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**'The Palme of Christian Fortitude': Japan's
Kirishitan martyrs in seventeenth century
records**

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in seventeenth century records**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Account</i>	Andres de Parra, <i>A short account of the great and rigorous martyrdoms...</i> (Madrid, 1624)
<i>Atlas</i>	Arnoldus Montanus, <i>Atlas Japannensis being remarkable addresses by way of Embassy from the East India Company of the United Provinces, to the Emperor of Japan ...</i> Trans. John Ogilby (London, 1670)
<i>Collection</i>	Jean Baptiste Tavernier, <i>A collection of several relations and treatises singular and curious, of John Baptista Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne</i> , trans. John Phillips (London, 1680)
HL	Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University
<i>Kingdoms</i>	François Caron, <i>A true description of the mighty kingdoms of Japan and Siam. Written originally in Dutch by Francis Caron and Joost Schorten: and novv rendred into English by Capt. Roger Manley.</i> (London, 1663)
MN	Monumenta Nipponica
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
<i>Palme</i>	Joao Rodriguez Girao, <i>The Palme of Christian Fortitude. Or The glorious combats of Christians in Iaponia ...</i> trans. Edmund Neville (London, 1630)
<i>Relation</i>	Pedro Morejon, <i>A briefe relation of the persecution lately made against the Caatholike Christians, in the kingdome of Iaponia diuided into two bookes: taken out of the annual letters of the fathers of the Society of Jesus</i> , (1619). Trans. William Wright.
<i>Societas</i>	Mathias Tanner, <i>Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem ...</i> (Prague, 1675)
<i>Theater</i>	William Badduley, <i>The theater of Iaponia's constancy...</i> (London, 1624)



Figure 1: Jacques Callot, *Martyrs of Japan* (ca.1627) © Trustees of the British Museum.

INTRODUCTION

Jacques Callot's *Martyrs of Japan* (Figure 1) depicts one of the most notorious episodes in the history of Christianity in Japan: the crucifixion of twenty-six Kirishitans on Nishizaka hill, Nagasaki on 5th February 1597.¹ The engraving was commissioned for the occasion of their beatification in 1627. The twenty-three crosses stand imposingly in the centre, celebrated by cherubs above who toss flowers and wreaths; below stand the soldiers who prepare to spear them, as was the custom in Japanese crucifixion.² Some Christians look up at the heavens in anticipation, whilst others look wearily below them. The scene is simultaneously one of hope and tragedy: the light of salvation and the horror of hell on earth. Yet the engraving is not simply a depiction of a Christian martyrdom, it is also an artefact of global cultural interaction and religious politics. The artist, Callot, embodies globalised Christianity as a Frenchman who had never been to Japan, and engraved the scene far from Nagasaki in his native Nancy. The image also has confessional influences and illustrates the rivalry between the religious orders; the omission of the three Jesuit martyrs killed alongside the Franciscans being the clearest example.³ This dissertation will assess both of the

¹ For definition of 'Kirishitan' see glossary in Appendix A; see Appendix B for chronology; for good detailed accounts of this martyrdom see F. V. Williams, *The Martyrs of Nagasaki* (California, 1956) 27-37; N. Fujita, *Japan's Encounter with Christianity* (New York, 1991) 139-43; D. R. Yuki, S.J., *The Martyrs' Hill Nagasaki* (Nagasaki, 1979).

² On the Japanese crucifixion see J. Dougill, *In Search of Japan's Hidden Christians* (Tokyo, 2012) 75-85; on the development of executions and torture methods see Appendix C: Additional Images; S. H. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia, Volume II: 1500-1900* (New York, 2005) 87-92; C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan* (California, 1951) 347-61.

³ Confessionalism was more diverse than rivalry between orders because of the Reformation context. On martyrdom in the Reformation see B. S. Gregory's *Salvation at the Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (1999) and R. Kolb 'God's Gift of Martyrdom: The Early Reformation Understanding of Dying for the Faith', *Church History*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Sep., 1995) 399-411; On the global Catholic context see A. D. Wright, *The Counter-Reformation: Catholic Europe and the non-Christian World* (London, 1983). A. C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542-1742* (New York, 1994) 72-7; R. H. Drummond, *A History of Christianity in Japan* (Michigan, 1971) 82-86; Fujita, *Encounter*, 126-139; on rivalry see Boxer, 'Portuguese and Spanish Rivalry in the Far East during the Seventeenth Century', *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No.2 (Dec. 1946) 150-164 and also Boxer, *Century*, 154-171; Ross, *Betrayed*, 72-7; Drummond, *History*, 82-86; Fujita, *Encounter*, 126-139.

elements represented here: the Kirishitan martyrs and their reception beyond Japan. In particular, it will focus on their reception in England.

A study of the Kirishitan martyrs and their broader reception is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it provides an insight into how Christians, both as immediate spectators and as distant artists, translators and readers, recorded and interpreted the lives and deaths of other Christians in Japan. Secondly, the Japanese context provides a historically interesting case study for understanding and broadening the meaning and significance of martyrdom in this period, which will also help to address the historiographical imbalance in studies which favour the European martyrs. Finally, the Kirishitans were ‘witness’ not only to their own faith but to the extremes of human nature, our capacity for great cruelty and profound bravery.⁴ The subject therefore contains not only its traditional historical importance as a violent clash of cultures or as an area of uniquely large Christian sacrifice ‘probably unequalled in the annals of the church’, but also as an episode of universal human value.⁵

Much of the relevant historiography is to be found within the field of Christianity in pre-modern Japan. Two groups of scholars have tended to dominate this area: those approaching it with a specific interest in the Christian religion or its missions, and those who are primarily concerned with the cultural exchange between East and West, in which the Christian episode in Japan is understood to be important. The work of R. H. Drummond, Samuel Hugh Moffett, Johannes Laures, Joseph Jennes and Andrew C. Ross loosely aligns with the former category, that of Neil S. Fujita, J. F. Moran and Michael Cooper with the latter.⁶ Generally the two

⁴ The meaning of ‘martyr’ in Greek, see M. L. Budde and K. Scott (ed.), *Witness of the Body: The Past, Present and Future of Christian Martyrdom* (2011) viii.

⁵ J. Laures, *The Catholic Church in Japan: A Short History* (Tokyo, 1954) 179.

⁶ See Drummond, *History*; Moffett, *Asia*; Laures, *Church*; J. A. Jennes, *History of the Catholic Church in Japan* (Tokyo, 1973); Ross, *Betrayed*; For examples of Christianity in Japan as an important early global interaction/exchange see Fujita, *Encounter*; J. F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in sixteenth century Japan* (London, 1993); M. Cooper, (ed.) *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640* (Los Angeles, 1965).

angles result only in subtle differences in emphasis and their works cover much of the same ground in discussing the initial contact, the period of persecution and the subsequent closure of Japan.⁷ These broader studies are especially useful for appreciating the wider trends in, and the context of, the persecution of Christians in Japan. C. R. Boxer's landmark *The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650* remains the most valuable work, both for its thoroughness and its assimilation of multiple perspectives. Boxer also discusses the Kirishitan martyrs in the most detail by examining: the reasons for and methods of execution; works of exhortation influencing Christians; the crowds; and the growth of apostates.⁸ However, he does not focus on the reception of martyrs.⁹

The historiography focussing specifically on Kirishitan martyrs remains elusive in English language scholarship. The peak of interest seems to have been from the 1930s to the 1950s, where one can find several helpful studies, most notably those by Hubert Cieslik and M. Anesaki. Cieslik is rare in taking a case study (The Great Martyrdom of Edo, 1623) and tracing its causes, the execution and its consequences in such detail.¹⁰ Anesaki also conducted some very useful research in his *Concordance to the History of the Kirishitan Missions* (essentially a catalogue of the martyrdoms) as well as penning numerous shorter essays which shed light on many aspects of the persecution of Christians, the most helpful of which are those evaluating the available Japanese sources and their perspectives.¹¹ From the

⁷ The response of Japanese women to Christianity has also begun to receive attention see H. N. Ward, *Women Religious Leaders in Japan's Christian Century, 1549-1650* (Surrey, 2009). Ward is therefore the exception to this general rule, as her focus on women gives her work a completely different emphasis.

⁸ See Boxer, *Century*, 308-62.

⁹ The closest he comes is: 'It is no wonder that the exiled English Jesuits of Douai, searching for examples wherewith to inspire their coreligionists in England, selected the Japanese Catholics as bearers of *The Palme of Christian Fortitude*.' But he does not expand upon this assertion in any detail, see *Century*, 361.

¹⁰ See Cieslik 'The Great Martyrdom in Edo 1623. Its Causes, Course, Consequences', *MN*, 1-44.

¹¹ Anesaki, 'A Concordance to the History of the Kirishitan Missions', *Proceedings of the Imperial Academy*, Supplement to Vol. VI (Tokyo, 1930); 'Psychological Observations on The Persecution of The Catholics in Japan in The Seventeenth Century', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Apr., 1936) 13-27; 'A Collection of Documents belonging to the Inquisition Office against the Kirishitans', *Proceedings of the*

1950s onwards there seems to be a decline in specific studies on Japanese martyrdoms, and their story tends to be absorbed into broader histories instead. This is an interesting contrast to the corresponding popularity of historical novels on the topic from the 1960s, a likely reflection of the growing awareness of the human importance of the subject, as well as its role in Japan's history. The most successful was *Silence* by Shusaku Endo, a Japanese Catholic, published in 1969.¹²

R. Po-chia Hsia has suggested there is a growing realisation that histories of Christianization in Europe would be much enriched by the incorporation of encounters between European and non-European civilisations.¹³ Similarly, this dissertation will illustrate that histories of martyrdom would benefit from a greater awareness of, and interest in, non-European martyrs.¹⁴ Previously, much of the discussion of Japan's Christian martyrs has been restricted to mission histories, and most English-language historians have not dedicated any significant attention to how the martyrdoms were actually recorded in the seventeenth century, and the meaning and significance which writers and translators – near and far – attached to them. Rather, the subject of martyrdom is treated more as an interesting and horrifying spectacle of persecution on the road to the much larger rejection of western culture to come.¹⁵ This is indicative of the fact that the central debates in the field revolve around how and why Christianity was rejected in Japan, and the consequences of the encounter.¹⁶ The sources – the most frequently cited being Leon Pages, François Caron, the diary of Richard Cocks and

Imperial Academy, Vol. 8, No. 93 (October, 1932), 331-34; 'Exaggerations in the Japanese Accounts of the Kirishitan Propaganda', *Proceedings of the Imperial Academy*, Vol. IV, No. 26 (March, 1928), 85-88.

¹² S. Endo, *Silence*, tr. W. Johnston (Taplinger, 1969); also see L. O'Hara, *Kirishitan: Heaven's Samurai* (2012).

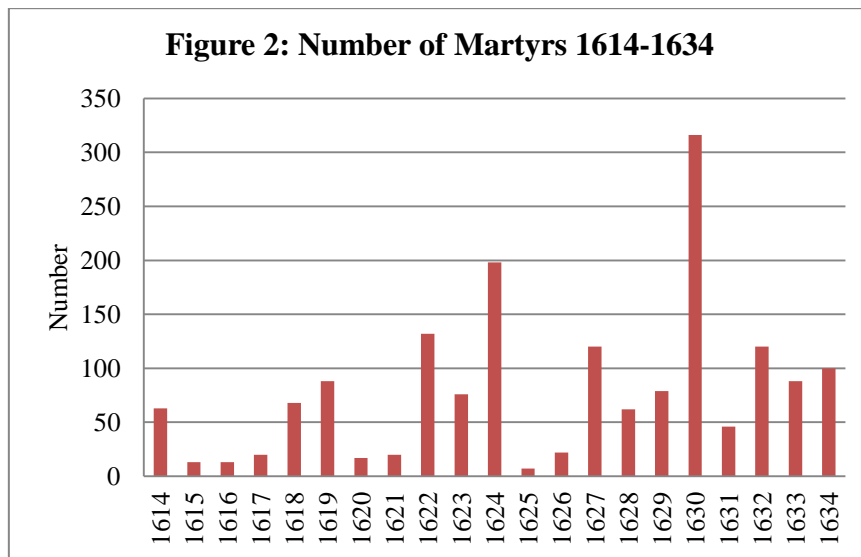
¹³ R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge, 1998), 6.

¹⁴ The following studies would have benefited from the inclusion of non-European martyrs: Budde and Scott, *Witness of the Body* and L. B. Smith's *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World* (New York, 1997); B. Wicker (ed.), *Witness to Faith? Martyrdom in Christianity and Islam* (London, 2006).

¹⁵ Moffett, *Asia*, 80-93; Fujita, *Encounter*, 161-190; Lares, *Church*, 155-179; Drummond, *History*, 73-109.

¹⁶ G. Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, (Massachusetts, 1991); Drummond, *History*, 11; Fujita, *Encounter*, 1; Doughill, *Hidden*, xii.

the Annual Letters of the Jesuits – are therefore largely examined for the information they provide regarding this issue.¹⁷ Equally, the Japanese context has not been seen as a potentially useful case study for understanding early modern Christian martyrdom. So it is these two elements – examining records of martyrdoms and evaluating their broader reception – which will form the backbone of this dissertation.



There is a consensus that the publication of shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa’s edict on 27th January 1614 signalled the beginning of a systematic national policy of persecution.¹⁸ Ieyasu’s escalation was furthered by his successors, his son Hidetada (1579-1632) and his grandson Iemitsu (1603-1651) who succeeded to the position of shogun in 1623.¹⁹ There is thus good justification for not choosing a single martyrdom, one location for study, or a tight time frame, because the persecution became geographically widespread and the martyrdoms tended to happen in waves, as shown in Figure 2.²⁰

¹⁷ For examples of these sources in use see Boxer, *Century*, 358-61; Fujita, *Encounter*, 142, 174, 176, 177-79; Laures, *Japan*, 128.

¹⁸ For definition of ‘shogun’ see glossary in Appendix A; see Appendix B for chronology; also see Appendix D for more information on Ieyasu, Hidetada and Iemitsu Tokugawa; for examples of historiographical consensus that this edict was important see Anesaki, ‘Psychological Observations’ *Asiatic Studies*, 14-18; Boxer, *Century*, 317-20; Dougill, *Hidden*, 92-7; Jennes, *Catholic*, 114-21; Fujita, *Encounter*, 10.

¹⁹ It is during Iemitsu’s rule that we begin to see an escalating, sustained and brutal campaign of persecution, see Ross, *Betrayed*, 98-101; Boxer, *Century*, 363-4,394; Fujita, *Encounter*, 176-7; Jennes, *Catholic*, 138-43.

²⁰ See maps 1 and 2 in Appendix E; from the late 1620s prolonged and violent tortures also began to be utilised in order to invoke apostasy, see Appendix C for visual depictions of executions; for a good account of trends in

The relationship between the English-reading audience and the martyrs of Japan is a primary focus of this dissertation, therefore a range sources have been utilised to gain a balanced perspective. For the Catholic perception, translations by William Wright and Edmund (alias Neville) Sale of two Jesuit Annual Letters (1613-14 and 1623-4 respectively) form a central focal point, alongside earlier letters by the missionary Luis Fróis pertaining to the 1597 Martyrdom of Nagasaki and other early executions, as well as pamphlets by William Badduley and Andres de Parra. For an alternative view, the dissertation will also examine three works of travel literature by François Caron, Arnoldus Montanus and Jean Baptiste Tavernier, which were similarly translated into English, respectively, by Captain Roger Manley (d. 1687), an army officer and historian, John Ogilby (1600-1676), a publisher and geographer, and John Phillips (1631-1706), an English author and nephew of the poet Milton.²¹ Although the original writings are mediated through the lens of the translator and may have been altered, it is this very factor that demonstrates that the Kirishitan martyrs had an audience beyond Japan, and were in some cases given a specific role for Christians elsewhere. The translations will therefore be examined with this interpretative aspect in mind, which is distinct from previous historiographical attention which tends to examine material for the purpose of harvesting information about the martyrs rather than analysing how they were interpreted.

The dissertation will also utilise visual sources seldom included in the historiography. As the initial examination of Callot's *Martyrs* (Figure 1) has shown, the value of paintings,

persecution see E. Hagemann, 'The Persecution of the Christians in Japan in the Middle of the Seventeenth Century', *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Jun, 1942), 151-160; M. Anesaki, 'Psychological Observations', *Asiatic Studies*, 13-27; Fujita, *Encounter*, 147-248; Drummond, *History*, 73-108. Data in Figure 2 from Boxer's Summary Martyrology, *Century*, 448.

²¹ On these translators see C. E. A. Cheesman, 'Manley, Sir Roger (d. 1687)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008, available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17940> [accessed 22 March 2014]; C. W. J. Withers, 'Ogilby, John (1600-1676)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007, available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20583> [accessed: 22 March 2014]; G. Campbell, 'Phillips, John (1631-1706?)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008, available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22161> [accessed: 22 March 2014].

engravings and drawings of martyrdoms is potentially large, particularly when evaluating how the martyrdoms were presented elsewhere and observing the details which were (or were not) considered important. It is fortunate that several survive, notably the seventeenth-century anonymous painting of *The Great Martyrdom of Nagasaki* – currently residing at the Church of the Gesu in Rome. The efforts of the 26 Martyrs Museum in Nagasaki mean that there is a wealth of useful images collated, which will be heavily drawn upon. Mathias Tanner's (1630-1692) martyrology *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem...* will also be included for its detailed illustrations. The challenge for the historian is that there is irregularity in what survives as well as in what is accessible; there are surplus images for some martyrdoms and a deficit for others. Therefore one must avoid overstating their importance but play to their strength as valuable supplements to the textual sources.

The dissertation will be split into two chapters. The first will examine the accounts of martyrdoms and establish the recurring themes, as well as illustrate the prominence of women and children. It will show that the Annual Letters portray Japan's Kirishitans as archetypal and victorious martyrs, whilst the authors of the travel literatures demonstrate greater ambiguity in their assessments. The second will focus on the way in which the martyrs have been interpreted in the translations; demonstrating that the diverse translators and audiences have produced different perspectives but agree that the Kirishitan martyrs were significant.

CHAPTER ONE: THE MARTYRS

On 4th December 1623 fifty Kirishitans were executed by burning alive, amongst them the leading missionaries of the Edo mission.²² Iemitsu wanted to set an example to the whole country so the execution site was set alongside the busiest road in Japan. The Kirishitans were paraded through the streets before being brought to their stakes. Jerome de Angelis SJ (1568-1623), Franciscan Francis Galvez (ca.1574-1623) and Japanese noble John Hara Mondo-no-suke Tanenobu waited on horseback, with the others on foot.²³ The crowd of spectators was enormous ‘for a spacious field and neere bordering mountaine was quite covered over.’²⁴ The forty-seven lay Kirishitans were to be burnt first and were tied to their stakes: ‘There should you have seene them with their eyes lifted up to heaven and their hartes panting with the love of God, on whome their hopes were fixed, and from whome they expected to succour in this last passage.’ They showed no signs of suffering. The scene was so intense that two spectators broke from the crowd and professed that they too were Christians.²⁵ De Angelis, Galvez and Hara Mondo stood by ‘with eyes of marble, and hartes impregnable rendering many thanks to God’ despite the intention ‘to frighten them with this bloody spectacle and thereby drive them unto a new resolution.’²⁶ They were then tied to their own stakes. In that moment they comforted and animated each other ‘with great zeal and affection.’²⁷ De Angelis preached until he died, followed by Galvez and Hara Mondo. Afterwards, the crowd all ‘agreed that their constancy was worthy of highest praises’.²⁸

²² See map 1 in Appendix E for location and Appendix D for the list of martyrs included in this dissertation; *Palme* for full account, 10-27; for a detailed analysis of this martyrdom and its background see Cieslik, ‘Great Martyrdom’, 1-44.

²³ Little is known about Hara Mondo’s early life but he was in service as a page boy in 1593, so he was probably middle aged by the time of his execution. See Cieslik, ‘Great Martyrdom’, 8-12.

²⁴ *Palme*, 15-16.

²⁵ They were denied execution at that time but were arrested and later killed, *Palme*, 17-18.

²⁶ *Palme*, 17.

²⁷ *Palme*, 18.

²⁸ *Palme*, 19.

This account of a mass execution illustrates the paradoxical scenario which features in all the accounts of martyrdom within the Annual Letters and pamphlets. In their attempt to annihilate the Kirishitans, the persecutors made a spectacle of their deaths. They were violently executed together in a visible and often publicised location. Instead of the executions inducing recantations and establishing a deterrent, the Kirishitans bore their deaths with dignity – if not delight – to the astonishment of spectators. The victims were empowered by enduring their executions willingly. It is no coincidence that this same paradox forms the basis of the Christian religion with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ at Golgotha. Although superficially a triumph of the persecutors, Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead, defeated original sin and revealed the road to salvation with his act of sacrifice.²⁹ It is this understanding of martyrdom as a triumph or a victory ('the Palme') that underpins the themes that emerge throughout the Annual Letters; each theme reinforces this, whether it is overcoming temptation, preaching to the crowd, or aiding fellow Kirishitans. The martyrs are presented as upholders of biblical principles in their submission to God over earthly authority and in loving their neighbours. The martyrdoms of women and children also epitomise the notion of the weak overcoming the strong.

Although there are exceptions to every rule, most Kirishitans would have known what was expected of them at the point of martyrdom. Thus the consistency in their behaviour, shown in this chapter, should not be unexpected. They had access to texts like *Exhortations to Martyrdom*, compiled by missionaries to encourage their followers from 1615 onwards. They laid out the fundamental importance of fidelity to Christ, the temporal nature of the torments, the glory of the martyr in heaven, and refuted the reasons for apostasy (including

²⁹ For other biblical views on martyrdom and persecution see Ps. 116:15; Matt. 5:10; Matt. 10:28, 32-33; Matt. 24:9, 13; John: 15:18, 20; Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29; James 1:2-3; Rev. 2:10.

commitment to family and loyalty to feudal lords).³⁰ There were also Christian confraternities, such as those recorded in Arima in the *Relation*, which prepared Christians with penances and confession as well as requiring its members to be willing to die for the faith.³¹ They were prepared; they may have even seen members of their communities martyred. They knew they would have the opportunity to affirm their obedience to God (or indeed recant); to make known the reasons for their sacrifice and thereby convert the unbeliever; to make their life and death a testament to the truth of their faith by enduring execution. The Annual Letters and pamphlets are thus full of martyrs completing these various requirements.

Firstly, the Kirishitans are presented as using their execution as an opportunity to evangelise the spectators – a reversal of the persecutors intentions. They are recorded as preaching, praying and declaring their faith.³² For example, Jesuit Paul Miki (1565-1597) – one of the twenty-six martyrs – delivered a sermon from his cross in which he claimed Christianity was the only means to salvation and forgave those participating in his execution.³³ This engagement with the crowds was important, as it ensured that listeners understood why the Kirishitans were willing to be executed, as well as functioned as a public commendation to God. By refusing the opportunity to apostatise, it was also a last act of defiance. By recording the reactions of the crowd, the accounts also demonstrate that the martyrs were effective in getting their message across.³⁴

³⁰ Boxer, *Century*, 340-1; Fujita, *Encounter*, 179-83.

³¹ See map 2 in Appendix E; *Relation*, 91-3,232-3.

³² They often recited the names of Mary and Jesus, see *Palme*, 17,31,46-7,133,148; *Atlas*, 213; *Relation*, 126-7,261; HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'glorious death' 122-4; *Theater*, 23,24; For preaching see, HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, Fróis 'glorious death', 123; *Relation*, 125; *Palme*, 74,169; *Theater*, 7-8; On declarations of faith see *Palme*, 30,54,116,147; *Relation*, 195-8,202,204,210-11,233,257-8,267,274,276-7,281-2.

³³ HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, Fróis 'glorious death', 123.

³⁴ Their reaction is almost always recorded, as in the case of the Great Martyrdom of Edo. See *Palme*, 19-20,29,44,51,54,55,74,84,119,124,150,156; *Theater*, 8,18; On relic collection see *Relation*, 84-5,128-9; HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'terrible persecution' 191-2; HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, Fróis 'glorious death', 124; *Theater*, 8-9,19 and



Figure 3: Anon, *The Great Martyrdom of Nagasaki, September 10, 1622* (17th Century)
© Church of the Gesu, Rome.

‘The Great Martyrdom of Nagasaki’ on 10th September 1622, where fifty-one men, women and children were martyred by burning and beheading, is illustrated in Figure 3, where spectators are shown lining the surrounding area. Andres de Parra’s pamphlet notes the enormity of the crowd and its sympathy towards the martyrs:

‘A numberless multitude congregated to receive them, and the people named and pointed out to one another the fathers who had made them Christians, crying and wailing because their spiritual fathers and teachers were being taken away from them.’³⁵

This ‘multitude’ tends to be depicted as a mixture of ‘Gentile’ and Christian, with the ‘heathens’ also reported as ‘astonished and for many days talked of it with awe’.³⁶ Although it was in the interests of missionaries to present the martyrs as evangelising the crowd because it bolstered the success of the mission and its converts, the change in the policy of

n37; on conversions see HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, Fróis ‘glorious death’, 124-5; HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, ‘terrible parsecution’, 190-1.

³⁵ *Account*, 17.

³⁶ For the definition of ‘gentile’ in this context see glossary in Appendix A; *Account*, 18.

the persecutors verifies the spectators' shows of support. From 1624, executioners took steps to prevent preaching and the collection of relics.³⁷ By the late 1620s the Japanese also began to utilise forms of torture to induce recantation, because executions seemed to increase rather than deter the Kirishitans, in line with Tertullian's famed quote 'The Blood of Martyrs is the seed of Christians'.

The martyrs' prioritisation of their faith over earthly authority, their families and their lives is also a theme prevalent in the Annual Letters. Most Kirishitans had an opportunity to recant and if they had taken it, they usually would have been spared.³⁸ This was almost unanimously rejected in the absence of prolonged and violent torture.³⁹ For example, Leon Quita Quinzayemon, a soldier, explained to his lord that in matters pertaining to salvation his loyalty to God would subvert his obedience to him.⁴⁰ A favourite tactic of the persecutors was to galvanise relatives and friends of Kirishitans to persuade them to renounce the faith, which presented a personal temptation to overcome. Francis Toyama Jintaro (1600-1624) was sent letters by his family requesting him to apostatise but 'no sooner read the first letter tending to this purpose, but straight he toare in pieces all the rest ... and threw them into the fire.'⁴¹ His father-in-law also threatened to take away his wife if he did not recant. Jintaro replied, smiling: 'that neither wife, nor all the world could yeeld, should separate betwixt him and his Religion.'⁴² The ultimate test was whether faith was more important than their lives; all the martyrs in the Annual Letters and pamphlets answer in the affirmative. A good example was Catherine, a Japanese noblewoman of 48 years. She was stripped, beaten and taken to the execution site where she then spent 'some time in prayer' before she

³⁷ By 1624 the Japanese began to burn corpses or dispose of them in the sea, see *Palme*, 19-20,51,102,114,119, 124; on preventing preaching see Boxer, *Century*, 343-4.

³⁸ *Palme*, 136-7; on this assertion see Boxer, *Century*, 349-51.

³⁹ See Appendix C for information on effective types of torture used later, which did induce recantation.

⁴⁰ The name used here is as listed in *Relation*, see Appendix A; *Relation*, 88; similar examples 190,193-6,202,234-5,251-2; *Palme*, 30,34,39,46,48,68,116.

⁴¹ *Palme*, 68-9, similar examples 55,87,96-8.

⁴² *Palme*, 68-9.

‘undauntedly offered her head unto the sword.’⁴³ Father Luis Cabrera Sotelo (1574-1624), burnt alive in Omura on 25th August 1624, was said to have ‘endured, without ever moving him self, the fury of those flames, until at last he rendered his invincible soule to God’.⁴⁴ This willingness to die rather than recant pursues the biblical teaching of Jesus (‘if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me’) to its fullest conclusion, a victory over sin and damnation.⁴⁵ By doing so, the martyrs expected they would share in Paradise, the ultimate triumph.

Brad Gregory has argued that martyrdom in the European context was not an isolated activity and that ‘social support and sustenance’ were essential to the act of martyrdom.⁴⁶ The same is true in the Japan. The way in which de Angelis, Hara Mondo and Galvez encouraged each other at the point of martyrdom is a persistent theme in the Annual Letters. This is partly because the executions were often public and Kirishitans were rarely executed alone. We have already briefly examined the role of confraternities in preparing Kirishitans for martyrdom which illustrates a communal support system prior to the executions.⁴⁷ The Annual Letters also highlight that martyrs helped each other to stay constant in the faith and endure the pain of martyrdom during the act itself.⁴⁸ This was in active defiance of the purpose of the executions which were to divide and frighten the Kirishitans, as we saw in our first example at Edo. Similarly, Diego Carvalho (ca. 1578-1624) suffered execution by freezing in a lake during winter in Sendai.⁴⁹ He perceived that his companion Leo was beginning to struggle with ‘the pangues of death’ and so said to him: ‘yet awhile, yet awhile,

⁴³ *Palme*, 124. See n32 on declarations of faith for similar examples.

⁴⁴ See map 2 in Appendix E for this location. *Palme*, 148.

⁴⁵ KJV Matthew 16:24.

⁴⁶ Gregory, *Salvation*, 112.

⁴⁷ Some martyrs also had the blessing of their relatives or friends, see *Palme*, 54-5,70-1,105,108-9,125,165-170; *Relation*, 344-5.

⁴⁸ *Palme*, 30-1,71.

⁴⁹ See map 1 in Appendix E for this location; on Carvalho see: Cieslik, ‘Father Diego Carvalho (1578-1624), a Sendai Martyr’, *All About Francis Xavier* [website], 1-19, available: <http://pweb.cc.sophia.ac.jp/britto/xavier/> [Accessed: 21/04/14].

we shall quickly have an end' at which time 'Leo receiuing new strength seemed to joy his torments, and calling upon the names of Jesus and Maria gaue up his soule unto his creator.'⁵⁰ The support could also come from spectators, as in the case of Carvalho himself. He was the last of his companions to die 'but was not abandoned by certain Christians, who remained by, till he died.'⁵¹ It is also interesting to note that in the depiction of Carvalho's martyrdom (Figure 4), he is shown in the company of angel, who holds out a hand to him.⁵² This depicts a common belief that Christians were strengthened by God in order to endure their torments. The notion that God is present in some form during the executions reinforces the status of the martyrs as proponents of the true faith when they successfully endured it.

Although they do not feature strongly in the mass martyrdom that opened this chapter, women and children are central to both Annual Letters.⁵³ Their considerable presence is partly a result of the scale and nature of the executions because whole families were martyred if they refused to recant. It is their willingness and impact that make them particularly poignant.⁵⁴ On women and the rhetoric of martyrdom in Jean Crespin's martyrology, Nikki

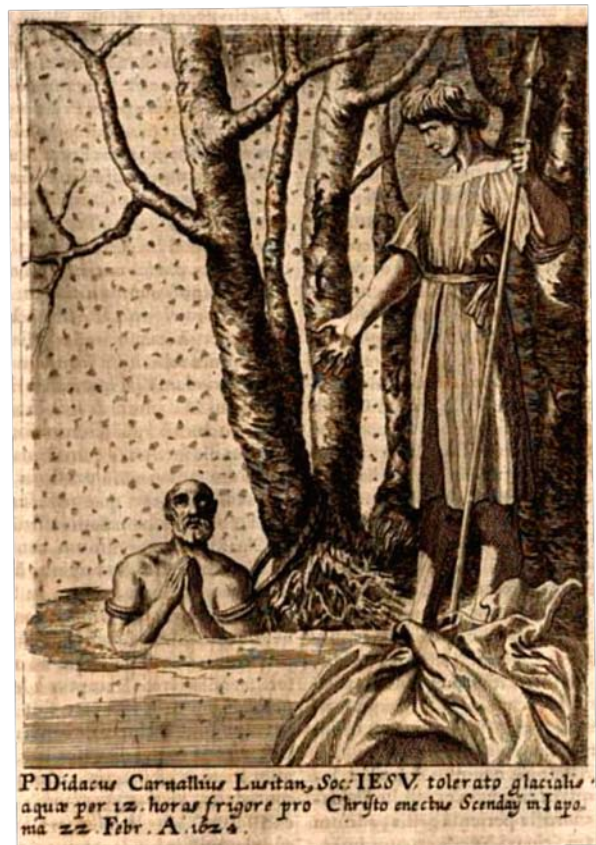


Figure 4: Melchior Küsel 'P. Didacus Carnallius Lusitan ...' in: *Societas*, 313.

⁵⁰ *Palme*, 49-50.

⁵¹ *Palme*, 50-1.

⁵² See Appendix C for similar visual records types of executions and martyrdoms.

⁵³ For examples see HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'terrible persecution' 182-90; *Relation*, 85-6; *Palme* esp.95-120; n64.

⁵⁴ *Collections*, 12; on conversions because of children see *Palme*, 154,156; *Relation*, 26-7,122-5.

Shephardson has convincingly argued that women are presented as lacking individual agency and are passive martyrs, simply ‘God’s chosen weapon’.⁵⁵ In Japan, in some texts like the *Exhortations to Martyrdom*, their ability to undergo martyrdom is similarly attributed to God’s supernatural aid.⁵⁶ By contrast in the Annual Letters women are shown to exercise a very active and individualised agency. In Hizen, a Christian leader tried to persuade the women to return to their homes rather than be imprisoned, but they protested and insisted upon remaining with the other Christians.⁵⁷ Women are shown to remain constant, encourage their relatives to do the same, and to set a ‘good example’ for their families or brethren at the time of execution.⁵⁸ Like Mary Iagea who was counted as ‘above the rest remarkable’ by resisting recantation, affirming her faith and enduring her death ‘with smiling countenance, and undaunted courage.’⁵⁹ Similarly, Visula of Hirado ‘did not only imitate her husband [Michael], but did by both example, and words, incite and stirre him up to all vertue.’⁶⁰ She also declined to have her children raised by a ‘Gentile’ instead of being executed.⁶¹ There are several reasons why women are depicted in more flexible and individual terms in some Annual Letters. Firstly, because they are mission letters rather than official martyrologies, and their role at this time is primarily to record all those being executed so that they would not be forgotten. Thus they do not have the same political constraints or concerns that informed Crespin’s interpretation of women martyrs.⁶² The agency of women is also an advantage rather than a potential hindrance in the context of Japan as a way of showing the extent of

⁵⁵ N. Shephardson, ‘Gender and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom in Jean Crespin’s “Historie des vrais tesmoins”’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 35, No.1 (2004), 171.

⁵⁶ Quoted and discussed in Boxer, *Century*, 341.

⁵⁷ Hizen is a region including Nagasaki, Omura, Arima and Hirado, see map 2 in Appendix E; *Palme*, 87-8, similar examples, 89,107.

⁵⁸ On constancy and encouraging others see *Palme*, 98-101,106,118-19,158; *Relation*, 85-6,100-1; on being a good example see *Palme*, 79,88,89,105-110,45-6; *Relation*, 152-8; *Atlas*, 213; *Theater*, 10-11,15,21.

⁵⁹ The name used here is as listed in *Palme*, see Appendix A; *Palme*, 28-9, for similar examples of women see 79,121-4,105-6,107-110,120-5; *Relation*, 207-9.

⁶⁰ The name used here is as listed in *Palme*, see Appendix A. The location of the execution is listed as ‘Firando’ which is probably actually Hirado, see map 2 in Appendix E; *Palme*, 119, similar example 125.

⁶¹ *Palme*, 116.

⁶² Shephardson, ‘Gender and the Rhetoric of Martyrdom’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 158-66.

Christianity's influence amongst the converted; even the 'weake sex' was willing to die for the faith in vast numbers.⁶³

Children are recorded in a similar manner. Louis Ibaraki was one of the first child Kirishitan martyrs in Japan. He was 12 years old and was one of three boys – the others Anthony (13) and Tom Kozaki (14) – that were martyred amongst the twenty-six in Nagasaki in 1597. He is described as asking which cross was his and 'when it was shewed him he ran with greate devotion and fervour unto it.'⁶⁴ Another case was Lewis Minami (1596-1603), martyred alongside his mother Magdalena Minami (ca. 1560-1603) by crucifixion in Yatsushiro in 1603.⁶⁵ The executioner asked the boy why he was not more upset and afraid at the thought of execution, he replied: 'I finde no grieffe at all in my minde, neyther am I trubled but rather Rejoyce seeinge I am to be crusified for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁶⁶ The significance of the children is that they are perceived, alongside women, as amongst the weakest and most vulnerable. The fact they are able to overcome the strongest in Japanese society by martyrdom makes the Kirishitans all the more triumphant in the Annual Letters.

The inclusion of women and children is not just a feature of the Annual Letters and missionary correspondence; it also attracts particular attention in the travel literatures, despite the fact they deal with the overall topic in far less detail. This was probably because it was particularly horrifying as the mass martyrdom of families was relatively unusual in Europe.

Manley relays Caron's observation that:

'During these bloody and savage persecutions, it happened that some Christian Children, because of their beautie, were begged and faved; but many of them of eight, ten and twelve years old. and refused this grace, protesting with courage, to a wonder, that they would not live,

⁶³ HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'terrible parsecution' 182.

⁶⁴ HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'glorious death' 121.

⁶⁵ For this location see map 2 in Appendix E.

⁶⁶ HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'terrible parsecution' 187; further examples of children include; *Palme*, 29,54-5, 87,92,100,106,110,132,154; *Relation*, 100-1,122-5,126-7.

they did not fear death; but would go where their parents went, into that joy where they would no more be tormented.’⁶⁷

Ogilby similarly notes the constancy of a six year old boy, who endured torture ‘with inexpressible courage’.⁶⁸ Although the piety of women and children is recognised, it is not as unreserved as in the Annual Letters. Manley passes on Caron’s suggestion that children had to be persuaded by their parents to undergo execution.⁶⁹ It is impossible to deduce from this one example how frequently this may have occurred as he does not point to any specific evidence, but it is possible Caron may have witnessed this himself having had a considerable tenure in Japan as an employee of the Dutch East India Company. On the scale of probability, it seems unlikely that all children would have been willing martyrs as suggested in the Annual Letters.

The violence committed against women and children receives detailed description. Ogilby’s rendition of Montanus’ work emphasises that women suffered the most (as they were paraded naked through the towns, made to crawl, and raped) as well as condemning the ‘barbarity against children’.⁷⁰ He also accuses Kirishitans of cruelty towards their children in preparations for martyrdom ‘not with instructing them in the Gospel, but by terrifying them with unusual cruelties’. He cites an example, also featuring in the *Palme*, in which a Kirishitan has his son hold a hot coal in preparation for burning alive. It is interesting to note that although Montanus views this as cruel, it is presented as an act of profound piety on the part of the compliant child and his Father in the *Palme*.⁷¹ Although the travel literatures do not depict the martyrs in as much detail and display some reservations about them, Manley and Phillips still appear broadly sympathetic to their situation. This is clear in the way they discuss the persecutions; Manley describes them ‘bloody and savage’ and Phillips similarly

⁶⁷ *Kingdoms*, 70. Tavernier/Phillips also makes a similar point, *Collections*, 12.

⁶⁸ *Atlas*, 262.

⁶⁹ *Kingdoms*, 70.

⁷⁰ *Atlas*, 267, 260. Caron/Manley makes the same point, *Kingdoms*, 66-7.

⁷¹ *Atlas*, 263; *Palme*, 54-5.

terms it a 'barbarous inquisition'.⁷² This links to the severity of the executions, especially those of women and children. These authors were primarily Protestant and thus less inclined to sympathise with the success or implications of the Catholic mission, which is why they do not contain the same level of detail or the spiritual intrigue underpinning the Annual Letters.

⁷² *Kingdoms*, 70; *Collection*, 12.

CHAPTER TWO: RECEPTION

Thomas H. Clancy, one of the few to comment on the English record of Japanese martyrs, writes: ‘The Jesuits had always been proud of the heroism of their brethren and their converts in Japan.’⁷³ This is undoubtedly true of the English Jesuits. Edmund Sale (alias Neville) (1604/5 – 1647/8) was an Englishman and entered the Society of Jesus at St Andrew’s, Rome, on 24th March 1626. He published his translation of Joao Rodriguez Girao’s Annual Letter (1623-4) in 1630.⁷⁴ In his preface Sale describes the significance of the Kirishitan martyrs for the English Catholics:

‘We the Catholickes of England, who liue in the happie danger of being partakers of the like crownes, haue speciall cause to behold with ioie this Iaponian Palme-tree of Christan Fortitude translated, and planted on English soile. The victories of Martyrs recorded in writing be encouragemets vnto martyrdomes ... They were members of the same Church, professours of the same Religion, practisers of the same deuotions ... The vexations we endure compared with theirs, will seeme more tolerable; and if they should grow to greater excesses, we haue here cofortable pledges to make us sure the Faith, we professe, is able to conqueror the most superlative rage of the world.’⁷⁵

He draws a direct connection between their shared beliefs and deuotions in Catholicism and parallels the suffering of the Kirishitans and the Catholics in England. By sharing the model of victory the Kirishitan martyrs represent, Sale believes that the English will be strengthened, comforted and better able to endure their own martyrdoms. This is an interpretation of the findings of the previous chapter, in which the Kirishitans – including women and children – are shown to be steadfast in the face of execution, and valiant upholders of the faith. Their example was made all the more poignant because they had died recently, not hundreds or even a thousand years ago, which created a sense of solidarity between the English and

⁷³ T. H. Clancy, *A Literary History of The English Jesuits: A Century of Books 1615-1714* (San Francisco, 1996) 24.

⁷⁴ T. Cooper, ‘Sale, Edmund (1604/5–1647/8)’, rev. R. M. Armstrong, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004, available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19928> [accessed: 22 March 2014].

⁷⁵ *Palme*, 7-8.

Japanese Catholics. William Wright (1563-1639), also an English Jesuit, in his translation of Pedro Morejon's Annual Letter of 1614-15, made a similar connection: 'I knew not to whome I might better direct it, then to You poore inflicted Catholikes of this our Countrey, for whose comfort and encouragement I did indeed principally from the beginning intend it.'⁷⁶

The situation for Catholics in England had been turbulent since Elizabeth's ascension to the throne in 1558; between 1577 and 1603 183 Catholics (including 123 priests) were executed. Many thousands more were imprisoned, tortured and exiled. Like the Kirishitans, the English were the victims of a national policy of persecution, as after the execution of Jesuit missionary Edmund Campion in 1581 the presence of Catholic clergy in England became a capital offense.⁷⁷ Although Po-chia Hsia has suggested that 'under James I English Catholics were generally acknowledged as loyal subjects and the anti-Catholic legislation lost much of its rigor in application', Sale and Wright indicate this did not apply to English subjects turned Catholic missionaries.⁷⁸ Sale joined a mission to England between 1626 and 1630, before living in London and then the south-west from 1639.⁷⁹ He had therefore been back to England before he translated the letter and wrote his preface, which suggests he had felt threatened during his time there. Wright similarly went to England in 1606 but was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1607. A few months later in September he was broken out and taken to a safe house in the East Midlands, where he remained for the rest of his life.⁸⁰ Their perception was that they too lived in a dangerous environment, and could therefore draw encouragement and inspiration from the Kirishitans.

⁷⁶ *Relation*, 5.

⁷⁷ Hsia, *Renewal*, 80-1.

⁷⁸ Hsia, *Renewal*, 82.

⁷⁹ Cooper, 'Sale, Edmund' *ODNB*.

⁸⁰ T. M. McCoog, 'Wright, William (1563–1639)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004, available: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30066> [accessed: 22 March 2014].

Beyond this purpose of comfort and encouragement, the Kirishitan martyrs were also utilised to prove the truth of the faith of Catholicism in the increasingly confessionalised context post-Reformation.⁸¹ Wright classifies the Kirishitans as Catholics, alongside his English brethren: ‘and not of any other priuate or particular sect or faction, of which God knoweth there is to great a multitude in the Christian world in these miserable dayes of ours.’⁸² The sense of ownership is clear. In the original accounts it is self-evident that the missionaries were Catholic as they were exclusively Jesuit, Franciscan, Dominican or Augustinian. Thus, no references are made to other confessions until they were interpreted by men elsewhere like Wright and Sale. Wright also draws a more explicit link between the original state of ‘infidelity’ of the Japanese converts and the Catholics in England who have rejected the ‘Schisme or Heresy, which is a kind of infidelity’.⁸³ It is interesting that the infidelity in the English context – or Protestantism – is defined along similar lines as following an entirely different religion, like Buddhism in Japan. This was a result of the antagonistic relationship between confessions after the Reformation, which often led to accusations of ‘false’ religions and martyrs in the battle for the true faith.⁸⁴ Interestingly, he also suggests that the persecutors are motivated by the devil in Japan as they are in England, and have been throughout time, which places the Kirishitans and English Catholics in a timeless battle between good and evil, light and dark.⁸⁵ Thus, as much as they promote Global Catholic fellowship in the English context, they also serve to reinforce the divisions between Catholics and other denominations.

⁸¹ For a good overview of the Reformation see D. MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London, 2003) and E. Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford, 2012); for its impact on England see E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (London, 2005).

⁸² *Relation*, 5-6.

⁸³ *Relation*, 7-9.

⁸⁴ Gregory, *Salvation*, 342-5 and n81.

⁸⁵ *Relation*, 12-17.

The Kirishitan martyrs are also employed as part of the English confessional rhetoric to prove they were on the side of 'light' and 'truth'. For example Wright suggests that the Kirishitan martyrs are a weapon sent to defeat the heretical Protestants or the 'darkness of heresy':

'This light of religion to the splendour of her shining victories improved, she sends thee back, to drive away the darknesse of heresy, that overshads some parte of thy dominions, to discover the blasphemy of their conceit, who think thy religion idolatrous, and to open their eyes, that by the light of new triuphes they may discern who be the heires of *Ancient Truth*'⁸⁶

Clearly the 'heires of ancient truth' are interpreted as the Catholic Church in this context, and there is an air of divine providence in Wright's interpretation of the Kirishitans martyrs; as if it were destined that they would become part of the arsenal against Protestantism in England. Sale similarly sets the Kirishitans in broader Christian history as the renewal of ancient Christian martyrdoms: 'where by the peerlesse lustre of primitiue Martyrdome is renewed in these days, to shew the neuer decaying merit of the pretious Immaculate Blood, in whose shining candour all Martyrs, auncient and recent made white their Triumphall Robes'.⁸⁷ He also links them with the earlier sacrifices of Laurence, Andrew, Bartholomew, Ignatius, Lazarus and Adauctus.⁸⁸ This sense of continuity was a common feature of records of martyrdoms by other confessions too, as a means of legitimising their identities.⁸⁹ This exemplifies the act of martyrdom as an ancient vessel of victory, stemming from the martyrdom of Jesus Christ and his first apostles which led to the founding of the Church. Wright and Sale hope that the Kirishitan martyrs will have the same effect as the first martyrs, by revealing the true faith and helping those lost in the darkness 'of their conceit ... open their eyes.'

⁸⁶ *Palme*, 4.

⁸⁷ *Palme*, 3.

⁸⁸ *Palme*, 5-7.

⁸⁹ See Gregory, *Salvation*, 119-24.

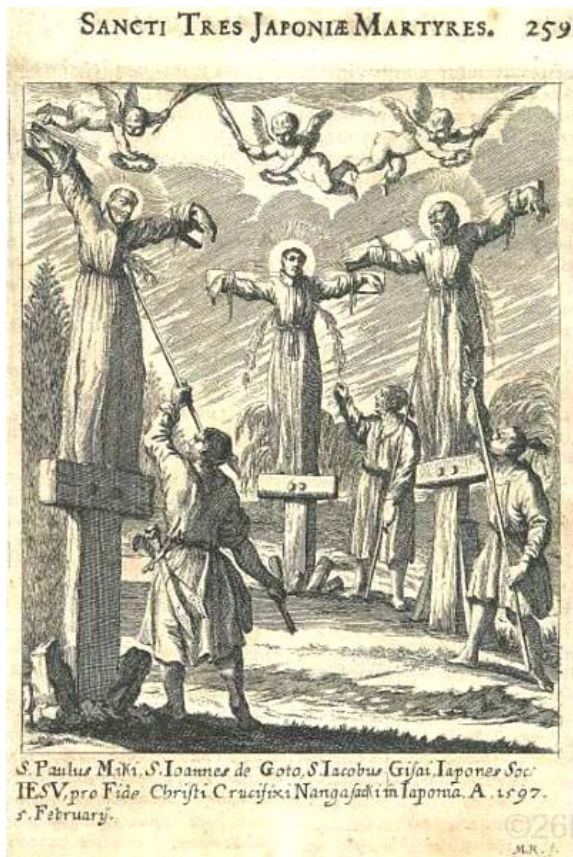


Figure 5: Melchior Küsel, 'S. Paulus Miki...' in: *Societas*, 259. © 26 Martyrs Museum, Nagasaki.

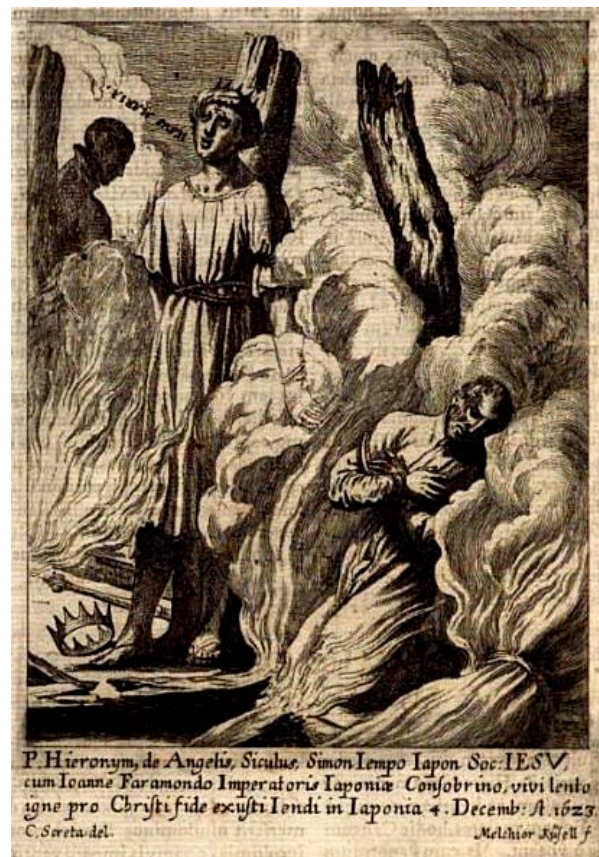


Figure 6: Melchior Küsel, 'P. Hieronymus, de Angelis...' in: *Societas*, 310.

The commemoration of Kirishitans also reveals divisions within Catholicism. Figure 1's depiction of the Franciscans and omission of the three Jesuit martyrs is a good example. The Jesuits, however, do the same – as illustrated in Figures 5 and 6 from Mathias Tanner's Jesuit martyrology. Figure 5 depicts the three Jesuit martyrs of the twenty-six martyrs of Nagasaki; note the cherubs adorning the Jesuits with the crown of martyrdom. Figure 6 similarly illustrates Jerome de Angelis, Simon Enpo and John Hara Mondo-no-suke Tanenobu, whilst omitting Franciscan Father Francis Galvez. This is probably a result of rivalry between the Portuguese-sponsored Jesuit and Spanish-supported Franciscan orders.⁹⁰ The Jesuits were the first missionaries to reach Japan, and they had a fraught relationship with the Franciscans since they began to arrival in 1593. Their tendency to openly flout the anti-Christian edicts

⁹⁰ The competition was religious and commercial, see n3.

worsened the relationship with the Japanese hierarchy and was a particular source of tension with the Jesuits. For example, in a letter Fróis emphasises that it was the Franciscans that had been targeted for persecution and not the Jesuits; he even states this was God's providence.⁹¹ Paul Miki is also reported to have complained about the inadequacy of Franciscan spiritual services, like confession.⁹² With this in mind, it is unsurprising that the orders favour their respective members. There is also a practical factor, not dissimilar to the veneration of local saints. Martyrs with whom you have a special relationship either by geography, community or order were seen as more likely to intercede on your behalf after death. Therefore for an order to pay special attention to their martyrs has a spiritual logic alongside a competitive one.

By contrast, the reception of the Kirishitans in the travel literatures is entirely different. Not only is the situation dealt with far more briefly, but the focus is often on the violent nature of the persecution rather than on the martyrs. Manley relays Caron's account of nameless women being dragged naked through the streets, tortured 'with snakes and adders' and families being induced to harm each other.⁹³ Phillips emphasises the treatment of children in a similar manner.⁹⁴ All accounts tend to stress the escalation of government policy from the late 1620s, when the objective changed – advanced by the two bugyō Kawachi and Takenaka – from executions (and the creation of martyrs) to the use of torture to induce apostasy.⁹⁵ Manley conveys Caron's assessment of the innovative and relentless nature of these tortures in his discussion of 'the pit' or *ana-tsurushi*.⁹⁶ Caron's considerable tenure in Japan and his

⁹¹ HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'glorious death' 76-83, 85, 97.

⁹² HL: MS Japan 3-3.1, 'glorious death' 114.

⁹³ *Kingdoms*, 66-8; similar points in *Atlas*, 267.

⁹⁴ *Collection*, 12.

⁹⁵ For definition of 'bugyō' see glossary in Appendix A; See Appendix C for visual depictions of methods of execution and torture; *Atlas*, 261-7; *Kingdoms*, 66-9.

⁹⁶ For a description of this torture and supporting image analysis see Appendix C.

accurate description of the pit mean it is probable that he had met Christians that had undergone this torture:

‘at last they found a more hellish and exquisite way of torturing them than before ... the greatness of this torment surpasseth all other, being beyond all humanie strength to suffer and be undergone, but by such who are extraordinarilie strengthened from above ... some of them who had hung two or three daies, assured me the pains they endured were wholly unsufferable, no fire nor no torture equalling their languor and violence.’⁹⁷

Similarly, Ogilby’s rendition focuses on the horrors of the sulphur hot springs of Mount Unzen, where Christians were taken to be tortured until they apostatised.⁹⁸ The reason why the methods of execution were discussed in more detail than the martyrs is because in the travel literature it is Japanese culture, customs and the indigenous peoples that are of primary interest. Thus the treatment of the Kirishitans tends to link back to broader assessments of the

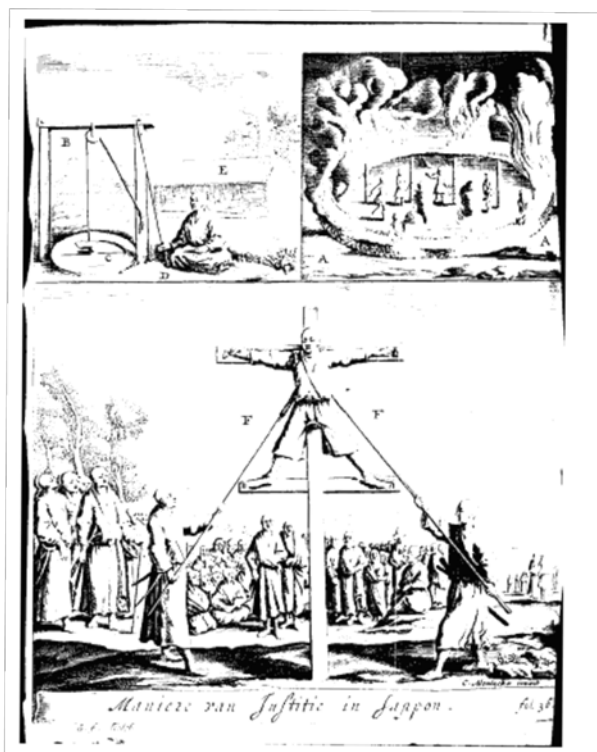


Figure 7: Caron, ‘The Persecution of the Christians’ in: *Kingdoms*, 66-7.



Figure 8: Melchior Küsel ‘Nicholas Koyar Fucunaga...’ in *Societas*, 346.
© 26 Martyrs Museum, Nagasaki.

⁹⁷ *Kingdoms*, 68.

⁹⁸ See Appendix C for an explanation of this torture; *Atlas*, 263-7.

persecutors: ‘There is no Nation under Heaven that fears Death less than this, or that is more inclin’d to cruelty.’⁹⁹ Manley likewise categorises them as ‘cruel Idolaters’ in his translation.¹⁰⁰

The contrast between the two perspectives is exemplified by the illustrations which accompany the works. In Manley’s translation an illustration (Figure 7) of the methods of execution and torture – burning alive, crucifixion and the pit – is included; one of only four in the text. It does not portray an actual martyrdom and is more like a diagram to aid the understanding of the reader. This would have been especially helpful in the case of the pit, which was a novelty confined to Japan. By contrast Figure 8, from Tanner’s Jesuit martyrology, has a patent devotional underpinning, with the presence of angels supporting martyr Nicholas Fukunaga Keian (1570-1633). The traditional role of angels as messengers also suggests that the angel was not only helping Nicholas through his torment but was also enabling him to spread the Gospel by testifying its truth with his endurance. Tanner’s text records Jesuit martyrs across the world; therefore his emphasis on their mission would naturally have a strong religious message – in this case invoking divine support – to emphasise it.¹⁰¹

Yet there is consensus amongst all the writers that the Kirishitan martyrs were significant. The title of this dissertation, ‘The Palme of Christian Fortitude’, is taken from Edmund Sale’s translation of the 1623-4 Annual Letter, which embodies this view of the victorious Kirishitan martyrs. He writes: ‘In their deaths they blaze forth rare, divine and miraculous examples of heroicall fortitude’.¹⁰² William Wright, in a similar vein, states that ‘[their] extraordinary feruour are rather to be admired of all’, and ‘they for theyr valour and

⁹⁹ *Collections*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Kingdoms*, 66.

¹⁰¹ It was also translated into German and therefore potentially accessible to lay Christians as well as Jesuits.

¹⁰² *Palme*, 3.

constancy in Gods cause be famous in all those partes of the world, yea, and in Europe also'.¹⁰³ The travel authors recognise, although not as comprehensively, that the constancy of the martyrs was worthy of acknowledgement. Ogilby mildly observes: 'we may judge the Japan martyrs to be very zealous and constant'¹⁰⁴ and Phillips affirms: 'the Japonners are the most ingenious in the cruelty of any people in the World, and the most constant in suffering.'¹⁰⁵ They still evaluate the significance of the martyrs in different ways. For Sale and Wright, the value of the Kirishitans was in their good example, and the broader meaning which their sacrifice had in the context of the Catholic persecution and renewal in Europe. In the travel literatures, although the martyrs are understood to have endured horrific suffering, they remain almost incidental to what they might indicate about Japanese politics and culture.

¹⁰³ *Palme*, 12, 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Atlas*, 262.

¹⁰⁵ *Collections*, 12.

CONCLUSION



Figure 9: 26 Martyrs Monument and Shrine © 26 Martyrs Museum, Nagasaki.

On 26th February 1981 Pope John Paul II visited the 26 Martyrs Monument, Shrine and Museum on Nishizaka Hill (Figure 8), now often referred to as Martyrs' Hill. He told the assembled pilgrims of his gratitude to God for the Kirishitan martyrs:

‘In this holy place, people of all walks of life gave proof that love is stronger than death. They embodied the essence of the Christian message, the spirit of the Beatitudes, so that all who look up to them may be inspired to let their lives be shaped by unselfish love of God and love of neighbor.’¹⁰⁶

In his message Pope John Paul reiterated the enduring role of the Kirishitan martyrs as champions of the faith and upholders of Christian principles, and emphasised the significance of their testament ‘to the power of the Cross’. This dissertation has shown that the same view was held across the globe over 350 years ago.

¹⁰⁶ ‘The Message of Pope John Paul II in Nagasaki (1981)’, *26 Martyrs Museum*, available: <http://www.26martyrs.com/> [Last accessed: 18/04/14]

Perhaps more significantly still, this study has found that they gained a specific meaning and significance beyond the shores of Japan. The Annual Letters and pamphlets contained expedient archetypal role models – individuals who resisted temptation, overcame horrific torture and execution, triumphed beyond their expected capabilities (as in the case of women and children), and endured suffering together. They were picked up by translators, who saw within their suffering a relevance to their own situation. In England, Edmund Sale and William Wright saw parallels between the infidel persecutors and the Protestants. They felt the Japanese Christians were similarly engaged in spiritual and physical warfare for the true faith and that their sacrifice renewed a battle fought since the dawn of Christianity. In their story the English Catholics found comfort, a sense of fellowship and a greater confidence in their own faith. This shows that the importance attached to martyrdom is not simply the act of sacrifice itself, but depends upon the way in which others interpret it. This is exemplified in the travel literatures, where the violence and its implications for Japanese culture were of primary interest, rather than the religious sacrifice.

The Kirishitan martyrs demonstrate that the story of early modern martyrdom extends beyond the European context. This dissertation is but one small step towards rectifying the relative neglect of non-European martyrs in the historiography. The potential for the Japanese context in particular is vast. Brad Gregory estimates that the number of Christians (including Catholics, Protestants and Anabaptists) executed in Western Europe during the sixteenth century totals about 5,000.¹⁰⁷ In Japan, Boxer suggests that a maximum figure would indicate between 5,000 and 6,000, despite the fact that most estimates fall between 2,000 and 4,000.¹⁰⁸ Although it might be a stretch to suggest that the scale of persecution in Japan in just over fifty years bests that in all of Western Europe combined over an entire century, the

¹⁰⁷ Gregory, *Salvation*, 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Century*, 360-1, 496; verifiable records exist for about 2,128 between 1614-1650 but yearly averages suggest the figure is substantially larger than this.

body count is not incomparable. In the particularly brutal year 1631, 316 Christians were martyred in Japan, which is more than the 300 English Catholics executed in total between 1523 and 1565.¹⁰⁹ At the very least, we are dealing with a context which was particularly hostile to Christians, even in a time that is notorious for its persecution. On the ordeals of the Japanese martyrs Boxer asserts: ‘virtually everything in this catalogue of horrors could have been paralleled in contemporary Europe.’¹¹⁰ This is an assessment that deserves further testing, especially in light of the prominence and quantity of women and children martyred in Japan.

Arguably, the stories of the Kirishitan martyrs should also be viewed as part of the cultural exchange that marked the period of ‘the Christian Century’. The Kirishitans adopted Christianity as their own faith through contact with European missionaries, and then died for it in significant numbers. In turn, the missionaries recorded their stories and sent them across the world, which enabled others to be inspired and led by their example. Until this dissertation, only the first half of this process has been examined with martyrs in mind. This global cross-cultural fertilisation is immensely important and it is hoped that this will inform future studies of early modern martyrdom. It is also interesting to reflect that, in this episode, Christianity enabled peoples from across the world to connect in a very immediate way, transcending barriers of custom, ethnicity and language.

Further discoveries in this vein still await the historian. Unlike its sister field of European early modern martyrs, international martyrs lack a systematic comparative study such as that conducted by Brad Gregory. Within the accounts there is also plenty of fruitful material, detailed coverage of which was not possible in this dissertation due to time and other restrictions. This study only touched the tip of the iceberg in terms of Annual Letters, images,

¹⁰⁹ Gregory, *Salvation*, 6; Boxer, *Century*, 448.

¹¹⁰ *Century*, 347.

printed books and pamphlets available, which makes its conclusions necessarily limited. A larger project could facilitate broader assessments including studies of change over time, particularly in the portrayal of the martyrs and the persecution after the introduction of tortures in the late 1620s. The confessional representation of martyrs also deserves further examination. Ultimately, it is impossible to know whether the martyrs did achieve the eternal life they anticipated when they sacrificed their lives; but what we can say for certain is that because of some meticulous records, in the dramatic act of martyrdom itself they achieved a form of immortality that endures to the present day.

APPENDIX A: NOTE ON STANDARDISATION AND GLOSSARY

Names and places have been standardised to facilitate consistency throughout the dissertation and to allow the reader an easier path to additional information if they would like to pursue further study of any individuals or places. For instance, ‘Nagasaki’ has been standardised from ‘Nangasachi’ or ‘Nangasacki’ as named in a variety of versions in the European sources. Equally names have been changed to forms more widely used in the historiography, such as martyr Hierome de Angelis (as spelt in the Annual Jesuit Letter of 1623/4) becoming Jerome de Angelis, for quicker and more efficient reference. Where martyrs are more obscure, and a common record could not be found (as in the case of like Leon Quita Quinzayemon), I have used the name they were given in the source.

GLOSSARY

bakufu (also translated as Shogunate)	The military dictatorship which ruled Japan during the early modern period. Often translated ‘tent’ or ‘curtain’ government because of the shogun’s military role.
bugyō	A commissioner, magistrate or governor.
daimyo	Territorial lord of Japan, usually only subordinate to the shogun.
gentile	In the Annual Letters this tends to refer to non-Christians or unbelievers rather than non-Jews.
Kirishitan	Derived from Portuguese <i>crístao</i> , referred to Roman Catholic Christians in Japan during the Christian Century 1549-1650.
shogun	A military governor or general, head of the Bakufu; held by a warrior family, applies to the period 1192-1867.
martyr	In this dissertation ‘martyr’ refers to any Christian labelled as such in the accounts or any individual that was executed because they were a Christian. They had to remain Christians until death and not recant, regardless of torture or other conditions, in order to qualify. It is worth noting that early modern martyrdom often had very different connotations from modern notions, i.e. they would not qualify as martyrs if they died in battle or committed acts of violence against others. For example, those Christians who died in the Shimabara rebellion 1637-38 were not considered martyrs.

APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGY

August 1549: First three Christian missionaries, including Francis Xavier, arrive in Japan

1585: Toyotomi Hideyoshi 'the dictator' orders the Edict of Taiko which demands the expulsion of missionaries

1593: Franciscan missionaries begin to arrive in Japan

1596: *San Felipe* Incident

1597: 26 Christians executed by crucifixion on a Nagasaki hilltop

1598: Churches destroyed in Arima, Omura and Hirado; Death of Hideyoshi

1602: Augustinian and Dominican orders begin to arrive in Japan

1608: The *Madre de Deus* Affair

1612: Decree prohibiting Christianity; Franciscan church in Edo destroyed; the daimyo of Arima (famous protectors of the Jesuits) caught in a bribery scandal and executed

7th October 1613: 3 Arima Samurai and their families martyred at the stake

1614: Edict of Ieyasu expelling the missionaries; beginning of general persecution; 71 Christians (mostly of nobility) were banished from central Japan and exiled to the North

1616: Death of Ieyasu; Hidetada issues a new Edict making offering aid to foreign missionaries punishable by death

April 1617: A Jesuit and a Franciscan beheaded in Omura; an Augustinian and a Dominican executed in the same way a few weeks later

1619: Great Kyoto Martyrdom, 52 burnt at the stake

1622: The Great Martyrdom of Nagasaki, 25 Kirishitans burnt alive and 30 more beheaded; 60 more executed around the same time in the surrounding area

23rd August 1623: Hidetada retires from Shogunate and his son Iemitsu is appointed as his successor by the Emperor

4th December 1623: 50 Kirishitans burnt alive in Edo (Tokyo) under Iemitsu's orders

22nd February 1624: The Great Martyrdom of Sendai, 7 Christians executed by freezing

10th June 1624: 16 more burnt to death on the outskirts of Edo after 6 months of incarceration

1627-8: 40 Christians tortured and killed in the hot sulphur springs of Mount Unzen, Shimabara

1632: Great Genna Martyrdom in Nagasaki, 55 martyred

October 1633: Jesuit Provincial Padre Christovao Ferreira apostatises after 6 hours of the pit

Late 1637: Shimabara insurrection begins

12th April 1638: Shimabara rebel stronghold overrun by Government forces; 37,000 massacred

1637-8: 20 converts arrested and executed in Bungo

1638: Pedro Kasai (Jesuit) martyred in the pit, Martino Ichizaemon Shikimi (Jesuit) and Giovanni-Battista Porro (Jesuit) allegedly apostatised and die in prison; Japanese decree forbidding Portuguese commercial enterprise and banning the arrival of more missionaries; all to be expelled

1639: Decree enforced; Last case of execution by burning alive, direct order of Shogun

1640: Special office set up for the purpose of prosecuting Kirishitans; 70 Christians hung upside down in the sea at Suzugamori execution site, Edo

1642: Five Jesuits arrested and all five were martyred, either executed in Nagasaki or died in the prison of Omura

Summer 1643: Four Jesuit padres, one Irman and five servants led by Pedro Marques were arrested; all declared apostasy and only one later died in prison after revoking it

1657: Plans for a Christian insurrection unearthed at Kori near Omura (the 'Kori Debacle'); 600 people arrested and 400 beheaded; Inquisition Chief Inouye retires

1792: Inquisition Office closes

Compiled from: Anesaki, 'Psychological Observations', 13-20; Anesaki, 'Prosecution', 293-4; Hagemann, 'The Persecution of the Christians' 151-160; Drummond, Christianity, 83-6; Moffett, *Christianity in Asia*, 87; Cieslik 'The Great Martyrdom in Edo' 4; Dougill, *Hidden Christians*, timeline.

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL IMAGES

The increasing ferocity of the tortures and executions attracted interest in the records. The purpose of illustrating of them extends beyond an interest in the macabre; describing and depicting them would help readers visualise and understand the situation for Christians in Japan, which gives them an educational as well as devotional value. This is especially true of the travel literatures which depict executions, as we saw in the Caron's illustration. They tend to be compilations (see Figure C), or more akin to diagrams. The best images (in terms of detail and accuracy) tend to emerge from martyrologies. Most of those included here are engraved illustrations from Mathias Tanner's *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem ...* (Prague, 1675). Their purpose was most likely to be devotional contemplation as they help to focus the mind and aid visualisation of the scene.

BURNING AT THE STAKE



Figure A: Melchior Küsel 'Leonardus Kimura ...' in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem ...* 282.

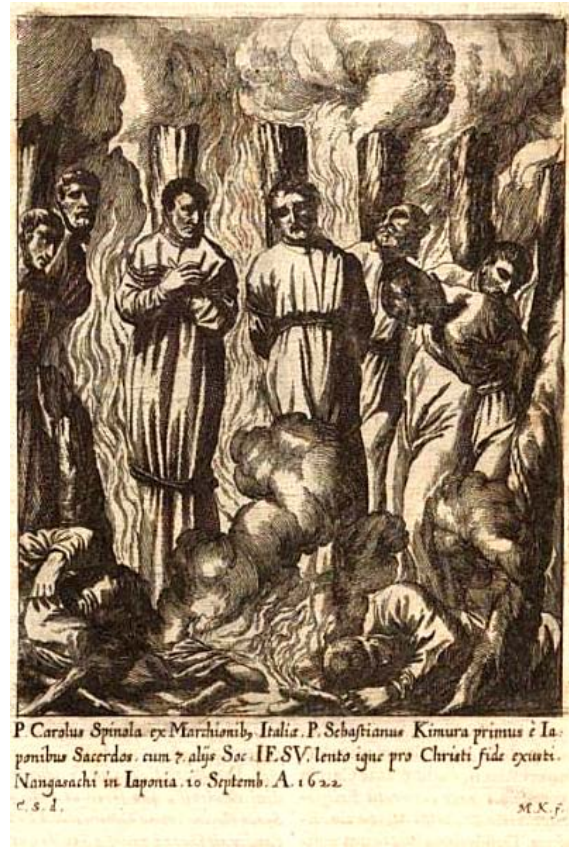


Figure B: Melchior Küsel 'P. Carolus Spinola ...' in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem ...* 290.

Alongside beheading, burning at the stake was amongst the most frequently used methods of execution for Christians, depicted above in Figures A and B. This would have been familiar to Europeans as it was also used for the executions of Christians during the Reformation.

Figure A accurately shows a common Japanese practice of placing the faggots a few feet away in order to prolong the execution; some Christians burned for several hours before finally dying.

MOUNT UNZEN



Figure C: Anon. 'The boyling water of Singock' in: Montanus, *Atlas Japannensis*, 266-7.

The torture of Mount Unzen (sulphur hot springs, located in Shimbara, Nagasaki), depicted in Figure C¹¹¹, was an innovation that emerged in the late 1620s and was designed to force Christians to apostatise. Often it involved incisions being made into the flesh, into which boiling water was poured. If this did not have the desired effect, the victim could be suspended or thrown into the springs as can be seen in Montanus' illustration. When the victim was in danger of dying, a doctor was allowed to intervene until the Christian was well enough to be tortured again. It was relatively successful, alongside other tortures (like branding and cutting off limbs), 370 of 400 Christians were forced to recant, released and sent to Nagasaki.¹¹² The torture fell out of use however when five missionaries and two Macaonese women were tortured for a whole month in December 1631 without recanting.¹¹³

¹¹¹ The illustration refers to the springs as 'Singock', of which I have been unable to find a reference. It seems probable that this title is a mistake, or an older name now fallen out of use. Mount Unzen is the most frequently referenced location of this torture, so I have allocated the image under this title.

¹¹² Boxer, *Century*, 351-3

¹¹³ Boxer, *Century*, 353

Figure C also depicts the torture of the pit (bottom left corner), crucifixion (visible on the hill) and burning churches (top right), so it is a compilation illustration rather than a record of a particular martyrdom as in case of Figures A and B.

THE PIT (ana-tsurushi)

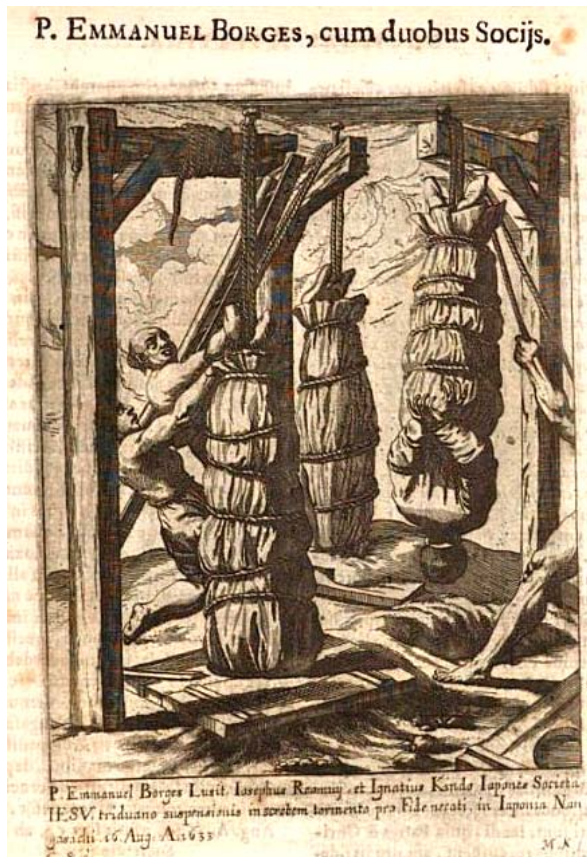


Figure D: Melchior Küsel 'P. Emmanuel Borges ...' in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem ...* 349.



Figure E: Melchior Küsel 'P. Didacus Iuki ...' in: Tanner, *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem ...* 382 © 26 Martyrs Museum, Nagasaki.

As shown in Figures D and E, the pit involved being hung upside down from a scaffold (normally with a small incision on the forehead) into a pit of excrement. The victim was tightly bound around the body excluding one arm so they could indicate apostasy.¹¹⁴ It was not in regular use until after 1633 when it successfully induced the apostasy of veteran Jesuit Provincial Christovao Ferreira (c.1580-c.1652) in October 1633.¹¹⁵ It became one of the most infamous tortures the persecutors inflicted and it was exclusively reserved for Christians. The utilisation of the pit was part of a broader change of government policy emerging the late 1620s; officials were encouraged to create apostates, rather than martyrs, by torturing rather than executing the Christians. It was very successful.

¹¹⁴ Boxer, *Century*, 353.

¹¹⁵ His apostasy was a shock to the Catholic world whose records were dominated by triumphant martyrs, on his case see: H. Cieslik. 'The Case of Christovao Ferreira', *MN*, Vol. 29, No.1 (1974) 1-54.

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MARTYRS AND PERSECUTORS

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but rather an accessible summary of those included in the dissertation. On the persecutors it also provides some useful background information.

MARTYRS

Anthony (ca.1584-1597), crucified in Nagasaki

Catherine (ca.1576-1624), beheaded in Hirado

Luis Cabrera Sotelo (1574-1624), burnt alive in Omura

Diego Carvalho, (ca. 1578-1624), froze to death in a lake in Sendai

Francis Galvez (1574/5-1623), burnt alive in Edo

Francis Toyama Jintaro (1600-1624), beheaded in Hiroshima

Jerome de Angelis, (1568-1623), burnt alive in Edo

John Hara Mondo-no-suke Tanenobu (d. 1623), burnt alive in Edo

Leon Quita Quinzayemon (ca.1562-1612) stabbed in Arima

Lewis Minami (1596-1603), crucified in Yatsushiro

Louis Ibaraki (ca.1585-1597), crucified in Nagasaki

Magdalena Minami (ca. 1560-1603), crucified in Yatsushiro

Mary Iagea (d.1623), beheaded or burnt alive in Edo

Nicholas Fukunaga Keian (1570-1633), died in the pit in Nagasaki

Paul Miki, (1565-1597), crucified in Nagasaki

Simon Enpo, (ca.1580-1623), burnt alive in Edo

Tom Kozaki (ca.1583-1597), crucified in Nagasaki

Visula (d.1624), beheaded in Hirado

Compiled from primary source accounts and various secondary works (see bibliography or references accompanying martyrs in main text), some names and dates gathered from online martyrology at the *Hagiography Circle*, see ‘Martyrs of Japan 1597-1637’, available: <http://newsaints.faithweb.com/martyrs/Japan02.htm> [accessed: 22/04/2014]

PERSECUTORS

Both the Annual Letters and travel literatures highlight that the appetite for persecution began with the shoguns.¹¹⁶ It is also emphasised that the Japanese daimyo only persecuted Christians under pressure from the shogun or to gain his favour.¹¹⁷ Several factors influenced their determination to persecute, including catalyst events like the *San Felipe* incident and *Madre de Deus* Affair, the rebellion and execution of the Christian daimyos and corresponding factors like the decline of Japan's reliance on foreign trade and the growing influence of Dutch and English traders and their hostility towards Catholicism.¹¹⁸ There was also an enduring and growing paranoia that the missionaries were precursors to conquest.

Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1537-1598) was appointed regent after the assassination of his predecessor Nobunaga Oda (1534-1582) and ruled until his death. He was the first to issue an edict against the Kirishitans (Edict of Taiko) which began a general persecution 1587-97. It mostly went unenforced because of the protection the Christian daimyo provided, and was not escalated so that commercial ties would not be damaged. However, it did result in the shocking mass martyrdom of the twenty-six at Nagasaki in 1597.

Ieyasu Tokugawa (1543-1616): assumed the title of Shogun in 1603 and ruled until his death. His dynasty (Tokugawa) was amongst the most successful in terms of duration (over 250 years) and ended with the rise of the Imperial Government in 1867. His edict on 27th January 1614 signalled the beginning of a systematic national policy of persecution by banning Christian missionaries from Japan. During this period, several significant Christian daimyo were also executed which diminished the protection the Kirishitans had previously enjoyed.

Hidetada Tokugawa (1579-1632): furthered his Father's policy with a new edict in autumn 1616 prohibiting Christianity under penalty of death, as well as any men, women or children aiding foreign missionaries.¹¹⁹ Between 1616 and 1623, there were spikes in executions every few years.

Iemitsu Tokugawa (1603-1651): Described by Boxer as 'the neurotic megalomaniac', he succeeded to shogun in 1623.¹²⁰ He pursued a policy of annihilation against the Kirishitans and it is during his rule that mass martyrdoms become a regular phenomenon as well as the development of innovative tortures.

¹¹⁶ *Palme*, 28; *Collection*, 12, 3.

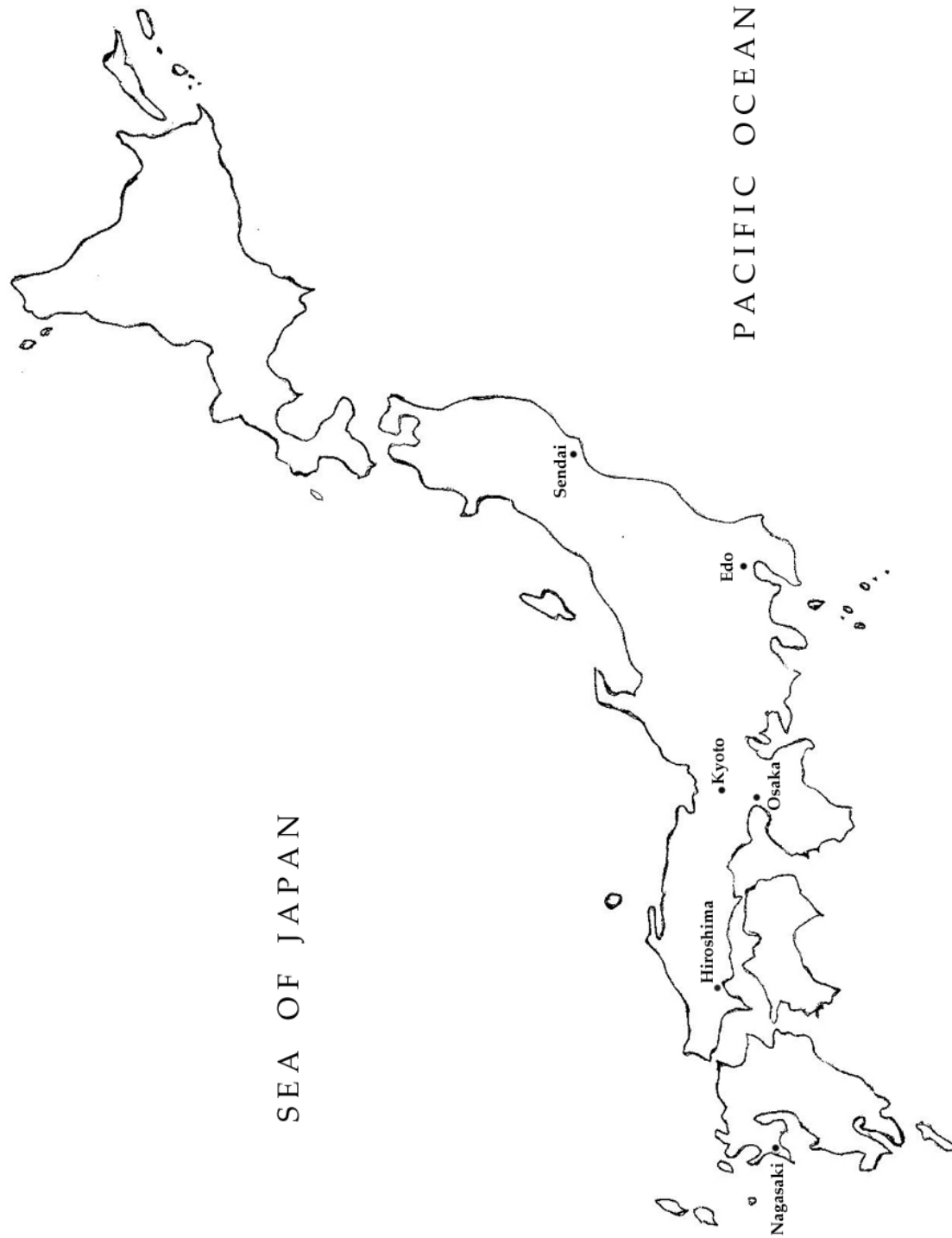
¹¹⁷ *Palme*, 2, 3-4, 32, 54, 86, 131, 156, 157; *Relation*, 76-7.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the relative importance of these factors, see Boxer, *Christian Century*, 308-16, Ross, *Vision*, 93-9 and Fujita, *Encounter*, 147-61; for emphasis on rivalry see Drummond, *Christianity in Japan*, 83-5; for the political situation, Steichen's *Christian Daimyos*, 279 and J. W. Hall, (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 4 Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 1991) 301-72.

¹¹⁹ Jennes, *A History*, 130; Drummond, *Christianity in Japan*, 98-9

¹²⁰ Boxer, *Christian Century*, 346.

APPENDIX E: MAP 1



Locations of martyrdoms mentioned in dissertation (across Japan)

APPENDIX E: MAP 2



Locations of martyrdoms mentioned in dissertation (South Japan)

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