

# **Modern History Sourcebook: St. Francis Xavier: Letter from India, to the Society of Jesus at Rome, 1543**

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**May the grace and charity of Christ our Lord always help  
and favour us! Amen.**

**It is now the third year since I left Portugal. I am writing to you for the third time, having as yet received only one letter from you, dated February 1542. God is my witness what joy it caused me. I only received it two months ago, later than is usual for letters to reach India, because the vessel which brought it had passed the winter at Mozambique.**

**I and Francis Mancias are now living amongst the Christians of Comorin. They are very numerous, and increase largely every day. When I first came I asked them, if they knew anything about our Lord Jesus Christ? but when I came to the points of faith in detail and asked them what they thought of them, and what more they believed now than when they were Infidels, they only replied that they were Christians, but that as they are ignorant of Portuguese, they know nothing of the precepts and mysteries of our holy religion. We could not understand one another, as I spoke Castilian and they Malabar; so I picked out the most intelligent and well-read of them, and then sought out with the greatest diligence men who knew both languages. We held meetings for several days, and by our joint efforts and with infinite difficulty we translated the Catechism into the Malabar tongue. This I learnt by heart, and then I began to go through all the villages of the coast, calling**

around me by the sound of a bell as many as I could, children and men. I assembled them twice a day and taught them the Christian doctrine: and thus, in the space of a month, the children had it well by heart. And all the time I kept telling them to go on teaching in their turn whatever they had learnt to their parents, family, and neighbors.

Every Sunday I collected them all, men and women, boys and girls, in the church. They came with great readiness and with a great desire for instruction. Then, in the hearing of all, I began by calling on the name of the most **holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost**, and I recited aloud the **Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Creed** in the language of the country: they all followed me in the same words, and delighted in it wonderfully. Then I repeated the Creed by myself, dwelling upon each article singly. Then I asked them as to each article, whether they believed it unhesitatingly; and all, with a loud voice and their hands crossed over their breasts, professed aloud that they truly believed it. I take care to make them repeat the Creed oftener than the other prayers; and I tell them that those who believe all that is contained therein are called Christians. After explaining the Creed I go on to the **Commandments**, teaching them that the Christian law is contained in those ten precepts, and that every one who observes them all faithfully is a good and true Christian and is certain of **eternal salvation**, and that, on the other hand, whoever neglects a single one of them is a bad Christian, and will be cast into **hell** unless he is truly penitent for his sin. Converts and heathen alike are astonished at all this, which shows them the holiness of the Christian law, its perfect consistency with itself, and its agreement with reason.

As to the numbers who become Christians, you may understand them from this, that it often happens to me to be hardly able to use my hands from the fatigue of

baptizing: often in a single day I have baptized whole villages. Sometimes I have lost my voice and strength altogether with repeating again and again the Credo and the other forms. The fruit that is reaped by the baptism of infants, as well as by the instruction of children and others, is quite incredible. These children, I trust heartily, by the grace of God, will be much better than their fathers. They show an ardent love for the Divine law, and an extraordinary zeal for learning our holy religion and imparting it to others. **Their hatred for idolatry is marvellous.** They get into feuds with the heathen about it, and whenever their own parents practise it, they reproach them and come off to tell me at once. Whenever I hear of any act of idolatrous worship, I go to the place with a large band of these children, who very soon load the devil with a greater amount of insult and abuse than he has lately received of honor and worship from their parents, relations, and acquaintances. The children run at the idols, upset them, dash them down, break them to pieces, spit on them, trample on them, kick them about, and in short heap on them every possible outrage.

I had been living for nearly four months in a Christian village, occupied in translating the **Catechism**. A great number of natives came from all parts to entreat me to take the trouble to go to their houses and call on God by the bedsides of their sick relatives. Such numbers also of sick made their own way to us, that I had enough to do to read a **Gospel** over each of them. At the same time we kept on with our daily work, instructing the children, baptizing converts, translating the Catechism, answering difficulties, and burying the dead. For my part I desired to satisfy all, both the sick who came to me themselves, and those who came to beg on the part of others, lest if I did not, their confidence in, and zeal for, our holy religion should relax, and I thought it wrong not to do what I could in answer to their prayers. But the thing grew to such a

pitch that it was impossible for me myself to satisfy all, and at the same time to avoid their quarrelling among themselves, every one striving to be the first to get me to his own house; so I hit on a way of serving all at once. As I could not go myself, I sent round children whom I could trust in my place. They went to the sick persons, assembled their families and neighbours, recited the Creed with them, and encouraged the sufferers to conceive a certain and well-founded confidence of their restoration. Then after all this, they recited the prayers of the Church. To make my tale short, God was moved by the faith and piety of these children and of the others, and restored to a great number of sick persons health both of body and soul. How good He was to them! He made the very disease of their bodies the occasion of calling them to salvation, and drew them to the Christian faith almost by force!

I have also charged these children to teach the rudiments of Christian doctrine to the ignorant in private houses, in the streets, and the crossways. As soon as I see that this has been well started in one village, I go on to another and give the same instructions and the same commission to the children, and so I go through in order the whole number of their villages. When I have done this and am going away, I leave in each place a copy of the Christian doctrine, and tell all those who know how to write to copy it out, and all the others are to learn it by heart and to recite it from memory every day. Every feast day I bid them meet in one place and sing all together the elements of the faith. For this purpose I have appointed in each of the thirty Christian villages men of intelligence and character who are to preside over these meetings, and the Governor, Don Martin Alfonso, who is so full of love for our Society and of zeal for religion, has been good enough at our request to allot a yearly revenue of 4000 gold farlams for the salary of these catechists. He

has an immense friendship for ours, and desires with all his heart that some of them should be sent hither, for which he is always asking in his letters to the King.

There is now in these parts a very large number of persons who have only one reason for not becoming Christian, and that is that there is no one to make them Christians. It often comes into my mind to go round all the Universities of Europe, and especially that of Paris, crying out everywhere like a madman, and saying to all the learned men there whose learning is so much greater than their charity, "Ah! what a multitude of souls is through your fault shut out of heaven and falling into hell!"

Would to God that these men who labor so much in gaining knowledge would give as much thought to the account they must one day give to God of the use they have made of their learning and of the talents entrusted to them! . . .

We have in these parts a class of men among the pagans who are called Brahmins. They keep up the worship of the gods, the superstitious rites of religion, frequenting the temples and taking care of the idols. They are as perverse and wicked a set as can anywhere be found, and I always apply to them the words of holy (St. King) David, "from an unholy race and a wicked and crafty man deliver me, O Lord." They are liars and cheats to the very backbone. Their whole study is, how to deceive most cunningly the simplicity and ignorance of the people. They give out publicly that the gods command certain offerings to be made to their temples, which offerings are simply the things that the Brahmins themselves wish for, for their own maintenance and that of their wives, children, and servants. Thus they make the poor folk believe that the images of their gods eat and drink, dine and sup like men, and some devout persons are found who really offer to the idol twice a day, before dinner and

supper, a certain sum of money. The Brahmins eat sumptuous meals to the sound of drums, and make the ignorant believe that the gods are banqueting. When they are in need of any supplies, and even before, they give out to the people that the gods are angry because the things they have asked for have not been sent, and that if the people do not take care, the gods will punish them by slaughter, disease, and the assaults of the devils. And the poor ignorant creatures, with the fear of the gods before them, obey them implicitly. These Brahmins have barely a tincture of literature, but they make up for their poverty in learning by cunning and malice. Those who belong to these parts are very indignant with me for exposing their tricks. Whenever they talk to me with no one by to hear them they acknowledge that they have no other patrimony but the idols, by their lies about which they procure their support from the people. They say that I, poor creature as I am, know more than all of them put together.

They often send me a civil message and presents, and make a great complaint when I send them all back again. Their object is to bribe me to connive at their evil deeds. So they declare that they are convinced that there is only one God, and that they will pray to Him for me. And I, to return the favour, answer whatever occurs to me, and then lay bare, as far as I can, to the ignorant people whose blind superstitions have made them their slaves, their imposture and tricks, and this has induced many to leave the worship of the false gods, and eagerly become Christians. If it were not for the opposition of the Brahmins, we should have them all embracing the religion of Jesus Christ.

The heathen inhabitants of the country are commonly ignorant of letters, but by no means ignorant of wickedness. All the time I have been here in this country I have only converted one Brahmin, a virtuous young man,

who has now undertaken to teach the Catechism to children. As I go through the Christian villages, I often pass by the temples of the Brahmins, which they call pagodas. One day lately, I happened to enter a pagoda where there were about two hundred of them, and most of them came to meet me. We had a long conversation, after which I asked them what their gods enjoined them in order to obtain the life of the blessed. There was a long discussion amongst them as to who should answer me. At last, by common consent, the commission was given to one of them, of greater age and experience than the rest, an old man, of more than eighty years. He asked me in return, what commands the God of the Christians laid on them. I saw the old man's perversity, and I refused to speak a word till he had first answered my question. So he was obliged to expose his ignorance, and replied that their gods required two duties of those who desired to go to them hereafter, one of which was to abstain from killing cows, because under that form the gods were adored; the other was to show kindness to the Brahmins, who were the worshippers of the gods. This answer moved my indignation, for I could not but grieve intensely at the thought of the devils being worshipped instead of God by these blind heathen, and I asked them to listen to me in turn. Then I, in a loud voice, repeated the **Apostles' Creed and the Ten Commandments**. After this I gave in their own language a short explanation, and told them what **Paradise** is, and what **Hell** is, and also who they are who go to **Heaven** to join the company of the blessed, and who are to be sent to the **eternal punishments of hell**. Upon hearing these things they all rose up and vied with one another in embracing me, and in confessing that the God of the Christians is the true God, as His laws are so agreeable to reason. Then they asked me if the souls of men like those of other animals perished together with the body. God put into my mouth arguments of such a sort, and so suited to their ways of thinking, that to their

great joy I was able to prove to them the immortality of the soul. I find, by the way, that the arguments which are to convince these ignorant people must by no means be subtle, such as those which are found in the books of learned schoolmen, but must be such as their minds can understand. They asked me again how the soul of a dying person goes out of the body, how it was, whether it was as happens to us in dreams, when we seem to be conversing with our friends and acquaintance? (Ah, how often this happens to me, dearest brothers, when I am dreaming of you!) Was this because the soul then leaves the body? And again, whether God was black or white? For as there is so great a variety of color among men, and the Indians being black themselves, consider their own color the best, they believe that their gods are black. On this account the great majority of their idols are as black as black can be, and moreover are generally so rubbed over with oil as to smell detestably, and seem to be as dirty as they are ugly and horrible to look at. To all these questions I was able to reply so as to satisfy them entirely. But when I came to the point at last, and urged them to embrace the religion which they felt to be true, they made that same objection which we hear from many Christians when urged to change their life---that they would set men talking about them if they altered their ways and their religion, and besides, they said that they should be afraid that, if they did so, they would have nothing to live on and support themselves by.

I have found just one Brahmin and no more in all this coast who is a man of learning: he is said to have studied in a very famous Academy. Knowing this, I took measures to converse with him alone. He then told me at last, as a great secret, that the students of this Academy are at the outset made by their masters to take an oath not to reveal their mysteries, but that, out of friendship for me, he would disclose them to me. One of these mysteries



was that there only exists one God, the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, whom men are bound to worship, for the idols are simply images of devils. The Brahmins have certain books of sacred literature which contain, as they say, the laws of God. The masters teach in a learned tongue, as we do in Latin. He also explained to me these divine precepts one by one; but it would be a long business to write out his commentary, and indeed not worth the trouble. Their sages keep as a feast our Sunday. On this day they repeat at different hours this one prayer: "I adore Thee, O God; and I implore Thy help for ever." They are bound by oath to repeat this prayer frequently, and in a low voice. My friend added, that the law of nature permitted them to have more wives than one, and their sacred books predicted that the time would come when all men should embrace the same religion. After all this he asked me in my turn to explain the principal mysteries of the Christian religion, promising to keep them secret. I replied, that I would not tell him a word about them unless he promised beforehand to publish abroad what I should tell him of the religion of Jesus Christ. He made the promise, and then I carefully explained to him those words of Jesus Christ in which our religion is summed up: «He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.» This text, with my commentary on it, which embraced the whole of the Apostles' Creed, he wrote down carefully, as well as the Commandments, on account of their close connection with the Creed.

He told me also that one night he had dreamt that he had been made a Christian to his immense delight, and that he had become my brother and companion. He ended by begging me to make him a Christian secretly. But as he made certain conditions opposed to right and justice, I put off his baptism. I don't doubt but that by God's mercy he will one day be a Christian. I charged him to teach the

ignorant and unlearned that there is only one God, Creator of heaven and earth; but he pleaded the obligation of his oath, and said he could not do so, especially as he was much afraid that if he did it he should become possessed by an evil spirit....

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# **Modern History Sourcebook: St. Francis Xavier: Letter from Japan, to the Society of Jesus in Europe, 1552**

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**May the grace and charity of our Lord Jesus Christ be ever with us! Amen.**

**By the favor of God we all arrived at Japan in perfect health on the 15th of August, 1549. We landed at Cagoxima, the native place of our companions. We were received in the most friendly way by all the people of the city, especially the relations of Paul, the Japanese convert, all of whom had the blessing to receive the light of truth from heaven, and by Paul's persuasion became Christians. During our stay at Cagoxima the people appeared to be wonderfully delighted with the doctrines of the divine law, so entirely new to their ears.**

**Japan is a very large empire entirely composed of islands. One language is spoken throughout, not very difficult to learn. This country was discovered by the Portuguese eight or nine years ago. The Japanese are very ambitious of honours and distinctions, and think themselves superior to all nations in military glory and valour. They prize and honour all that has to do with war, and all such things, and there is nothing of which they are so proud as of weapons adorned with gold and silver. They always wear swords and daggers both in and out of the house, and when they go to sleep they hang them at the bed's head. In short, they value arms more than any people I have ever seen. They are excellent archers, and usually fight on foot, though there is no lack of horses in the country. They are very polite to each other, but not to foreigners, whom they utterly despise. They spend their**

means on arms, bodily adornment, and on a number of attendants, and do not in the least care to save money. They are, in short, a very warlike people, and engaged in continual wars among themselves; the most powerful in arms bearing the most extensive sway. They have all one sovereign, although for one hundred and fifty years past the princes have ceased to obey him, and this is the cause of their perpetual feuds.

In these countries there is a great number, both of men and of women, who profess a religious rule of life; they are called bonzes and bonzesses. There are two sorts of bonzes---the one wear a grey dress, the others a black one. There is great rivalry between them, the grey monks being set against the black monks, and accusing them of ignorance and bad morals....

On certain days the bonzes preach publicly. **The sum of all their discourses is that none of the people will be condemned to hell**, whatever may be the number of their past and present crimes, for the founders of their sects will take them out of the midst of those flames, if perchance they are condemned to them, especially if the bonzes who have made satisfaction for them constitute themselves their intercessors. And indeed the bonzes boast greatly to the people of their own holiness, on the ground of their obedience to the five laws. At the same time, they also say that the poor who are unable to show kindness to the bonzes have no hope of escaping hell. And they say women are as badly off if they neglect the five precepts. For they say that each woman, on account of her monthly courses, is covered with more sins than all men put together, and that thus so foul a creature can hardly be saved. They go on to say that there is some hope even for women of escaping from the prison of hell, if they give a great deal more than the men to the bonzes. They further declare that persons who in their lifetime have given money to the bonzes will after their death

receive ten times as much in the same coin, for the necessities of their new life; and there are numbers of men and women who entrust considerable sums to the bonzes, in order to receive tenfold in the next world, and the bonzes give them a security in notes, which they write. The ignorant people have no hesitation in believing in this multiplied interest on funds thus invested. The notes of the bonzes are carefully preserved, and people about to die order them to be buried with them, in the belief that the devil will fly at sight of them. The bonzes have thousands of other impostures which I cannot speak of without pain. One thing is very amusing, that though they take money from everybody by way of alms, they themselves never give anything to any one. I omit, for the sake of brevity, the infinite number of ways they have of getting money given to them. But I cannot help grieving and feeling indignant at all the tribute the people pay to men like these, and all the honour in which they hold them....

The Japanese doctrines teach absolutely nothing concerning the creation of the world, of the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, the earth, sea, and the rest, and do not believe that they have any origin but themselves. The people were greatly astonished on hearing it said that there is one sole Author and common Father of souls, by whom they were created. This astonishment was caused by the fact that in their religious traditions there is nowhere any mention of a Creator of the universe. If there existed one single First Cause of all things, surely, they said, the Chinese, from whom they derive their religion, must have known it. For the Japanese give the Chinese the pre-eminence in wisdom and prudence in everything relating either to religion or to political government. They asked us a multitude of questions concerning this First Cause of all things; whether He were good or bad, whether the same

**First Cause were the origin of good and of evil. We replied that there exists one only First Cause, and He supremely good, without any admixture of evil.**

**This did not satisfy them; they considered the devils to be evil by nature, and the enemies of the human race; God therefore, if He were good, could never have done such a thing as create beings so evil. To these arguments we replied that the devils were created good by God, but became evil by their own fault, and that in consequence they were subject to eternal punishment and torment. Then they objected that God, who was so severe in punishing, was not at all merciful. Again, how could He, if He created the human race in the manner we taught, allow men sent into the world to worship Him to be tempted and persecuted by the devil? In like manner, if God were good, He ought not to have made man so weak and so prone to sin, but free from all evil. Again, it could not be a good God, they said, who had created that horrible prison of hell, and was to be for ever without pity for those who suffer therein the most fearful torments from all eternity. Lastly, if He were good, He would not have imposed on men those difficult laws of the Ten Commandments. Their religious traditions, on the contrary, taught that all who should invoke the authors of their religion would be delivered even from the torments of hell.**

**They were quite unable to digest the idea that men could be cast into hell without any hope of deliverance. They said, therefore, that their doctrines rested, more than ours, on clemency and mercy. In the end, by God's favour, we succeeded in solving all their questions, so as to leave no doubt remaining in their minds. The Japanese are led by reason in everything more than any other people, and in general they are all so insatiable of information and so importunate in their questions that there is no end either to their arguments with us, or to their talking over our**

answers among themselves. They did not know that the world is round, they knew nothing of the course of the sun and stars, so that when they asked us and we explained to them these and other like things, such as the causes of comets, of the lightning and of rain, they listened to us most eagerly, and appeared delighted to hear us, regarding us with profound respect as extremely learned persons. This idea of our great knowledge opened the way to us for sowing the seed of religion in their minds.

Only one of the nine sects prevailing in Japan teaches that souls are mortal, but this sect is considered detestable by the followers of the rest. Its adherents are extremely vicious and corrupt, and **cannot endure to hear hell mentioned**. In the course of two months, after numerous conferences, we baptized about five hundred persons at Yamaguchi, and every day, by the mercy of God, others are added to the number. The converts are very zealous in exposing to us the tricks and frauds of the bonzes and sects of Japan; they show so diligently great affection and respect towards us that we have great confidence that they are true and solid Christians.

Before their baptism the converts of Yamaguchi were greatly troubled and pained by a hateful and annoying scruple---that God did not appear to them merciful and good, because He had never made Himself known to the Japanese before our arrival, especially if it were true that those who had not worshipped God as we preached were doomed to suffer everlasting punishment in hell. It seemed to them that He had forgotten and as it were neglected the salvation of all their ancestors, in permitting them to be deprived of the knowledge of saving truths, and thus to rush headlong on eternal death. It was this painful thought which, more than anything else, kept them back from the religion of the true God. But by the Divine mercy all their error and scruple was taken away. We began by proving to them that the Divine

law is the most ancient of all. Before receiving their institutions from the Chinese, the Japanese knew by the teaching of nature that it was wicked to kill, to steal, to swear falsely, and to commit the other sins enumerated in the Ten Commandments, a proof of this being the remorse of conscience to which any one guilty of one of these crimes was certain to be a prey.

We showed them that reason itself teaches us to avoid evil and to do good, and that this is so deeply implanted in the hearts of men, that all have the knowledge of the Divine law from nature, and from God the Author of nature, before they receive any external instruction on the subject. If any doubts were entertained on the matter, an experiment might be made in the person of a man without any instruction, living in absolute solitude, and in entire ignorance of the laws of his country. Such a man, ignorant of and a stranger to all human teaching, if he were asked whether it were or were not criminal to kill, to steal, or to commit the other actions forbidden by the law of God, and whether it were right to abstain from such actions, then, I say, this man, so fundamentally without all human education, would most certainly reply in such a manner as to show that he was by no means without knowledge of the divine law. Whence then must he be supposed to have received this knowledge, but from God Himself, the Author of nature? And if this knowledge is seen among barbarians, what must be the case with civilized and polished nations? This being so, it necessarily follow that before any laws were made by men the divine law existed innate in the hearts of all men. The converts were so satisfied with this reasoning, as to see no further difficulty; so that this net having been broken, they received from us with a glad heart the sweet yoke of our Lord....

When I was at Yamaguchi with Father Cosmo Torres and Joam Fernandez, the King of Bungo, one of the most



powerful of the country, wrote to ask me to go to him; a Portuguese vessel had come into his harbor, and he wished to talk with me on certain subjects. So, both to find out how he was affected towards our holy religion, and to pay a visit to the Portuguese, I set out at once for Bungo, leaving Cosmo and Joam with the Christians. The King gave me a most gracious reception, and it was a great pleasure to me to meet with the Portuguese....

The King of Bungo commands numerous and very warlike troops, and as things go with Japanese kings, has vast dominions to govern. He has a great liking for the Portuguese. No sooner was he informed of the power and character of the King of Portugal than he wrote to him asking to be admitted into the number of his friends, and sending him a rich suit of armor as a token of friendship. He has also sent an envoy to the Viceroy of India, offering him with many compliments his friendship, alliance, and good offices; this messenger, who came to India with me, has been most honorably and liberally received by the Viceroy. Before I left Japan, the King of Bungo promised the Portuguese and myself to take Cosmo Torres and Joam Fernandez under his protection. The sovereign elect of Yamaguchi bound himself in the same way, when he enters into the possession of his kingdom....

I had been some time at Bungo, when the opportune presence of the Portuguese vessel invited me to give up the idea of returning to Yamaguchi; and I made up my mind to sail from Bungo for India, in order, after so long a separation, to revisit our fathers and brothers, and to provide members of the Society fitted for the work of cultivating the Japanese mission, as well as other necessary things quite wanting out there. I reached Cochin on the 24th January, and I was received in the kindest manner by the Governor. Next April some fathers will be sent to Japan from India, and the King of Bungo's ambassador will return home in their company. I have

very great hopes that, by the favor of Jesus Christ, there will be a plentiful harvest in these countries; for a nation so ingenious, moderate, so desirous of instruction, so much guided by right reason and so well adorned with other eminent qualities, ought to be, as it were, a rich and fertile field from whence copious and joyful results may be expected.

The university of Bandou, situated in an island of Japan, which has given its name to its country, is the most famous of all; and a great number of bonzes are constantly going thither to study their own laws. These precepts are derived from China and are written in Chinese characters, which are different from the Japanese. There are two kinds of writing in Japan, one used by men and the other by women; and for the most part both men and women, especially of the nobility and the commercial class, have a literary education. The bonzes, or bonzesses, in their monasteries teach letters to the girls and boys, though rich and noble persons intrust the education of their children to private tutors.

The bonzes are persons of acute mind, and are very fond of studying, especially what relates to the future; they are fond of considering what will happen to them, what will be their end, and all questions of this nature. There were some of the bonzes who, in the course of their meditations, had come to believe that there was no way of saving souls in their system. They argued in this way: It is necessary above all things that there should exist a single origin of all things; now, in their books there is not a word on the subject, for there is a wonderful silence in them all as to the creation of the universe; and therefore if any of their predecessors were acquainted with this principle---a thing not confirmed by any authority, written or traditional---they must have kept the knowledge to themselves and hidden it from their descendants.

Now, men of this sort were wonderfully delighted with the divine law. One of them embraced the faith of Jesus Christ at Yamaguchi, after being many years in the university of Bandou, where he had a flourishing reputation for learning. Before we came to Japan he had thought of becoming a bonze; afterwards he changed his mind and married. The reason he assigned for this change was, that he had seen the falsehood and emptiness of the Japanese religions, and therefore did not believe in them at all, but felt that he was bound to pay his homage to the Author and Creator of the universe. Our Christians were overjoyed at his accession, for he was and was thought to be the most learned man of the city. . . .

One of the things that most of all pains and torments these Japanese is, that **we teach them that the prison of hell is irrevocably shut**, so that there is no egress there from. For they grieve over the fate of their departed children, of their parents and relatives, and they often show their grief by their tears. So they ask us if there is any hope, any way to free them by prayer from that eternal misery, and I am obliged to answer that there is absolutely none. Their grief at this affects and torments them wonderfully; they almost pine away with sorrow. But there is this good thing about their trouble---it makes one hope that they will all be the more laborious for their own salvation, lest they like their forefathers, should be condemned to everlasting punishment. They often ask if God cannot take their fathers out of hell, and why their punishment must never have an end. We gave them a satisfactory answer, but they did not cease to grieve over the misfortune of their relatives; and I can hardly restrain my tears sometimes at seeing men so dear to my heart suffer such intense pain about a thing which is already done with and can never be undone.

Opposite to Japan lies China, an immense empire, enjoying profound peace, and which, as the Portuguese

merchants tell us, is superior to all Christian states in the practice of justice and equity. The Chinese whom I have seen in Japan and elsewhere, and whom I got to know, are white in colour, like the Japanese, are acute, and eager to learn. In intellect they are superior even to the Japanese. Their country abounds in plenty of all things, and very many cities of great extent cover its surface. The cities are very populous; the houses ornamented with stone roofings, and very elegant. All reports say that the empire is rich in every sort of produce, but especially in silk. I find, from the Chinese themselves, that amongst them may be found many people of many different nations and religions, and, as far as I could gather from what they said, I suspect that among them are Jews and Mohammedans.

Nothing leads me to suppose that there are Christians there. I hope to go there during this year, 1552, and penetrate even to the Emperor himself. China is that sort of kingdom, that if the seed of the Gospel is once sown, it may be propagated far and wide. And moreover, if the Chinese accept the Christian faith, the Japanese would give up the doctrines which the Chinese have taught them. Japan is separated from Liampou (which is a principal town in China) by a distance of about three hundred miles of sea. I am beginning to have great hopes that God will soon provide free entrance to China, not only to our Society, but to religious of all Orders, that a large field may be laid open to pious and holy men of all sorts, in which there may be great room for devotion and zeal, in recalling men who are now lost to the way of truth and salvation. I again and again beg all who have a zeal for the spreading of the Christian faith to help by their holy sacrifices and prayers these poor efforts of mine, that I may throw open an ample field to their pious labours....

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