PAPERS COMMUNICATED

1. Confucian Refutations of Christianity in Japan in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

By Masaharu ANESAKI, M.I.A.

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The first and chief religion of Japan with which the Kirishitan missionaries came into contact and conflict was Buddhism. Although the declaration of Hideyoshi against the Kirishitans in 1587 emphasized the Shinto idea that Japan was the land of the gods, the Shinto religion played its part only as a subsidiary of Buddhism. Neither Confucianism had played an independent rôle against Christianity until the Tokugawa government adopted, in the seventeenth century, its ethics as the orthodox teaching of the state. The first contact of a Confucianist with Christianity took place when Hayashi Razan (1583–1657) was engaged in polemic with Fabian who later became an apostate. That was in 1606 when Hayashi was a young scholar destined ten years later to become the official teacher of orthodox Confucianism. Razan's chief point amounted to emphasizing the priority of the Reason (*Li*) to Deus or anything else, that is, to denying the creatorship of God as apart from the Reason, the self-existent principle of being which has no beginning nor end.¹⁾ Besides, he ridiculed the Occidental theory of the Earth as a planet and other physical theories simply as absurd. The later Confucian refutations of Christianity followed nearly the same line in emphasizing the *Li* as over against Deus the Creator and in explaining away Deus as a modification of the mythical king Banko or another name of Taikyo.²⁾ Besides this Inouye Chikugo, the first Inquisition Official and himself an apostate, gave effort to show the absurdity of the Christian teachings of Adam's fall, of the virgin birth and saviorship of Christ, and similar points, all this on the basis of his Confucian cosmology, particularly of his conviction that all the mysteries of life were revealed in the Yi-king. However, he never published these views

1) Razan seems to have more or less studied Christian doctrine through the Chinese writings of Matteo Ricci.

2) Cf. Pagès, i. 745, ii. 370.

but kept them in his official records, which were later circulated among Confucianists in manuscript copies and only recently printed.

Next to Razan, Kumazawa Banzan (1619-91) refuted Christianity in casual notes in his several writings. Banzan was not an orthodox Confucianist but a pragmatist. He stood against both Buddhism and Christianity as absurd teachings captivating popular fancy by the stories of future life. Banzan's attacks on religion in general was motivated by his condemnation of Christianity as well as by his denunciation of the government's policy of patronizing Buddhism for the sake of the prohibition of Christianity. He thought that Christianity was better equipped than Buddhism for alluring the people and that the high protection of Buddhism would end in inducing the people to adopt Christianity as a more seductive counterpart of Buddhism.¹⁾ His prejudice against everything foreign is shown in his remark that tobacco was only one of the means by which the "Southern Barbarians" tried to ruin the economic life of Japan.

Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), the positivist thinker and statesman, was the man who examined Sidotti and thereby was impressed by the latter's personality. In spite of his appreciation of Sidotti and of his relatively unbiased view of Kirishitan missions, Hakuseki did not hesitate in denouncing the Christian doctrine of God as against his Confucian idea of the self-sustaining principle of cosmic existence. As in this view he shared that of Razan, Hakuseki shared Banzan's view in nearly identifying Christianity with Buddhism and thought that the former was merely a modification or disguise of the latter. One particular point in Hakuseki's refutations was a peculiarly bureaucratic view that the worship of Heaven should be the privilege of the Emperor and not be shared by the people at large, that, therefore, the Christian worship of God was a violation of the law of social status.

Hakuseki's writing on this subject bore the title "Seiyo Kibun" (What I heard of the Occident) and was circulated only among the officials and scholars. A commentary on this book by an unknown author was called "Sangan Yokō."²⁾ The chief point in this book was that the Christian teaching of Deus was a device for captivating

1) See R. C. Armstrong, *the Light from the East*, p. 148, where the author misinterpretes Banzan's intention.

2) This means "Additional Ideas on the Three Eyes." "Three Eyes" was derived from a peculiar tradition current in China in the eighteenth century that the Christian missionaries taught that they were furnished with four eyes, while Japanese with three and Chinese with only one.

the people's mind by mysteries and obscurities, while Confucius taught only evident facts and positive morals. This may remind us of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists.

The last of the series was Miura Yasusada who wrote "Samidare-shō" (Rainy Season Talks) in 1784. His chief objection to Christianity was directed against its missionary zeal which he could not interpret but as factious spirit. For, he thought, Confucius taught only the demonstrable human relationships and so his ethical teachings were universally applicable to human life, with no need of proselyting, whereas Christian propaganda was a manifestation of factious and sectarian spirit, an evidence of its ulterior purpose of establishing an *imperium in imperio* and of finally subjugating Japan to the rule of a foreign power, which the Japanese could not understand but as a political power.

This last point, the denunciation of Christianity as a means of political conquest was common to all the critics of Christianity and was unquestioningly accepted by the whole people during the centuries of seclusion and prohibition.

There was, however, a great Confucianist who never expressed his opinion of Christianity but taught a teaching verging on Christian monotheism. He was Nakae Toju (1608-48) who lived in Ozu in Iyo during the years 1618-34 and probably had a knowledge of Christianity. Ozu was one of the places where there were number of converts and a legend says that Toju obtained a certain medicine from a Kirishitan. The missionary reports of 1626 tell of a Confucianist in Iyo who was converted to Christianity.¹⁾ Though his identity cannot be established, it is remarkable that Toju emphasized "filial piety" towards the father of all, whom he also called "Heavenly Lord."

Lastly there is another writing of refutation, chiefly from the Confucian standpoint, bearing the Japanese name of the apostate Padre Christovan Ferreira as its author. It was never published but the author's note is dated 1636. A separate report will be made on it, because there are some observations to be made besides the Confucian refutations.

1) Pagès, p. 637.