

French Catholic Missionaries in Japan in the Bakumatsu and Early Meiji Periods

JEAN-PIERRE LEHMANN

University of Stirling

THE legacy of the Portuguese Jesuits and Spanish mendicant orders in Japan in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was strongly felt both in Japan and in the Catholic Church. In Japan the alien religion had been suppressed in the early Edo period and throughout the decades of *sakoku* measures continued to be taken to ensure that Christianity would not re-emerge. In Europe, however, the determination of Christian missionaries to return to Japan persisted. Already in the seventeenth century, after the expulsion of the Iberian missionaries and at a time when the French Société des Missions Etrangères (established in 1658) had been granted by the papacy the exclusive right of missionary work in the Far East, on two occasions bishops of the Société were appointed Apostolic Vicars to Japan—even though, needless to say, they never set foot in the country.¹ Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Japan remained little more than a distant memory of the past and a distant hope for the future. Following the French Revolution, the end of the Napoleonic wars, the onset of the Bourbon Restoration and with increasing French naval activity in the Far East, however, the Société's interest in Japan revived.

Eventually the Société covered most of Asia and counted numerous missionaries. The Société was French and its missionaries were Frenchmen; missionary nuns sent to the Far East—though not from the Société which was exclusively male—were also French.² The Société was closely allied to the development of French expansionism in Asia.³ It was also a powerful lobby in Paris, especially so during the Second

¹ A. Launay, *Histoire Générale de la Société des Missions Etrangères*, Vol. III (Paris, 1894), p. 202.

² Throughout most of the Meiji period Catholic missionaries in Japan were predominantly, if not exclusively, French. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Spanish Franciscans from the Philippines and Jesuits and Marianites of other nationalities began entering Japan.

³ For the role of the Société in French imperialism in Indochina and China, see John F. Cady, *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1967).

Empire. The Catholic Church in France had strongly supported the plebiscite of 1852 to proclaim Louis Napoleon emperor. Also it should be recalled that Napoleon III's *casus belli* in joining the British in war against China (1856–60) was the murder there of a member of the Société, Chapdelaine, in 1856.⁴ During the Third Republic support for the Société waned, though missionary enterprise as such (whether the Société des Missions Etrangères in Asia or the Société des Missions Africaines in Africa) was not curtailed to the extent one might have imagined in view of the increasing anti-clericalism in France. This was no doubt due to a number of factors. The elements mainly involved in overseas expansionism, the army and the navy, had close ties with the Church. Missionary work continued to be part of the *mission civilisatrice* of the *France d'outre-mer*, even though the Church was being attacked at home; the reasoning here may have been similar to Rousseau's habit of never discussing atheism in front of the servants for fear they might steal the silverware.

Japan can be said to have entered the Société's web in 1832 when the Vatican, entrusting Korea to the Société as an apostolic vicariate, added the Ryukyu (Loochoo) islands 'in the hope that these dependent and not distant islands from Japan would be the door through which the Gospel would be re-introduced into this country'.⁵ For another decade, however, both Japan and her southern door, the Ryukyus, remained unpenetrated and seemingly impenetrable. With Britain's victory over China in the Opium War, however, the outlook for the missionaries brightened considerably: 'It was not only a new era in the relations between Europe and the Far East that the English guns inaugurated, they also opened the way for the preachers of the Gospel'.⁶

The Ryukyus

The chief of the Société in Macao, Libois, and his assistant, Forcade, saw in the consequences of the Treaty of Nanking exceptionally favourable circumstances for carrying out the Ryukyu project, especially as both of them were on close terms with a number of French naval officers in the China seas, notably Admiral Cécile.⁷ The interests of the missionaries and the navy converged; the missionaries sought to enter

⁴ See Cady, *Roots of French Imperialism*, p. 142 and chs XI to XV.

⁵ Launay, *La Société des Missions Etrangères*, p. 202.

⁶ F. Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus Ressuscitée au Japon Dans La Seconde Moitié du XIXe Siècle* (Paris, 1896), Vol. I, p. 98.

⁷ Launay, *La Société des Missions Etrangères*, p. 203.

Japan via the Ryukyus, while the French navy, with the encouragement of Guizot, at the time acting as foreign minister under King Louis-Philippe, was interested in acquiring a base for its Far Eastern operations.⁸

By 1844 preparations were complete and in April of that year Admiral Cécile ordered Captain Fornier-Duplan to accompany Forcade and his assistant, a Chinese convert by name of Augustin Ko, to Naha; they arrived on 28 April. Fornier-Duplan informed the Okinawan officials that he had orders to leave Forcade and Ko on the island. The officials pleaded that this was against their laws, that the climate was unhealthy, and so on, but all to no avail. Fornier-Duplan left the two behind, warning the authorities that severe reprisals would follow were anything untoward to happen to Forcade or Ko.⁹ Thus the Ryukyuan connection was established.

Forcade's period of residence in the Ryukyus has been described in several works.¹⁰ It may suffice here to summarize briefly the events as they are recounted in these sources. As soon as Fornier-Duplan and his corvette had left, Forcade was told by the officials that in view of his importance a special guard of honour would be attached to his person. From that day onwards Forcade and his assistant were virtual prisoners, albeit apparently well fed and well treated. Forcade's main reason for wishing to stay in the Ryukyus was in order to learn the Japanese language. His attempts in that direction, however, were rendered very difficult, given the ruses the authorities resorted to. His guard and his servants were constantly changed. Whenever he asked the Japanese word for an object he was told one thing one day, another the next. He was prevented by all sorts of means from meeting or talking to people outside his imposed circle of spies and attendants. His task was considerable, for not only did he wish to learn Japanese in order to be able to converse and preach, but he had to find ways of discovering Japanese words which would correspond to those necessary for explaining Christian dogma. Despairing of being able to achieve anything in Okinawa, he wrote to his superior begging him to find copies of works which the

⁸ A. Bocher, *Aventures d'un Missionnaire Français aux Iles Liou-Tcheou (Japon) 1844-46* (Paris, 1895), pp. 3-8.

⁹ Launay, *La Société des Missions Etrangères*, p. 204.

¹⁰ See Bocher, *Aventures d'un Missionnaire Français*; H. Cordier, *Les Français Aux Iles Lieou-K'ieuou* (Paris, 1914); T. Forcade, *Le Premier Missionnaire Catholique au Japon au XIXe Siècle* (Lyon, 1885); Launay, *La Société des Missions Etrangères*; Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus au Japon*; J. B. Piolet, *La France au Dehors: Les Missions Catholiques Françaises au XIXe Siècle*, Vol. III, *Chine et Japon* (Paris, 1902).

sixteenth-century Jesuits must have written and which could simplify his task.¹¹

Apart from linguistic frustrations, Forcade's stay in Okinawa can hardly be described as having been pleasant. The sense of exasperation and loneliness must have been all the worse in that he and Ko were not visited by the French fleet for a period of two years. Finally, in May 1846, Admiral Cécile appeared, bearing with him another missionary, Le Turdu. Forcade had intended—in spite of all the tribulations—to stay in Naha; however, Cécile required his help for a mission he had decided to undertake in Nagasaki. Le Turdu was left alone in Okinawa, Cécile having been assured by the Naha officials, after renewed insistence on his part, that the missionary would be well treated and helped in the learning of the language.

Cécile's expedition to Nagasaki proved abortive. In the meantime, however, Forcade learned that Gregory XVI had elevated Japan to an Apostolic Vicariate in her own right and had nominated him as head (at the time aged 30) with the title of Bishop of Samos. Forcade thus went to Hong Kong, which had become the centre of operations for the Société in the Far East, while the missionary Adnet replaced him in the Ryukyus and joined Le Turdu. The situation in the Ryukyus following Forcade's pioneering efforts seems to have improved considerably for the missionaries; this was partly caused, no doubt, by the more frequent appearance of French battleships.

Between Hong Kong and Naha further and more intensive preparations were made for what was increasingly becoming the inevitable onslaught on Japan. In 1855 Admiral Guerin came to Naha with two missionaries, Mermet de Cachon and Girard. Three years later, they both joined the expedition of Baron Gros (who was to sign France's first treaty of commerce and friendship with Japan) and thus they became the first French missionaries to set foot on Japanese soil.¹²

¹¹ Forcade to Libois, 12 August 1845, in *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1846 (Paris). The problem of translating Christian dogma, terms, psalms, and so on into Japanese was a particularly difficult one for all the pioneering missionaries to Japan. As Sir George Sansom wrote, 'Most baffling among the linguistic obstacles were the problems of selecting suitable equivalents for such words as God, Spirit, Soul, Atonement, Grace, Conscience, and notably, Logos; for literal renderings often produced ludicrous results'. G. B. Sansom, *The Western World and Japan* (New York, 1950), p. 474.

¹² For material on the missionaries in the Ryukyus, see the works cited in footnote 10 and O. Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan: Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Missions* (Tuttle reprint, Rutland, Vt., and Tokyo, 1976, original date of publication, 1909), Ch. IX.

The Missionaries and the Bakufu

With the announced departure of the expedition of Baron Gros to Japan, the missionaries may have felt that the long years of hardship and arduous work were about to bear fruit. So far as the French government was concerned, however, Japan was only of marginal interest; indeed, it could be said that the only Frenchmen really interested in the country were the missionaries. Following Perry and accompanying Elgin, it would seem that the French wished to establish relations with Japan, but with the least possible difficulties and expense. Under no circumstances were they prepared to countenance any military effort in that country.¹³ In fact, prior to the departure of the Gros expedition two memoranda had been submitted to the Foreign Ministry arguing that France should not raise the Christian question at all in her overtures to Japan.¹⁴ No doubt such a course would have been impossible owing to political considerations at home; throughout the Bakumatsu period, however, official support for the missionaries was lukewarm. The treaty concluded by Gros contained only one article touching upon the question of religion; it simply stated that French subjects would enjoy religious freedom within the treaty-ports and to that end they were permitted to erect churches and establish cemeteries.¹⁵

When the first French diplomatic representative to Japan, Duchesne de Bellecourt, was appointed, it was explained to him that the interests of his government in Japan were secular. For example, it was brought to his attention that under the treaties missionaries were not permitted to penetrate into the interior of the country. A certain latitude, however, or at least ambiguity was given in his instructions:

If the government of the Emperor is resolved, in conformity with the conduct it has already followed in China, of in no way provoking Japan by Catholic propaganda, it cannot, however, envisage its indifference were it to succeed in reaching the hearts of a population having so far remained inaccessible to the light and blessings of Christianity; above all it could not countenance abandoning the right of protecting the missionaries under any circumstances.¹⁶

¹³ Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, Correspondance Politique. Japon (hereafter CP), Vol. I, 16 May 1857, 'Projet d'Instruction pour le Japon à M. le Baron Gros'.

¹⁴ Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, Mémoires et Documents, Japon (hereafter M & D), Vol. I, 'Extrait d'un Mémoire . . . de J. C. Delprat', November 1857 and 'Observations sur le Christianisme', May 1857.

¹⁵ H. Cordier, *Le Premier Traité de la France avec le Japon* (Leiden, 1912), p. 280.

¹⁶ CP, Vol. I, Walewski to de Bellecourt, 8 June 1859.

The first two years for the missionaries were peaceful, albeit uneventful. Girard, as head of mission, remained in Yokohama and served as de Bellecourt's interpreter.¹⁷ Mermet was established in Hakodate where he was occupied in teaching French.¹⁸ Another missionary, Petitjean, came to Japan from the Ryukyus in November 1862 and established himself in Nagasaki.¹⁹

By 1862, however, the missionaries were becoming increasingly annoyed because no progress was being made. Their frustrations, in fact, were not all that different from those experienced by diplomats and merchants during the same period. In January of that year, at the time of the Bakufu's first diplomatic mission to Europe, Girard had submitted a memorandum to the Quai d'Orsay suggesting that the Emperor Napoleon might take this opportunity to bring his influence to bear upon the Japanese officials in regard to their attitudes *vis à vis* the Christian religion.²⁰ A month after having submitted his memorandum, the missionaries encountered their first crisis.

Girard had established a chapel in Yokohama where he had begun to preach in Japanese; a number of curious peasants, merchants and even samurai had ventured into the chapel to listen to him—as a result of which thirty-six were arrested. De Bellecourt then learned that the authorities intended to have the arrested executed. In collaboration with the British representative, Alcock, he protested to the Governor of Kanagawa. Eventually a compromise was reached: the arrested would be released on the condition that Girard refrain from preaching in Japanese. The Governor of Kanagawa further asked de Bellecourt himself to prevent the Japanese from entering the chapel. As de Bellecourt explained to his minister, he found himself considerably embarrassed in having to reconcile 'the duty which humanity imposes on me with the not less imperious duty of the prudence which is necessary to ensure the maintenance of our relations here, and of the dignity and future of the Christian religion in this country.'²¹

For his part, Girard renewed his efforts to get Paris to take a strong stand on the question. He expressed his belief that the future of Christianity in Japan could be very bright, for 'the Japanese being very intelligent and having an admirable disposition for the Gospel will be

¹⁷ CP, Vol. II, de Bellecourt to Walewski, 19 September 1859.

¹⁸ CP, Vol. II, de Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 24 January 1860.

¹⁹ J.-B. Chaillet, *Monseigneur Petitjean (1829-1884) et la Résurrection Catholique du Japon au XIXe Siècle* (Montceau, 1919), p. 81.

²⁰ Included as an appendix to CP, Vol. V, de Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 21 January 1862.

²¹ CP, Vol. V, de Bellecourt to Thouvenel, 19 February 1862.

easily converted'; he added, however, that so long as the political structure remained as it was, 'each neophyte will soon become a martyr'. France, he urged, must take a lead in paving the way in Japan for bringing the people to Christianity; he added that were Japan to become Christian, trade would dramatically improve and France would be able to exert a strong political influence.²²

By 1863, following the assassination of Richardson in 1862, the closing of the Shimonoseki straits and the firing by Chōshū batteries on American and French ships ostensibly in order to carry out the Emperor's order of expulsion, relations between Japan and the Western powers were getting far worse, rather than better. As tension rose, Petitjean wondered whether the hour had not come for the West to act resolutely and punish Japan. In a letter to a friend, dated 14 April 1863, he discussed the rumours of a coming Anglo-Japanese war: 'Despite an impunity of more than two centuries, Japan has a great debt to repay God for the torrents of Christian bloodshed in the 17th century. Who knows whether the hour of punishment is not about to arrive!' ²³ In another letter some six weeks later he explained that, 'if there is a war, idolatry will at last give way to the holy faith'.²⁴

In fact, so far as diplomatic relations were concerned, the crises of 1863 and 1864—with the consequent bombardment of Kagoshima by the British fleet, the allied Shimonoseki expedition, and in 1865 the naval display in Osaka bay which culminated in the ratification of the treaties by the Emperor—paved the way to far greater cordiality. The policy of expelling the barbarians (*jōi*) was abandoned and the rival factions concentrated on resolving the internal political crisis (culminating in the Imperial Restoration of 1868), with both sides, Bakufu and Tōbaku, now seeking the assistance of the West. For the missionaries, however, great difficulties still lay ahead.

Nagasaki and the *Kakure Kirishitan*

In 1597 twenty-six Christian martyrs had been put to death on a hill

²² M & D, Vol. I, Girard, 'Mémoire Relatif au Rétablissement de la Religion Chrétienne au Japon', 1862 (neither date nor month are given).

²³ In Chaillot, *Monseigneur Petitjean*, p. 84.

²⁴ In *ibid.*, p. 85. Petitjean was not the only French missionary believing that war with Japan would have salutary effects for the christianization of the country. Both Girard and another missionary, Mounicou, expressed similar sentiments; see Archives of the Société des Missions Étrangères (Paris), Lettre Commune, 20 June 1863. At the time of the British expedition to Kagoshima, it was rumoured among the missionaries that Britain intended to annex the Ryukyus as a colony, a step which was to be welcomed, for the missionaries would then have 'all possible liberty for the exercise of their ministry among the natives' (Lettre Commune, 20 June 1863).

outside Nagasaki. In 1862, 'Pius IX, in the presence of two hundred and fifty cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, summoned from all parts of the earth had solemnly proclaimed the canonization of these martyrs'.²⁵ In February 1865 the Catholic Church at Nagasaki, named after the Twenty-Six martyrs, had been inaugurated. The following month, March, Petitjean was approached by a number of Japanese who asked him some questions regarding his mission and then declared that they were of kindred spirit. The missionaries had always suspected, or at the very least hoped, that descendants of the seventeenth-century Christians must still exist somewhere. This was the proof they had been waiting for so long.²⁶

From this first handful Petitjean learned that there were supposedly thousands of Christians who were still following, albeit in hiding, the rites taught to their ancestors by the Iberian missionaries. The joy and satisfaction which this discovery brought to the missionaries was no doubt great, yet in their enthusiasm for visiting their new parishioners they completely disregarded the treaties, travelling and preaching clandestinely in areas beyond the treaty port limits.²⁷

The missionaries knew that the new French head of legation, Léon Roches, was gaining favour with the Bakufu. They saw this as an opportunity that could be exploited to their advantage. In June 1866 Petitjean visited Roches while the latter was in Nagasaki. Roches apparently told Petitjean that the Bakufu was reasonably well disposed towards Christians and that in due course, when political circumstances permitted it, the situation would change markedly for the missionaries and their flock.²⁸ In fact, the reverse turned out to be the case. Starting in 1867 the so-called Urakami (after the valley they came from) Christians were imprisoned. The problem of the Urakami Christians was to plague Western-Japanese relations for six years, being resolved only in 1873 following great pressure that was brought upon the Iwakura mission both in America and Europe.

In the situation of 1867, however, the ban against Christianity was still to be strictly enforced. As we saw, the treaties did not give the missionaries the right to proselytize in the interior of the country; their

²⁵ Cary, *History of Christianity in Japan*, p. 281.

²⁶ The tenacity and devotion of these *Kakure Kirishitan* were amazing. During the whole period of *sakoku* they maintained the Christian faith in hiding, at great peril, and without the ministry of any priests. Christian teaching was handed down from father to son. *Kakure* means hidden or concealed, thus *kakure kirishitan* could be translated as crypto-Christians.

²⁷ See Chaillet, *Monseigneur Petitjean*, pp. 170ff.

²⁸ Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus au Japon*, pp. 669-70.

activities were supposed to be limited to ministering to their own compatriots. The Japanese authorities knew that the missionaries were clandestinely and illegally preaching and travelling into the interior. Had they arrested the missionaries, however, there was nothing they could do except to hand them back to their consular authorities; the missionaries, like all Westerners in Japan, enjoyed the protection of extra-territoriality. Thus, although the missionaries were breaking the laws of Japan and acting contrary to the stipulations of the treaties that their own country had entered into, they were immune from punishment. It is interesting to note in this context that a missionary describing a special inaugural mass at the Nagasaki Church on 2 June 1866 expressed with satisfaction how France was 'trebly represented in her religious force, in her civilizing power and in her martial valour, by a bishop, by a minister plenipotentiary and by an admiral'.²⁹ No doubt to the Japanese as well the three seemed inseparable; unable to make the missionaries respect the treaties, they turned their attention to the native Christians.

In the events and years that followed the first arrests of the native Christians, considerable tension developed between the missionaries and the diplomats.³⁰ Upon first hearing of the arrest of the Christians, Roches protested to the Japanese government and obtained the promise that the Christians would be released, on condition that they cease openly practising the foreign religion and that the missionaries moderate their zeal and obey the treaty stipulations in regard to internal travel and evangelization. Following this interview Roches addressed a letter to Petitjean in the following terms. He had found among the members of the Rōjū (the council of elders) not a trace of religious fanaticism. They had agreed to the release of the prisoners. But given the proof of good will on the part of the Japanese government, Roches urged Petitjean to reciprocate; in any case, as he pointed out, 'the tenor of the treaties, the specific engagements France has entered into, the very

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 672.

³⁰ The missionaries expressed great disapproval of the lack of Christian militancy—and indeed at times of lack of Christian values and faith—on the part of the French diplomats, especially Roches and to a lesser extent his successor, Max Outrey: see Chaillet, *Monseigneur Petitjean*, pp. 199–212; Launay, *La Société des Missions Étrangères*, pp. 484–7; Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus au Japon*, pp. 669–74, L. Pagès, *La Persécution des Chrétiens au Japon et l'Ambassade Japonaise* (Paris, 1873), pp. 1–20; and Piolet, *La France au Dehors*, pp. 450–2. In fact there is very little that the diplomats could have done, short of resorting to force, and that was excluded by Paris. France, as pointed out, was not particularly interested in Japan; she had no colonial designs on the country and militarily had enough problems to cope with—in North Africa, Indochina, until recently in Mexico and indeed in Europe.

interests of your mission for the future, impose upon us to moderate our zeal, through which the very results we so much wish to obtain would be put in peril.' The Japanese, Roches reminded Petitjean, associated Christianity in their history with a period of troubles and bloodshed, and that consequently it would be most unwise at this particular time, when a political crisis was raging, to allow the Christian question to intervene. The most opportune moment for revising this question, Roches suggested, would be at the time of the revision of the treaties due for 1872.³¹

Later Roches spoke to the Shōgun personally about the Christians. He asked him to declare an amnesty in their favour and that on his side he would again urge the missionaries to obey the treaties.³² After his meeting and in keeping with his promise to the Shōgun, Roches wrote a second letter to Petitjean. He explained that he had obtained the release of the Christians, who normally and according to Japanese law were liable to the death penalty, and once again he urged Petitjean not to precipitate matters. In a perhaps tactless, yet pointed, conclusion he reminded the bishop (as Petitjean had since been appointed) that as a preacher of peace and meekness, he should not seek to bring about greater trouble into a country already facing severe problems which only time would settle. Roches expressed the hope that Petitjean and his colleagues would realize that were they to persist in their untrained apostolic activity and interference in the internal affairs of Japan bloodshed would follow.³³ In a lengthy letter Petitjean refuted Roches' appeals for moderation and insisted that their mission could not be constrained by the laws of men, as they were directed by the law of God. He rejected Roches' warning that were they to persist they could be held responsible for the ensuing bloodshed. The missionaries, claimed Petitjean, 'are the glory of France'. In the eyes of God the Japanese persecutors would have to answer for their crimes.³⁴

³¹ Roches to Petitjean, 8 August 1867, taken from Pagès, *La Persécution des Chrétiens au Japon*, pp. 8–9. Of course it must be added that by this time Roches had committed himself completely to the cause and political survival of the Bakufu and indeed had developed reasonably close relations with the last shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (Keiki). The Christian crisis was a source of considerable annoyance and embarrassment to him.

³² CP, Vol. XV, Roches to de Moustier, 9 September 1867.

³³ Roches to Petitjean, September (no date) 1867, in Pagès, *La Persécution des Chrétiens au Japon*, pp. 9–10.

³⁴ Petitjean to Roches, 12 October 1867, in *ibid.*, pp. 12–14. The new British representative, Sir Harry Parkes, who rarely found agreement on any issue with Roches, nevertheless did so on this occasion: 'M. Roches has even obtained the consent of the Gorōjiu [Rōjū] to their release, but that the prisoners themselves and

And so the arguments raged on for six weeks. By 1868 the Shōgun had been overthrown, the new Meiji government installed, Roches left and was succeeded by Max Outrey. For the Christians the years immediately following the Restoration witnessed not a relaxation, but on the contrary an intensification of the Christian persecution. There were far more arrests and deportations and the missionaries were further prevented from carrying out their mission. The missionaries and their supporters urged decisive action on the part of the Western powers and their representatives; Outrey like his predecessor urged caution and moderation on the part of the missionaries and believed change could be effected by persuasion rather than by force.³⁵

The intensification of anti-Christian activities by the new government can be understood in the government's desire to establish Shintō as the state religion. In fact, in the consolidation of power under the Throne, 'metaphysically' buttressed by the tenets of Shintō, Buddhism, as well as Christianity, was out of favour.³⁶

However, in view of the fact that the government had made it a matter of policy that not only would it continue relations with the Western powers, but also, according to the fifth article of the Charter Oath, that knowledge would be sought throughout the world, its anti-Christian stand was doomed to failure. It was during the Iwakura mission in 1872 and 1873 that the pressure of the Western powers was brought to bear with great force.³⁷ The policy of moderation adopted by the foreign representatives and inaugurated by Roches had paid off. Shortly after the return of the mission, the French chargé d'affaires, Paul de Turenne, was able to cable Paris: 'The Japanese Government

their foreign pastors who are greatly excited would almost prefer the horrors of martyrdom to this leniency'. Parkes to Stanley, 17 August 1867, copy given to Roches and sent to Ministry, CP, Vol. XV, Roches to de Moustier, 18 August 1867.

³⁵ Outrey repeated these arguments on numerous occasions; see Outrey to Ministry, CP, Vol. XVI, 7 July 1868, CP, Vol. XVIII, 11 February 1869, CP, Vol. XIX, 22 January and 21 February 1870. Outrey shared the conviction of many Westerners at the time that not only would religious freedom soon be granted in Japan, but indeed that the Japanese would embrace the religion. Outrey claimed that Christianity was intimately linked with the progress of civilization in Japan; see Outrey to Ministry, 4 June 1870.

³⁶ See M. Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion* (London, 1930), pp. 334-9, and Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, pp. 468-70.

³⁷ When Iwakura paid his visit to the French Foreign Minister, Rémusat, he was presented with a petition for religious freedom signed by members of the Chamber of Deputies; M & D, Vol. II, 'Mémoire relatif aux garanties de liberté religieuse pour le Christianisme à demander au gouvernement japonais à l'occasion du renouvellement de nos traités', par les Députés de l'Assemblée Nationale, March 1873. Rémusat also argued with Iwakura in favour of granting religious freedom; M & D, Vol. II, 'Compte rendu des Conférences entre le Ministre et Iwakura', January 1873.

has just abrogated the edicts against Christianity and is to proceed with the release of the deported Christians'.³⁸ It must be added that by this time attitudes in Japan had changed as well. In fact, during the period of *Bunmei Kaika*, a number of Japanese, including a few influential ones, wondered whether Japan should not officially adopt the Christian religion.³⁹

Religion and Nation

The missionaries had long believed that it was only official hostility and punitive laws which prevented them from reaching the hearts and souls of the Japanese people and thus converting them by the thousand.⁴⁰ Even with their new-found freedom, however, missionary work was not going to reap a plentiful harvest. There are many reasons for this. There is, however, one important factor in Catholic evangelization which deserves attention.

Although many Christian missionaries could be accused of confusing their religion with their nation, this confusion seems to have been particularly acute with the French Catholics. This situation was made worse in that for a long time the French missionaries were the only representatives of the Catholic church, which was not the case with the Protestant churches. Evidence of this confusion can be found in numerous instances. We noted earlier the pride with which one missionary related the presence of the French 'trinity'—bishop, diplomat, admiral—at the inauguration of the Nagasaki Church. Two further examples will be given here. With the lifting of the ban on Christianity in 1873, the missionaries hailed this event as a victory for France. In that same year one of the missionaries' first converts, a young samurai, was dying. The event was described thus:

Was it not a most touching symbolism that of the young Japanese officer? Baptized 31 May 1873, this neophyte had fallen very ill almost immediately. On the eve of his death . . . unable either to speak or to write, he made

³⁸ CP, Vol. XXII, de Turenne to de Rémusat, 24 February 1873.

³⁹ Reference to flirtations with Christianity during the early Meiji period can be found in numerous works written about the period. Sansom tells us, for example, that 'in 1873 members of the Japanese legation in Berlin inquired of Professor Gneist whether he thought that Japan should introduce Christianity as the state religion'. *The Western World and Japan*, p. 471.

⁴⁰ In 1863 a missionary expressed the view that 'the iron arm which holds back the impulse of the masses towards the truth which we have brought to them' was what was preventing conversions; *Lettre Commune*, 20 June 1863. In 1864, before the *Kakure* had been discovered, the missionaries exclaimed, 'Give us freedom and we will convert by the thousand'; *Lettre Commune*, 25 June 1864.

a sign to a Christian who was assisting him to hold his hand and drew these two characters: God! France! . . . He died with this paper in his hand.⁴¹

To what extent the Japanese authorities and the Japanese people in general realized the close link which the missionaries established between their religion and their country is difficult to ascertain. One missionary historian was to note that one of the chief impediments to Christianity in Japan was the distrust the people had of doctrines coming from outside the country.⁴² Yet the missionaries seemed incapable of distinguishing between their apostolic mission and their nationalism. The passage above would certainly have provided evidence to those Japanese who suspected that embracing the Christian faith also meant embracing a foreign nation.

Another missionary, giving a lecture in Lyon, after having exposed to his audience all the work carried out by Catholic missionaries in Japan, concluded that 'It is through these Frenchmen and Frenchwomen that France continues, as I see it, her role as a civilizing power in the world. And I know, having been able to witness at first sight, that thanks to their good works, to the very confines of Asia, the name of France is loved and respected.'⁴³

The attempts by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their representatives in Japan to gain freedom for missionaries to travel in the interior of Japan, as early as 1873, were resisted by the Japanese government.⁴⁴ Even if the Japanese authorities did not know the full extent of the equation the missionaries made between their faith and their nation, the mere suspicion of it would make it unlikely that the government would take kindly to the idea of foreigners inside the country trying to convert Japanese nationals to Christianity and to attachment to France, at a time when it was eagerly trying to build up Japanese nationalism as an important pillar of its programme of *fukoku-kyōhei* (rich country-strong army).

Conversions

With the lifting of the ban on Christianity and in spite of restrictions

⁴¹ In Chaillet, *Monseigneur Petitjean*, p. 333. There is of course a slight ambiguity here in that the Chinese character for France (*futsu*) and the Buddha (*butsu*) is the same. Rather than adopting France, the samurai may have been renouncing his new faith and proclaiming his belief in his old faith. Needless to say, however, this was not the way the missionaries chose to interpret it.

⁴² See Piolet, *La France au Dehors*, pp. 482-501.

⁴³ F. Marnas, *Conférence sur le Japon, Faite à la Société de Géographie de Lyon* (Lyon, 1891), pp. 47-8.

⁴⁴ See CP, Vol. XXIII, Broglie to Berthémy, 7 August 1873.

on travelling in the interior, the French missions increased their forces in Japan. In 1873 the first nuns, the Religieuses du Saint-Enfant-Jésus, better known as the Dames de Saint-Maur, arrived. By 1877 there were ten nuns who opened schools and orphanages in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Kobe; in 1879 they established themselves in Osaka and in 1880 in Nagasaki. Another order of French nuns arrived in 1880, Les Religieuses de Saint-Paul de Chartres, founding similar establishments in Hakodate. Japan was divided into two apostolic vicariates, one for the north with its headquarters in Tokyo and Osouf as bishop and one for the south with headquarters in Osaka and Petitjean as bishop, the latter having moved from Nagasaki. (Petitjean remained in Japan until his death in 1884.) In 1873 there were 15,000 Catholics in Japan; in 1885 there were 31,371.⁴⁵ The question is how did the Catholic missionaries go about converting and whom did they convert?⁴⁶

In looking at the figures (in the Appendix, page 400), the most striking feature that emerges is the tremendous disproportion between North and South Japan; for 1877, 1,235 Catholics in the North to the South's 16,622. Although the figures for the North practically quintupled by 1885, whereas those for the south increased by just 1½ fold, the difference remained very substantial, with 6,193 for the north and 25,178 for the south. The south had its headquarters at Osaka and encompassed all southern Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku. Although no exact figures are available, one can safely assume that all but a small handful of the southern Catholics were descendants of the *kakure kirishitan*, namely people coming from a small radius around Nagasaki, mainly the Urakami valley to the north and the islands to the south.

These people were from generally poor, though not necessarily destitute backgrounds. Most were farmers, fishermen, a few were miners. The harsh persecutions of the late 1860s and early 1870s seem to have strengthened rather than weakened them in their faith. Of the first 800 families subjected to torture, only 100, it seems, apostasized.⁴⁷ Both at the time of the persecutions and afterwards the 're-converted' *kakure* did a great deal of proselytizing among their own number, i.e. other

⁴⁵ See the Appendix on page 400.

⁴⁶ The material one is dealing with is fragmentary. The archives of the Société des Missions Etrangères are closed to the public. The information here is gathered from the 'Lettres Communes'; these are yearly compilations which included reports from the various missions and extracts from the missionaries' letters to Paris. I wish to express my gratitude to Frs Guennou and Prouvost for having given me permission to use the library of the Société, where I was able to consult these Lettres Communes which cannot be found elsewhere.

⁴⁷ Lettre Commune, 25 July 1867.

kakure not yet returned to the fold.⁴⁸ Following the lifting of the ban on Christianity things dramatically improved. From 1875 to 1883 more than a thousand were baptized each year. The missionaries believed that *kakure* should be found throughout Japan, though in fact these existed only in the Nagasaki area. Even then, however, it was impossible for them to have any clear idea of how many there might be; in 1880 when some 20,000 had already been converted, the missionaries wondered how many tens of thousands might still just be waiting for salvation.⁴⁹

The whole story of the *kakure* is remarkable. For the missionaries their existence was extremely fortunate, for as we have noted, they formed the great bulk of their flock. It must be said, however, that their influence on the rest of the population, with the possible exception of immediate neighbours, was, if not altogether non-existent, at least very negligible. They were from uninfluential sectors of the population and were geographically remote. We must now turn our attention away from the *kakure* and concentrate on the other Japanese converts.

What were the means at the disposal of the missionaries for achieving conditions necessary for conversion, or of arousing, at least in the first instance, Japanese curiosity with regard to the Catholic faith? One could suggest that there were four means for securing conversion, though these should not be seen in isolation, but as complementary one to the other. These are: 1) The curiosity generated by the building of churches and chapels; 2) The importance of the role of native catechists; 3) The role of orphanages, schools and various other means which helped those in hardship; 4) Publications and lectures. In looking at the means of conversion and instances of success, some idea of who the converts were and why they were converted emerges.

It will be recalled that following the opening of the church in Yokohama in 1862 the Bakufu had arrested a number of Japanese for having penetrated inside the church. Leaving the arrests aside, however, the missionaries wrote in terms of more than 10,000 Japanese who in just a few days following the opening of the 'modest chapel' showed such

⁴⁸ The interesting thing is that a good many *kakure* refused to accept the ministry of the French missionaries, which was a source of considerable irritation to the missionaries. For example the *kakure* population of Amakusa proved particularly recalcitrant (Lettre Commune, 31 December 1876) and by 1884 at the village of Oe, out of a *kakure* population of 4,000, only 142 had accepted to join the Church (Lettre Commune, 31 December 1884).

⁴⁹ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1880. One should note that by 1909 the total Catholic population of Japan was 54,556. Of these 44,931 came from the Nagasaki area. If one compares this with the figures for 1885 one sees that conversion in the north increased by less than 50%, while in the south it nearly doubled. (The figures for 1909 are taken from Cary, *History of Christianity in Japan*, p. 371.)

eagerness to visit it, seeking explanations about each object in the church.⁵⁰ The Nagasaki church aroused similar interest,⁵¹ and, of course, it had been responsible for attracting the interest of the first *kakure* in 1865. Thus a dozen years later when Osouf saw the erection of the church in Osaka, he expressed the hope that it, too, might attract some still unknown *kakure* from the Kansai area.⁵² In the same year he had urged that more churches and chapels be built, as these awakened curiosity;⁵³ the number of churches for Japan in 1877 almost doubled that of 1876, from 20 to 39. It was the services inside the buildings, no less than the buildings themselves, which attracted attention; and the missionaries frequently mentioned the importance they attached to the rituals (some of which apparently lasted three hours or more).

Needless to say the French missionaries learned Japanese; nevertheless, the most important, indeed the absolutely essential auxiliaries of the missionaries were the Japanese catechists. These were men and women who were trained by the missionaries to go out, preach and teach the catechism. Their role was not just to bring in new converts, but also to keep in touch with the Christians. There were three reasons why the catechists were of special importance. They could communicate with their compatriots, not just in terms of language, but also in dealing with the intricate web of Japanese society and social mores. They were significant in terms of numbers, swelling considerably the ranks of the missionaries. Thirdly, and of great importance, was the fact that catechists had easy access to all parts of Japan; something which the missionaries did not enjoy.

The question of the catechists and propagation of the faith in the interior of Japan (i.e. beyond the limits of the treaty ports) being intimately linked, a few words must be said about what can be called the campaign in the interior. The missionaries had the right, from the establishment of the treaties, to build churches in the treaty ports. Following the lifting of the ban on Christianity they also had the right to preach to the Japanese. They often complained, however, that the treaty ports presented two problems: the first was that most of the Japanese were attracted to the ports in search of money rather than spiritual enrichment; secondly, that the foreigners in the treaty ports

⁵⁰ Lettre Commune, 20 June 1863.

⁵¹ Lettre Commune, 20 July 1865.

⁵² Lettre Commune, 31 December 1877.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, see also Lettre Commune of 31 December 1880 where it is stressed that the important thing is not just to build a church, but to build a beautiful church.

set a bad example by their behaviour.⁵⁴ Three treaty ports, Niigata, Hakodate and Nagoya, were singled out as being especially difficult: in Niigata, 'the love of lucre and pleasure is traditional';⁵⁵ in Hakodate conversions are so few that one wonders whether the cold climate 'freezes the souls of the inhabitants';⁵⁶ while Nagoya 'is distinguished by its thirst for gold and its corruption' and practically all the girls are prostitutes.⁵⁷

In spite of restrictions on internal travel, missionaries did occasionally manage to penetrate into the interior, passports for internal travel could be obtained from the authorities. In 1874 the missionary Marin was allowed to travel in the interior, which permitted him to accompany the silk merchant, Guimet, on an extensive trip from Yokohama to Hakodate.⁵⁸ By 1876 Marin had been able to found a small Catholic community in Numazu; while Arrivet, another missionary, had established a similar community in Sendai.⁵⁹ By 1878 one missionary was specifically in charge of internal travel in the North;⁶⁰ the following year a second missionary had been detailed with internal southern travel.⁶¹ In 1880 there were three internal itinerant missionaries⁶² and a year later the number had been increased to eight.⁶³ Two priests had also penetrated the interior by finding employment as teachers of French, one in Kyoto, the other in Okayama. In Kyoto the missionary Villion was able to baptize thirty-seven adults in 1881.⁶⁴ By the very early 1880s, therefore, the missionaries could claim that almost all the interior of Japan, with the exception of Hokkaido, had been visited.

In all this the role of the catechists was of crucial importance; they were the scouts, the chief collaborators. In 1876 three schools were established in Tokyo for the training of catechists.⁶⁵ An illustration of their importance can be seen from the complaint of a missionary in 1880 that the harvest in one of his districts of southern Japan had been

⁵⁴ Lettres Communes, 1874 and 1884. According to *Les Missions Catholiques* (Lyon), 'the Japanese of the interior are more gentle, more moral, better disposed than the inhabitants of the coast' (18 September 1874).

⁵⁵ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1878.

⁵⁶ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1882.

⁵⁷ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1874.

⁵⁸ Marin recorded his journey in a number of articles which appeared every week from 27 February to 18 September 1874 in *Les Missions Catholiques*.

⁵⁹ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1876.

⁶⁰ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1878.

⁶¹ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1879.

⁶² Lettre Commune, 31 December 1880.

⁶³ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1881.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1876.

terrible, mainly because of the death of one catechist and the illness of two others.⁶⁶ Death, however, was never as catastrophic for the mission as the desertion of a catechist: 'it is not only a signal of a halt in conversions, but also a great temptation and at times even a cause for the fall of those whom he has instructed'.⁶⁷ For one of the grave problems the missionaries faced was not simply to be able to convert and baptize, but to keep the neophytes secure in their faith. The missionaries occasionally were forced to admit that at times converts quite simply 'disappeared'.⁶⁸ The problem was how to create a Christian community in a non-Christian environment.

Of the schools established by the Catholics little can be said so far as this period is concerned. The Catholics began attempting to play an important and influential role in the field of education only in the early twentieth century.⁶⁹ Most of the schools established during the period under consideration—apart from the seminaries to train indigenous priests—seem to have been mainly associated with the general field of 'good works'. On the question of these good works, far more material exists; these included orphanages, the care of the sick, and needlework schools for indigent young women.

Orphanages were first established in 1867 and the missionaries estimated that they would be 'powerful roots planted into the soil [which] will blossom after the storm'.⁷⁰ A good deal of this sort of work was carried out by the orders of nuns. For example, in 1877 the sisters of the Saint-Enfant-Jésus opened an asylum for old women and were able to convert seventy of them that same year.⁷¹ The missionaries opined that 'the curing of the bodies will prove a powerful means to procuring the salvation of the souls'⁷² and indeed the sisters brought quite a few converts to the missionaries in this way.⁷³ Hardships and illnesses, however, helped not only to bring in new converts, but to keep the converted in line; in 1879 a missionary estimated that the recent cholera epidemic 'contributed in no small way in forcing the negligent

⁶⁶ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1880.

⁶⁷ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1884.

⁶⁸ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1881.

⁶⁹ The Marianites and the Jesuits provided the main Catholic education; cf. Cary, *History of Christianity in Japan*, ch. XIII.

⁷⁰ Lettre Commune, 25 July 1867.

⁷¹ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1877.

⁷² Lettre Commune, 31 December 1881.

⁷³ See, for example, praise of their work by the missionaries in Lettre Commune of 31 December 1885 and an article appearing in *Les Missions Catholiques* of 10 January 1879.

and the laggards to look into themselves. I had the happiness of seeing a good number thus sincerely return to God.⁷⁴

The tactics of the Société were diametrically different from those of the Jesuits a few centuries earlier. The Jesuits had aimed for the ruling classes; the significant number of their converts can be partly explained by their success in converting some of the nobility. Of course the situation of Japan in the nineteenth century was far different from that of the seventeenth. The point here, however, is to emphasize that it is clear that the very large majority of the Japanese Catholics were the poor, the downtrodden (including a number of *eta*),⁷⁵ the aged, and the sick.⁷⁶ This was not much of a foundation to build on. Although none of the Christian missions made a great impact on Japan, some of the protestant sects were more successful, mainly because they were able to penetrate to some degree into the samurai classes. Another problem for the missionaries was that a large percentage of their orphans, whom they converted, were girls, who, upon getting older and seeking marriage, tended to abandon their religion as it was an impediment to marrying a non-Christian and there were not enough Christian men to go around.⁷⁷

The missionaries did go about giving lectures in villages and cities as a means of attracting attention. In order to reach a wider audience, however, the missionaries increasingly stressed the importance of publications in Japanese. From 1881 to 1885 a bimonthly review appeared, edited by M. Sutter, entitled *Kōkyō Banpō* (Catholic news) and from 1885 to 1889 another bi-monthly edited by M. Ligneul, *Tenshu no Banpei* (The Soldier of God). By 1885 the missionaries had published a dozen monographs, including catechisms, histories of the bible, explanations on the sacrament of the eucharist, books of prayers and guides to the Christian way of life. It was hoped here not only to reach a wider audience, but a better class.

Although by the early 1880s the harvest was far from being as abundant as had been expected, on the whole the missionaries remain-

⁷⁴ Lettre Commune, 31 December 1879.

⁷⁵ The problems resulting from the conversions of *eta* are mentioned in Lettre Commune, 31 December 1885.

⁷⁶ The nuns 'achieved great success in aiding the poor and the weak. Catholics . . . gained many friends among . . . members of the lower classes. These uneducated people had no real understanding of Christianity.' In H. Kisimoto, *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era* (Tokyo, 1968), pp. 211-12. On the converts coming mainly from the poor, see the Lettres Communes of 1881, 1882 and 1884.

⁷⁷ See Cary, *History of Christianity in Japan*, p. 360.

ed hopeful for the future.⁷⁸ Indeed, the missionaries seem not to have been the only French citizens to bask in optimism regarding the future of Christianity in Japan. In perhaps one of the more extraordinary dispatches ever sent by a French diplomat to Paris, the chief of legation, Sienkiewicz, in October 1885, gave his views on the 'Christianization' of Japan.

Sienkiewicz began by affirming that 'there can be no doubt that this Empire is destined to count among the Christian powers', though he admitted that this would not necessarily take place overnight. The lead in adopting Christianity would be taken by the Japanese government, but what had yet to be decided was whether it would opt for Catholicism, Protestantism or the Orthodox Church. The first step would be for the Emperor to seek conversion to one of the Christian denominations. The decision whether to become Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox would be taken by the Japanese government, a decision in which 'they will be guided by exclusively political considerations'.

In his discussions with the Russian diplomatic chief of mission, the latter was of the opinion that neither Protestantism—as it had too many sects and would thus confuse a nation which showed such an overwhelming tendency towards uniformity—nor Catholicism—for fear of papist imperialism and the risk of the Pope becoming more important in the eyes of the Japanese than the Emperor—would suit Japan. The Russian diplomat felt that

If the Japanese want to become Christians, they only have one side to chose and that is to make themselves Orthodox. They would have their own Patriarch, would establish an autocephalic Church, and thus would benefit from the double advantage of becoming a Christian nation and at the same time avoiding all external complications.

Sienkiewicz' British colleague, Plunkett, although a Catholic himself, felt that it was unthinkable for the Emperor to become Orthodox, nor would he become Catholic, however, not because of the Pope, but because of the French Protectorate. The Emperor, Plunkett declared, would become a Protestant.

For his part, Sienkiewicz assured his Ministry that he would do all in his power to ensure that the Emperor opt for the Catholic Church. He pointed out that until this imperial conversion was achieved, in the meantime, for the sake of France's influence in Japan, the more con-

⁷⁸ See, for example, Chaillet, *Monseigneur Petitjean*, p. 395. F. Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus au Japon*, pp. 479–89; and Piolet, *La France au Dehors*, p. 479.

verts to Catholicism the better. But, he added, France should beware of Austria-Hungary as the latter might try to get the Protectorate.⁷⁹

Such expectations were bound to culminate in bitter disillusionment, especially on the part of the missionaries. The Emperor never converted to any of the three, nor did many Japanese. Those who at first had been the most seduced by the Christian religion were the early 'Westernizers'. These people soon discovered, however, that in the West the scientific spirit was gaining ascendancy over the religious.⁸⁰

Christianity did have an influence among a small, but by no means unimportant, number of intellectuals, some of whom were eventually to become the leaders of Japan's social democratic and labour movements. But this influence was Protestant, not Catholic. There are a number of reasons for this. One was that the English language was more important in Japan than French; Protestant missionaries—mainly Americans and Scots—thus had a greater chance of getting access to the new intelligentsia by finding employment in the new schools. In fact, the relative success of the Protestants was due to their being able to count among their converts a number of influential and distinguished intellectual figures of the Meiji period. Another reason why these intellectuals were drawn to Protestantism was that the ideals, especially of the American missionaries, which tended towards stressing such popular concepts as liberty and democracy, appealed far more to them than the rigid social conservatism of the French Catholic Church of the period.

By the end of the nineteenth century defeat had to be admitted. One of the missionaries listed the numerous obstacles which he and his colleagues had encountered in Japan. In the first place, there were the 'uniquely supernatural or moral obstacles, paganism and the corruption of morals.' There were also the obstacles put in their way by the opposition of the bonzes, greater perhaps in Japan than anywhere else 'because they use against the missionaries modern weapons, schools, brochures, journals, newspapers, unbridled propaganda in the interior, and even to the exterior, reaching as far as Catholic countries, in order to ruin more easily the credit of the apostolic workers'. Furthermore there was the *esprit de corps* which united Japanese villages, corporations, etc.; one would not join Christianity for fear of ostracism by one's peers. Then there was the racial vanity of the Japanese who believed it humiliating to accept religion coming from the outside which they would not be allowed to accommodate and model according to their own fashion.

⁷⁹ CP, Vol. XXXI, Sienkiewicz to Ministry, 20 October 1885.

⁸⁰ See, for example, R. S. Schwantes, 'Christianity versus Science, a Conflict of Ideas in Meiji Japan', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 12 (1952).

But worst of all was 'scepticism, fruit of the relations between Japan and Europe, and which threatens to invade everything.'

Thus the missionary concluded that the greatest obstacle to their work came from Europe itself:

Japan has not only taken from Europe her most perfected inventions, she has also borrowed from her the ideas which are current in official and scientific circles. Science, which has produced such marvellous results, has dazzled them; willingly they believed that which the doctors of our universities affirmed, whose courses they were following: that science would give the explanation of all things. . . .

This scepticism has been introduced and propagated by those Japanese the government had sent to the Universities of Germany, England, France and America. They learned in these schools to believe only in the positive notions of science. Having returned to their country, they propagated these ideas, and, thanks to the high positions which the majority of them enjoy, they have little by little infused their scepticism into the spirit of their compatriots. The press has been of great help to them in diffusing their ideas, or perhaps more exactly, those which they derived from the books of the Occident, for the assets of a Japanese writer being too poor to supply the innumerable publications which inundate this country, it is similar publications from old Europe which furnish the material which the editors season to the taste of their public.

No doubt one of the things that grieved the French missionary most was that although the Japanese sought their sources in Germany and England, among the favourite authors of these Japanese thinkers were the missionary's own compatriots: 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Auguste Comte and his disciples, Renan and other writers of the same persuasion.'⁸¹

Finally he protested against what he saw as the official Japanese attitude of suspicion, if not actual hostility, toward the Catholic Church, explaining, rather unconvincingly from the Japanese viewpoint, that any anxieties the government might feel were misplaced:

Catholicism has nothing which can inspire fears similar to the Russian schism, or that can be treated as an enemy of the social order such as Protestantism; it is universal and presents a danger to no country; it is the defender of the legitimate authority in the family as in the State, because it teaches that all authority emanates from God.⁸²

Indeed, on the question of political authority a Japanese writer had remarked that 'a Catholic's attitude toward the Pope was similar to

⁸¹ Piolet, *La France au Dehors*, pp. 482-500.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 498.

the attitude the Japanese government wanted to inculcate with respect to the Emperor.⁸³

The point is, however, that by the last decade of the century the Japanese government had devised indigenous means to inculcate respect for the Emperor among the people; such documents as The Imperial Precepts to the Soldiers and Sailors, the Preamble to the Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education served as pillars for the developing *Tennō-sei* (Emperor system). Neither the Pope nor Catholicism were necessary for the consolidation of the Emperor's power; in fact, they were mutually exclusive.

⁸³ Kisimoto, *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era*, p. 212.

Appendix

Converts: Statistics

| Year | Catholics | | Baptisms** | | Churches/Chapels | |
|------|-----------|-------|-------------|--------------|------------------|-------|
| | N | S* | N | S | N | S |
| 1873 | | 15000 | | 120-197 | | 27 |
| 1874 | | 15000 | | 1151-46 | | 33 |
| 1875 | | 15050 | | 1402-477-120 | | 21*** |
| 1876 | | 15501 | | 1158-518-162 | | 20 |
| 1877 | 1235 | 16622 | 439-28-325 | 867-562-55 | 10 | 29 |
| 1878 | 2164 | 17380 | 669-25-365 | 1197-631-29 | 13 | 33 |
| 1879 | 2766 | 17380 | 622-72-237 | 1314-281-65 | 15 | 36 |
| 1880 | 3263 | 20646 | 576-79-172 | 1720-503-297 | 19 | 61 |
| 1881 | 3547 | 22086 | 383-81-195 | 842-841-353 | 21 | 59 |
| 1882 | 4094 | 23000 | 649-71-251 | 623-808-292 | 22 | 44 |
| 1883 | 4855 | 24359 | 676-146-309 | 649-807-327 | 23 | 53 |
| 1884 | 5574 | 24656 | 760-186-237 | 470-482-256 | 27 | 57 |
| 1885 | 6193 | 25178 | 860-158-369 | 544-816-261 | 33 | 59 |

*N = North Japan and S = South Japan; up till 1877, figures are for both North and South.

** Baptisms for 1873 and 1874 are given in the order of adult pagans and pagans' children; from 1875 to 1885 they are given in the order, adult pagans, Christians' children and pagans' children.

*** Some rather surprising figures find no explanation in the documents. Why there should all of a sudden be twelve churches/chapels less in 1875 than in 1874 I do not know.

| Year | Bishops | | Missionaries | | Native Priests | | Catechists | | Seminaries | | Schools/Orphanages | |
|------|---------|---|--------------|----|----------------|------|------------|-----|------------|--------|--------------------|----------|
| | N | S | N | S | N | S | N | S | N | S | N | S |
| 1873 | 2 | | 29 | | 0 | | 227 | | 2(70)* | | 10(251)* | |
| 1874 | 2 | | 26 | | 0 | | 202 | | 2(60) | | 13(258) | |
| 1875 | 2 | | 28 | | 0 | | 165 | | 2(57) | | 10(225) | |
| 1876 | 2 | | 28 | | 0 | | 179 | | 2(62) | | 14(565) | |
| 1877 | 1 | 2 | 18 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 166 | 1(31) | 1(20) | 17(508) | 6(275) |
| 1878 | 1 | 2 | 19 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 37 | 175 | 1(15) | 1(31) | 19(733) | 11(457) |
| 1879 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 44 | 182 | 1(13) | 2(37) | 23(821) | 20(861) |
| 1880 | 1 | 2 | 21 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 38 | —** | 1(17) | 2(44) | 34(1698) | 33(1461) |
| 1881 | 1 | 2 | 22 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 162 | 1(11) | 2(60) | 30(1886) | 44(1717) |
| 1882 | 1 | 2 | 23 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 174 | 1(12) | 2(76) | 29(1788) | 40(1700) |
| 1883 | 1 | 2 | 24 | 24 | 0 | 3*** | 35 | 196 | 1(19) | 1(70)† | 31(1729) | 54(1700) |
| 1884 | 1 | 1 | 28 | 25 | 0 | 3 | 30 | 222 | 1(19) | 1(60) | 29(1809) | 36(1522) |
| 1885 | 1 | 1 | 30 | 27 | 0 | 3 | 37 | 235 | 1(14) | 1(60) | 26(1994) | 37(1590) |

* The figures in parentheses indicate the number of students; ** no figure is given for that year; *** the first three Japanese priests were all descendants of Christians, their parents had been *kakure*, the three as young boys had been in prison with their parents during the persecutions; † the Osaka seminary had to be closed down owing to lack of staff.

The sources for these figures are the *Lettres Communes* for those years, i.e. 1873-1885.