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# XXV.14 Why the Christian religion is so repellent in Japan

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXV. On laws in their relation with the establishment of religion and its external policy -

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I have spoken of the atrocious nature of the Japanese character. [1] The magistrates saw the steadfastness that Christianity inspires when it came to renouncing the faith as very dangerous : to them, what they were seeing was a redoubling of audacity. Japanese law severely punishes the slightest disobedience : renunciation of the Christian religion was ordered ; not to renounce it was to disobey : this crime they punished, and the continuation of disobedience seemed to merit further punishment.

Punishments to the Japanese are regarded as vengeance for an insult made to the prince. Our martyrs' joyful songs seemed to be an attack on him ; the label of martyr incensed the magistrates : in their minds it meant rebel, and they did everything they could to prevent it from being acquired. It was then that everyone panicked and a horrific combat ensued between the tribunals which condemned and the defendants who suffered, between civil laws and those of religion.

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[1] Book VI, ch. xxix.