoning, this was due to the fact that Jesus had been a disciple of Buddha and had stolen many of his teachings. For example, the fact that God is eternal and is not created are doctrines stolen from Buddhism, but which have been misinterpreted by the Christians. The differences between the two religions are the result of Jesus having learnt the teachings of Buddha only superficially and the fact that he did not manage to penetrate its profound truth, to which Sessô further adds his bad character and uncouth heart. This induced Jesus to stray from the Path of Perfect Enlightenment.

“One can say that [the] Christian [religion] is the religion that is based upon Zezu Kirishito\(^60\). Investigating its origins, [it is known that] Zezusu\(^61\) was a disciple of Shaka\(^62\) (....), but incited by his malignant ideas he strayed from the Path. Proof of this can be found in the Buddhist sutras and books of the kirishitans.”

\(^57\) God.
\(^58\) Paradise.
\(^59\) Spiritual body. It is interesting to note the use of a hybrid Latino-Japanese expression, in which for the body, a Japanese word is used while for the spirit a Latin term is employed. This example shows that the missionaries avoided utilizing one of the Japanese equivalents for the word “spirit”, but were inclined to use the equivalent of the word “body”.
\(^60\) Jesus Christ.
\(^61\) Jesus.
\(^62\) Shakushi or Shaka, Sakyamuni, Xaca in the missionaries’ writings.
The affirmation that Jesus was a bad disciple of the Buddha was to be repeated several times throughout the text to reinforce his arguments regarding other points. Another important idea of this part of the treatise is the ratiocination that Buddhism is not the absolute nihilism that the Christians, with their defamatory vested interests, say that it is. The reasoning, if one can call it thus, is reduced to the statement that Buddhist nihilism is not a mere denial, but is an intuitive vision of the transcendental reality present in the perfect knowledge of the Buddha.

“During the sermon on the first day they say that Buddhism is no more than extreme nihilism. They say that the essence of the Law that Shaka intuitively transmitted by means of a mystic poem to Kashô is nihilism. But if everything is nothing, how does the Universe and everything contained therein exist? The Lord of the Heavens Deusu created the Universe and everything that is contained therein, and furthermore, transmitted the law of causality that allows the salvation of humanity. Ignorance of this principle is the root cause of the appearance of hollow theories that profess nihilism as their religious principle. [Buddhism] presents many different laws such as Mahâyâna, Theravâda, Gonjitsu, Kenmitsu, and thus people get lost in a confusion of [many] small paths”.

As for the statement that the Buddhas and the Gods only represent human beings who are, thus, not worthy of the reverential adoration that is bestowed upon them, Sessô retorts that the negation of the national deities served to reveal the missionaries’ objective of destroying national traditions with a view to plunder the country.

The final, and longest, part of the text, discusses in some detail some of the Christian doctrines such as the downfall of Adam, Salvation, and the Final Judgement. The Christian doctrine and its refutation are expounded in alternating paragraphs. In general, the Christian doctrine is correctly presented, in a sober manner, but with factual errors such as, for example, when he places the resurrection of Christ on the seventh day. Subsequently, he

60 Jesus Christ.
61 Jesus.
62 Shakushi or Shaka, Sakyamuni, Xaca in the missionaries’ writings.
63 One of Buddha’s ten disciples, to whom knowledge of the Buddhist truths were transmitted, not verbally, but in an intuitive way.
presents his refutation in which two kinds of arguments seem to merit particular importance. In the first kind of argumentation the teachings of Christians ethics and theology are considered to be incompatible with the attributes that the Christians confer to God: for example, the creation of Lucifer and of Hell are deemed to be unworthy of the “Fount of All Compassion”; to defend the notion that the wise saints who did not have faith went to Hell while the sinners who had faith but who repented went to Heaven is unworthy of the “Source of Universal Order”; that, for centuries, God had only afforded Westerners the possibility of reaching Heaven, excluding people from all other races, irrespective of their virtues, which was unworthy of the “Fount of All Virtues”; that God is All Powerful is incompatible with him having allowed the Jews to crucify Christ etc. The Buddhist scriptures are cited to reinforce these arguments. These citations, more than just attempting to prove the error in question, seek to demonstrate that a somewhat similar teaching exists in Buddhism. Sessô affirms and defends polytheism as being the belief of their ancestors, without resorting to any arguments of a theological or philosophical nature.

One of the most difficult problems that the missionaries faced was that of choosing a terminology that would adequately transmit the truths of the Faith. After a short period in which a terminology of Buddhist origin was utilized, somewhat equivocally, by the missionaries, they decided to use Portuguese and Latin words to designate certain theological concepts with the intention of avoiding future confusion between Christianity and Buddhism. This extensive use of Portuguese and Latin terminology is also criticized by Sessô:

“The man Zezusu, ambitious but crude, was skilled in the art of deception. Although he made himself a disciple of Shaka, he learnt his teachings but did not penetrate their profound meaning. Astutely, he stole the Law of Shaka but strayed from the Path and spread maleficient opinions. He either altered the name, maintaining the teaching, or maintained the teaching in which he altered the principle. Thus, he changed Brahma, who was denominated Deusu, the celestial devas were denominated anjo, the celestial temple was denominated paraizo, the human world was denominated

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64 This theme has been developed further in Hubert Cieslik, “Balthasar Gago and the Japanese Christian Terminology”, Missionary Bulletin, Vol. VIII (1954).
65 Angel
purogatouriyo⁶⁶, hell was denominated inherruno⁶⁷, the kanjô was denominated bautesumo⁶⁸, repentance was denominated konhisan⁶⁹, the ten good precepts were denominated the ten madamento⁷⁰, the nuns were denominated biruzen⁷¹, the staff was designated esukumogâto⁷², the jihibyou⁷³ was to be designated masan⁷⁴, the rosary was to be designated kontasu⁷⁵. They take possession of the bones of criminals, and call them kurikimo⁷⁶, and they pass them off as the bones of Buddha. They say that there exist ten heavens above, and beyond these ten, one more, which they call paraizo. They call these heavens by the names of Jikokuten, Tamonten, Kômokuten, Zôchôten, Tôriten, Yamaten, Tosotsuten, Rakuhengeten, Takejizaiten, [and] Banshuten. They further state that the ancestors Adan⁷⁷ and Ewa⁷⁸ were the first [ancestors] and are common to all of humanity.”

Sessô concludes by affirming that the new teachings consequently resulted in a lack of education of the people and the destruction of the nation. Here, he demonstrates some typically Confucian arguments: the adherence to Christianity implies a betrayal of your lord and of the nation; ceasing the practice of venerating the ancestors is an omission of filial piety and a lack of gratitude; ceasing to worship the Gods is an attack on the nation’s customs.

Conclusion

In the course of the systematic efforts on the part of the bakufu to eradicate Christianity, the use of brute force is a feature that stands out. Less spectacular and less well known is the ideological campaign that was deve-
loped with the aim of preventing new converts from adhering to the Faith, or with the purpose of obtaining renunciations of the faith by those who had already converted. As a result of this campaign, some treatises refuting Christianity were penned, the vast majority of which were produced at the behest of the authorities.

In this article, we have made a preliminary presentation and analysis of the arguments propounded by one of these treatises, the Taiji Jashû-ron, dating from 1648, written by the (Zen) Buddhist monk, Sessô Sôsai. This work, produced with the express purpose of guiding the Buddhist clergy in their duties as an instrument of the government in the anti-Christian repression, is the only known work that was written with this objective in mind by an orthodox Buddhist during the 16th and 17th centuries. It is a unique work, primarily basing its arguments on Buddhism and not on Neo-Confucianism, the ideology of the dominant powers that be of the time, that formed the basis for the other anti-Christian refutations.

In his treatise, Sessô reveals an extraordinary knowledge of the minutiae of the Christian doctrine, from original sin to Redemption, from the sacraments to man’s ultimate purpose. He likewise demonstrates a conspicuous lack of comprehension of the fundamental principles of Christianity when he deems it simply to be a heretic imitation of Buddhism, as the black sheep in the enormous flock of Buddhist factions. The Taiji Jashû-ron clearly reflects one of the basic difficulties of cultural interaction: that the quantity and detail of available information does not necessarily translate into understanding, nor does it, perforce, lead to comprehension.
Abstract

In this article, we present and succinctly analyze the arguments advanced by one anti-Christian treatise, the Taiji Jashû-ron, dating from 1648, written by a Buddhist monk, Sessô Sôsai. This work, written with the purpose of guiding the Buddhist clergy in their duties as instruments of the government in its anti-Christian repression, is the only known work that was produced with this purpose by a cultured Buddhist before the end of the 17th century. It is a remarkable work because it illustrates the transmission and the reasoned rejection of one of the principal constituents of a foreign culture. It is also a unique work, because its argumentation is not based primarily on Neo-Confucianism, the dominant ideology in Tokugawa Japan, which served as basis for most of the other anti-Christian refutations, but is instead based on orthodox Buddhist arguments.

Resumo

Nesta comunicação apresentamos e analisamos brevemente os argumentos expostos num tratado anti-Cristão, o Taiji Jashû-ron, escrito em 1648 por Sessô Sôsai, um monge Budista. Esta obra, escrita com o objectivo de orientar o clero Budista na sua função de instrumento do governo na repressão anti-Cristã, é a única conhecida que com este fim foi produzida por um Budista ortodoxo antes do fim do século XVII. É uma obra remarcável porque ilustra a transmissão e rejeição de um dos elementos principais de uma cultura estrangeira. É também uma obra única porque não baseia a sua argumentação principalmente no Neo-Confucionismo, a ideologia dominante, que serve de base às outras refutações anti-Cristãs, mas no Budismo.