PAPERS COMMUNICATED

101. The Writings of Fabian, the Apostate Irman.

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One reads in the Index to Léon Pagès' "Religion chrétienne au Japon" the name of Fabian as an apostate Irman, S.J., who wrote a book for, and another against, Christianity. On the other side, an apparently same name Habian is well-known in Japanese stories of Kirishitan missions, and a book bearing his name as the author, the Ha-Daius-shi (Refutation of the Deus Religion), has been preserved in its edition of 1620 and also reprinted more than once in recent years. Another book with the title Myô-Tei Mondô, the dialogues between two nuns Myôshû and Yûtei, was disclosed at the Jingû Library in Ise and a new edition was made by Professor Shimmura, of Kyoto, in 1927. Besides, one sees in Satow's "Jesuit Mission Press" (p. 17) the name Fucan Fabian as the compiler of the Heike-Monogatari told in brief and printed at Amakusa in 1592. Now the identity of these three names has been well established by Shimmura, besides an interesting episode of Fabian's discussions on Confucianism and Christianity with a great Confucianist of the time, Hayashi Razan, at Miyako in 1606. The results amount to that Fabian was an ex-novice of Zen Buddhism, converted to Catholicism and later an apostate; that the book "for the religion" mentioned in Pagès was the Myô-Tei Dialogue and the one against was the Ha-Daius polemic.

Now one point in this paper is to supplement Shimmura's identification of Fabian, identifying Fabian, also called Fukansai (不干齊), with Unquio Fabian, no. 92 in the list of Jesuit Padres and Irrmans from 1592 (Delplace, i. 278). He was then 27 years old and 6 years in the College, a man from Miyako (not definite whether native there). This brings the year of his birth to about 1565 and his entrance into the college to 1586. If so, it might be assumed that he was converted a few years before 1586, when he was seventeen or eighteen years old, when he had been a novice in a Zen monastery for some years, as Japanese legends tell us. The name Unquio, though never mentioned elsewhere, may support this latter point, because it is quite a Zen name, possibly being 雲居, "Living in Clouds." The author of the Ha-Daius-shi says that fifteen years passed since he had apostasized and before that he had been deluded by the evil religion during more than
twenty-two years, his conversion having taken place at the eighteenth year of his age. This statement means that he apostasized about 1606. On the other side we know that Fabian Fukansai was still an Irman when he debated with the Confucianist on July 19, 1606. All these accord well and confirm the identity of Fabian, except the statement in Pagès (p. 147) that an apologetic document written by Fabian was presented in 1607 to a high official, a writing made for the occasion. But this can easily be compromised by assuming as inexact either the date or the phrase "for the occasion."

Now having ascertained the personal identity of Fabian, we might proceed to examine his writings. We shall pass by his refutation of Christianity, Ha-Daius, only remarking that the arguments amount to deny the truth of Christian monotheism on the ground of Zen idealism or transcendentalism, a tenet so bitterly condemned by the Jesuit missionaries as nihilism. At any rate this argument, together with several other points of refutation, shows Fabian’s return to his original Zen standpoint, supplemented by his later training, as well as some evil informations about the missions current among the people, towards which he shows simply an attitude of acceptance.

The antipode is the Dialogue in refutation of Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism, concluded with Christian apologetics. The only extant manuscript copy of the Dialogue contains two volumes, missing the first. The second volume contains refutations of Confucianism and Shinto, while the third is an apologetic, the missing volume having evidently been refutations of Buddhism. Up to the present the first volume has been regarded as lost for ever, but we have now a clue to it. Among the documents confiscated from the persecuted Kirishitans, probably near Nagasaki, some time between 1789 and 1793, we have three fragments. One of them is a paragraph arguing for the existence of God on the analogy of a ship conducted by a captain, a sailing ship appearing as if moving by itself and the captain invisible to the lookers-on from the coast. This paragraph is a passage in the Dialogue (lines 5–15, p. 45 in the Shimmura edition), though a little shorter and not in the form of a dialogue but of an essay. Another larger fragment is a refutation of Shinto, amounting to saying that Shinto is a naturalism ignorant of the true God and simply glorifying sexual acts.

1) This implies that this Fabian is not identical with a Fabian mentioned in Frois (p. 94), an aged monk in Murasakino.

2) Cf. Anesaki, The Extermination of the Kirishitans and Their Survival (in Japanese, Tokyo, 1925), pp. 44–50. Besides the above mentioned there are important ones among these documents, of which reports will be made.

3) Printed in p. 139, op. cit.
The present copy shows a certain amount of confusion in paging but we can restore its paragraphs in comparing them with the text of the Dialogue. The fragment contains the sentences largely agreeing with the following passages in the Shimmura edition: the parts \( A \) — p.27, line 8 to p.28, line 3; \( B \) — p.32, last six lines; \( C \) — p.19, lines 4–8; \( D \) — p.18, line 11 to p.19, line 4; \( E \) — p.24, lines 1–6. These parallels show that there were seven pages in the original of the present copy which were bound in confusion. In restoring them to the original order in referring to the Dialogue, we see it as follows: Two pages of \( D \), one page of \( C \), a gap, one page of \( E \), a gap, two pages of \( A \), a gap, one page of \( B \), end lost.

Now, as to the missing volume of the Dialogue, there is a reference to its arguments stated in brief at the beginning of the second volume, to the effect that Buddhism amounts to nihilism. This is what we should naturally expect from a Jesuit critic of Buddhism. Fortunately we have in the confiscated documents a still larger fragment stating just the same arguments; and its title is “Extracts on the Systems of Buddhism” (佛法之次第略挙抄), which we could assume as a remain of the missing part of the Dialogue. It is in a better order, except in the last part, and contains the following arguments:

1. That Buddhism teaches three aspects of Buddhahood embodied in Amita, Śākyamuni, and Dainichi (Mahā-Vairochana), who are nothing but manifestations of our own soul. Thus Buddhism reduces everything to our own soul, which is taught to have no real entity. — 23 lines.

2. The life of Śākyamuni stated in brief for showing that he was a mere human being and not god. — 22 lines.

3. Similar points concerning Amita. — 23 lines.

4. Dainichi means nothing but the six elements and the two principles pervading the universe, and therefore not a god but another name of our own being. — 11 lines.

5. All the Buddhist teaching about Being, Non-being, and the Middle Way amounts to say that everything is an illusion. — 7 lines.

6. The ultimate tenet amounts to negation of all, as testified in the utterances of the Zen teachers. — 24 lines.

7. Consequently, the denial of the future life and nullifying of all moral sanctions; further discussions on the meaning of Non-being or Vacuity. — 23 lines.

8. Sectarian division, all the sects ultimately teaching the same negation. — 8 lines.
9. The fiction of Amita, the absurdity of the story that he meditated during five kalpas.—25 lines, ending with an incomplete sentence.

10. Criticism of Buddhist cosmology, leading to an argument that Amita means nothing but mere space, a symbol of vacuity.—21 lines.

11. The life of Shinran shows that he was convinced of nothingness and therefore adopted an Epicurean life and taught naturalism.—9 lines.

12. More proofs adduced from Buddhist teachings that they amount to nihilism, referring to the secrets handed down in the various sects.—26 lines.

The sequence of the whole arguments is clear, and though there seem to be a few gaps and a little confusion, we have here a whole refutation of Buddhism endorsing the conclusion hinted at the beginning of the second volume of the Dialogue, as stated above. Thus we can safely assume that this is a counterpart of its missing volume, stated in the form of an essay, just like the part on Shinto. We can also conclusively see that these three fragments represent a book of the same structure and arguments with the Dialogue, containing many identical sentences and wordings, the only difference being the form.

Questions remain whether this book preceded the Dialogue or was an abridgement of it; who was its author, Fabian or somebody else.

Lastly we append a chronology of Fabian’s life reconstructed:

1565 Born (in Hakkoku?)
1583 Converted (in Miyako).
1586 Entered the College (at Nagasaki?).
1592 Heike published at Amakusa.
1593–4 Made Irman.
1505 Myōtei Dialogue published (at Miyako?).
1606 Debate with Hayashi in Miyako.
1606 or 7 Apostasized (in Miyako?)
1607 His book presented to an official at Yedo (?)
1620 Ha-Daius published.
End unknown.