

# The Case of Christovão Ferreira

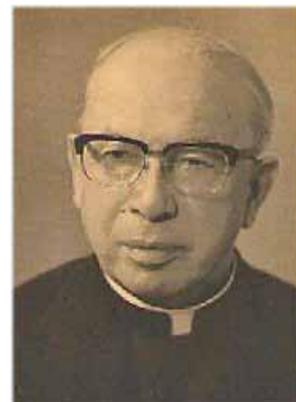
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## 1 Introduction

Christovão Ferreira is undoubtedly one of the most controversial figures in the history of Jesuit mission work in Japan, or, for that matter, in the whole world. His apostasy in 1633 shocked Catholic Europe, and Jesuits from many provinces of the Order volunteered to sail to Japan and die there as martyrs in expiation. Subsequent reports of his revocation of apostasy and martyrdom were received with great jubilation in Europe, many seeing this development as a sign of divine mercy bestowed on human frailty.<sup>1</sup> Based on contemporary sources, this article will investigate the complete case of Christovão Ferreira and will try to assess how far the reports on his martyrdom can be considered trustworthy.



1 Fr. Hubert Cieslik

The affair of Sawano Chūan.<sup>2</sup> Ferreira's Japanese name adopted after his apostasy, gave rise to a good deal of curiosity about his personality even in the Tokugawa period. In recent years Nagayo Yoshirō has taken the theme up again in his novel *Seidō no Kirisuto* (The Bronze Christ), while Endō Shūsaku has rekindled interest and discussion with his novel *Chimmoku* (Silence) and play *Ōgon no Kuni* (The Golden Country).<sup>3</sup> A novel is not, of course, reliable history. The author is free to use historical material as he sees fit to put across his personal ideas; he may also interpret original sources of information and give free rein to his imagination. And so the purpose of this article is not to criticize these literary works; on the other hand, as the novels have revived widespread interest in Ferreira, this seems to be an appropriate time to present the historical facts as they are given in contemporary sources.

## 2 To the Mission of the Indies

Christovão Ferreira was born in the Portuguese village of Torres Vedras in the archdiocese of Lisbon about 1580. Nothing is known about his family except for the names of his parents, Domingos Ferreira and Maria Lourenço.<sup>4</sup> Ferreira entered the Society of Jesus at Coimbra on Christmas Day 1596,<sup>5</sup> but in the following year he and the other novices were transferred to Campolido to inaugurate a new novitiate. It is quite possible that he had already volunteered for the

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Antonio Franco, S.J., *Imagem da Virtude em o Noviciado de Lisboa*, Lisbon, 1714, Book 2, ch. 29, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> 澤野忠庵 'Sawano Chūan'

<sup>3</sup> 長興善郎 'Nagayo Yoshirō', 青銅の基督 'Seido no Kirisuto', 1923; 遠藤周作 'End Shusaku', 沈黙 'Chimmoku', 1966 (English translation: *Silence*, tr. William Johnston, Sophia/Tuttle, Tokyo, 1969); 黄金の國 'Ōgon no Kuni', 1966 (English translation: *The Golden Country*, tr. Francis Mathy, Tuttle, Tokyo, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Among the published material, one may make special mention of Franco, *Imagem*; Philippus Alegambe, S.J., *Mortes illustres et gesta eorum de Societate Jesu...*, Rome, 1657, pp. 701-4. Further information is provided by the letter, 30 June 1642, of Antonio Rubino, S.J. (see Part 10 of the present article).

<sup>5</sup> Franco gives the date of his entry as 27 November 1596 at the age of seventeen, but Rubino ([Part 10](#) of the present article) mentions Christmas Day.

missions by this time, for the letters of St Francis Xavier and the annual mission reports had fired young Jesuits with great enthusiasm for work in India and East Asia, and in fact the General of the Society received numerous appeals from volunteers wishing to be sent to the Indies.

Having completed his two-year noviceship Ferreira took his first vows in the presence of his Provincial, Christovão Gouvea, at Coimbra on 27 December 1598, and then began his studies at the university in the same city. Within a matter of two years, his desire to leave for the missions was fulfilled. On 4 April 1600, twenty Jesuits embarked at Lisbon under the direction of Fr Pedro de Almeida; Ferreira traveled with Almeida on the *São Valentim*, while other members of the Jesuit party, including the future missionary and martyr in Japan, Diogo Carvalho, sailed on the *São João*.<sup>6</sup> The ships reached Goa after a successful voyage, and on 1 May of the following year the passengers destined for China and Japan boarded a Macao-bound ship for the next stage of their journey. In Macao, the furthest outpost of the Portuguese colonial empire and center of its East Asian trade, the Jesuits lodged at the Madre de Deus College, founded some years previously by Alessandro Valignano as the central seminary for missionaries destined to work in China and Japan. At the time of Ferreira's arrival, the college was rather full, if we may believe the 1601-2 annual report of the China mission. 'The Society has a college here [at Macao] with usually thirty persons. This year, however, about seventy men stayed here, as those who were to go to Japan in 1600 and 1601 spent the winter here.'<sup>7</sup>

Ferreira continued his interrupted studies at Macao. Unfortunately there is no detailed description available of the academic program offered at the college, although a contemporary source makes mention of the four courses conducted there. Frs Balthasar Borghes and Francisco Pacheco were in charge of the four-year course of theology; a three-year course of philosophy was taught by Fr Francisco López; Frs Antonio Rodriguez and Francisco Laguna were the professors of the three-year program of 'casuistry', or moral theology; and finally a one-year course of humanistic studies was also offered.<sup>8</sup> Jesuit students who were destined to work in the missions as 'spiritual coadjutors' usually followed only the course of moral theology, whereas the more gifted had to study not only three years of philosophy but also four more years of theology. The members of this latter group were destined to become the 'professed' priests, who, in addition to the three usual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, took a fourth vow of special obedience to the Pope, and thus made up a kind of elite from whose ranks Jesuit superiors were chosen.

According to a catalogue, dated October 1603, of the Japanese Province, Ferreira was at that time in his third year of philosophy studies, together with two Portuguese, Diogo Carvalho and Miguel Cabral, and two Japanese, Martinho Shikimi and Mancio Mizoguchi.<sup>9</sup> After the completion of this course, Ferreira spent four more years in Macao studying theology. In 1608 he was ordained priest and celebrated his first Mass at Christmas of the same year.<sup>10</sup> It is not known where his ordination took place, as the bishop of Macao, João de Pinto de Piedade, O.P., had left for India in 1605, and so there was no resident prelate there until the arrival of Bishop Diogo da Valente in 1620; thus candidates for ordination were obliged to travel to Malacca or even as far as India. The Jesuit catalogue of January 1609 lists Ferreira in his fourth year of theological studies; his professors were the Italian Francisco Boldrino, later to be martyred in Japan, and the Portuguese Manuel Díaz,

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<sup>6</sup> Josef Wicki, S.J., 'Liste der Indienfahrer 1541-1758', in Wicki, *Aufsätze zur Portugiesischen Kulturgeschichte*, VII, Münster, 1967, pp. 82 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Fernão Guerreiro, S. J., *Relação Anual...*, Coimbra, 1930, I, p. 235.

<sup>8</sup> Guerreiro, I, p. 235.

<sup>9</sup> Jesuit Archives, Rome: Jap-Sin [hereafter JS] 25, f. 65.

<sup>10</sup> Rubino, [Part 10](#) of the present article.

Junior, subsequently the Jesuit Provincial.<sup>11</sup> This overall plan of Ferreira's studies is admittedly sketchy, but it at least affords us an insight into his general education and background of learning.

On 16 May 1609, Ferreira finally left Macao and sailed for Japan; the ship on which he traveled was probably the *Nossa Senhora da Graça*, the official *nao*, or carrack, under the command of Andre Pessoa. On account of dense fog the voyage took longer than usual and reached Nagasaki only on 29 June. Like all the other newly arrived Jesuits, Ferreira was sent to the seminary at Arima to begin his studies of the Japanese language. He appears to have been gifted in this respect and, as he had already studied some Japanese at Macao, he learned the language quickly. The 1614 catalogue reports, 'He understands the language well and his sermons in Japanese are fairly good.'<sup>12</sup> In addition to his language studies, he probably taught Latin at the seminary during his second year in Japan.<sup>13</sup> The Rector of the seminary was Mattheus de Couros,<sup>14</sup> a gifted missionary who not only spoke the language well but also possessed a deep insight into the Japanese mentality. He was an excellent guide and teacher for young Ferreira, and the two became close friends and confidants. Francisco Pires, who had been in Arima since 1610, wrote, 'Fr Christovão Ferreira has been here in Arima for two years, and everybody is very satisfied with his great talents.'<sup>15</sup>

The work of the seminary was abruptly terminated, however, in the summer of 1612 when the local daimyo, Arima Harunobu,<sup>16</sup> who had until then been one of the patrons of the Christian mission, turned persecutor. During the quarrel with the Portuguese, ending in the tragic loss of the *Nossa Senhora da Graça* on 6 January 1610,<sup>17</sup> Harunobu was still able to distinguish between Portuguese trade and the Christian mission. When Tokugawa Ieyasu planned to expel all the Portuguese from Japan, Harunobu vigorously defended the missionaries and thus saved the mission. But a few months later Ieyasu shrewdly offered one of his nieces to Naozumi,<sup>18</sup> Harunobu's son, as part of his policy of binding local daimyos to the house of Tokugawa by marriage. Ieyasu was well aware that by accepting the offer Naozumi, already married to Martha, a niece of Konishi Yukinaga,<sup>19</sup> would have to reject his Christian religion, and it is possible that the offer was made expressly for this purpose. The house of Arima could hardly resist the wishes of Ieyasu, and thus Naozumi not only broke with the Church but his new wife proved to be a fanatical anti-Christian and soon gained complete control over her feckless husband. Persecution began in 1612 when Harunobu was called to account for his intrigue to recover the region of Isahaya; he was banished from his domain and eventually, at the instigation of his own son, was condemned to death. So in June 1612 the seminary and most of the missionaries were obliged to leave the region of Arima and took refuge in Nagasaki.<sup>20</sup> Thus, soon after his arrival in the country, Ferreira had an early foretaste of the coming persecution.

<sup>11</sup> Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon: Fondo Geral 29, f. 1

<sup>12</sup> JS 25, f. 91.

<sup>13</sup> Jesuit catalogue of June 1617: 'Leo Latim hum anno' (Ajuda Library, Lisbon: Jesuitas na Asia, 49-IV-66, f. 106v).

<sup>14</sup> Jerónimo Rodrigues, 10 May 1612 (JS 15, I, f. 144).

<sup>15</sup> Pires, 10 March 1613 (JS 15, II, f. 216).

<sup>16</sup> 有馬晴信 'Arima Harunobu'

<sup>17</sup> For the sinking of this ship, see C. R. Boxer, *Antes Quebrar que Torcer*, Macao, 1950; shorter versions are given in C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century of Japan*, California, 1967, pp. 279-82, and Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon*, Lisbon, 1959, p.77

<sup>18</sup> 直純 'Naozumi'

<sup>19</sup> 小西行長 'Konishi Yukinaga'

<sup>20</sup> Mattheus de Couros, 12 January 1613 (JS 57, ff. 185v-9).

In the same year of 1612, Ferreira was sent from Nagasaki to Kyoto, probably to replace Carlo Spinola, who had been recalled to Nagasaki to take up the post of procurator, or treasurer, of the Jesuit mission in Japan. We find Ferreira listed in February 1613 as Minister, Consultor and Admonitor of the Rector in the Jesuit residence in the capital.<sup>21</sup> The old imperial city was the center of culture and learning, and would have been a congenial field for Ferreira's activities. On the initiative of Spinola, the Jesuits had founded there a kind of academy of natural sciences. Spinola had ordered numerous technical books from Europe, and had installed various astronomical and optical instruments, which had aroused considerable interest among the learned circles of the capital.<sup>22</sup> But the first signs of the coming persecution soon appeared in Kyoto as well, for in April or May 1612 the Jesuits had to leave their residence in Kamigyō under pressure from the local authorities; at the same time the Franciscan and Dominican friars withdrew from the capital and settled in nearby Fushimi.<sup>23</sup>

### 3 The Persecution

The crushing blow for the Japanese mission fell in 1614. The Christmas liturgy was solemnly celebrated in the Kyoto church in 1613 and nothing seemed to disturb the security of the extensive Christian community; by that time the faithful living in the capital and the neighboring provinces numbered from thirty to forty thousand people. But two days later, on 27 December, an edict was unexpectedly issued ordering a census to be taken of the membership of the various religions. As Buddhists also had to be registered, it was not clear at the beginning whether the decree was in fact merely a census of religious membership or a smokescreen for future anti-Christian measures. Any doubt about the matter was dispelled on the following day when the order was modified to include only Christians. The first list compiled for Kyoto contained 4,000 names, but as the city governor, Itakura Katsushige,<sup>24</sup> considered this figure to be dangerously high, he eliminated from the list the names of children and servants, and in this way reduced the number to 1,700.

This unexpected development naturally caused no small excitement among the Christians, and so the Jesuit Superior, Gabriel de Matos, sent several Japanese Brothers and catechists about in order to encourage the faithful and instruct them how to behave. At the same time, he sent a Japanese Brother to Edo to ask the Nagasaki *bugyō*, Hasegawa Sahyōe,<sup>25</sup> who happened to be at court at the time, to intercede with the government. But the Brother was not admitted to his presence and returned to Kyoto with his mission unaccomplished. Meanwhile, the Christians began the Forty-Hours Devotion, fasting and other penances. On 12 February a government decree, ordering all priests, Brothers and catechists to proceed to Nagasaki and there await further instructions, reached the capital and was promulgated two days later. At the command of the government, Okubo Iwami-no-kami<sup>26</sup> arrived in Kyoto with three hundred men to enforce the order. The community in the Kyoto residence (*casa reitoral*) then numbered eight priests, seven Brothers and twenty catechists, or *dōjuku*,<sup>27</sup> but in fact only three priests, three Brothers and six catechists were registered with the

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<sup>21</sup> JS 25, f. 87.

<sup>22</sup> Guerreiro, II, pp. 73 & 280. See Spinola's letter, Kyoto, 3 December 1606 (JS 15, II, f. 151); also his letters to João Alvarez and Bernardino Rossignoli, in Giuseppe Boero, ed., *Vita del B. Carlo Spinola*, Rome, 1869, pp. 86-9.

<sup>23</sup> Couros, in JS 57, ff. 232 v-4v.

<sup>24</sup> 板倉勝重 'Itakura Katsushige'

<sup>25</sup> 長谷川佐兵衛 'Hasegawa Sahyoe'

<sup>26</sup> 大久保石見守 'Ōkubo Iwami-no-kami'

<sup>27</sup> 同宿 'dojuku'

authorities. It was thus possible for some missionaries to remain in the capital secretly, and men who were not so well known in Kyoto were selected for the purpose. Matos chose Balthasar de Torres, who had so far worked in Kanazawa, to remain in Osaka, while it was decided that Bento Fernández and Christovão Ferreira should stay in Kyoto. Two Japanese Brothers and five catechists were assigned to help them. Matos left the capital with other missionaries on 23 February and traveled to Osaka by ship, finally reaching Nagasaki after an eighteen-day voyage. The missionaries assembled at the port and left for exile on 8 and 9 November on three ships sailing for Macao and two for Manila. The Provincial, Carvalho, and other priests planned to jump ship under cover of darkness and return secretly, but in the event only Jerónimo Rodrigues was able to do so. Rodrigues had been appointed Superior of the Kyoto district by the Provincial and so, without waiting for any further news, he set out for central Japan. The fighting that had broken out in Osaka and the consequent strict inspection of all shipping prevented his reaching the capital, and so he was obliged to return to Hiroshima. It was only there that he heard for the first time that Carvalho had not been able to remain in Japan. In such a case it had been arranged that Rodrigues himself would take over the office of Vice-provincial, and so he returned to Nagasaki and appointed Ferreira as Superior of the Kami district.<sup>28</sup>

After the departure of the missionaries from the capital, Ōkubo Iwami-no-kami ordered the church of Shimogyō and two cemetery chapels to be dismantled and the wood piled up on the banks of the River Kamogawa. There the Christians who had not apostatized were supposed to be put to death by fire; but this remained only a threat and the officials were satisfied merely to put fifteen women of the Japanese nuns' convent and the most important Christians of *Daiusu-chō*, the Deus Street, where only Christians lived, into old rice-bags and have them paraded publicly through the streets. But about a week later Okubo was suddenly deposed and sent into exile, and the lot of the Christians eased. The governor of the city asked for instructions from the Edo authorities, and as a result seventy noble Christians of Kyoto and Osaka were exiled to Tsugaru on 13 April, while the nuns were told to go to Nagasaki and thence into exile with the missionaries.

As regards Ferreira's activities during the two troubled years 1614-5, Rodrigues reported in a letter to the Jesuit General:

Fr Christovão Ferreira, who until the arrival of the *nao* [the ship from Macao] was the Superior of the Kami district, has been in charge of the Christians of Miyako [Kyoto] and Fushimi, and also those in the dominion of Tamba and those living in the mountains [*yamanouchi*] of Tsunokuni. He has experienced a great deal of trouble there. Since Miyako was full of soldiers, he had nowhere to stay, nor could he trust any people without placing them in danger. He told me in a letter that since the arrival of the *uyesama*<sup>29</sup> [shogun] in Miyako, there has not been a day without some *kizukai*<sup>30</sup> [trouble] concerning himself or others, or the Christians or the other priests. Things became even more difficult for him at the end of the war because of the strictness with which the officials were searching for the men who escaped from Osaka. He does a marvelous job there, and if necessary he goes about barefoot with his clothes tied up to his belt because of the dirt. He travels by night since he might be noticed in the day-time, and *norimono*<sup>31</sup> [palanquins] and covered litters are still forbidden at present.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Rodrigues, Nagasaki, 17 March 1615 (JS 16, I, f. 178). In Jesuit parlance, 'Kami' referred to the region around Kyoto.

<sup>29</sup> 上様 'uyesama'

<sup>30</sup> 氣遣 'kizukai'

<sup>31</sup> 輿 'norimono'

In another place in the same letter, Rodrigues mentions Kuroda Shichirō<sup>33</sup> and adds, 'His mother, Kuroda Maria, lives in Miyako. She and Justa, the wife of Arima *Dono*, do much for Frs Bento Fernández and Christovão Ferreira, who are staying there, one in Kamigyō and the other in Shimogyō.'<sup>34</sup> Thus the two priests lived in Kyoto hidden in the houses of Christians and were cared for mostly by the widow of Miguel Kuroda Soemon and Justa, the widow of Arima Harunobu. Ferreira was in charge of the faithful in lower Kyoto and nearby Fushimi; he also visited the Christians of Tamba, the former dominion of João Naitō,<sup>35</sup> and the Christian communities in the mountainous areas of Settsu province, which had formerly belonged to Takayama Ukon.<sup>36</sup> It would also seem that the Macao ship, probably *Nossa Senhora da Vida*, which reached Nagasaki in August 1615,<sup>37</sup> had brought new directions from the Provincial in Macao, as a result of which Torres had been appointed Superior of the Kyoto district. But apart from Torres' appointment, little else had changed. Torres himself reported about the distribution of the missionaries in his district as follows.

I myself am staying at Sakai at present. Frs Christovão Ferreira and Bento Fernández are in Miyako; Fr João Battista Porro is in Harima; Fr Jerónimo de Angelis is in the region of Ōshū, the furthest region of Japan. All of these men are accompanied by some *dōjuku*, except Fr de Angelis, who had only a Japanese Brother with him. The Japanese Father Antonio [Ishida] is in the city of Hiroshima.<sup>38</sup>

When in October 1617 the Jesuit Vice-Provincial Jerónimo Rodrigues had to leave Japan for Macao, Matheus de Couros took over the administration of the province and immediately recalled Ferreira to Nagasaki to act as his secretary. Rodrigues had only been Vice-Provincial, that is, he had acted as the representative of the Provincial, Valentim Carvalho, who himself was in Macao; but with the nomination of Couros, the full administration of the province reverted back to Japan. Couros had for his official consultors Carlo Spinola, Sebastian Vieira, Juan de Baeza and Francisco Pacheco. The composition of this group is interesting and the fact that it was made up of two Portuguese, one Spaniard and one Italian was probably not unintentional; national rivalries among the missionaries in Japan had to be balanced, especially in the difficult times of persecution, in order to preserve the unity of the province. Ferreira was not given the official title of Socius (*companheiro*) to the Provincial, but merely served as his secretary.<sup>39</sup> Ferreira returned to Nagasaki by the end of September, for on 1 October 1617, he pronounced his four solemn vows there in the presence of Couros in the house of a certain Christian, Kyūji João.<sup>40</sup>



2 Francis Pacheco

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<sup>32</sup> Rodrigues, Nagasaki, 3 March 1616 (Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia: 2665, ff. 109-14). Writing a few months later, on 18 July, Rodrigues reported that Ferreira had visited the province of Kaga in 1615 (Archives of the Jesuit Province of Toledo: *legajo* 1051-8, no. 17).

<sup>33</sup> 黒田七郎 'Kuroda Shichirō'

<sup>34</sup> Rodrigues, Real Academia: 2665, f. 112v.

<sup>35</sup> 内藤如安 'Naitō João'

<sup>36</sup> 高山右近 'Takayama Ukon'

<sup>37</sup> Boxer, *Great Ship*, p. 86. No official ship sailed from Macao to Japan in 1616.

<sup>38</sup> Torres, 18 January 1616 (JS 36, f. 222).

<sup>39</sup> Francisco Pacheco, 5 March 1618 (JS 36, f. 114v).

<sup>40</sup> Rubino's letter, [Part 10](#) of the present article. Ferreira's autograph vow formula is still preserved in the Jesuit Archives, Rome: Lus. 4, ff. 6 & 106—see the photograph in [Section 4](#) of the present article.

As secretary of the Provincial, Ferreira wrote from Nagasaki a long report on the activities of the Jesuit missionaries and on the deaths of the martyrs of the previous years; he also composed the 1618 annual letter.<sup>41</sup> It is most likely that he wrote the annual reports of the following years as well, but they were edited in Macao and sent to Rome by João Rodrigues Girão and therefore bear his name. When the Jesuit Visitor, Francisco Vieira, came to Japan in the summer of 1618, Ferreira assisted him as socius and secretary.<sup>42</sup> During these years the Provincial, Matheus de Couros, resided mainly at Kazusa or elsewhere in the Shimabara Peninsula. As he had long been handicapped by sickness, and was even at times completely paralyzed,<sup>43</sup> a great part of his work load inevitably fell to his secretary; as a result, Ferreira was often obliged to travel to Nagasaki and other places on province business.

On the night of 13-14 December 1618, Spinola was arrested, and Ferreira had also to take over the work of the province treasurer.<sup>44</sup> From that time onwards he administered not only the mission's finances, but also had to supply the Jesuits scattered all over the country with their requirements, especially Mass wine, and, as may be appreciated, this was no light burden in the time of open persecution. On 30 November 1620, a great fire destroyed six districts of Nagasaki, and although no Jesuits were injured, the central storehouse of the mission was razed. Couros duly reported, 'We lost a great deal in this fire. All the stores in some of our houses were destroyed—medicine, Mass wine and many other things—to the value of almost a thousand *cruzeiros*, so I'm told by Fr Christovão Ferreira, who is in charge of all this.'<sup>45</sup>

As secretary of the ailing Provincial and as treasurer of the mission, Ferreira had to keep in constant contact with the other missionaries and was often traveling to various parts of Kyushu. For example, the Provincial reported in 1620: 'Last year I tried to find out what has happened to the cleric Pero Antonio [Thomas Araki] who apostatized after his return from Rome. So I sent a man to the district of Hirado, and when Fr Christovão Ferreira happened to go there also, I asked him to investigate the matter as well.'<sup>46</sup> In his last year as secretary, Ferreira himself wrote an interesting commentary on the situation of the persecuted mission.

As the persecution becomes increasingly violent, the Society and the Christian community are pressed harder than ever. We are particularly distressed by the reasons the shogun gives for the persecution, namely, the interests of the state [*razão de estado*]. He imagines that we intend to rob him of his kingdom by our preaching of the Gospel. He has had this kind of fear for some time and it is constantly being confirmed by the Dutch heretics. One of his nobles told the Portuguese ambassador this year that the shogun was much obliged to the Dutch for having enlightened him on this point. He has been still more confirmed in his opinion by an apostate named Fabian. A former Brother of our Society who published a treatise full of heresies and blasphemies against God our Lord and His Holy Law, he pretends to prove in his tract that we plan to conquer Japan through the preaching of the Gospel and to subjugate it to our king. At present he makes a particularly deep impression on everybody, as may be seen by the effect that his accusations have had on the shogun, a pagan and an enemy of our holy Faith.

<sup>41</sup> 29 November 1617 (JS 17, ff. 115-7); 30 January 1619 (JS 59, ff. 96-135).

<sup>42</sup> Vieira, 15 February 1619 (JS 17, f. 238v).

<sup>43</sup> Couros had been seriously ill in 1612 and at times so paralyzed that he was unable to move (Couros, 10 October 1620: JS 37, f. 160v). When he was sent from Macao to Japan in 1615, many wondered that such a sick man should undertake such a difficult mission (Afonso Lucena, 6 January 1616: JS 16, I, f. 260). According to Vieira, Couros led a miserable life, unable to say Mass (Vieira, 15 February 1619: JS 17, f. 239).

<sup>44</sup> Couros, Kazusa, 12 October 1620 (JS 37, f. 202).

<sup>45</sup> Couros, Kazusa, 15 March 1621 (JS 37, f. 196).

<sup>46</sup> Couros, Kazusa, 15 March 1621 (JS 37, f. 202).

There is little hope, humanly speaking, that the persecution will soon end unless God our Lord helps us with His special providence. In fact He has already shown His help by protecting the servants of His Gospel. For many spies and traitors are employed, especially in this city, in order to catch us, and we would have already been caught if God had not protected us with His special providence. The gravest and most unpardonable crime here is to hide a priest. In spite of this, we try to help our neighbor both here where we live and on our missionary circuits. Fr Provincial is promoting this latter activity with much zeal and skill, and has divided his men up among all the different regions so that none should be neglected.<sup>47</sup>

In April 1621, Couros suffered a breakdown in health as a result of deprivations and the burden of responsibility. Sick and bedridden, he was forced to change his hiding place several times because of house-to-house searches, finally finding refuge in the small hut of a Christian at Nagasaki. Believing that he was on the point of death, he called his secretary to his bedside. 'Since I believed that I was near death, I had Fr Ferreira come to see me, although I realized the danger of his being arrested on the way or in the house together with me. Wherever we went, people were lying in wait to betray us to the persecutors, even in the street where I was staying. In preparation for death I made my confession and then informed Fr Ferreira about some important business matters; I asked him to give me Extreme Unction when death was imminent and then I received Holy Communion. But it pleased our Lord that my spasms ceased on the very same day, although I remained paralyzed in both arms.<sup>48</sup> When he was able to move again, Couros went to the hot springs of Arima, probably at Obama, to recover his health.

During the summer of 1621 the mail from Rome brought the nomination of Francisco Pacheco as Provincial, and with considerable relief Couros transferred responsibility of office to his successor on 20 October.<sup>49</sup> The change of Provincial also brought about Ferreira's release from his duties as secretary. It is of interest to note the judgment of his fellow Jesuits about his activities at that time. As a result of Couros' sickness, his secretary had taken a more active role in the administration of the mission than was usual. But it would seem that Ferreira had not limited himself to a merely advisory role, for he had often followed his own initiative in various matters, and this had not been well received, especially by the non-Portuguese Jesuits. One of the Provincial's consultors, Bento Fernández, wrote to the Portuguese Jesuit Assistant in Rome in the following year:

During the time of the former Provincial, Fr Matheus de Couros, the Spanish and Italian Fathers complained about Fr Christovão Ferreira, and many found it hard because Fr Couros would not understand them. Some even said that he was a Duque de Uceda,<sup>50</sup> and that nobody really knew who governed. Many of the older Fathers talked in this way, for this trait was noticed from the very beginning; many complained that Fr Couros did not care very much and made his decisions according to the opinions of his Benjamin. Things he would reprimand others for, he approved in this Father [Ferreira]. That's why all of them were rather glad about the nomination of the new Provincial and everybody is very satisfied with him.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, it was a Spanish Jesuit, Balthasar de Torres, who thought that Ferreira, among all the younger priests of the mission, was the most suitable candidate for the post of Superior.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ferreira, Nagasaki, 18 March 1621(JS 17, f. 274).

<sup>48</sup> Couros, 28 October 1621 (JS 17, f. 205).

<sup>49</sup> Ferreira, 20 October 1621 (JS 17, f. 300); Couros, 6 March 1622 (JS 37, f. 209).

<sup>50</sup> The Duke of Uceda was the all-powerful minister of the Spanish king Philip III; after his dismissal in 1618, his son soon gained a similar post of influence under Philip IV.

<sup>51</sup> Fernández, 4 March 1622 (JS 35, f. 165).

<sup>52</sup> Torres, 20 March 1620 (JS 34, f. 237).

Pacheco had been in charge of the Jesuit mission in central Japan, and after his appointment as Provincial, it was decided to send Ferreira to take his place. Ferreira therefore returned to central Japan probably before the end of 1621 and stayed there for four years, mostly in Osaka.<sup>53</sup> During these years, he collected evidence about the Great Martyrdom of Edo (4 December 1623), wrote the official record of the event, and conducted the canonical process of the martyrs.<sup>54</sup> On 18 February 1625, Pacheco was apprehended at Kuchinotsu and was first taken to Shimabara and then to Nagasaki, where on 20 June of the following year he was burned at the stake along with eight other Jesuits. Couros again took over the administration of the province and recalled Ferreira to act as his secretary, sending Giovanni Battista Porro to take his place as Superior of the Kami region.<sup>55</sup>

Thus Ferreira was once more given the responsibility of writing the annual reports of the mission to Macao and Rome. On 14 September 1627, he compiled an account of the martyrdom of numerous Christians in the region of Takaku, that is, near Shimabara Peninsula, where Christians had been tortured, maimed, or killed. He also wrote on the martyrdoms that took place in the hot sulphur springs of Unzen in February and May of the following year.<sup>56</sup> The report on the martyrdoms of 1628-30, published anonymously in Rome in 1635, is mainly the work of Ferreira and is in fact sometimes quoted under his name.<sup>57</sup> On 22 March 1632, he wrote a moving description of the torture suffered by the Japanese Jesuit Antonio Ishida and his companions, who in spite of inhuman torments could not be persuaded to apostatize.<sup>58</sup> This was Ferreira's last report on the martyrdoms. Nobody would have thought that only a year later the author of these accounts would play such a tragic role.

#### 4 Torture

Worn out by the privations suffered during the persecution, Couros died in his hideout in the remote village of Hasami in Omura on 12 July 1632.<sup>59</sup> Since no successor had been nominated, Sebastião Vieira, as the senior professed Jesuit in Japan, took over the administration of the province until his arrest in the summer of the following year, when he was succeeded by Ferreira.

At this point his juridical position should be explained in order to avoid an erroneous interpretation. Ferreira was not a Provincial nominated by the General in Rome in accordance with the Jesuit

<sup>53</sup> Pacheco, 15 February 1622 (JS 38, f. 87).

<sup>54</sup> Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid: *Jesuitas, legajo 22 ter*, ff. 1-13v.

<sup>55</sup> Couros, 24 February 1626 (JS 37, f. 231v).

<sup>56</sup> 'Relação de Perseguição contra a Fé .... escrita em 14. de Setembro do dito ano [1627]', 'Relação do Martirio de Leonardo Massuda.... a 13. de Setembro de 1627', in *Lettere Annue del Giappone De Gl'Anni MDCXXV, MDCXXVI, MDCXXVII*, Rome, 1632, pp. 249-328.

<sup>57</sup> *Relatione Delle Persecutioni Mosse Contra la Fede Di Christo in Varii Regni Del Giappone Negl'Anni MDCXXVIII, MDCXXIX, MDCXXX*, Rome, 1635. These reports are anonymous, but according to Sommervogel (*Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Brussels, III, col. 681-2) they were composed by Ferreira. But the first report, originating from Wakamatsu and dated 2 July 1628, was most certainly composed by a Jesuit stationed in the north of Japan, either Boldrino or Porro, and then sent through Ferreira to Macao. The second report, 20 August 1631, was drawn up by Ferreira and sent to Macao.

<sup>58</sup> Printed in Léon Pagès, *Histoire de la Religion Chrétienne au Japon*, Paris, 1869, Appendix, no. 110, pp. 369-74. English translation in Emma Helen Blair & James Alexander Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, XXIV, Cleveland, 1904, pp. 231-42.

<sup>59</sup> André Palmeiro, 20 March 1634 (JS 18, I, f. 145v). In some works Fushimi is mistakenly given for Hasami, while the date of his death is erroneously reported as 29 October 1633.

Constitutions, but merely the *locum tenens* exercising authority until a new Provincial could be appointed. His title of 'Vice-Provincial' is admittedly not very clear since it is capable of two meanings.

First, a Superior nominated by Rome to administer a Vice-Province; the official title in this case is *Praepositus Vice-Provinciae* in the Constitutions, but for convenience the term 'Vice-Provincial' is generally used. The second meaning refers to a *Provincialis vices gerens*, who is nominated by an actual Provincial to take his place during his absence or in case of incapacity. The Japanese Province had suffered a great deal during the persecution and was cut off almost completely from contact abroad. It had therefore been decided that, in the event of the sudden death or arrest of the Provincial in Japan, the oldest professed Jesuit in the country would automatically take charge. Since the Provincial in Japan also occupied at the same time the office of Vicar General to the bishop in Macao, this post was also automatically transferred to a new Vice-Provincial. Thus, on the arrest of Vieira, Ferreira became not only the Vice-Provincial of the Jesuits but also the Vicar General of the diocese of Japan.



3 Sebastian Vieira

After Ferreira's apostasy, the Jesuit Visitor Manoel Díaz included a clear account of the juridical situation in a letter to Rome.

Your Paternity will notice that, when talking about the Father [Ferreira], secular people refer to him as 'Provincial', but this does not quite correspond to the facts. When the persecution became fiercer, many were arrested and martyred; the missionaries in prison were not allowed to speak with people outside, nor could they write letters except in secret. And so the following arrangement was made for Japan: if the Superior was taken prisoner, then his nominated successor should take over his post. But if there was no formally nominated successor, then the oldest professed priest would take over his office. And so, when Fr Sebastian [Vieira] was arrested, the next man in line to succeed as Superior took his place. Therefore when he [Vieira] was arrested, Fr Ferreira became Vice-Provincial and, as such, in charge of the diocese. When this happened, he explicitly notified the Inquisition and explained the case.<sup>60</sup>

As a matter of fact, Ferreira was officially appointed Vice-Provincial of Japan on 23 December 1632, but, according to the Visitor Palmeiro, the nomination never reached him. 'Among the letters of the via prima I have received here [Macao], I learned that Fr Christovão Ferreira had been appointed Vice-Provincial, but meanwhile he has become a glorious martyr.'<sup>61</sup>

When Ferreira took over the administration of the mission in July 1632, the persecution had just reached its climax. Since 1629 the infamous Takenaka Uneme<sup>62</sup> had occupied the post of bugyō at Nagasaki, and his second-in-command, the *daikan* Suetsugu Heizō,<sup>63</sup> was in no way inferior to him as far as cruelty was concerned. While the missionary letters generally dwell on the heroic attitude

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<sup>60</sup> Díaz, Macao, 26 January 1636 (JS 18, II, f. 241).

<sup>61</sup> Palmeiro, 20 March 1634 (JS 18, I, f. 144); the date of his appointment is given in Rubino's letter, [Part 10](#) of the present article.

<sup>62</sup> 竹中采女正 'Takenaka Uneme'

<sup>63</sup> 未次平蔵 'Suetsugu Heizō'

of the martyrs, the eyewitness reports of the Dutch, who were anything but pro-Catholic, provide vivid descriptions of the sadistic approach of the Nagasaki officials.<sup>64</sup> Reyer Gysbertsz made the following comments.

In short, this Governor Onemendonne, has rooted out all Christians within the space of 45 or 46 days, without any bloodshed whatsoever. . . . The reason why they tortured them thus, without wishing to kill them, was not to save bloodshed, nor because they thought it sinful to kill people, but simply to prevent making Martyrs, for they know full well that the Romish Christians greatly esteem such. He could not catch any Priest, although he placed great rewards on their heads. It was said, that if he caught one, he would torture him continually on the same wise, until he should recant, which would be a great joy to him.<sup>65</sup>

According to the reports of these years, only four missionaries were in fact numbered among the martyrs, except for the spectacular martyrdom of the Jesuit Antonio Ishida and his companions. On 20 March 1633, Takenaka was deposed and summoned to Edo. Since his bad government and various scandals had come to light, he was obliged to commit *seppuku* at Kaizenji<sup>66</sup> in Asakusa on 21 March of the following year. In order to avoid any further scandals, the government appointed two governors for Nagasaki on 23 March 1633, with the intention that the one official would keep an eye on the other. They were the former *bugyō* of Shimoda, Imamura Denshirō,<sup>67</sup> and the former *tsukaiban*, Soga Matazaemon.<sup>68</sup> The latter was appointed *bugyō* of Osaka on 22 August 1634, so this gubernatorial tandem occupied office in Nagasaki for only seventeen months, but this relatively brief period witnessed a new and violent phase in the history of the Japanese mission.

At the time of their appointment the two governors had received strict instructions from the central government to use all means possible to eradicate Christianity in the city and the surrounding districts. Their chief aim was to hunt down missionaries hiding in the area, and not content with the occasional help afforded by an informant, they began a systematic search for priests and faithful alike.

Such was the hunt for the Japanese Augustinian friar Thomas de San Augustin and the Dominican Thomas de San Jacinto. Letters, pictures, secret agents, road check-points and border controls were used in all the provinces from Nagasaki to Edo, with an efficiency that would do credit to a modern Interpol inquiry. To the new methods of search was added a new kind of torture, the *ana-tsurushi*,<sup>69</sup> generally called the pit, or *fossa*, in European reports.

This torture, rightly called the most cruel torment to be employed in Japan, was used exclusively against Christians from that time onwards, and is therefore not mentioned in the ordinary list of punishments inflicted by the government or local authorities during the Tokugawa period. Even Anesaki Masaharu, the noted specialist in Kirishitan research, considered the missionary descriptions of this torment as at least misinterpretations, if not invented or exaggerated, of the

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<sup>64</sup> See François Caron's report in his *A True Description of the Mighty Kingdoms of Japan and Siam*, ed. C. R. Boxer, London, 1935, pp. 44 ff.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>66</sup> 海禪寺 ‘Kaizenji’

<sup>67</sup> 今村傳四郎 ‘Imamura Denshirō’

<sup>68</sup> 曾我又左衛門 ‘Soga Matazaemon’

<sup>69</sup> 穴吊 ‘ana tsurushi’

word *tsurushi*, hanging.<sup>70</sup> In the biography of Nicholas Keian Fukunaga,<sup>71</sup> the first victim of this new method, we find the following description, based principally on the 1633 Jesuit annual letter from the Philippines.

They dug a pit some feet deep, and above it they erected a frame from which the body was hung up by the feet. To prevent the blood flowing into the head and causing death too quickly, they tied the body tightly with ropes and cords. The hands were tied behind the back, and the prisoner was lowered into the pit down to his belt or navel or even down to his knees and legs. The pit was then closed by two boards which were cut in such wise that they surrounded the body in the middle and let no light enter. In this fashion they kept the man hanging upside down without food, poised between life and death and in doubt about the final outcome, until the slowly rising blood pressure brought about complete exhaustion, or else hunger entirely sapped his physical strength. Or until, worn out by the torment, loneliness and solitude, he finally succumbed to this deadly torture and renounced his faith while there was still life left in him. Nicholas hung three days in the pit, from vespers on Thursday until noon on Sunday, 31 July, the day on which we celebrate the feast of our holy Father Ignatius.<sup>72</sup>

François Caron, who stayed in Japan from 1619 to 1641, the last three years of which he was in charge of the Dutch trading post in Hirado, can be certainly considered an unprejudiced witness. His 1636 report about Japan includes a chapter on the persecution of the Christians, and when speaking about this newest type of torture, he provides an account based, as he says, not only on the testimony of eyewitnesses but also on that of people who had actually experienced the torment themselves.

At last they found a more hellish and exquisite way of torturing than before; they hung these sufferers by the heels, their heads in pits, which to give the blood some vent, they slasht lightly cross-waies, (but they do that now no more), and in this posture they live several daies, ten or twelve, and speak sensibly to the very last: The greatness of this torment surpasseth all other, being beyond all humane strength to suffer and be undergone; but by such who are extraordinarily strengthened from above. This extremitie hath indeed (by reason of its continuance) forced many to renounce their religion; and some of them who had hung two or three daies, assured me that the pains they endured were wholly unsufferable, no fire nor no torture equalling their languor and violence.<sup>73</sup>

In contemporary Japanese sources, especially in the notes of the inquisitor Inoue Chikugo-no-kami,<sup>74</sup> this torture is mentioned by various names: *tsurushi*, hanging; *ana-tsurushi*, hanging in the pit; *saka-tsurushi*, hanging upside down. The actual details of the method—for

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<sup>70</sup> Anesaki Masaharu, 'Psychological Observations on the Persecutions of the Catholics in Japan in the Seventeenth Century', in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, I, 1936, pp. 13-27. 'This new method consisted in the burying of the body at the bottom of a pit so that only the head protruded. . . . In the imaginary drawings of the scene made in Europe in the 18th century, the scene is a picture of the executed hanging down with the feet fastened on top of a pole and the head downwards—simply a distortion induced by the name "hanging".'

<sup>71</sup> 福永ケイアン, 'Fukunaga Keian' c.1570-1633.

<sup>72</sup> Alegambe, pp. 417-8.

<sup>73</sup> Caron, p. 45.

<sup>74</sup> 井上筑後守 'Inoue Chikugo-no-kami', 1585-1661. The notes and documents pertaining to Inoue's long term of office as inquisitor, 1639-58, were probably collected together under his successor, Hōjō Awa-no-kami 北條安房守. At the end of the eighteenth century, part of these documents came into the possession of the Confucian scholar Ōta Zensai 太田全齋, who wrote a preface to the collection and perhaps gave it the title *Kirisuto-ki* 契利斯督記. A German translation is given in Gustav Voss & Hubert Cieslik, eds., *Kirisuto-ki und Sayō-yoroku*, MN Monograph No. 1, Tokyo, 1940.

example, the way of trussing up the victim and the depth to which he was lowered into the pit—varied according to time and place. But whatever the refinements of the process, it is clear from a psychological viewpoint that this type of torture rendered clear thinking and genuine moral decision quite impossible within a short period of time; thus the greatest caution must be exercised in making a moral evaluation of so-called apostasy in the pit. Far more indicative of the victim's true state of mind is his attitude after being released from the torment: only if a prisoner kept up his retraction of Christianity can he be called an apostate in the true sense of the word. In these cases the apostate was granted his freedom, although he remained under lifelong surveillance. Others revoked their apostasy after being freed from the pit, and either they were then executed or else the Japanese officials refused to recognize their recantation.

The officials were anxious to exert the maximum psychological effect on the Christian faithful by publicizing the cases of these *korobi bateren*,<sup>75</sup> or apostate priests. The efficacy of the torture was developed especially during the administration of the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu, 1623-51, and Inoue Chikugo-no-kami introduced various refinements in order to obtain the desired pavlov-effect result.

Both psychological and moral pressure was added to the physical torments, and, especially when dealing with women and girls, the officials strove to break the prisoners' self-respect and reduce them to moral wrecks.<sup>76</sup> It was for this reason that apostate priests were forced to live with women, usually widows of executed criminals.

The list of the priests and religious who died in the pit is long and impressive. As mentioned above, the Japanese Jesuit Nicholas Keian Fukunaga suffered for three days before dying on 31 July 1633. In the period 13-16 August, Manuel Borges, two Jesuit Brothers, and three catechists died in the same way. On 15 August a Japanese Franciscan expired in the pit, while a few days later the Augustinian Francisco de Gracia, the Dominican Diego de S. Maria, and four companions died in the same way. At Shimabara the Jesuit Antonio Giannone and Brother João Kidera were martyred on 28-29 August; immediately afterwards the Dominican friars Domingo de Erquicia and Francisco, together with eight other Christians, were strung up at Nagasaki. In September or October the Jesuit João Yama died in Edo, while on 29 September-2 October Bento Fernández and Paulo Saitō suffered in the pit at Nagasaki. The next group, also at Nagasaki consisting of Jesuits João da Costa, Sixto Tokun, and Damião Fukae, together with the Franciscan João Miyasaki and four Christians, suffered on 4-10 October.

On 18 October another group of arrested priests and religious were led to the pit at Nagasaki. The band included Christovão Ferreira,<sup>77</sup> Superior of the Jesuit mission; Antonio de Souza, the Superior of the Dominican friars; Julian Nakaura, the Jesuit who had set out for Rome in 1582 as one of the four youthful Kyushu legates; Giovanni Battista Adami; Lucas del Espiritu Santo; the Japanese Brothers Pedro and Matteo, who had entered the Society of Jesus while lying in prison; and Francisco, who had become a Dominican friar in the same circumstances.

The governor of Nagasaki had high hopes of dealing a destructive blow against the Christian mission by torturing this outstanding group, and in the event the result surpassed his keenest expectations. After hanging in the pit for five painful hours, Christovão Ferreira gave in. It is not known how he indicated his decision, but he was pulled out of the pit and released from his bonds.

<sup>75</sup> ころび伴天連 'korobi bateren'

<sup>76</sup> See Gysbertsz' report in Caron, pp. 86-8.

<sup>77</sup> The circumstances of Ferreira's arrest are not known in any detail.

Whether or not he tried to retract his decision is also not known, but he was provided with a house in Nagasaki and obliged to live with the Japanese widow of an executed Chinese merchant. Ferreira adopted the name Sawano Chūan, under which name he is known in Japanese records and documents. He was 53 years old at the time and had spent 37 years as a Jesuit.<sup>78</sup>

## 5 Reaction in Macao

The news of Ferreira's apostasy came as a great shock to the Catholic world. Up to that time nothing had come from Japan except reports of heroic martyrdoms, and these accounts had been written up in the somewhat baroque style of the period to portray glorious victories over Satan and the persecutors of the Church; in some cases the reports were adapted for stage production. This general triumphalist mood is reflected in the titles of works such as *De Christianis apud Iaponios Triumphis*, or *Palme of Christian Fortitude or the Glorious Combats of Christians in Iaponia*.<sup>79</sup> The news of Ferreira's fall from grace was so much greater since he had, until then, been regarded as a courageous martyr for the Faith. A Portuguese ship was on the point of leaving Nagasaki and returning to Macao when Ferreira and his companions were hung up in the pit on 18 October 1633, and the Portuguese on board heard that Ferreira had been released after a few hours but then had been put back into the pit for a second time. The ship finally sailed from Nagasaki on 23 October,<sup>80</sup> and the Portuguese merchants reported in good faith the Jesuit's martyrdom on their arrival at Macao. The Jesuit Visitor Palmeiro referred to this news in a letter written to Rome in the following year:

From the letters of the *prima via* received here I learned that Fr Christovão Ferreira was appointed Vice-Provincial, but in the meanwhile he had become a glorious martyr. They freed him just at the time when the ships were about to leave, but after that they tortured him for some hours in the pit; but we have been told that he was martyred after being pulled out a second time.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to this rather sober report of Palmeiro, there were other more spectacular accounts which originated in Cambodia and were relayed to Europe via Macao and the Philippines. A letter written in Manila on 20 August 1634 stated that news about Japan had been indirectly received from a Jesuit stationed in Cambodia. According to these somewhat credulous reports, the 'emperor' of Japan (a reference to the shogun) had been suffering from leprosy and had been advised by soothsayers that the imprisoned Christian missionaries could effect a cure.

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<sup>78</sup> Díaz, 26 January 1636 (JS 18, II, f. 239). Possibly Sawano was the family name of the wife. In a similar way, Giuseppe Chiara later received the name of an executed samurai, Okamoto San'emon 岡本三右衛門, when he was forced to 'marry' the widow.

<sup>79</sup> Nicholas Trigault, S.J., *De Christianis...*, Munich, 1623; *Palme*, Douai, 1630.

<sup>80</sup> Boxer, *Great Ship*, p. 132.

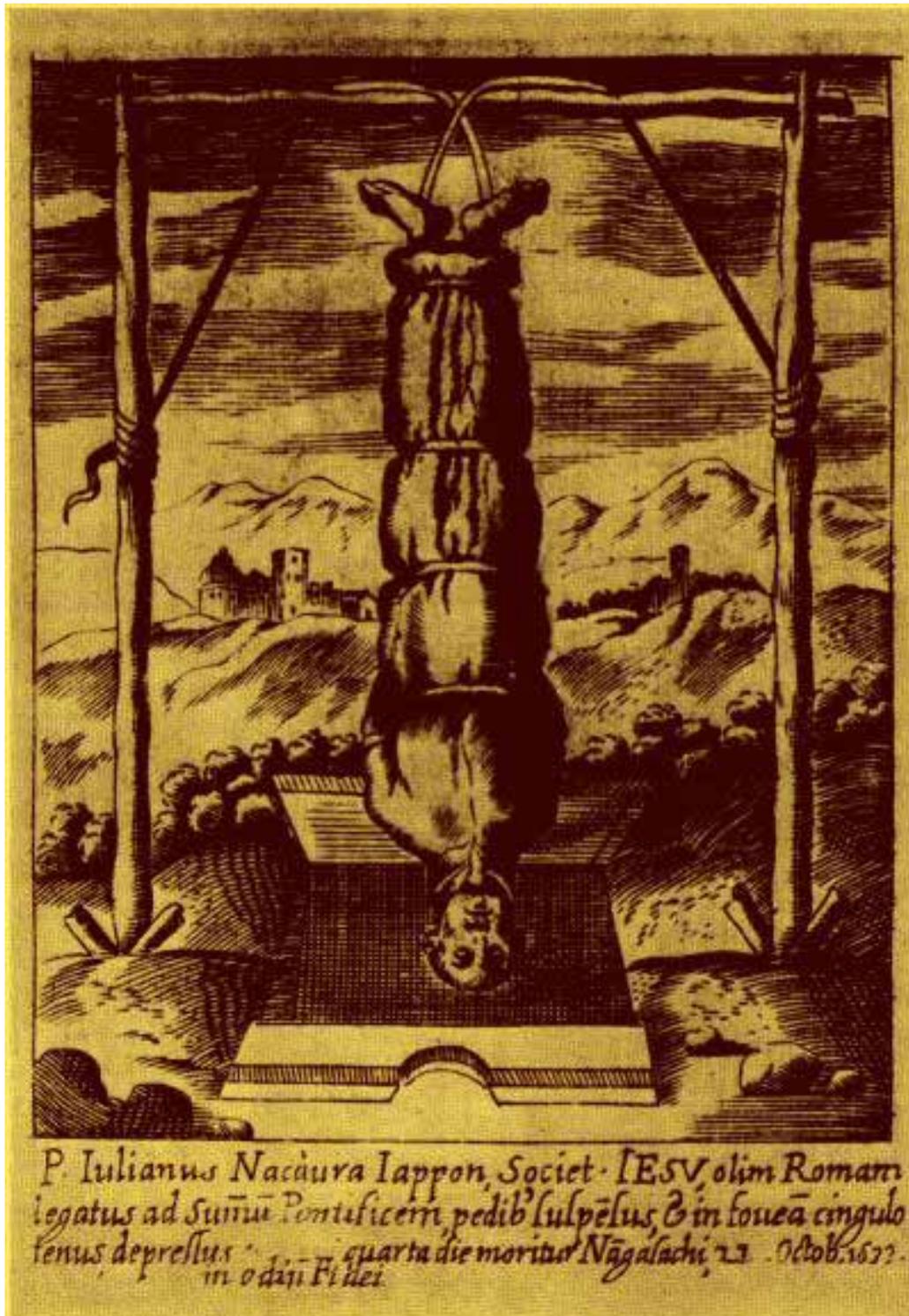
<sup>81</sup> Palmeiro, 20 March 1634 (JS 18, I, f. 144).

Ego Christophorus Ferreira professione facio, et promitto omnipotenti  
 Deo coram eius Virgine Matre, et uniuersa caelesti curia, ac omnibus in-  
 uentibus, et tibi Reuerendo Patri uice Praepositi generalis Societatis  
 IESV, et successoru eius, Locum Dei tenenti, perpetuam Paupertate, Cas-  
 titatem, et Obedientiam, et secundum eam peculiarem curam circa pueroru  
 eruditionem, iuxta formam uiuendi in litteris Apostolicis Societatis  
 IESV, et in eius constitutionibus contenta.  
 Insuper promitto specialem obedientiam Summo Pontifici circa mis-  
 siones, prout in eisdem litteris Apostolicis, et constitutionibus continetur.  
 Nagasagij apud Quiji Joanni Japoniu. kalend. Octob. anni Dni 1617.  
 Christophorus Ferreira.

Ego Christophorus Ferreira professus Societatis IESV promitto Deo omni-  
 potenti coram eius Virgine Matre, et tota curia caelesti, et coram Reuerendo Patre  
 Mattheo de Couras, Locu generalis Praepositi tenente, nunquam me acturum  
 quauis ratione, s. consensu, ut quae ordinata sunt circa paupertate in Con-  
 stitutionibus Societatis, immutentur, nisi quando ex causa iusta uera exigenti-  
 ae uideretur paupertas restringenda magis.  
 Praeterea promitto nunquam me aderam, s. praetensurum, ne indirecte quidem, ut  
 in aliqua praelatione, s. dignitate in Societate eligar, s. promovear.  
 Tum, si quem sciam id curare, s. praetendere, promitto illi, remque locum me  
 manifestaturum Societati, s. praeposito eius.  
 Promitto praeterea nunquam me curaturum, praetensurumue extra Societatis pra-  
 latione aliquam, s. dignitate, nec consensum in mei electione quando in me  
 fuerit, nisi coactus obedientia eius, qui mihi scipere potest sub poena peccati.  
 Insuper promitto, si quando acciderit ut hac ratione in Praesidium alicuius  
 Ecclesiae promovear, pro cura qua de anima meae salute, ac recta mu-  
 neris mihi impositi administratione gerere debeo, me eo loco, ac numero  
 habiturus Praepositi Societatis generalis, ut nunquam consilium audire da-  
 rectem, quod s. ipse perse, s. quicuis alius de Societate, que ad id ipse sibi subs-  
 tituerit, dare mihi dignabitur. Consilij uero huiusmodi ita me pariturus semper  
 esse promitto, si ea meliora esse, qua qua mihi in mentes uenerint, iudicabo.  
 omnia intelligendo iuxta Societatis IESV constitutiones, et declarationes.  
 Nagasagij apud Quiji Joanne Japoniu. kalend. Octob. anni Dni. 1617.  
 Christophorus Ferreira

## 4 Ferreira's Vows

The autograph vow formula of Christovão Ferreira, Nagasaki, 1 October 1617 (Jesuit Archives, Rome: Lus. 4, f. 6)



P. Iulianus Nakaura Iappon, Societ. IESV olim Romani  
legatus ad Summū Pontificem pedib' lulpēlus, & in foueā cingulo  
tenus depressus. quarta die moritur Nagasachi, 23. Octob. 1633.  
in o dñi Fi dei

5 Nakaura Tortured

Antonio Francisco Cardim, S.J., *Fasciculus e Iapponicis Floribus*, Rome, 1646

A European depiction of the martyrdom of Julian Nakaura, S.J., who suffered in the pit at Nagasaki in October 1633 along with Christovão Ferreira; Nakaura is shown suspended above the pit prior to the torture. In his youth he had traveled to Europe as a member of the legation representing the Christian daimyo of Kyūshū and visited Rome in 1585.

The result was that the emperor immediately sent messengers to Nagasaqui and other places to bring to him the Fathers who were in prison. They brought from Nagasaqui Father Fray Luis [Gómez], of the Franciscan order; and the father-provincial Christobal Ferreira, and Father Sevastian de Vieira, of the Society. . . . The ambassador of Macao who is at that court writes that the kindly treatment which the emperor extended to them was remarkable. He ordered them to be taken from the prisons and spoke to them with much gentleness. He told the Fathers that if their faith was such truth as they said, they should obtain from their God the cure of his leprosy, so that he might recognize its truth; and see that he had done wrong in taking the lives of those who followed it. The Fathers offered to ask this from our Lord, if his Majesty wished, for the cause was His; and He heard their petitions and our desires. This emperor may be the Constantine of that Church, in whom the blood that he shed of so many noble laborers wrought the health which was restored to him; and this made him unwilling to shed the blood of the humble innocents. We hope that this omen has assuaged the persecution, and his health goes far to confirm this.<sup>82</sup>

But in the same year of 1634 disturbing news was received from Japan so that no-one in Macao knew quite what to believe about the matter. As reports of Ferreira's apostasy multiplied, Palmeiro and the other Jesuits in the Macao college began to offer special prayers and penances for the conversion of their fallen brother, while hoping against hope that the tragic affair would be happily resolved. Palmeiro died on 14 April 1635, and as Manual Díaz wrote to Rome, 'In the opinion of the doctors and of us all, his death was a consequence of the many fasts and scourgings he undertook after receiving the news from Japan in 1634, especially the news about Fr Ferreira.'<sup>83</sup> On 12 June a ship arrived in Macao from Cochin China bringing news about the persecution in Japan and confirming the report of Ferreira's apostasy. This added to the fears of the Jesuits in Macao, although they still clung to the hope that the account might turn out to be false, especially as the news had come in a roundabout way and was not confirmed by eyewitnesses. A week later Díaz sent on the news to Rome.

Toward the end of 1633 we received news from Japan that Fr Christovão Ferreira, the Provincial of that province of the Society, had been arrested for preaching the Faith and tortured, and that after some torments he had finally apostatized. Since these were early reports and sounded so fantastic, neither we nor the laity gave them much credence. Then came another report that Fr Ferreira and Fr Sebastian Vieira and a Franciscan friar had been imprisoned in Ōmura, and that the king of Japan had called them to his court in order to cure him of a certain skin disease [*de certa lepra*], for the bonzes had told him that only the assurance of the Law of God could bring him health. Thus all three, or two, were taken there under strong guard and in chains. Fr Ferreira said that they informed him he had been treated very generously and kindly because he had told them during the torture that they should take him to the king as he had something to tell him.

Another ship brought yet a third report, namely, that Fr Vieira and a Franciscan had suffered martyrdom but not Fr Ferreira. None of these reports was obtained through letters written by Jesuits, for they all live far from Nagasaki and remain in such hiding that they have no contact with the Japanese beyond the immediate neighborhood, much less with the Portuguese who went to that city. Since the news did not come through a letter written by Ours, neither we nor prudent laypeople believed the report to be true or trustworthy.

On 12 June 1635, a ship arrived from Cochin China and the merchants on board confirmed definitely these two facts. First, two secular priests have been arrested in Japan and have

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Blair & Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, XXIV, pp. 297-9.

<sup>83</sup> Díaz, 26 January 1636 (JS 18, II, f. 239).

apostatized. These two betrayed the information that the living expenses, Mass wine, rosaries, and other articles of devotion which are distributed among the Christians, had been sent to the Fathers from Macao. Second, four men had arrived in Cochin China from Japan and had reported that they were quite certain that Fr Christovão Ferreira had denied his faith under torture and now lives married to a Japanese woman in Nagasaki. One of them added that he had visited him several times at his house and had met a woman there, and that the Father, when he visited him, had also worn Japanese dress.<sup>84</sup>

At the end of the letter Díaz promised to make further inquiries through trustworthy people, for the ship for Japan was leaving in a few days. On 22 June he wrote a long and kindly letter directly to Ferreira, informing him of the latest news from Macao, the death of Palmeiro, and his own appointment as Visitor. He then went on to mention the disquieting reports brought from Cochin China and asked for accurate information. He ended by making an eloquent appeal to Ferreira, and as his Superior and old friend, he urged him to return to the Faith and make reparation for his apostasy by martyrdom.<sup>85</sup> This letter was entrusted to the Captain-Major of the fleet for Japan, Dom Gonçalo da Silveira, who was asked to obtain reliable information about the case and speak, if possible, with Ferreira himself. The same request was made to some other trustworthy men on board. The fleet of three ships left Macao on 25 June and reached Nagasaki on 9 August.<sup>86</sup>

During the two months while the ships lay at anchor in Nagasaki the Portuguese made repeated attempts to contact Ferreira. Owing to his prominent and exposed position, the Captain-Major found it impossible to do this personally, but tried to get some subordinates to deliver Díaz' letter and obtain reliable information. Some of the Portuguese in fact managed to meet Ferreira, one man conversing with him on several occasions, before the fleet left Nagasaki toward the end of October, reaching Macao on 12 November. The sick and paralyzed Visitor summoned the merchants immediately to hear the latest news from Japan, and their accounts merely confirmed the fact of Ferreira's apostasy. Díaz asked his informants to submit their reports in writing and testify to their truth on oath. In his next letter to Rome, dated 26 January 1636, he summarized the latest information and included the eyewitness reports verbatim.

On 12 November the three ships that had gone to Japan entered the harbor of this city. When the people on board had disembarked, they confirmed what had been reported through Cochin China about Fr Ferreira—that he has apostatized and lives in the same house with a woman, etc., which we have hitherto considered false. At present there is not a great deal that can be said about this matter. Since the doctors have not allowed me to leave the college for almost three years, I could not go out and visit Dom Gonçalo da Silveira; he has been in charge of the business and has written down with his own hand everything that he has done in this matter and the results thereof. Here is a copy of what he has written.

When I left with three ships as *capitão mor* of the voyage on 25 June of this year 1635, I was urgently asked by your Reverence to inquire with all diligence into the unhappy case of Fr Christovão Ferreira, the Provincial and the administrator of the diocese of Japan, who is known in this place. Something was already known about the matter through some junks that had come from Cochin China bringing news from Japan, namely, that the Father had apostatized under torture and that he was then living at Nagasaki in Japanese dress and with a Japanese name, and that he could be distinguished in no way from the natives and the other apostates.

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<sup>84</sup> Díaz, 18 June 1635 (JS 18, II, f. 227).

<sup>85</sup> Díaz, 22 June 1635 (JS 18, II, f. 230). Several copies of this letter preserved in Rome are erroneously dated 22 June 1634.

<sup>86</sup> Boxer, *Great Ship*, pp. 141-5.

I found out that the *shōya*,<sup>87</sup> a government official, had ordered him to marry a Japanese woman according to Japanese custom. This woman had formerly been married to a Chinese who had, by order of the king, been executed for his crimes. When the *shōya* demanded this marriage, it is certain that the Father answered that he was too old for such a thing and did not have the same religion as her, and that he refused to do it. The woman also said the same and refused since she was a pagan. The *shōya*, however, forced them to do so, ordering the Father to take her as his wife. It is said that they do not live happily together.

I tried to speak to the Father and deliver to him the letters that I had taken with me from your Reverence and other Fathers. This had to be done secretly, since it was impossible to give them to him openly without contravening the strict prohibition and command of the king. I sent him a message at night telling him that our departure was at hand, and he twice came all the way to the door of my lodgings but turned back without speaking to me. He wrote to a friend that he did not dare appear before me for two reasons. Namely, first of all, he was an apostate and, secondly, in order not to have to ask for alms since, as he said, he was very poor.

I heard that he has resigned himself to this situation and lives there without saying anything that could cause scandal. He works for the *shōya*, translating the letters from Macao into Japanese and those for Macao into Portuguese. In this way he earns his living expenses. He does not, however, denounce any Christians, nor does he betray the Fathers, and, as far as is known, he has done nothing evil in this regard.

All that I have heard and here record is the truth, even if some less informed people say the opposite. But this information is correct, for as *capitão mor* of the fleet, I received this news from the interpreters of the *shōya* himself, and they are in contact with the unhappy man every day and know him well. The Portuguese have also learned the same news from a letter written by the Father to one of his Japanese friends. It is certain that he told them that, if he were alive the following year, he would try to talk to me. From this, as well as from some other things that the Father mentioned to some Portuguese who talked to him and saw him often shed tears, we may hope that our Lord will open his eyes and through His divine grace give him courage and strength to return, so that he may do penance and die for our Lord as a martyr.

I also found out that he always talks about the Society with pain [*com magao*] and about the holy martyr Dom Gonçalo da Silveira,<sup>88</sup> who he knew was my uncle and was known to me. The Portuguese who spoke with him will report on other things and they will confirm what I have said. The above is the truth, which, in my capacity of *capitão mor* of this voyage, I hereby confirm. Given on 19 November 1635.

Dom Gonçalo da Silveira

Díaz continues :

The other two Portuguese who had taken letters for the Father both related that they had refrained from delivering them on account of the governor, who had strictly prohibited any kind of meeting with Dom Gonçalo. But among those in Japan this year was a person of courage and good judgment. He is Manuel Mendes de Moura, married in Portugal and a brother-in-law of the Reverend Patriarch of Ethiopia, Dom Afonso Mendes. I did not give him a letter to deliver since he was not so familiar with that country, but after his return he wrote for me a report containing many details he had observed there about Fr Ferreira. In substance, these are the things he mentioned.

<sup>87</sup> 庄屋 ‘shōya’, a title for a village official during the Tokugawa period, but in Nagasaki the term was used as a popular, unofficial name for all city officials.

<sup>88</sup> Nothing is known about this martyr.

First, he, Ferreira, asked me about Fr Andre Palmeiro. I told him that he had already died, and that the doctors, and in fact all of us, believed that his death was a consequence of the many fasts and scourgings he took upon himself after receiving the news from Japan in 1634, especially the news about Fr Ferreira. His successor is Fr Manuel Díaz, who is already very old, and if anybody was sent to Japan to see him, it would not be him. But most Fathers in Macao would like to come to Japan and would be ready to give their lives for you so that you might reach the heights of martyrdom.

He did not reply but shed many tears, and I had to weep myself. But soon afterwards the expression on his face changed and he said to me, 'What good can a man do if he is separated from God?' Then he asked me if the devotion of the Forty Hours was still practiced in the college. I answered that it was still performed with much devotion and that on the last occasion the church had been more splendidly decorated than in former years. For the church is now adorned with trees which the people of Macao have planted in memory of the holy martyrs of Japan. The last tree is in memory of the most excellent martyr Fr Sebastian Vieira; next to it they have left room for another one, which everybody believes is destined for your Reverence, and all the people are keeping their eyes on it with great expectation. To this he made no answer but shed more tears.

On several of my visits he spoke about God with such eloquence that I was surprised, and I truthfully testify that, had I not seen him as an apostate with my own eyes, I would not be able to believe it. His conscience greatly troubles him, and he feels such shame that he refuses to speak with any of the Portuguese.

Thirdly, I was told by trustworthy persons, Portuguese as well as Japanese, that he still offers many prayers to God. Alvaro Monhos, a Spanish apostate there,<sup>89</sup> meets him quite often and is very close to him. He told me that he swears before God that Ferreira does not have any intercourse with the woman to whom he is married. And he testified that he keeps her only because of his meals, but has not had intercourse with her.

Fourthly, when I inquired further into this case, I learned that while hanging in the pit he put three questions to the officials; and in the last one he said that he wanted to apostatize, and so as a result he was pulled out of the hole. Then he was taken to the court, whence he afterwards returned to Nagasaki. I tried to find out if he persecuted Christians in any way and I learned that this was not the case. I was also told the same by Alvaro Monhos. He was several times summoned to the *shōya*, but only because he had sent in a petition regarding his living expenses. There was a temple procession in which most of Nagasaki took part carrying their insignia. I watched from close by, but did not see any sign of Fr Ferreira participating in it.

Fifthly, Alvaro Monhos observed and heard what I had said to the Father and noticed the tears that he had shed, and so he told me, 'Don't urge him a second time, for he expects in our Lord not to commit mistakes in front of such an exalted person.' Such are his excuses and the information that he secretly told me, some Portuguese and many Japanese.

This is what I learned in Japan about Fr Christovão Ferreira, and I swear on the holy Gospels that everything happened in the way mentioned.

Manuel Mendes de Moura

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<sup>89</sup> Nothing else is known about this apostate. Since it is explicitly mentioned that he was a Castilian, he may have been the Castilian apostate 'Syovan', who acted as interpreter in 1634 for the Dutch stranded in Nambu. See also n. 99.

Pedro Cordeiro, a married man here, told Fr Pedro Morejon that he had visited the house of Fr Christovão Ferreira four times, and every time he had talked with him quietly, he had heard him complain with much emotion and many tears to find himself in such a condition, brought about by the fear of past tortures. He had given signs of hope that he would return and repair his past deeds. When he said goodbye for the last time, he said with tears, 'If you come back in a year's time, it may be so.' He wept and would not leave without giving some indication that his situation had improved. The house in which he lived was very poor and no bigger than one room of our houses. I saw no woman there, but only one poor little boy. In the beginning the governors put him in the house of that Chinese woman so that she would feed him. But the neighbors of the street were against this and said that, since he was a Father, the Christians would come to him, and that the people living in that street would have to suffer this. And so they put him into that hut.

Some people who have returned from Japan have mentioned various details about the case, but these points seem to be false as they contradict each other. This has been confirmed for me by trustworthy persons whom I secretly asked that, as friends of the Society, they should tell me everything, the bad as well as the good, as far as they knew. And in my conversations with them, I learned the following things.

First, the governor ordered the Father to marry a woman, since this was the way for him to make a living. When he answered that he could not marry, they told him that, if he could not take her as his wife, then he should take her at least as his housekeeper. And when she also said that she could not take a Father as her husband, they made them live in the house together.

Second, some Japanese told the Portuguese that the reason for the Father keeping to himself was less because of his apostasy than because of his shame; his way of acting shows that he feels deep shame, and that his apostasy from the Faith has made him appear like a Jew.

Third, in the conversations with the governors, a pagan told him, 'You are already pretty old, but you are a no-good Father because you have apostatized when weak women kept the Faith. Besides, you had two women with you when they caught you.' (These were obviously women who took care of the Father in the place where he was living.)

Fourth, when he asked the governors to give him something to eat, they replied, 'The king of Japan will give you nothing, for you have apostatized out of pure weakness; and so far you have rendered no service, since you have betrayed neither the Fathers nor the Christians.'

This is everything that I have learned about this matter with all possible diligence and that, among all the other things, some of them contradictory, bears the appearance of truth.<sup>90</sup>

When four ships again sailed to Japan in 1636, Díaz made a last appeal to Ferreira and again admonished him to repent and make amends. The commander of the fleet was once more Dom Gonçalo da Silveira, but when the ships reached Nagasaki on 8 August, the Portuguese were forbidden to move freely on shore. Instead, they were obliged to drop anchor at the artificial islet of Deshima, which had been built off a promontory in the harbor, and the fleet's commander was ordered to present himself personally to the government at Edo and then to remain in Nagasaki as a hostage until the arrival of the Portuguese ships in the following year. The fleet started back to Macao about the middle of October, transporting 287 people—Portuguese merchants, their families and servants expelled from Japan.<sup>91</sup> The first ship reached Macao on 31 October and was closely followed by the other three ships on the following day. Since Silveira had been obliged to remain

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<sup>90</sup> Díaz, 26 January 1636 (JS 18, II, ff.238-41).

<sup>91</sup> Boxer, *Great Ship*, pp. 146-8.

in Japan, Díaz obtained fresh information about Ferreira from other trustworthy men, and then in the afternoon of 1 November assembled the Jesuits of the Macao college for a consultation about the case. He had obviously not yet received specific orders or powers from Rome to act, but he felt that a decision could no longer be postponed and that further delay would only give rise to more scandal and rumors.

The *consulta* had first of all to decide on its juridical position, and on this point the assembled Jesuits unanimously agreed that, in view of the urgency of the case, the principle of *epikeia*<sup>92</sup> could be invoked and thus the Visitor possessed all the necessary authority. As regards the second matter—the dismissal of Ferreira from the Society—four Jesuits asked for more detailed information. Two priests were therefore ordered to talk on the very same afternoon with the Portuguese who had just returned from Japan, and later on the same day they reported that the fact of Ferreira's apostasy had been newly confirmed. The *consulta* then assembled again in the evening and decided on the dismissal of Christovão Ferreira from the Society of Jesus. On 2 November the necessary document was drawn up and signed by all the priests present. The elderly Morejon, Ferreira's former Superior in Kyoto, added his signature with a trembling hand in the last place. The text of the document is as follows:

On the last day of October of 1636 there arrived in the harbor of Macao the first of the four ships that had made the voyage to Japan this year; the other three ships reached here on the following day, 1 November. At 2.00 P.M. on the same day, the Visitor of the Province of China and Japan, Fr Manuel Díaz, called the following priests to a consultation: Pedro Morejon, Vicente Ribeira, João Baptista Bonelli (Rector of this College), Francisco Távora, Alexander Rhodes, and João Maria Leria, all professed of the four vows. Also summoned were Raymundo de Gouvea and João Monteiro, who both teach theology in this college, the first named having taught for five years, the second for one and a half. The Visitor informed us what the people who had come from Japan had said about Fr Christovão Ferreira, professed of the four vows, namely, that he had apostatized from the Faith and everything else as related by those people. The Visitor stated that the *consulta* was being held to discuss the following two points.

First, whether, if there were no jurisdiction here to dismiss a professed priest from the Society, the principle of *epikeia* could be invoked to dismiss Fr Christovão Ferreira legally on account of the scandalous behavior that he has shown and is public knowledge, as has been reported and as many of us here have already heard. Second, whether the notoriety of these facts as stated is sufficient for this dismissal, or whether it is necessary to gather further information.

It was evident to all of us that in these circumstances your Reverence could justly use the principle of *epikeia* in this type of case, and that Fr Christovão Ferreira must indeed be dismissed, and that this must be done with all speed before this scandal spreads further to the great discredit of the Society. We believe that our Very Reverend Father General would certainly approve of this dismissal and would in fact act in the same way if he were here.

Frs Pedro Márquez, João Baptista Bonelli, Francisco Távora, and Alexander Rhodes stated that, for greater security, they thought it advisable to inquire in more detail into this matter and into all the circumstances from some men of standing who had returned from Japan. Fr Visitor

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<sup>92</sup> *Epikeia* is a moral principle of equity. A legislator cannot take into account every possible case to which a given law is to apply. So if it is morally certain that in a certain case the legislator would grant an exception but under the circumstances recourse to competent authority is impossible, permission may be presumed to have been granted.

therefore ordered Frs João Baptista Bonelli and Francisco Távora to gather further information from Pedro Fernández de Carvalho, who had rented the fleet from the city, and from Rodrigo Sanches da Paredes, the most qualified men who had come on the ships. When Fr Bonelli returned with the information that he had obtained, he reported in the presence of some of the other Fathers and said that there was no need for further inquiry into the case. So all agreed to dismiss Fr Christovão Ferreira immediately, as indeed most of the undersigned had already agreed to do so; and Fr Pedro Márquez and Alexander Rhodes concurred with this opinion this same evening. And thus Fr Visitor announced to the whole college that the said Fr Christovão Ferreira had been dismissed.

We swear *in verbo sacerdotali* that everything has been done and has happened exactly as it has been reported herein, and in witness thereof we confirm this on this second day of November, 1636.

Vicente Ribeira	João Baptista Bonelli
Manoel Díaz	Francisco TAvora
Alexander Rhodes	Pedro Márquez
João Monteiro	João Leria
Raymundo de Gouvea	Pedro Morejon <sup>93</sup>

## 6 *In the Service of the Government*

Just as Ferreira's apostasy under torture was a great blow to the Catholic world, so it marked the greatest success of the Tokugawa anti-Christian policy. Apostatized priests served as living proof of the evil of the forbidden religion, and the Japanese authorities did not fail to obtain the maximum propaganda effect from this golden opportunity. Thus a certain amount of care has to be exercised when using the Japanese sources referring to this case. If the European accounts, apart from the diaries kept by the Dutch on Deshima, are at best second or third-hand sources, so also many of the Japanese reports provide indirect evidence, mostly compiled at a later date and including legendary exaggerations.

Let us recapitulate here some of the foregoing information. Soon after his apostasy Ferreira appears to have been summoned to Edo for a short time and then returned to Nagasaki, where he spent the rest of his life. The city governor ordered a small house to be put at his disposal, where he could recover from the effects of torture; it is not known whether this was the house in Gotō-machi where he later lived. Officials then urged him to marry, or at least take a woman as his housekeeper. Their intention was to take advantage of Ferreira's psychological depression after his apostasy and, through this marriage, undercut his personality and self-esteem. The marriage, of course, would also provoke adverse publicity, and the same strategy was later used by Inoue against Giuseppe Chiara and his companions.<sup>94</sup> It seems that both Ferreira and the woman, who was supposedly the Japanese widow of a Chinese merchant, objected to the plan initially, but the Portuguese merchants who visited him in 1635 found the woman in his house.

Ferreira was now known as Sawano Chūan, wore Japanese dress, lived in the Japanese way, and received from the government a small annuity for his living expenses. As a Japanese citizen he was obliged to belong to a family temple, although whether the choice of the particular temple was

<sup>93</sup> The document, with the original signatures, is found in JS 1, II, f. 256.

<sup>94</sup> Voss & Cieslik, pp. 24-5.

left to him is not known. At any rate he was registered at the large Zen temple Kōdaiji,<sup>95</sup> where both he and his son are buried.<sup>96</sup>

Mention of his son brings us to the subject of his family. Trustworthy Japanese sources refer to a son called Sawano Chūjiro,<sup>97</sup> who died on 29th day, 7th month, Keian 4 (13 September 1651). Unfortunately the register of Kōdaiji does not mention the age of the son at his death, and so it is impossible to determine whether in fact he was a natural son of Ferreira or a child from the widow's first marriage. The same can be said of the two daughters mentioned in historical sources. One of them later married a physician, Sugimoto Chūkei,<sup>98</sup> 1618-89, whose descendants served as government physicians until the close of the Tokugawa period.

As regards Ferreira's work, he was first of all ordered by the Nagasaki officials to act as interpreter and to translate Portuguese and Spanish documents, possibly the letters and writings of the missionaries which had been confiscated by the authorities. He tried to avoid a direct meeting with Portuguese merchants, and although this was interpreted by his fellow countrymen as shame on account of his apostasy, he may well have been forbidden by the authorities to have anything to do with the visitors from Macao lest he might be persuaded to retract his denial of Christianity. When Rubino and his companions were arrested as they tried to land in Satsuma in 1642, they were led to Nagasaki, where an apostate by name of Juan served as an interpreter. Some authors believe this name to be a slightly corrupted version of Chūan, or Ferreira, but this cannot be proved with any certainty.<sup>99</sup>

In the year 1641 the Dutch trading post at Hirado was transferred to Deshima and Ferreira often acted as interpreter and middleman between the Dutch and the Japanese, and as a result his name is

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<sup>95</sup> 洪泰寺 'Kodaiji'

<sup>96</sup> Koga Jūjirō 古賀十二郎, 'Haikyōsha Sawano Chūan' 背教者澤野忠庵, in *Shigaku* 史學, XIX, 1940, No. 3, p. 182. See also [Part 10](#) of the present article.

<sup>97</sup> 澤野忠二郎 'Sawano Chūjiro'

<sup>98</sup> 杉本忠恵 'Sugimoto Chūkei'

<sup>99</sup> 'Un Sacerdote Apostata' (*Breve Relazione della Gloriosa Morte che il P. Rubino ...*, Rome, 1625, p. 32); 'un Prestre Apostat' (*Histoire de la Vie et de la glorieuse Mort...*, Paris, 1635, p. 56). Since Rubino had gone to Japan expressly to meet Ferreira and persuade him to repent, it would be strange if the report of the meeting did not explicitly mention that the interpreter was in fact Ferreira. The Dutch diary of Deshima, under date 22 August 1642, mentions that the apostate priest 'Syovan' served as interpreter and asked the prisoners to apostatize, but the same source normally refers to Ferreira as 'Syuvan'. When the Dutch landed at [Nambu](#) (see below, [Part 6](#)), an apostate priest called 'Syovan' served as interpreter; but he is explicitly mentioned as a Castilian, whereas Ferreira was known to the Dutch as a Portuguese. Anesaki tentatively identifies Juan as a certain Antonio Carvalho, who interpreted at the August meeting between the Dutch and Portuguese (*A Concordance to the History of Kirishitan Missions*, Tokyo, 1930, p. 161); but in the report of the meeting, he is referred to as 'o Iurabaca Antonio Carualho', without any mention that he was either a priest or apostate (Antonio Cardim, *Relação da Gloriosa Morte de Quatro Embaixadores ...*, Lisbon, 1643, f. 7). Another Spanish apostate, Alvaro Monhos, is mentioned in Díaz' letter above, [Part 5](#), but it is not stated whether he was a priest or not. See also nn. 89 & 107.

The most probable identification of Juan, alias Syovan, is an apostate priest called Shōhaku 昌伯 in Japanese sources (Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治, *Kirishitan Dendō no Kōhai* 切支丹傳道の興廢 Tokyo, 1930, pp. 731 ff.; Anesaki, 'Persecution of Kirishitans after the Shimabara Insurrection', in *MN*, I, 1938, pp. 293-300). Anesaki tentatively identifies him with Giovanni Battista Porro ('Persecution' p. 293) or with Pedro Márquez (*Concordance*, p. 166). But it could not have been Márquez for, belonging to the Second Rubino Group, he had not reached Edo by 13 June; nor could it have been Ferreira, who was not in Edo in June. The 'Syoven' mentioned by the Dutch is a possibility.

frequently mentioned in the factory records. Thus, for example, Willem Versteegen, the director, or *Opperhoofd*, of the factory, recorded in his diary on 17 November 1646:

Since my arrival in Japan, I have tried to get information about the apostatized priests. There is a Japanese by name of Thomas who lived in Rome for some time and served the Pope. He had often declared that he was a Christian, but the *bugyō* thought that, on account of his age, he was mentally disturbed and so did not pay any attention to him. After they had put him in chains for a day and a night, he denied his faith, but he preserved it in his heart and died in that state. At present there are only two still alive. One is a Portuguese called S'yūan and was formerly the Superior of the Jesuits here. However, his heart is black. The other is a brother of the *Otona*, Gotō Shōsaburō<sup>100</sup> *Dono*, but he never does anything to harm the Dutch.<sup>101</sup>

The authorities hoped, of course, to find in Ferreira a welcome ally in their campaign to uproot the forbidden religion, and Japanese records, which will be mentioned later, report that he was used as a *meakashi*,<sup>102</sup> that is, a government spy. The accounts of the Portuguese merchants, however, expressly state that he did not betray any Christians or supply the authorities with information about them. This is certainly true for the first years of his apostasy, and there is in fact no case known of his actively participating in the search for missionaries and Christians. But there is a reference in the Dutch reports to his petitioning for the desecration of Christian graves. Under the date 17 March 1643, the diary of the Dutch factory records, 'Christopher Ferredra [sic], who was born in Lisbon and apostatized in the pit after four days of torture, now lives in Nagasaki under the name of Syuvan; together with several other former servants of the Fathers, he has requested that the bones of the Fathers buried twenty-two years ago be dug up and thrown into the sea.'<sup>103</sup>

As regards Ferreira's activities in the service of the local inquisition, the *Kiyōzakki*<sup>104</sup> reports:

About that time there were three Fathers, Chūan, Ryōhaku, and Ryōjun.<sup>105</sup> When examined by the inquisition, these men renounced their heresy, and confessed that the whole of the Christian religion was false and merely a trick to conquer foreign countries. They also said that, to prevent apostatized Christians from recanting, they should be made to write an oath. At the conclusion of this document all three men would sign their names in testimony to the truth of the statement.

And so their lives were spared and, as long as these three men lived, the Christians were obliged to write an oath at each examination, and each time these three men signed the document in confirmation. Of the three, Chūan, and Ryōhaku were foreigners, Ryōjun was Japanese.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>100</sup> 後藤庄三郎 'Gotō Shōsaburō'

<sup>101</sup> Here, as elsewhere, I make use of Murakami's Japanese translation of the Dutch diary, *Nagasaki Oranda-shōkan no Nikki* 長崎オランダ商館の日記, Tokyo, 1957, II, p.117.

<sup>102</sup> 目明 'meakashi'

<sup>103</sup> Murakami, *Nagasaki*, Tokyo, 1956, I, pp. 212-3.

<sup>104</sup> 崎陽雜記 'Kiyōzakki', a work dealing with the local history of Nagasaki, author and date unknown, but probably compiled toward the end of the eighteenth century. There are MS copies in Nagasaki Municipal Museum, Tokyo University, Waseda University, Shōkōkan 彰考館 in Mito, etc.

<sup>105</sup> 仲庵 'Chūan', 了伯 'Ryōhaku', 了順 'Ryōjun'

<sup>106</sup> As quoted in *Sokkyo-hen* 息距編 V, pp. 13-13v. The *Sokkyo-hen*, consisting of twenty-two books, is a compilation of anti-Kirishitan works; the original manuscript is preserved in Shōkōkan, Mito, but there are copies in Waseda University and Tokyo University; I have used the latter copy.

Chūan, of course, was Ferreira, and Ryōjun was the apostatized Japanese secular priest Miguel Gotō Ryōjun; contrary to what is stated above, Ryōhaku was also an apostatized Japanese priest, Thomas Araki.<sup>107</sup>

In a letter written on 25th day, 7th month, Kyōhō 11 (22 August 1726) by Ro Sōsetsu to Watanabe Gunzō,<sup>108</sup> the following remark is made:

Sawano Chūan was originally a foreigner but was naturalized in Japan. He lived according to Japanese fashion and took the name Chūjirō [sic]. He stayed in Kyoto in the time of the governor Itakura and received from the inquisition thirty rations for living expenses. Then he was called back to Gotō-machi, Nagasaki, and was appointed *shilmon no metsuke*,<sup>109</sup> supervisor of religion. His assistant was Gotō Ryōjun, and he also received the same living expenses and was active in the Nagasaki inquisition. The register of names concerning the examination of religion and of the stepping on the pictures is now kept in the office, but it was formerly kept at the place of these two men. After their deaths their posts were not inherited by their descendants, and so the registers were taken to the office of the governor. Chūan was originally a foreigner, but he was so gifted that he could read *Taiheiki*. His son's name was Chūjirō and he was a skillful pilot. His son-in-law, Sugimoto Chūi,<sup>110</sup> was a surgeon; he is said to have been later summoned to Edo and his family is reported to be still there, but I know nothing about this in any detail.<sup>111</sup>

There is no other record of Ferreira's activities in Kyoto, and it is quite possible that the above information contained in a somewhat late account is merely a vague reference to his former work in the capital as a priest. But even if some reservations may be made regarding the historical accuracy of the above account, it remains clear that Ferreira and the other two former priests played an active role in the religious inquisition at Nagasaki. As an illustration of the oath mentioned in *Kiyō-zakki*, there is still a written example extant in Saishōji<sup>112</sup> at Nagasaki, relating to the apostasy of a certain Kyūsuke and his wife.

We have been Christian believers for many years. Yet we have found out that the Christian religion is an evil religion. It regards the next life as the most important. The threat of excommunication is held over those who disobey the padres' orders, whilst they are likewise kept from associating with the rest of humanity in the present world and doomed to be cast into Hell in the next. It further teaches that there is no salvation in the next life unless sinners confess their faults to the padres and receive their absolution. In this way, the people were led to place their trust in the padres. Yet all this was done with the design of taking the lands of others. When we learned this, I became an adherent of the Hokke sect and my wife of the Ikko sect.

We hereby witness this statement in writing before you, worshipful magistrate. Hereafter we shall never revoke our apostasy, not even in the secret places of the heart. Should we even entertain the slightest thought thereof, then let us be punished by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, St. Mary, and all the Angels and Saints. Let us forfeit all God's mercy,

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<sup>107</sup> Thomas, or Antonio, Araki 荒木 was a Japanese diocesan priest who had studied in Rome. He returned to Japan in 1615; in 1619 he was arrested at Ōmura and apostatized, subsequently working as a government interpreter at Nagasaki. Before his death, in about 1646, he is supposed to have returned to Christianity, as the Dutch reports confirm.

<sup>108</sup> 盧草拙 'Ro Sōsetsu'、度邊軍蔵 'Watanabe Gunzō'. For Ro's (1675-1729) family, see Koga Jūjirō, *Nagasaki Yōgaku-shi* 長崎洋學史, Nagasaki, 1966, I, pp. 248-55.

<sup>109</sup> 宗門の目附 'Shūmon no metsuke'

<sup>110</sup> 杉本忠意 'Sugimoto Chūi'

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Koga, '*Haikyōsha*', pp. 170-1.

<sup>112</sup> 最勝寺 'Saishōji'

and all hope like Judas Iscariot, becoming a laughing-stock to all men, without thereby arousing the slightest pity, and finally die a violent death and suffer the torments of Hell without hope of salvation. This is our Christian Oath.

We tell you frankly that we have no belief whatsoever in Christianity in our hearts. Should we be guilty of any falsehood in this respect, now or in the future, then let each and both of us be divinely punished by Bonten, Taishaku, Shiten-daijo, the great and small deities of the sixty and more provinces of Japan, particularly Gongen and Mishima-Daimyōjin of the two regions of Idzu and Hakone, Hachiman-daibosatsu, Tenman-daijizai-Tenjin, especially our own tutelary deity Suwa-daimyōjin, and all the minor deities. This is our formal oath.

Second year of Shōho [1645]

KYŪSUKE, HIS WIFE

[Endorsement]

The custom of recanting the Christian religion by such a formal oath, and of stamping on a holy image and so forth, has never yet been applied against the Christians in any other land. How can anyone who is troubled by their apostasy revoke it under these circumstances! Moreover, a true revocation of apostasy is quite impossible without the mediation of a padre. A secret revocation is not possible.

The apostate foreign padre—CHŪAN  
The apostate Japanese Padres—RYŌJUN

RYŌHAKU

COUNTERSIGNED

We hereby certify that the above-mentioned Kyusuke and his wife have become members of the Ikko sect.

Saishōji Temple  
Head Priest, SHUSAN<sup>113</sup>

Some authors hold that the signatures of the three former priests on this document are original and genuine, but more detailed research has shown that the document is only a copy, perhaps kept in the temple as a sample or model.

While it is known that Ferreira could read Japanese, it is certain that he could not write it; thus his signature is somewhat questionable, although it is quite possible that he practiced writing his own name in Japanese, or that one of the other two Japanese wrote it for him.

It is also sometimes asserted that Ferreira was the inventor of *efumi*, the treading on sacred pictures as a sign of rejection of Christianity. In recent years, however, Professor Kataoka Yakichi has convincingly shown that this practice was not introduced by Ferreira, for it was most certainly in use before his apostasy.<sup>114</sup> It is possible that Ferreira's name became associated with the invention of the *efumi*, because he was often present at this procedure and countersigned the register of names.

Ferreira was summoned to other places on several occasions to help in the examination of Christians. If his activity in Kyoto, mentioned above, really took place, it must have been between 1634 and 1637, since specific reference is made to Itakura Iga-no-kami,<sup>115</sup> who was killed at the

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<sup>113</sup> Translation taken from Boxer, *Christian Century*, Appendix VIII, pp. 441-2.

<sup>114</sup> Kataoka Yakichi 片岡彌吉, *Fumie 踏絵*, NHK Books no. 90, Tokyo, 1969, p. 49.

<sup>115</sup> 板倉伊賀守 'Itakura Iga-no-kami'

siege of Shimabara in 1637. Any activity of Ferreira in the capital after his apostasy is otherwise not mentioned.

His presence in Edo on at least two occasions, however, is amply recorded. After the Shimabara siege, 1637-8, the government launched a systematic campaign to root out Christianity, and search was made for the few remaining missionaries hiding in northern Japan. In the course of 1638-9, the three Jesuits Giovanni Battista Porro, Martinho Shikimi and Pedro Kibe (Kasui), and two Franciscan friars, were arrested and taken to Edo. The two friars were condemned to the stake at Shinagawa, while the three Jesuits were submitted to the pit torture; Porro and Shikimi apostatized, but Kibe remained steadfast and was dispatched with a sword.<sup>116</sup> First, however, the three men were brought before the supreme court, whither also Ferreira was summoned to persuade his former companions to apostatize. Porro had formerly worked under Ferreira in Kyoto and had succeeded him as Superior of that district; Shikimi had studied theology with him in Macao in 1600-3. It is not known whether Ferreira knew Kibe, although he must certainly have met him after the Japanese priest returned to Nagasaki in 1630 from his epic travels abroad. It is related in Kibe's biography that he addressed a fervent speech to Ferreira on his meeting him in Edo and admonished him to repent. Franco records the somewhat rhetorical words allegedly used by Kibe on this occasion but does not make clear the source of his information.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, if the actual content of this melodramatic speech must remain in doubt, the fact that Ferreira was confronted by the imprisoned Jesuit would appear to be quite certain.

Ferreira is found again in Edo in 1643. On 27 June of that year the so-called Second Rubino Group, consisting of the Jesuits Pedro Márquez, Alfonso Arroyo, Francisco Cassola, Giuseppe Chiara and six companions, landed on Ōshima in Chikuzen and were immediately arrested. By order of the government they were sent to Edo on 27 July in the company of two official interpreters, Namura Hachizaemon and Nishi Kichibyōe,<sup>118</sup> and 'the inquisitor Chūan'.<sup>119</sup> Such is the irony of fate that Ferreira, for whose conversion the group had come to Japan, was to act as interpreter at their trial. The prisoners reached Edo on 27 August, and there they were frequently questioned by the supreme court and even by the shogun, Iemitsu, himself. They were condemned to the torture of the pit, where, according to the report of the inquisitor Inoue Chikugo-no-kami, they all apostatized. They were then sent to Inoue's country house at Kobinata and confined there until their deaths.<sup>120</sup>

Ferreira's visit to Edo in 1643 is also confirmed by the reliable reports of the Dutch. In July of that year the Dutch ship *Breskens*, which together with the *Castrecom* had been ordered by the Dutch East India Company to inquire into trade possibilities with Tartary, put into the bay of Yamada in the province of Nambu on the northern coast of Japan in order to purchase supplies. But the Japanese officials suspected that the ship carried hidden missionaries and so arrested Captain Peter Cornelius Schaep and nine others, and sent a report to Edo.<sup>121</sup> The group left Nambu on 14 August and

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<sup>116</sup> Kibe's death is reported in the Dutch diary of Hirado; for his life, see Hubert Cieslik, 'P. Pedro Kasui (1587-1639)', in *MN*, xv, 1959-60, pp. 35-86.

<sup>117</sup> Franco, *Imagem*, p. 475, cites Cardim and Alegambe, but this incident is not mentioned in either of these works.

<sup>118</sup> 名村八左衛門 'Namura Hachizaemon' 西吉兵衛 'Nishi Kichibyōe'

<sup>119</sup> *Sokkyo-hen*, VI, p. 2.

<sup>120</sup> About the fate of this group, see Voss & Cieslik, pp. 17-29, 77-95 & 166-91.

<sup>121</sup> Arnoldus Montanus, *Atlas Japannensis: Being Remarkable Addresses...*, London, 1670, pp. 319-93. Schaep's original report is kept in The Hague, Overgekomen Brieven jaar 1645, Baek II. GGG2, Koloonial Archief, no. 1055 ('Journael ofte dachregister gehouden bij der schipper Hendricq Cornelisz Schaep...'). A Japanese translation, '*Nambu-hyōchaku-ki*' 南部漂着記, was published by Nagazumi Yōko 永積洋子 in Kirishitan Bunka Kenkyū Series, IX, Tokyo, 1974.

reached Edo after a nine-day journey. Among the interpreters sent from the Tokugawa capital to Nambu was a foreign 'bonze'. He seemed to be an apostate Spaniard, but his nationality was not clear. Montanus reports vaguely, ' . . . the foremention'd *Bonzi* . . . , whom they took to be an Apostate *Castilian*, because he spoke not only *Spanish* and *Portuguese*, but also broken *English* and *Low-Dutch*.' 'Next to them sat the *Spaniard*, an Apostate Priest, which had accompanied the *Netherlanders* from *Namboe*.'<sup>122</sup>

This apostate served as interpreter at the first interrogation in Edo, but he could not have been Ferreira, who reached Edo only on 27 August and is always referred to as 'Siovan', that is, Chūan, in the Dutch records. The Spanish apostate who spoke broken Dutch was perhaps Antonio Carvalho, who had served as interpreter at the trial of the Portuguese ambassadors from Macao in 1640.<sup>123</sup>



6 Jeronymo de Angelis

The Dutch group from the *Breskens* first met Ferreira when, together with the interpreters Namura and Nishi, he was ordered by Inoue to take them warm clothing. 'The next day the Interpreters Kitsbioye [Nishi Kichibyōe] and *Fatsiosaimon* [Namura Hachizaemon], with the Renegado Priest *Siovan* [Ferreira], came and brought for every *Hollander* two *Japan Coats* made of Cotton by *Sicungodonne's* Order.'<sup>124</sup> During the following week interpreters from Nagasaki, and later two from Hirado, made contact with the group and Ferreira was often present at the meetings. Toward the end of September the officials in Edo received an explanatory letter from the director of the Dutch factory at Nagasaki, Johan van Elserak, and they again questioned the Dutch at some length about their travel route and their intentions. Ferreira was present and took part in the geographical disputation over the possibility of reaching Tartary by sea. He produced a Japanese world map showing

Ezo (Hokkaido) as a continuation of North America and tried to prove that there was no sea connection north of Ezo. Ferreira may have said this only to deceive the Dutch, for the Jesuits already knew from the travels of Girolamo de Angelis, 1618-20, that Ezo was in fact an island.<sup>125</sup>

One interrogation was held on 20 October in the presence of the *rōjū* (councilors) Sakai Sanuki-no-kami and Matsudaira Iyo-no-kami.<sup>126</sup> The Dutch were confronted by the four Jesuits of the Second Rubino Group, for the Japanese authorities wanted to find out whether the men from the *Breskens* had any secret connection with the missionaries. During the course of the interrogation Ferreira was summoned, and Montanus reports on this memorable meeting in some detail.

. . . and being carried into the Place of Audience, they were commanded to sit down on Mats by four *Jesuits*, who look'd exceeding pitifully; their Eyes and Cheeks strangely fallen in; their Hands black and blew; and their whole Bodies sadly misus'd and macerated by Torture. This Company amaz'd the *Hollanders*, who were not able to judge the Reason of their being plac'd by the four *Jesuits*.

<sup>122</sup> Montanus, pp. 328 & 330.

<sup>123</sup> Anesaki, *Concordance*, p. 161. See also n. 99.

<sup>124</sup> Montanus, p. 334.

<sup>125</sup> The original text of de Angelis' reports is given in Hubert Cieslik, ed., *Hoppō Tanken-ki* 北方探検記, Tokyo, 1962.

<sup>126</sup> 老中酒井讃岐守 'Rōju Sakai Sanuki-no-kami' 松平伊豫守 'Matsudaira Iyo-no-kami'

These, though they had Apostatiz'd from the *Christian* Faith, yet declar'd publickly to the Interpreters *Kytsbyoye* and *Phatsyosamon*, That they did not freely Apostatize; but the insufferable Torments which had been inflicted upon them, had forc'd them to it. The Council ask'd them at large concerning their Opinions, and the Power of God; on which one answer'd faintly, but the rest were much more resolute.

The *Hollanders* fearing to give any occasion of suspicion in the Council, durst not seem to take notice of their Questions and Answers; yet because they sat close by the *Jesuits*, and *Kytsbyoye* interpreted the *Japan* Questions into Portuguese, which some of the *Hollanders* understood, they heard, amongst others, these following....



7 Ferreira as Interpreter

*An imaginary depiction of the confrontation between Christovão Ferreira and the four captured Jesuits of the Second Rubino Group, at Edo on 20 October 1643. The two rōjū (councilors) Sakai Sanuki-no-kami and Matsudaira Iyo-no-kami are seen on the left. Opposite them are seated the four Jesuits, 'their Eyes and Cheeks strangely fallen in; their Hands black and blew; and their whole Bodies sadly misus'd and macerated by Torture.' Sawano Chūan, alias Ferreira, is shown seated next to them, speaking to one of the Dutch sailors, perhaps Captain Peter Cornelius Schaep, of the ship Breskens, which had reached Japan in July of that year. In fact, ten Hollanders from the ship were present at the interview, but the artist has included only one.*

*Arnoldus Montanus, Atlas Japannensis: Being Remarkable Addresses by Way of Embassy..., London. 1670*



8 Ferreira Family Tombstone

The monument of the Sugimoto family in the graveyard of Zuirinji, Tokyo. The first listed name on the right, Chūan Jōkō Sensei 忠安淨光先生, refers to Christovão Ferreira. The date of his death is erroneously inscribed as the 11th, instead of the 10th, month of Keian 3 (1650)—see note 186.

The *Japan* Council not well experienc'd in the *Romish* Religion, wanted Questions to ask them, and therefore call'd for *Syovan* [Ferreira] the Apostate Priest, who was there ready for that purpose. So soon as he saw the Jesuits, he look'd very fiercely upon them, notwithstanding he had formerly been one of their Order, and in a scoffing manner said, 'Now fie upon you Jesuits, that make this World in an Uproar. How you vapor of your God and Salvation? Are not sav'd but *Jesuits*, or those that embrace your Opinion? In what consists your Interest in Heaven? It is because you privately dissemble with, and defraud all Princes; and gathering, hoard up the Worlds Treasure? Had you remain'd still in your usual Pleasures, the *Japan* Prisons had not harbor'd such a crue of Antichrists; nay, *Japan* had never shed so much Blood: for thousands, by your Delusions, were taken from their Worship of the ancient Gods *Amida*, *Xaca*, and *Canon*, and embrac'd the Christian Religion, for which they suffer'd the cruellest Deaths.

Was it under a pretence to win Souls? Why did you then carry so many Tun of Gold yearly out of *Japan*? And why did you plot to bring Japan under the Subjection of the Spanish Tyrant, and so to order all things according to your pleasure? But now, what is the Power of the Christian God? Look upon your miserable Bodies; can he not help you? Where then is he Omnipotent? Will he not help you? Where is his Mercy? O foolish thought of Salvation! You are distracted, to continue thus in your stubborn humor, imagining to receive great Rewards from God, and great Esteem of your Successors, in suffering willfully your Bodies to be thus tormented. I ask once again, Why doth not your God help you? Certainly your Life is not in his Hands, but in the Emperor's of *Japan*, who when he pleaseth can punish and torture you more than ever he hath done yet.

This the *Hollanders* understood very well, because *Syovan* spoke with a loud Voice; and they also were us'd to his Stile, by reason of their conversation with him in their Inn. But whilst *Syovan* rail'd thus at the *Jesuits*, he seem'd exceedingly to please two of the *Japan* Council, *Sackay Sammoccysame*, and *Matsodairo Ysossamma*, with his Discourse, and chiefly when he spoke of *Amida* and *Xaca*.<sup>127</sup>

Then follows a long theological discourse about the idols of the pagans and Buddhism. Montanus closes his account of the interrogation as follows:

To return again to our Relation, when *Siovan* had reply'd to the four *Jesuits* sitting by the *Hollanders*, he ask'd them also, Why doth not your God help you? How comes your Life in the Hands of the Emperor of *Japan*, if it be at the dispose of your God?

To these blasphemous Discourses the wisest of the *Jesuits* said, Notwithstanding these words come from *Siovan*, yet they ought to be reprov'd; and I tell you, that we believe, that without God's permission none can hurt one Hair of our Heads, neither is there Salvation for the immortal Soul without God; and to forsake him, either for worldly ends, or cruel torments, must upon necessity be a great sin: mean while God denies not mercy to those, that in the last hour beg it, if they are penitent, and depend on their Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

It seem'd as if the *Jesuit* would have said more, but that the Councillors *Sackay Sammoccysama*, and *Matsodairo Ysosamma* gave a sign that the four Jesuits should be led from thence.<sup>128</sup>

Afterwards the Dutch heard that two of the Jesuits had retracted their apostasy and had refused to join a Buddhist sect.

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<sup>127</sup> Montanus, pp. 356-8.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 361.

Wherefore *Siovan*, who was ready to go for *Nangesaque*, receiv'd a Command to stay in *Jedo* till farther Order, his Presence being requir'd when the two other Priests should be carry'd to their torture.<sup>129</sup>

At the end of November Ferreira returned to Nagasaki. Before he departed, he paid a farewell visit to the Dutch.

Soon after, the Apostate Priest *Syouan* went for *Nangesaque*, and came to take his leave of the *Hollanders*, who would willingly have given him a Letter which they had made ready some days before, to deliver to *Elserak*; but *Syouan* excusing himself told them, That he had receiv'd Orders from *Sicungodonne*, Commanding him, not to carry any Letters for the *Hollanders*: Therefore they desir'd him, since he durst not carry their Letter, that if he should meet Master *Elserak* any where by the way, to relate the whole circumstance of their condition to him by word of mouth; which *Syouan* promis'd, according to their request, to perform.<sup>130</sup>

On 1 December Elserak arrived in Edo to pay an official visit on the shogun. The ten prisoners were set free and returned with him to Nagasaki, where they arrived on 24 January 1644.

## 7 The *Kengi-roku*

Three years after Ferreira's apostasy, a tract bearing the title *Kengi-roku*<sup>131</sup> (A Disclosure of Falsehoods), was produced in 1636. The work is attributed to Ferreira but has so far not received a great deal of notice. The only extant manuscript<sup>132</sup> was kept under seal in the Ōkōchi<sup>133</sup> family, the lords of Ōtaki in the province of Kazusa, present Chiba prefecture. Professor Mikami Yoshio<sup>134</sup> discovered it there in the twenties and made a copy, and in 1927 the work was first published in the *Nihon Koten Zenshū* series.<sup>135</sup> The discovery of the document caused quite a stir at the time, but as early as 1930 Anesaki voiced doubts about Ferreira's authorship and advanced his own hypothesis about the origin of the work, and his views, with some modifications, have received general acceptance. That the Ōkōchi manuscript is genuine can hardly be doubted, since it has been preserved in the family since the middle of the seventeenth century; but it is impossible to determine whether the manuscript is original or only a copy, and whether other copies of the work ever existed.

Although the work is attributed to Ferreira both in the introduction and in the epilogue, Anesaki has pointed out that the tract contains hardly any Buddhist ideas and that its arguments against

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 367.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 368.

<sup>131</sup> 顯偽録 'Kengi-roku'

<sup>132</sup> The manuscript was kept in two envelopes. On the outer is written, 'The Writing of the Apostate Fathers', together with the remark, 'In 8th month, Meiwa 6 [1769], Year of the Ox, resealed.' The inner envelope carries the inscription, 'The Writing of the Apostate *Nanban* Fathers. This is a forbidden doctrine and so this is sealed. 24th day, 10th month, Kambun 10 [1670], Year of the Dog.' To this envelope there are attached two papers: on one is written, 'Imprint of the Government Seal', and on the other, 'Former Government Seal. 27th day, 11th month, Ansei 3 [1856], Year of the Hi-no-e and the Dragon, provisionally sealed by the Province Councillors.' Thus, the owners had been authorized by the government to possess the forbidden documents and periodic checks had been made.

<sup>133</sup> 大河内 'Ōkōchi'

<sup>134</sup> 三上義夫 'Mikami Yoshio'

<sup>135</sup> 日本古典全集、第二回 'Nihon Koten Zenshū'. Anesaki published an analysis, 'A Refutation of Christianity Attributed to Christovão Ferreira, the Apostate Padre', in *The Proceedings of the Imperial Academy*, VI, 1930, No. 2, pp. 27-30, and also 'Japanese Criticisms and Refutations of Christianity in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *TASJ*, 2nd series, VII, 1930, pp. 1-15.

Christianity are written from a Confucian standpoint, despite the fact that, according to the epilogue, Ferreira was converted to the Zen sect. Moreover, the work is written in typically Chinese, or *kambun*, style in keeping with the practice of Confucian scholars of those days, but the Jesuits of that time spoke and wrote a pure, almost classical, Japanese.<sup>136</sup> One may also add to Anesaki's arguments the fact that, while Ferreira could speak and read Japanese, he was unable to write it.<sup>137</sup> Although the treatise does not therefore go directly back to Ferreira, its many theological expressions and details concerning the inner life of the Church show that the contents must be traced back to a theologically-trained foreign missionary. Anesaki therefore came to the following conclusion.

Leaving these passages in question to later observation, the apparent difficulty seems not very hard to solve if the following hypotheses be adopted:

That the book was the joint work of a Confucianist and the apostate Padre; that the former asked questions about Kirishitan doctrines with the refutatory remarks, while the apostate replied for information, then more or less in defence, and, finally, in confirmation of the inquisitor's accusations; that these conversations were noted down by the Confucianist and the final results arranged as Ferreira's own confessions and arguments, all intended to fulfill the desire of the Governor to 'disclose the falsehoods of Kirishitan teaching'.<sup>138</sup>

The noted historian of Nagasaki, Koga Jūjirō, believes that Ferreira wrote the tract as an apologia for his apostasy in order to justify himself in his own eyes and before the world. Koga suggests, however, that the Japanese interpreter who took down the notes did not completely understand the meaning of some passages.

On reading and studying this document, one gets the impression that the text was written by an interpreter at the dictation of Chūan, and that various additions were made. It is probable that in general he wrote down quite correctly what Chūan wanted to say, but that, when the book was officially censored, someone in the office of the Nagasaki governor appears to have abridged the original text, cutting out some parts and adding others.<sup>139</sup>

Koga further suggests that Ferreira was genuinely convinced by Confucian teaching and experienced an inner conversion.

It is generally admitted today that the text in its present form cannot be attributed directly to Ferreira. Yet another explanation of its origin is that the tract is a collection of so-called confessions like those later made by Chiara and his companions in Edo.<sup>140</sup> In several of the interrogation sessions Ferreira would have been questioned about the main points of Christian teaching; he himself may have presented some refutations, others could have been added by officials, and finally Ferreira might have been obliged to sign the statements. It has even been proposed that the document was intended as secret propaganda for Christianity;<sup>141</sup> while this hypothesis would certainly explain the secrecy in which the manuscript was preserved, it is difficult to give the suggestion a great deal of credence.

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<sup>136</sup> Anesaki, 'Japanese Criticisms', pp. 11-12.

<sup>137</sup> As noted in the preface to *Kenkon Bensetsu* –see p. 41.

<sup>138</sup> Anesaki, 'Japanese Criticisms', p. 12.

<sup>139</sup> Koga, 'Haikyōsha', p. 174.

<sup>140</sup> Voss & Cieslik, pp. 89 ff.

<sup>141</sup> See Shimmura Izuru in his preface to *Kengi-roku*, pp. 4-5.

The introduction of the tract provides an exposé of Confucian teaching and the motives of Ferreira's apostasy, and is given here in Anesaki's translation.

Viewing the world around we see that everything is endowed with its own nature and merit; bird or beast, insect or fish, grass or tree, earth or stone, air or water, each one has its natural quality and merit. All this is the work of Natura. Man stands at the head of all existence and Heaven has endowed mankind with the natural faculties of charity, justice, propriety, sagacity. Therefore mankind discriminates between good and bad, as well as aspires after equanimity [extinction of emotion].

Having been born in the Land of the Southern Barbarians, I was ever immersed in evil paths and remained ignorant of the right way. Since my youth I have devoted myself to the teaching of Kirishitan, and having become a shukke (religieux) came to the Land of Sunrise, crossing thousands and myriads of leagues on the sea, with the ardent desire of propagating that teaching in Japan. Years and years I have worked on the propaganda in going and wandering east and west, enduring the hardships of hunger and thirst and other perils, hiding myself among the mountains and in the forests, at the risk of life and daring to evade the interdiction. But, having seen the life of the Japanese and learned the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism [Shinto?], and having gradually grasped a small fraction of this truth, I have repented my errors and given up illusions. I have finally abandoned the Kirishitan faith and adopted Buddha's doctrine. Thus, not for vindicating the deeper teachings of the Kirishitan religion but for exposing its falsehood, I write down this for the purpose of awakening those who are ensnared by the evil teachings of the Kirishitan.<sup>142</sup>

The tract is divided into six parts, in each of which a short explanation of Christian doctrine is given.

The existence and essence of God, creator of the universe.  
The doctrine of the human soul and its immortality.  
The Ten Commandments [the ninth and tenth commandments are interchanged]; the law of the Church and papal authority.  
The Life of Christ.  
The Sacraments [only Baptism, Penance and Eucharist are mentioned].  
The Last Judgment.

Although the refutation of these doctrines is generally based on a Confucian standpoint, a Protestant attitude, especially as regards the doctrine of the sacraments, may sometimes be discerned; this has prompted Anesaki to suggest that the influence of the Protestant Dutch may have made itself felt through the Japanese interpreters. There is, for example, an argument against baptism in particular and the sacraments in general on the basis that spirit cannot be purified by matter. As regards the practice of confession, the tract notes that Christ made no clear announcement about this sacrament. In refutation of the Eucharist, it declares, 'It is against reason for bread to be changed into body and wine [*sake*] into blood through one word. And if Jesus said, "My words are life for the people," this only means that his words will live on and not die. This is called a metaphor [メダホラ], and is to be interpreted in this way. The words, "This bread is my body, this wine is my blood," are to be understood as metaphor.'<sup>143</sup>

These statements certainly seem to show Protestant influence, but, as Anesaki remarks, they can hardly be attributed to the direct influence of the Dutch, who at that time were still in Hirado. Yet

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<sup>142</sup> Anesaki, 'Japanese Criticisms', p. 12.

<sup>143</sup> *Nihon Koten Zenshū*, II, p. 23.

another explanation is that Ferreira simply took the objections that are listed in scholastic textbooks of theology under the heading of *adversarii*. It may also be noted that several chapters, especially those dealing with Original Sin and the commandments of God, end with the remark that these doctrines are nothing but a means for conquering foreign countries. The document ends with the following epilogue:

The above work offers a summary of the mysteries of the Christian religion and inquires about their truth and their falsehood; it is therefore called *Kengi-roku*. I would have liked to explain the matter more explicitly, but since I do not understand *kanji*, I have not been able to express everything just as I wanted. I have therefore dictated everything verbally. Since everything is written in this book, our people can study it for themselves.

Kan'ei 13, the year of the *hi-no-e* and the mouse [1636]. On the lucky day of the ninth month.

Citizen of the land of Portugal, Superior of the Fathers of Japan and Macao, Christovão Ferreira. After a change of religion, a member of the Zen sect.

Chūan.<sup>144</sup>

Although this work contains a good deal of material not found in other anti-Christian tracts and therefore almost certainly goes back to Ferreira, it is somewhat surprising that Japanese officials did not exploit its propaganda value and that the document was kept strictly locked up. The work is mentioned by Mukai Genshō in the prologue to his *Kenko Bensetsu*, described in the following section, but no other reference has been found in any other book.

## 8 The Kenkon Bensetsu

But Ferreira became best known in Japan through the scientific treatise *Kenkon Bensetsu*<sup>145</sup> (A Critical Explanation of Heaven and Earth), a work which has played a rather important role in the history of Japanese science.<sup>146</sup> There are, however, several contradictory traditions about the origin of this book. According to an old but untrustworthy tradition in Nagasaki, Ferreira is supposed to have written the text in *rōmaji* at the request of the physician Asano Chōsai,<sup>147</sup> after which the monk Shōgin of Kōgetsuji<sup>148</sup> transcribed the manuscript into *kanji* under the title *Sankoku Unki-ron*<sup>149</sup> (An Astrological Treatise of the Three Countries [Japan, China, and Europe]). This work is also known by the additional titles *Kana Temmon-shō*<sup>150</sup> (An Astronomical Summary in *Kana*), or *Sankoku Unki Tsūyō-shō*<sup>151</sup> (A Summary of Astrology of the Three Countries).<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>145</sup> 乾坤辨説 ‘Kenkon Bensetsu’ 1958.

<sup>146</sup> The work has been preserved in several, partly differing, manuscripts. It was printed in the collection *Bummei Genryū Sōsho* 文明源流叢書, Tokyo, 1914, II, pp. 1-100. Of the extensive literature on the subject, one may cite Koga, 'Haikyōsha Sawano Chūan', and Ebisawa, *Namban Gakutō no Kenkyū* 南蠻學統の研究, Tokyo, 1958.

<sup>147</sup> 浅野長濟 ‘Asano Chōsai’

<sup>148</sup> 松吟 ‘Shōgin’, 光月寺 ‘Kōgetsuji’

<sup>149</sup> 三國運氣論 ‘Sankoku Unki-ron’

<sup>150</sup> 假名天文鈔 ‘Kana Temmon-sho’

<sup>151</sup> 三國運氣通要鈔 ‘Sankoku Unki Tsuyo-sho’

<sup>152</sup> Koga, 'Haikyōsha', p. 184.

The physician and Confucian scholar Mukai Genshō,<sup>153</sup> 1600-77, later added a critical commentary to the work and edited it under the title *Kenkon Bensetsu*. Many divergent, partly contradictory, versions of the prologue are found in different manuscripts and certainly do not go back to Mukai himself. Nevertheless, the substance of the work may be traced back to him, and his account of the origin of the document and text is generally accepted today as trustworthy. On the basis of this tradition, supported by further evidence, it is possible to summarize the history of the treatise as follows.

On 27 June 1643 the members of the Second Rubino Group, Giuseppe Chiara and his companions, landed on the island of Ōshima off the coast of Chikuzen and were immediately arrested. Among the members of the group was Francesco Cassola, a mathematician and astronomer, who had specialized in scientific studies and probably hoped to use these as a means of approaching the court of the Japanese 'King', just as his fellow Jesuits had done in China. And so it is not surprising that among the books confiscated at the time of landing was a treatise on astronomy.<sup>154</sup> About two or three years later Inoue Chikugo-no-kami gave this book to Sawano Chūan, alias Ferreira, telling him to translate it into Japanese. Ferreira was able to read Japanese script but could not write it, and so wrote down the translation in *rōmaji*. This *rōmaji* version was subsequently consigned to the storehouse of the governor of Nagasaki. When the new governor Kainoshō Kiemon<sup>155</sup> took office in the winter of 1652, he instructed the interpreter Nishi Kichibyōe and the Confucian scholar Mukai Genshō to transcribe the *rōmaji* text into Japanese script, with Mukai adding a suitable commentary. So Nishi read out the *rōmaji* text, while Mukai produced a polished Japanese version, later adding to each chapter a refutation from the Confucian standpoint.

Mukai's *Kenkon Bensetsu* cannot be dated with certainty since in the date given in the work there is a contradiction between the year number and the calendar sign, but the date is usually given as 1659 in accordance with the calendar sign. The treatise, however, may well have been produced in the years 1656-9. When interest in Western science later grew stronger, the original text, without Mukai's refutations, was summarized under the title *Temmon Biyō*<sup>156</sup> (A Handbook of Astronomy). Ebisawa has rightly suggested that this work is not a later extract but rather the original text, especially as it includes Sawano's introduction of Kan'ei 21 (1644), the year after the arrest of the Second Rubino Group.<sup>157</sup> It may be noted that the prologue to *Sankoku Unki-ron* is dated 1645, while Ferreira's introduction to *Kenkon Bensetsu* bears the date 1650.

While the original work, *Temmon Biyō*, consisted of two books, *Kenkon Bensetsu* contains four; thus the first and second books of *Kenkon Bensetsu* correspond to the first book of Ferreira's treatise, while the third and fourth books correspond to his second. A list of the chapter titles of *Kenkon Bensetsu* gives a good idea of the structure and content of the work.

### Book 1.

Introduction. The science of the Four Countries (Japan, China, India, and Europe). Cosmology :

1. The Four Elements
2. The mutual relations between earth, water, air and fire
3. The composition of all things from these elements

<sup>153</sup> 向井元升 (or 元松) 'Mukai Genshō'

<sup>154</sup> For a catalogue of the confiscated books, see Voss & Cieslik, pp. 182-4.

<sup>155</sup> 甲斐庄喜右衛門正述 'Kainoshou Kiemon', Nagasaki *bugyō* from 1652 to 1659.

<sup>156</sup> 天文備要 'Tenmon Biyou'

<sup>157</sup> Ebisawa, *Namban Gakutō*, p. 99

4. The essential qualities of these elements
5. The climate of spring, summer, autumn, and winter
6. The natural places of the elements
7. The extension of the four elements
8. The sphericity of the earth

**Book 2.**

9. The size of the earth
10. The elements of the earth
11. The earth as the center of the universe
12. Heavy objects tend toward the center of the world
13. The immobility of the earth
14. Earthquakes and the element of water
15. The origin of water
16. Springs of water coming from out of the earth
17. The saltiness of sea water
18. The ebb and flow of the tides
19. Why springs are cool in summer, warm in winter
20. The three regions of the air
21. The movements of the winds
22. What originates in the air
23. The things of the middle air space (dew, frost, fog, etc.)
24. The things of the lower air space (clouds, rain, hail, rainbows, meteorites, thunder, etc.)

**Book 3: Astronomy**

1. The heavenly substance (ether).
2. The round shape of the heavens
3. The celestial movements
4. Whether the heavens move or whether the stars have their own movement
5. The number of the heavens
6. The meaning of the different heavens
7. The period of the opposite movement of the ninth heaven
8. The map of the heavens
9. The time of the equinox
10. The solstice
11. The spring and autumn equinox
12. The time when the sun is in the zenith
13. The time when half of the whole sky space may be seen
14. Midsummer and midwinter
15. The southern and northern polar regions
16. The five zones and their seasons

**Book 4.**

17. The distribution of the days and months
18. The length of the day and night
19. The length of the day and night according to geographical position
20. The years and months
21. The moon has no light of its own
22. The size of the sun and moon
23. Solar and lunar eclipses
24. The heavens of the seven planets
25. How the seven planets differ from the other stars



on scientific topics; to help him in this work he ordered both scientific books and instruments from Europe.<sup>163</sup>

In 1612 Spinola was recalled to Nagasaki and left the capital. As has been already noted, Ferreira then went to Kyoto to take his place as Minister of the residence, but it is not known whether he was also supposed to continue the scientific endeavors of his predecessor. In any case in little over a year's time the expulsion decree obliged the Jesuits to leave the capital in February 1614, but during that short period Ferreira had the opportunity of studying the latest developments in European scientific research.

Which treatise, then, did he translate into Japanese in 1643? If the information given in the introduction is correct, the work was brought to Japan by the Second Rubino Group in 1643, although it is not stated whether it was a printed book or merely a manuscript. Nevertheless, if the treatise was brought to Japan in this way, it must have come from Macao. As regards internal evidence, Ebisawa has suggested that the work translated by Ferreira was the book of Christopher Clavius, since both works contain the same diagrams.<sup>164</sup> But although Clavius' work is far more comprehensive, it does not contain a treatise on meteorology, and so a direct translation of Clavius' textbook is out of the question. At first sight there appears to be an inner connection between the *Sphaera*, the commentary compiled by Gómez in 1593 for use as a textbook in the Jesuit colleges in Japan, the Japanese work *Nigi Ryakusetsu*<sup>165</sup> (A Compendium of the Two Sciences), and *Kenkon Bensetsu*. Accurate comparison is complicated by the fact that Gómez' treatise was not printed and it is not clear whether the only extant copy, now preserved in the Vatican Library, is the original version or a revised edition. Obara Satoru has edited the text of this manuscript, and after analyzing its sources came to the conclusion that the first part, on astronomy, follows in structure the *Sphaera* of Joannes Bosco, while the second, on meteorology, goes back to Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle.<sup>166</sup> It is at present impossible to check whether in fact there existed such a book in Europe at that time or whether Gómez' work was a new compilation.

When Morejon used this treatise while giving his first lectures at the Amakusa college in 1593-4, a translation was made for the benefit of Japanese Jesuits and catechists who did not understand Latin. Gómez' treatise was later used as a textbook for the advanced classes of the seminary, and so the work had a wide circulation in the Japanese mission. There can hardly be any doubt that the treatise, both the original Latin text and the subsequent Japanese translation, was available in Kyoto when Ferreira was working in the capital. The Japanese translation of the work certainly provided the source for *Nigi Ryakusetsu*, which was later revised by Kobayashi Kentei.<sup>167</sup> Although this work was considerably abridged and the chapter sequence partly differs, the astronomical and meteorological sections, to say nothing of the over-all content of the complete work, clearly demonstrate their dependence on Gómez' *Sphaera*.

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<sup>163</sup> See n. 22.

<sup>164</sup> Ebisawa, *Namban Gakutō*, p. 95.

<sup>165</sup> 二儀略説 'Nigi Ryakusetsu' The manuscript is preserved in the Naikaku Bunko, Tokyo; it was first published by Hirose Hideo 廣瀬秀雄 in *Nihon Shisō Taikei* 日本思想体系, 63; *Kinsei Kagaku Shisō* 近世科学思想, Tokyo, 1971, II, pp. 9-107.

<sup>166</sup> Obara, pp. 153-9.

<sup>167</sup> 小林謙貞 'Kobayashi Kentei', 1601-83, a pupil of Hayashi Kichiemon 林吉右衛門. Suspected of being a Christian, Kobayashi spent twenty-one years in prison. See *Nihon Shisō Taikei*, 63, p. 468. For comparison of the *Nigi Ryakusetsu* with Gómez' *Sphaera*, see Obara Satoru, 'Waga Kuni Kinsei no Yōroppa-Kagaku ni tsuite no Ichikōsatsu' 我が國近世のヨーロッパ科学についての一考察, in *Kirishitan Bunko Kenkyūkai Kaihō* キリシタン文庫研究会會報, Tokyo, 1967, x, No. 1, pp. 23-5.

If Ferreira was acquainted with the original text and its Japanese translation from earlier days, *Kenkon Bensetsu* and *Sankoku Unki-ron*, which are both based on it, show differences in the sequence of material, and later additions and modifications must have been made.<sup>168</sup> The illustrations demonstrate a clear connection with Clavius' commentary on the *Sphaera*. If the report that the work was brought from Macao is correct, then one may suggest that there was a revised edition of the Gómez text made in Macao. Gómez' *Sphaera* was certainly known and available in Macao, as the 1616 catalogue of books in the Jesuit procurator's office in Macao clearly shows.<sup>169</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that the text was used in the Macao college and that various emendations were made there. Other European works, such as Clavius' textbooks, were also used there. In the last year of his life, Matteo Ricci, with the cooperation of the scholar Li Chih-tsao,<sup>170</sup> composed a commentary on the *Sphaera* entitled *Yüan-jung chiao-i* (*Kenkon Taigi*),<sup>171</sup> which was published in 1614, four years after his death. Its dependence on Clavius' work is shown on the title page, which is illustrated with a diagram of the four elements taken from Clavius. Somewhat surprisingly, *Kenkon Bensetsu* makes use of the same diagram with the same Chinese characters. But *Kenkon Bensetsu* is not identical with Ricci's *Yüan-jung chiao-i*, which contains only the astronomical section of the *Sphaera*.

To sum up. The book brought to Japan by the Second Rubino Group may have been a revision, made in Macao, of the Gomez text and containing illustrations from Clavius' work. It is also very probable that the group brought not only the Latin work of Gómez but also a copy of Ricci's Chinese version of the *Sphaera*. Thus the 1593 Gómez commentary on Bosco's *Sphaera* was probably used by Ferreira as a basis for his translation.

## 9 Ferreira and Japanese Medicine

The name of Ferreira, or more specifically his Japanese name Sawano Chūan, appears also in the history of Japanese medicine. As early as 1904 Fujikawa Yū, the pioneer investigator into the history of Japanese medicine, made reference in his famous work, *Nihon Igaku-shi*,<sup>172</sup> to Ferreira's role, although his historical information in this regard is less than trustworthy. This is especially so when Fujikawa associates Ferreira with the so-called *namban igaku*, that is, the Portuguese medical tradition in Japan that dates back to the time of the Jesuit Luis de Almeida.<sup>173</sup> Both Koga Jūjirō and Ebisawa Arimichi have also published their research in this field.<sup>174</sup>

It has to be asked in the first place whether in fact Ferreira possessed any special medical training or, at least, above-average medical knowledge. In the case of Luis de Almeida there can be no doubt,

<sup>168</sup> For example, Gómez mentions a 1579 earthquake in Peru and a 1580 one in the Azores; in the corresponding place, *Nigi Ryakusetsu* reports earthquakes in the Malaysian peninsula and in Ceylon without mentioning any date. *Kenkon Bensetsu* gives no concrete example.

<sup>169</sup> Pierre Humberclaude, S.M., 'Recherches sur deux catalogues de Macao, 1616 & 1632', in *Biblioteca Nipponica*, Tokyo, 1942, fasc. 3, p. 20.

<sup>170</sup> 李之藻 'Li Chih-tsao'

<sup>171</sup> 乾坤體儀 'Yuan-jun chiao-i (Kenkon Taigi)'

<sup>172</sup> 富士川游、日本醫學史 'Fujikawa Yu, Nihon Igaku-shi'. I have used the 1941 edition.

<sup>173</sup> Fujikawa, p. 265.

<sup>174</sup> Koga, 'Haikyōsha'; Koga, *Nagasaki Yōgakushi* 古賀十二郎、長崎洋學史、Nagasaki, 1966, II, pp. 158 ff.; Ebisawa, *Namban gakuō*, pp. 500 ff.

as he studied surgery in Portugal before setting out for Japan and even received a royal patent.<sup>175</sup> When he opened a hospital in 1556 at Funai (present-day Oita) and performed surgical operations there, he was in a true sense the pioneer of Japanese surgery. The Japanese Association of Physicians has recognized his contribution in this field by erecting two monuments to his memory.<sup>176</sup> But after 1561 Almeida left medical activity mostly to his pupils, and in the war troubles of 1586 the Funai hospital was destroyed and never rebuilt. It is not known whether surgical operations were performed in the Misericordia hospital at Nagasaki.

In any case the missionaries did not exercise any formal medical activity later because of the prohibition imposed on clerics. Since the Middle Ages priests and religious had been forbidden to study and practice medicine—'Priests shall study neither law nor medicine.' The Jesuit Constitutions, promulgated in 1559, prohibited the teaching of medicine at Jesuit colleges, or medical faculties had, at least, to be transferred to non-Jesuit teachers. The Visitor Alessandro Valignano was sent to the Far East specifically to introduce and promulgate the Constitutions and the prohibition against medicine was published by him and later renewed by his successor, Francisco Pasio, in the following terms, 'Nobody in the Society will be allowed to learn medicine or surgery, nor to practice anything of these arts which he may already know, nor to have books which treat of these subjects; the same prohibitions apply to the *dōjuku*.'<sup>177</sup>

The medical and surgical tradition begun by Almeida was therefore interrupted within the Society, and was continued only by his disciples and perhaps indirectly in the hospital of Nagasaki. Hospital work, frequently mentioned in the Jesuit and Franciscan reports, was restricted to the care of the sick and to the dispensing of medicines. Thus there is no question of Ferreira's being actively influenced by this tradition, for he came to Japan only in 1609, and after two years in Arima, was sent to Kyoto. It is also quite impossible for Ferreira to have engaged in medical studies before coming to Japan. He entered the novitiate at Coimbra at sixteen years of age, was sent still as a scholastic to East Asia, and finished his theological studies at Macao. He therefore possessed no greater knowledge in the field of medicine than did the average missionary of that time.

It may, however, be noted that this knowledge was often quite considerable, as the European priests lived in remote places, were completely dependent on themselves, and had to take care of treating wounds and injuries, blood letting, and simple medical ailments. Even during the time of persecution the Jesuits preserved in Nagasaki a supply of medicines far greater than their own personal needs would require.<sup>178</sup> There are also various extant letters written by missionaries expressing their thanks for medicines received,<sup>179</sup> and it may be borne in mind that, while procurator of the Jesuit mission, Ferreira was in charge of distributing medical supplies.

During the years after his apostasy, that is, from 1634 to 1650, there is no positive proof that Ferreira engaged in any medical activities, yet various references in the diary compiled by the Dutch at Deshima do give some indications. For instance, the following entries were made during 1648:

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<sup>175</sup> Léon Bourdon, 'Luis de Almeida, Chirurgien et Marchand', in *Mélanges d'Etudes Portugaises...*, Lisbon, 1949, p. 72.

<sup>176</sup> A memorial stone was erected in Hondo, Amakusa, in 1964, and a bronze statue in Oita in 1972.

<sup>177</sup> Pasio, 'Obediencias, 1612', ch. 15, no. 18 (Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid: Jesuitas, *legajo* 21, f. 187); further material is given in Dorotheus Schilling, O.F.M., *Das Schulwesen der Jesuiten in Japan*, Münster, 1931, pp. 63-5.

<sup>178</sup> See above, [Part 3](#).

<sup>179</sup> E.g., Diogo Carvalho, 1 January 1620, and Jerónimo de Angelis, 4 February 1620 (JS 34, f. 33).

- 12 July: Chūan [Ferreira] came to Deshima with two officials of the Governor and inquired about the medical efficacy and application of several medicinal plants.
- 26 July: One of Inoue Chikugo-no-kami's servants, who has suffered for three years from an open wound in his leg, came to Deshima, accompanied by Chūan as interpreter. Chūan was also present when the man received medical treatment, and he asked for an explanation of everything so that he could later, if need be, continue the treatment.
- 25 September: Chūan came to Deshima with an official of the Governor to collect several medicines ordered by Inoue, and he checked the list.<sup>180</sup>

On later visits Ferreira received an explanation of the magnifying glass and other optical instruments; he once brought along a unicorn's horn and asked a pharmacist for an explanation. These extracts from the diary do not, of course, provide any complete picture allowing us to come to a definite judgment, but one gets the impression that, in his dealings with the Dutch, Ferreira may have acquired some medical knowledge, especially as regards the treatment of wounds and the application of medicinal herbs. Nevertheless, it is highly doubtful whether he was able to perform a surgical operation. In summary, it would be true to say that Ferreira in fact does not occupy a very important position in the history of Japanese medicine, and that this history owes far more to the Dutch tradition, or *oranda igaku*, than to the Portuguese. Ferreira's name is, in fact, associated with a medical book entitled *Nambanyū Geka Hiden-sho* (The Secret Tradition of Southern Barbarian Surgery), but both the authorship and time of compilation are very doubtful.<sup>181</sup>

Ferreira's importance in the development of Japanese medicine depends perhaps not so much on his actual practice of medicine as on his work as interpreter and middleman. This may be seen in the role that he plays in three prominent medical traditions of the Edo period.<sup>182</sup>

1. *The Yoshida School*. Among the pupils of Ferreira, the first to be listed is a man called Handa Jun'an.<sup>183</sup> Interested in medicine from his youth, he studied under Chūan, went to Macao, and after his return to Japan became a famous doctor. One of Handa's pupils was Yoshida Jikyū,<sup>184</sup> the founder of the Yoshida School, which was later called to Edo and provided government physicians throughout the Tokugawa period.

2. *The Sugimoto School*. Sugimoto Chūkei,<sup>185</sup> born in Izu province, studied under Chūan and married his daughter. Later summoned to Edo, he became for a time the personal physician of the shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune. The Sugimoto family continued in the service of the government until the end of the Tokugawa period. The family traces its ancestor back to Sawano Chūan (Ferreira), and a memorial stone bearing his name may still be seen in the family temple of Zuirinji<sup>186</sup> in Tokyo.

<sup>180</sup> Murakami, *Nagasaki*, II, pp. 199, 200 & 212.

<sup>181</sup> 南蠻流外科秘傳書 'Nambanryū Geka Hiden-sho': Ebisawa, *Namban Gakutō*, p. 501.

<sup>182</sup> Koga, 'Haikydscha', pp. 193 ff.

<sup>183</sup> 半田順庵 'Handa Jun'an'

<sup>184</sup> 吉田自休 'Yoshida Jikyū'

<sup>185</sup> 杉本忠恵 'Sugimoto Chuukei'

<sup>186</sup> The tomb of Ferreira in the cemetery of Kōdaiji, Nagasaki, has been destroyed. The Sugimoto family erected a monument for several of their ancestors in the graveyard of Tōkaiji 東海寺, Shinagawa, Edo, and the first of the six names inscribed was Chūan-jōkō Sensei 忠庵淨功先生 (i.e., Ferreira). In 1941 the family combined their family graves in Tōkaiji and in Zuirinji 瑞輪寺, Yanaka-chō 4-2, Taitō-ku, Tokyo, and at the latter temple erected a new memorial for forty-six ancestors, among whom Chūan-jōkō Sensei is again mentioned in first place. The date of his death is wrongly recorded as 11th day, 11th month, Keian 3 (2 January 1651), instead of 11th day, 10th month (4 November 1650).

3. *The Nishi School*. The Nishi family was widespread throughout west Kyushu, and provided a number of missionaries and martyrs for the Christian cause. It is not known whether Nishi Kichibyōe, known as the Interpreter, was a former Christian. Employed as a government interpreter at Nagasaki, he played a large role in dealings with both the Portuguese and the Dutch. The transcription of Ferreira's treatise on astronomy, *Kenkon Bensetsu*, is attributed to him. His son, Nishi Gempo,<sup>187</sup> but also often called Kichibyōe, was active after his father's death as an interpreter. It is known that he possessed considerable medical knowledge, and he is mentioned as one of Chūan's pupils. Gempo studied directly under the Dutch and was even presented with a diploma, signed by the Dutch captain Constantin Ranst, Daniel Van Vliet, and the physician Arnold Dirckz, and issued on 20 February 1668, in which his extraordinary medical knowledge is recognized.<sup>188</sup> He also was called to Edo, where he served as a government physician and died in 1684.

Such is the connection of Ferreira's name with the history of Western medicine in Japan. Exactly how much he contributed in this field must remain an open question. It is possible that his name and position as a foreigner recognized by the government and working in official business may have been some kind of cover, for a number of scientists, medical men, and astronomers in Japan were obliged to hide their interest and research in the forbidden Western sciences.

## 10 The End

Ferreira's apostasy had caused great consternation not only in all the missions of the Far East but also in Europe. Prayers and penances were offered up on his behalf in many countries, and no effort was spared to bring about his conversion. Marcello Mastrilli, Antonio Rubino, and other Jesuits departed for Japan in an effort to move him to repent and to offer their own lives in reparation. Meager news of the fate of the fallen apostate was eagerly received in the Christian world, and people listened with great satisfaction to the accounts of the Portuguese and Chinese merchants who had met Ferreira in Nagasaki and reported that he regretted his apostasy, preserved the Faith in his heart, secretly carried a rosary, recited the Gospel over sick people, and never betrayed the hiding places of the persecuted missionaries and Christians.<sup>189</sup> In particular, there were three specific attempts to contact Ferreira and persuade him to renounce his apostasy.

The first attempt was made by the Jesuit Marcello Mastrilli. He sailed to Japan, was arrested immediately on disembarkation, and condemned to death in the pit at Nagasaki. On 17 October 1637, after three days of the torment, he was pulled out of the pit and beheaded.<sup>190</sup> The second attempt was made by the Japanese Jesuit Pedro Kibe (Kasui), who was condemned to death in the pit at Edo in July 1639. As noted above, according to some reports Ferreira is supposed to have been present at the interrogation and to have been admonished by Kibe to repent; other reports state that he was present at the Japanese Jesuit's martyrdom.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> 西玄甫 'Nishi Gempo'

<sup>188</sup> See Koga, *Haikyōsha*, p. 194.

<sup>189</sup> Franco, *Imagem*, p. 372; see Díaz' letter, quoted above in [Part 5](#)

<sup>190</sup> There is ample literature about Mastrilli and his martyrdom. Among others: Nicholas de Acosta, *Breve Relacion del Martirio del Padre Marcello Francisco Mastrillo*, n.p., c. 1638; Ignacio Stafford, *Historia de la Celestial Vocacion, Misiones apostolicas y gloriosa Muerte del Padre Marcello Francisco Mastrilli*, Lisbon, 1639. Also Voss & Cieslik, p. 90.

<sup>191</sup> Franco, *Imagem*, p. 470.

The third attempt was made by Antonio Rubino.<sup>192</sup> In 1638, after working for many years in the Indian mission, Rubino was sent to Macao at his own request and was nominated Visitor in October of the following year. He felt a strong desire to go to Japan, and this wish was only increased by the news of the arrest of the last Jesuits and by the rumor of the apostasy of Giovanni Battista Porro, his friend and former colleague.<sup>193</sup> In November 1640 Rubino, together with Francisco Márquez, attempted the voyage to Japan, but was driven by a storm on to the coast of Cochin China. He returned to Macao, and, in spite of the objections of a number of Jesuits, went in 1642 to Manila, whence he intended to set out to Japan with a large group of missionaries. Since such a large party, consisting of nine priests, one Brother and several catechists, presented too big a risk of discovery, he divided the expedition into two groups. He himself left for Japan with four priests on 5 July 1642, while the second group, under the leadership of Pedro Márquez, was scheduled to set out in the following year.

Rubino had composed a glowing appeal to Ferreira in Latin and intended to send it to him on his arrival in Japan. It is worthwhile quoting from this long document the *Tu ille Christofihorus* section, since it not only reveals the mentality of the author but also supplies several important dates in Ferreira's biography.

Are you that Christopher who in 1596, on the holy day of the birth of Christ, was born for God and the Society at the age of sixteen, and did you give her your name? Are you that Christopher who, forgetting parents, relatives and friends, and despising the things of this world, took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience before the Provincial, Fr Christovão Gouvea, in the college of Coimbra on the feast of the blessed proto-martyr Stephen in the year 1598? Have you followed in the footsteps of such a great martyr only to deny Christ, for whom that saint was stoned to death?

Are you that Christopher who, on 4 April 1600, left the mother country and soil of Portugal and sailed to the East Indies to bring to that region the light of the Gospel? Have you brought that light there only to deny the true God? Are you that Christopher who, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, started from Goa on 1 May 1601 for the Japanese mission? Are you that Christopher who in the year 1608 at dawn on the same morning on which Jesus our Savior was born, celebrated your first holy sacrifice of the Mass? Have you misused those Holy Orders so that you may be dedicated to Satan? Are you that Christopher who, thirsting for the salvation of the souls of the Japanese, boarded ship on 16 May 1609 and sailed for Japan? Have you really brought them salvation, or have you through your bad example misled many from the true path?

Are you that Christopher who joyfully pronounced the four solemn vows before the Provincial, Fr Mattheus de Couros, on 1 October 1617 at Nagasaki? Should you not have preserved this loyalty which was vowed to God and the Society in the presence of so many witnesses? Should you not have remembered what we have so solemnly promised and to whom? Are you that Christopher to whom our Society committed with great confidence the leadership of the whole Japanese province and the duties of bishop on 23 December 1632? Have you administered it

<sup>192</sup> There is also considerable literature about Rubino. See, for example, *Breve Relazione della gloriosa morte... che il P. Antonio Rubino...*, Rome, 1642.

<sup>193</sup> 'I cannot believe it about Fr Porro. I grew up with him in the college at Milan. He was one of the most fervent people in the college. Although I experience much consolation in the constancy of Fr Pedro Kasui, I feel deep sorrow about the wickedness of these two [Porro and Shikimi], if it is indeed true what is reported about them.' Rubino, 2 November 1639 (JS 28, f. 212).

only that you may turn your back on Christ and his Order? What a terrible change! How you have degraded yourself! I perish with tears and sighs when I think on this.<sup>194</sup>



**10 Priest Saying Mass**

Dressed as Chinese, Rubino and his companions left Manila on 4 July and sailed to Formosa, where they transferred to Japan. On 11 August their ship hit a rock off the coast of Shimo-Koshikijima, an island belonging to Satsuma, and there they were immediately apprehended and brought to Nagasaki, where they arrived on 21 August. On the following day they were closely interrogated, and then led away to the prison at Ōmura. In the spring of the following year they were brought back to Nagasaki, and on 16 March condemned to the pit torture. The last three members of the group were still living after nine days of this torment, and were pulled out of the pit and beheaded.

The members of the Second Rubino Group were arrested on their arrival on the island of Ōshima in Chikuzen province, taken to Nagasaki and from there led to Edo. As related above, Ferreira was present at their interrogation.<sup>195</sup>

In 1652 further news about Ferreira reached the outside world. It was said that he had recanted and had been condemned to death in the pit as a result. The news traveled like wildfire through Europe and in next to no time was adorned with various miraculous stories and legends. Franco gives the year of his death as 1652, while Nadasi fixes the date of his martyrdom as 26 April, admitting somewhat ingenuously, however, that the actual day was unknown and that he had chosen this particular day merely because it was the feast of St Marcellinus, the patron of Mastrilli.<sup>196</sup>

In more recent years Fr J.F. Schütte has subjected the reports of Ferreira's martyrdom to a critical scrutiny, and utilizing original European documents preserved in Rome he has investigated the origin of the rumors and trustworthiness of the witnesses.<sup>197</sup> In the center of the affair is a Japanese Christian merchant by name of Paulo de Bada (Wada?), who in 1652 brought to Tongking the news that Ferreira's property had been confiscated. In the following two years there were further reports

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<sup>194</sup> An extant copy, sent by Rubino from Manila to the Patriarch of Ethiopia, Afonso Mendes, together with a letter dated 30 June 1642, is preserved in JS 18, II, ff. 279-83. All apart from its rhetorical style, the text is important as it provides data for Ferreira's biography; Rubino was the Visitor and therefore possessed all the pertinent information.

<sup>195</sup> For the Second Rubino Group, see Voss & Cieslik, pp. 166-91.

<sup>196</sup> Franco, *Imagem*, p. 374; Joannes Nadasi, in Alegambe, *Mortes*, pp. 701-4.

<sup>197</sup> 'Ist P. Christovão Ferreira als Martyrer gestorben? Nach dem Bericht eines japanischen "Mandarinen" in Tongking', in Voss & Cieslik, pp. 202-8. Full references to sources are given in this article and so are not repeated here.

about his martyrdom. Schütte is inclined to believe that in substance the reports are trustworthy and at the end of his research summarizes the various accounts as follows:

Fr Ferreira was already more than 80 years old,<sup>198</sup> and for years had been confined to bed by sickness and weakness. A great change took place in his soul and his deed now appeared to him in a completely different light. He abhorred his action as a cowardly betrayal of God and expressed his inner convictions in a loud voice. His neighbors heard him talking and finally informed the soldiers of the governor. They visited the house of the sick *tsūya*<sup>199</sup> and asked him the reason for his grief. The Father explained to them with all frankness and firmness his sorrow and his inner conversion. The soldiers joked and made fun of him, saying that he was out of his mind, but he contradicted them firmly. On the contrary, he showed himself ready to die for his faith.

The soldiers then reported this to the governor, who hesitated for a while but, after he had ascertained the facts, condemned Christovão to death in the pit. The sentence, however, was to be carried out in all secrecy so as to avoid causing excitement in the city. The soldiers returned to Ferreira's house, and seeing that he remained constant in his intention, they dragged him off to the torture of the pit. However, they were not able to prevent many Japanese, both Christian and non-Christian, as well as non-Christian Chinese, from attending the martyrdom. The soldiers bound Ferreira and hanged him head downward into the pit. With this torture Ferreira ended his life courageously for Christ.<sup>200</sup>

Whether or not one is willing to accept these second-hand accounts at face value, some definite information regarding at least the date of Ferreira's death is available. Koga notes that, according to the most important printed European sources, Ferreira is supposed to have recanted before his death and to have died as a martyr in the pit.<sup>201</sup> Of all the sources, however, only one provides the exact date of his death. Writing under 6 November 1650, the Dutch author François Valentyn noted, 'The apostate Jesuit Father Juan has died; he has lived here for the last forty years of his life.'<sup>202</sup>

Taking this date as a starting point, Koga examined the death registers of the Zen temples in Nagasaki and was successful in his quest. In the records of Kōdaiji, he found the posthumous name Chūan-jōkō-shinji,<sup>203</sup> from Hon-Gotōmachi, Nagasaki, under the date 11th day, 10th month, Keian 3 (4 November 1650). There can be no doubt that this refers to Sawano Chūan. No age is given in the register. In the following year, under 29th day, 7th month (13 September), the posthumous name Gessei-jōkō-shinji,<sup>204</sup> also from Hon-Gotō-machi, is recorded. This must be Ferreira's son Chūjirō, and so it would appear that he died only a year after his father. The date of Ferreira's death differs by only two days from that given by Valentyn. In any case, Koga overlooked the fact that the entry in the Deshima diary, the source of Valentyn's information, actually runs, 'On 6 November we heard that the apostate Jesuit Father, Chūan, died yesterday,<sup>205</sup> thus indicating 5 November as the date of his death. This differs from the entry in the temple register by only one day.

<sup>198</sup> As Schütte notes, Ferreira was in fact about 70 at the time of his death.

<sup>199</sup> *Tsūya* is probably derived from *tsūji* 通事, meaning 'interpreter'. Ferreira is often called 'Edo-tsūya' in the Dutch letters.

<sup>200</sup> Schütte, in Voss & Cieslik, p. 208.

<sup>201</sup> Koga, 'Haikyōsha', pp. 175 ff.

<sup>202</sup> 'Den 6 den November is afvallige Jesuit Padre Joan, die zig omtrent 40 jaarn hier onthouden heeft, overleden,' in Valentyn, *Beschryvinge van den Handel en vaart der Nederlenderen op Japan*, Amsterdam, 1714, 11, p. 91.

<sup>203</sup> 忠安淨功信士 'Chūan-jōkō-shinji'

<sup>204</sup> 月盛淨功信士 'Gessei-jōkō-shinji'

<sup>205</sup> As given in the Japanese translation of the text in Murakami, *Nagasaki*, III, p. 33.

This slight difference may easily be explained, however, by supposing that either Ferreira's death was not announced until the following day or else the Dutch on Deshima misunderstood their information and wrote 'yesterday' instead of 'the day before yesterday'. Thus two independent sources, one Japanese and the other European, agree as to the date of Ferreira's death, and 4 or 5 November 1650 may be considered quite certain. Furthermore, the findings of Schütte and Koga can easily be coordinated. If Ferreira died in 1650 and his property was then confiscated, the news might well not have reached Tongking until 1652. It is also possible that the property was not confiscated until after the death of Ferreira's son in 1651.

But there remains the other and more important question of whether Ferreira did in fact die as a martyr, or at least recanted before his death. The Dutch sources say nothing of his martyrdom or of the gathering of Japanese and Chinese onlookers, as mentioned in other indirect sources. This silence in itself is not proof against martyrdom, especially as the Dutch received their information through middlemen, and the entries in the Deshima diary are extremely terse and brief. Also, the temple register merely records the memorial days of the people buried in the cemetery and says nothing about the circumstances of their deaths. The fact that Ferreira was given a posthumous Buddhist name and a grave in a Buddhist cemetery is also inconclusive, for this could have been the result of the initiative of local officials or of family relatives, that is, the Sugimoto family.<sup>206</sup> In any case, the government would never have recognized a retraction of his apostasy and might well have tried to cover the matter up.

If, therefore, there are doubts as to the trustworthiness of the European sources reporting Ferreira's final conversion, the meager Japanese sources tell us no more than the date of his death. Whether or not the optimistic European reports are well founded, we cannot, of course, know what happened in the soul of the dying man during the last moments of his life. There will probably always remain a veil of mystery over the case of Christovão Ferreira.



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<sup>206</sup> There are two types of *kakochō* 過去帳, which list either the posthumous name, and often the ordinary name, and the date of death in chronological order, or else the memorial days, along with the posthumous names of the dead, for each day of the year. The register discovered by Koga obviously belonged to the first kind; it was unfortunately later destroyed by fire.