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Journey to the West

What is often called the first Japanese embassy to Europe was actually a publicity stunt conceived in 1582 by Alexandro Valignano, the inspector of the Portuguese-sponsored Asian missions of the Society of Jesus. Four teenagers from Kyushu were paraded through Portugal, Spain, and Italy—performers and audience at the same time in a theatrical production designed to display the capabilities of the Japanese before influential circles of Catholic Europe while imbuing the Japanese with the idea of the superiority of European civilization under the aegis of the Catholic Church.

After returning to their native country in 1590, all four joined the Jesuit order. Three served the cause of Christianity faithfully. The fourth, Miguel Chijiwa, apostatized and derided all that he had been taught to hold sacred. He is the narrator of the scurrilous piece of anti-Christian fiction *Kirishitan kanagaki*, a fantasy novel *avant-la-lettre* that deserves much greater attention than it has received. Its multifaceted deployment of European legendary materials makes it a challenge to students of comparative culture.

KEYWORDS: Miguel Chijiwa — Mancio Itō — Martinho Hara — Julião Nakaura — Alexandro Valignano — “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors” — *Kirishitan kanagaki*

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ON A June day in 1585, an exotic group paid the Umbrian hill town of Montefalco a visit. What was billed as a Japanese embassy was passing through. Four teenage boys from Kyushu were the stars of this traveling show—Mancio Itō, cast in the role of the ambassador of the King of Bungo; Miguel Chijiwa, assigned the part of the envoy of the King of Arima and the Prince of Ōmura; and Martinho Hara and Julião Nakaura, featured as the noble companions of the other two. Members of the Society of Jesus, acting in the indispensable capacity of the youths' mentors and chaperons, accompanied them. An account of these country boys' journey to the West and back to Asia, composed some years later in the form of an elaborate colloquy among them and two of their Japanese Christian friends (actually, it is not much of a colloquy, as the dialogue is dominated by long speeches scripted for Miguel Chijiwa), sums up the object of this brief visit as follows:¹

We passed through a town called Montefalco, where we were gladdened extraordinarily by the sight of the sacred cadaver of...Saint Clare, who bears a cognomen derived from the name of that town. Not only is her venerable cadaver uncorrupted and intact to the present day, but her heart is marked by the images of Christ crucified and other mysteries. Moreover, in her heart were found three globes, similar in the highest degree to one another, which are endowed with a supernatural property, so that the weight of all three together is exactly the same as that of each by itself, and there is no difference whether you place one of them on one dish of a balance and two on the other or, then again, put all together in the same dish. In this we perceived the manifest sign of the most holy Trinity, each person of which singly, no less than the three persons jointly, is replete with the same nature, power, and majesty. This supreme mystery of our faith is what this Saint (*Diva haec*) revered above all in her soul.

Clare of Montefalco (1268–1308) was not yet a saint, properly speaking, at the time of the Japanese youths' call at her shrine, as her case for canonization, formally initiated the year after her death, failed for obscure reasons to make progress and was not to be brought to a successful conclusion until 1881. She was, however, the object of a substantial local and regional cult. As a child, she had entered a religious community headed by her sister, whom she would eventually succeed as abbess. Her life in the convent was not circumscribed, however, by

1. *De missione* 1590, colloquy 26, 285. As the Portuguese translation may be more accessible, references will be given to it as well: *Diálogo* 1997, 257.

the routine practice of monastic virtues. Clare was known for her intense asceticism, her ecstatic mystical experiences, and the ardency of her identification with the crucified Christ. But she was a mystic with active social concerns—a cloistered nun who mingled with the diseased, disadvantaged, and downtrodden. Having associated herself inwardly with Christ suffering and dying on the cross for humankind, she became an outward example of Christian love and charity toward others, especially the poor and the sick (MENESTÒ 1996, 115–19). She “devotedly kissed the hands of leprosy women when they came to the monastery, cleaned their afflicted parts, with her own hands gave them to eat, and gave them clothing and other alms.”² Miraculous cures were attributed to her during her lifetime. Her extraordinary holiness earned her veneration even before her death.

Within days of her death, her sister nuns cut open her body in order to inspect it for visible signs of sanctity, in other words, to authenticate Clare as a saint. They remembered her asserting frequently that she bore the cross in her heart. They found that and more. In addition to the crucifix, which (in the words of a witness at the canonization proceedings) was formed “like a little human body,”³ Clare’s heart contained miniature representations of the instruments of Christ’s Passion: the three nails; the lance; the rod and sponge; the scourge; the crown of thorns; and the pillar. All of these icons were formations of flesh. The nuns also discovered three gallstones of identical shape and equal weight, which were interpreted as a symbol of the Trinity. These were relics of a highly unusual type, having been generated within Clare’s body “like a fetus inside its mother” (PARK 2002, 116). They were excised in a manner suggesting a caesarean operation. In a fascinating essay titled “Relics of a Fertile Heart,” Katharine Park accentuates the gynaecological aspects of Clare’s story. While drawing attention to certain unusual physical features that attested Clare’s virginity, Park notes: “Though virgin, Clare was anything but barren” (PARK 2002, 126). She bore Christ in her heart in more than one sense.

As far as the citizens of Montefalco were concerned, Clare’s uncorrupted body, the vessel of profound religious mysteries, was a continuing miraculous presence in their lives. To their Japanese visitors it was surely no more than a passing impression on their journey. Having viewed the “sacred cadaver” and been duly edified, they moved on. They were on their way to Loreto, a celebrated place of pilgrimage whence they would proceed to Venice. Before they could cross the provincial border of Umbria into the Marches, they still had two or

2. MENESTÒ 1991, 12. Interrogatory article LXXXII in the canonization process held between September 1318 and July 1319; attested by three witnesses.

3. PARK 2002, 126, citing the testimony that Sister Iohanna of Montefalco gave in 1318; cf. the original in MENESTÒ 1991, 87. A picture of the cross-section of Clare’s heart, showing the images of the Passion imprinted on it, is found (reproduced from a *Vita* published in 1640) in MENESTÒ 1991, clxx–clxxi. A photograph of the relic of Christ Crucified excised from her heart follows on p. clxxii.

three towns of greater importance than Montefalco on their schedule—including Assisi, where they would reverence the remains of another, more famous Saint Clare. So their brief stop at Montefalco was incidental. What makes it important to this essay is the peculiar echo that it was to evoke two decades down the road in the life of Miguel Chijiwa.

What were the youths doing in Italy in the first place? They were on a mission for the Society of Jesus.

That mission was organized by Alexandro Valignano, an imaginative, creative, and forceful priest whom the General of the Society had in 1573 appointed visitor of its Indian Province. In effect, Valignano functioned as the Jesuit Order's inspector plenipotentiary in a vast area of mission activity that extended from Mozambique in East Africa to Miyako (Kyoto) in Japan, spanning the territories penetrated by Portuguese influence in Asia. He first came to Japan in July 1579 and stayed for two and a half years. The Jesuits' enterprise in that country was reinvigorated under his energetic guidance; indeed, it would not be too much to say that their entire approach to the Japanese people was transformed by his insistence on greater accommodation to indigenous manners and customs.

To be sure, when his shrewd political sense indicated firmness, not pliancy, Valignano did not hesitate to subject his Japanese hosts to pressures. The very manner of his arrival in Japan involved a political maneuver: He induced the captain of the Portuguese trade ship on which he was a passenger to steer for Kuchinotsu 口之津, a harbor in the domain of Arima Harunobu 有馬晴信. By then, the Portuguese already had a habitual port of call—Nagasaki, which was in the domain of Ōmura Sumitada 大村純忠 (Dom Bartolomeu, baptized in 1563). In short, by his manipulation of the voyage Valignano was sending a signal to both of these barons of Hizen 肥前 Province. Ōmura already was and Arima was about to become the Jesuits' client. Arima was at the time beleaguered by powerful enemies, whom he managed to fend off thanks to the military supplies that Valignano purchased for him from the Portuguese ship with a considerable outlay of Jesuit funds. The expenditure was repaid as Arima, eager to retain the good will of his foreign protectors, in March 1580 submitted to baptism, taking the name Protasio, and set about eradicating the Japanese religions from his territory. He made that territory solidly Christian, adding some twenty thousand souls to the roster of converts under the Jesuits' care.

The Christian mission's growth was substantial, its economic base shaky. It was solidified somewhat by Valignano's arranging for a regular investment to be made on the Jesuits' behalf in the highly profitable trade in Chinese silk carried on by Portuguese merchants plying the seas between Macao on the South China coast and Nagasaki. To safeguard the trade and the mission, Valignano acquired Nagasaki for the Society of Jesus. On 9 June 1580 Dom Bartolomeu Ōmura and his son Sancho (Ōmura Yoshiaki 喜前) signed over that port city and a satellite township called Mogi 茂木 "for always to the said Society and to its P^e Visitador."

Two weeks after receiving this conveyance of cession, Valignano ordered Nagasaki and Mogi to be fortified “for the welfare and preservation of Christianity” and equipped with artillery and other munitions “in a manner to withstand any attack” (ELISON 1991, 94–95 and 98). Intended above all to provide a stable and secure environment for the Jesuits, their Christians, and their friends, the foreign missionaries’ acquisition of this enclave on Japanese soil would, before the 1580s were over, prove to have been counterproductive. Of that, however, Valignano had no idea as he prepared to leave Nagasaki for Macao and points west in February 1582. He did not know that a regime change was about to occur in Japan. Christianity would suffer severe trials as a consequence, but that was something he could not predict.

In a true sense, the period of Valignano’s first stay in Japan represents the high point of the mission started by Francis Xavier three decades previously. The political climate appeared to be favorable to the expansion of the Christian faith. The Jesuits had established a solid presence in the heartland of Japan, the area of Kyoto, under the aegis of the seemingly omnipotent hegemon Oda Nobunaga, a harsh but urbane man who favored them, if for no other reason than because they shared his loathing for Buddhist militants. (In despite of his demoniacal qualities, they in turn praised him to the skies in their reports to Europe.) Their most fertile field, however, remained western Kyushu, where the number of Christians had grown by leaps and bounds in the preceding decade, especially after Dom Bartolomeu Ômura embarked on a policy of forced conversions in 1574. In Ômura, Arima, and the nearby, heavily Christianized Amakusa 天草 Islands, the missionaries had attained what amounted to a regional influence. Their presence was also felt in northeastern Kyushu, that is, in Bungo 豊後, the main province in the large but ramshackle realm of the Ôtomo 大友, one of the great families of the Japanese military aristocracy.

They could never count on the support of Ôtomo Yoshimune 義統, the current ruler of that realm, who became the daimyo in 1576 on the retirement of his father Yoshishige 義鎮 (better known as Ôtomo Sōrin 宗麟). Sōrin, however, had been sympathetic to the Catholic missionaries ever since Xavier’s visit to Bungo in 1551. At length, in 1578, he was baptized and took the Christian name Francisco. In their relations from Japan, the Jesuits heroized him as their very prop and stay. As they celebrated “King Francisco of Bungo,” however, they were not only begging the question whether the Ôtomo realm merited the designation of a kingdom but also ignoring the fact that even if he did retain a hand in affairs, Dom Francisco had formally ceased being a territorial ruler before he took that name. He was no longer the daimyo of Bungo.

In all, there were some 150,000 Christians in Japan at the time of Valignano’s departure, and about two hundred Catholic churches (SCHÜTTE 1968, 430 and 749). No fewer than eighty-five members of the Society of Jesus—thirty-three padres (priests) and fifty-two irmãos (brothers, that is, Jesuits who were not, or

not yet priests)—were actively engaged in mission tasks or were in training in that country; twenty-three of the irmãos were natives of Japan.⁴ Various Japanese auxiliary personnel brought the total of the mission staff to about five hundred (SCHÜTTE 1968, 379). Before Valignano's tour of inspection the Jesuits of Japan had lacked formal educational structures. That was no longer the case when he concluded his official visit and left. The schools called into being by him included a college, located in Usuki 臼杵 in Bungo, where Japanese language training was taking place; the novitiate of Funai 府内 (also in Bungo), where probationary candidates for the Jesuit priesthood were indoctrinated, for a time by Valignano himself, in the values that all sons of the Society, European and Japanese alike, were expected to share; and two seminaries, equivalent to middle schools and intended to nourish potential Japanese aspirants to membership in the Society, which were situated in Arima and in Oda Nobunaga's castle town, Azuchi 安土. These were truly remarkable institutional innovations, but they were very costly.

In a word, Valignano needed funds. He knew that he could not raise them in Japan itself, as even the most prominent Japanese Christian lords, far from being owners of full and open purses, were hard pressed to maintain themselves in an era of constant internecine warfare (VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 53, para. 24). Indeed, some of them were financial liabilities, counting as they did on the Jesuits for various forms of assistance. So Valignano would have to get the funds in Europe. In order to do so, he would have to attract the attention and the sympathy of the European mighty to Japan. He would have to persuade them of the value of the Jesuits' Japanese venture.

The Jesuits were not unappreciative of the virtues of publicity and far from inexperienced in its uses. The imaginatively written and widely published letters from the toilers in their outlandish mission fields had by then gained them an extensive readership and considerable celebrity in Europe. Valignano, however, projected an even more effective dimension of propaganda. He would go the printed word one better. He would arrange to send a "living epistle," *carta uiua*, to Europe from Japan (VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 53, para. 23).

Valignano's plan was to parade living examples of Jesuit success in the Christianization of Japan through Catholic Europe. He knew that a demonstration of influence attained among the Japanese ruling classes was an important if not indispensable part of the presentation of that image of success, and he fully intended to have his specimens subjected to inspection in the highest of European circles. For those reasons Valignano could scarcely pick converts from

4. See "Viceprovincia Japponica" (data as of February 1582) in "Catalogus informationum communium tam Patrum quam Fratrum Societatis Iesu Provinciae Indiae Orientalis," comp. December 1584, SCHÜTTE 1975, 152–75. Included in the number are three Jesuits assigned to accompany the mission to Europe: Padre Diego de Mesquita, the Spanish Irmão Juan Sánchez, and the Japanese Irmão Jorge de Loyola. Sánchez dropped out somewhere along the route.

among the “common” peasantry to make the journey. He needed exemplars of the “nobility,” meaning, in actual terms, of the arms-bearing provincial gentry, generally identified as samurai. Youth would have to be given preference, for its resiliency if nothing else, because the ocean voyage between Japan and Europe was long, arduous, perilous, and often fatal. Valignano is said to have made the decision to take a Japanese group with him to Europe suddenly, no more than a month before his departure from Nagasaki on 20 February 1582.⁵ Consequently, he was restricted to the domains of Christian lords close at hand in choosing whom to take along. In view of the distances involved, there was not enough time to look beyond Kyushu. The Kansai area would perforce not be represented.

But even within Kyushu itself there were evident difficulties of communication. According to Pero Ramón, a well-informed Jesuit priest who was at the time in question active in Bungo and knew Ōtomo Sōrin well, “King Francisco” had been given no intimation that a Japanese mission was about to sail for the other side of the world, let alone that an envoy accredited in his name was to be part of it.⁶ When he heard the news *ex post facto*, he asked Ramón bemusedly: “Why are these children being sent to Portugal?” Bemused or not, Ōtomo had no choice but to accept the *fait accompli*. In the propaganda with which the Jesuits massively overspread Europe, he was put forward as the ostensible embassy’s sponsor, along with Arima and Ōmura.

In Jesuit reports from Japan, the term *kuni* 国, that is, province, one of the sixty-odd major administrative subdivisions of the classical Japanese state, is customarily rendered “kingdom.” Having granted themselves this translator’s license, Jesuit publicists habitually awarded royal titles to rulers of domains of provincial size.⁷ The domain’s territorial extent was not the sole criterion used by them, as they also bestowed the title of king to lords who had little power but boasted high standing in the hierarchy of the traditional military regime of Japan. Certainly, the head of the Ōtomo family had the status of a grandee, and Bungo was a large domain by Japanese standards; nevertheless, as noted above, anointing Dom Francisco king was problematic. The royal crown that Dom

5. Pero Ramón SJ to General SJ, Ikitsuki 生月, 25 October 1587; *Kyūshū sankō* 1942, 66.

6. *Kyūshū sankō* 1942, 67. Ramón also affirms knowing for certain that Sōrin had nothing to do with the preparation of letters presented in his name to European personages. That would certainly appear to have been the case with the extant letter from “Furanshishiko” 不龍獅子虎 to the General of the Society of Jesus, written in Japanese and dated [Tenshō 天正 10]/1/11 (3 February 1582). It is a palpable forgery, as shown by two crude errors: An incorrect character appears in the family name of Sōrin’s presumed ambassador, Itō (written 伊藤, rather than how the family actually identified themselves, 伊東), and a cypher not used by Sōrin for years is made to serve as his signature. Text in *Dai Nippon shiryō* 1959, 318–19; photo and comment in MATSUDA 1999, 70–71.

7. It must be pointed out that they were aware of the difficulties inherent in their construct, admitting that “all Japan, which is divided into sixty-six kingdoms, would be comprehended into no more than three kingdoms of medium size, if the standard according to which European kingdoms are measured were applied.” *De missione* 1590, colloquy 8, 83; *Diálogo* 1997, 93.

Protasio Arima's head was made to bear in the publicity destined for Europe had even less substance, as his dominion, far from extending across all of Hizen Province, did not even reach across all of the Shimabara 島原 Peninsula, and his grasp on that small territory was far from secure. His grandfather Arima Haruzumi 晴純 had in 1539 been appointed military governor (*shugo* 守護) of Hizen by the Muromachi shogunate, and this titular distinction achieved by his ancestor may have been the underlying principle that justified making Dom Protasio a king, if only on paper. In the case of Dom Bartolomeu, the kingmakers restrained themselves, although they did elevate him to the dignity of a Prince of Ōmura. Surely that was high enough. These days, textbooks universally call Dom Bartolomeu the first of the Christian daimyo, but daimyo is a misnomer in his case.⁸ Ōmura Sumitada had neither the status nor the power to be considered a "great name." In contemporary terms, he was no more than a local baron (*kokujin* 国人) struggling to survive. He had been forced to swear allegiance to the aggressive daimyo of Saga 佐賀, Ryūzōji Takanobu 竜造寺隆信. He was not his own man.

Sent to Europe in these Kyushu lords' names were four pupils of the Arima seminary, each of them thirteen or at most fourteen years old at the time of departure.⁹ In theory, noble descent was a prerequisite for admission to the seminaries—the regulations drawn up by Valignano restricted entry to "noble and honored folk (*gente noble e honrrada*) who have access to the lord's chamber" (SCHÜTTE 1958, 484)—so it may be assumed that by one definition or another, all four were members of the elite. To be sure, according to Padre Pero Ramón, Ōtomo's fictive envoy Mancio Itō 伊東 [*sic*; not 伊藤] was a destitute, deserted, and despised orphan who had nothing more than the shirt on his back when Ramón took pity on him, clothed him, and gave him shelter in the Jesuit church at Funai (*Kyūshū sankō* 1949, 64). Itō, it is true, was a scion of the family that had dominated Hyūga 日向 Province until it was defeated in war and dispossessed from its domains in 1578; that is, he was the maternal grandson of a "king" of Hyūga. His relationship with the Ōtomo was, however, extremely

8. The house of Ōmura did not attain daimyo status until after Sumitada's death in May 1587. When Toyotomi Hideyoshi completed his conquest of Kyushu and redrew its political map in the summer of that year, he confirmed Yoshiaki, Sumitada's son, in the possession of the traditional Ōmura domains in the Sonogi 彼杵 region, integrating the house into the national regime and thereby putting it for the first time on a solid foundation. The Ōmura fortified their standing by service in Hideyoshi's war of aggression in Korea from 1592 to 1598 and were reconfirmed in their position by Tokugawa Ieyasu and his successors after 1600. Their fief was estimated to have the yearly productivity of 27,900 *koku* 石 of rice. The minimum required for daimyo status was 10,000 *koku*, leaving the Ōmura among the minor daimyo.

9. Judging from "Primer Catalogo de las Informaciones Communes de los Padres y Hermanos de la Compañia de Jesús de la dicha Provincia de Japón," signed by Valignano on 1 January 1593, where Itō, Chijiwa, and Nakaura figure as twenty-three years old, Hara as twenty-four. SCHÜTTE 1975, 317–19. There are discrepancies with subsequent catalogues, which make it appear that Nakaura was born in 1567, Hara most likely in 1568, and Itō in 1568 as well.

tenuous. To be precise, Mancio was the son of a sister of the husband of Sōrin's sister's daughter. Between him and "King Francisco" there were no ties of blood (MATSUDA 1999, 38–40).

As far as his bloodline was concerned, Miguel Chijiwa 千々石 was fully qualified to represent both Arima Harunobu and Ōmura Sumitada: He was Dom Protasio's cousin and Dom Bartolomeu's nephew. They were all direct descendants of the sometime *shugo* of Hizen, Arima Haruzumi, among whose sons were Harunobu's father Arima Yoshisada 義貞; Sumitada himself (adopted into the Ōmura family); and Miguel's father Naokazu 直員 (adopted into the Chijiwa family). Naokazu, the castellan of Fort Kamabuta 釜蓋 at Chijiwa in the western part of the Arima domain, was killed in battle in 1570, leaving Miguel an orphan (MATSUDA 1999, 46–47). According to *Shinsen shikeiroku* 新撰土系録, a Tokugawa-period genealogy of the retainers of the house of Ōmura, Miguel "for a certain reason came to Ōmura at the age of four, carried in the arms of his nurse" (ŌISHI 2005, 90). Could the reason for his being taken from Arima have been to safeguard him with his uncle or his other relatives? If so, it was not the last time he would seek refuge in Ōmura. In any event, nothing certain is known of Miguel's fortunes in the 1570s. His godfather was the Portuguese captain-major Dom Miguel da Gama; so he must have been baptized in the second half of 1580, when Gama's ship was in port (MATSUDA 1999, 65–66). Mancio Itō, too, was baptized in 1580.

Mancio and Miguel's understudies were both natives of Ōmura (MATSUDA 1999, 49–56). Martinho Hara 原 was born in Hasami 波佐見, a locality in the Higashi Sonogi 東彼杵 District of Hizen, to a family of arms-bearing gentry. His brother is said to have been the castellan of an important fort in the Ōmura domain, and his sister to have married into the Ōmura family. What other ties Martinho may have had with that family is unknown. The background of Julião Nakaura 中浦 is even more obscure; indeed, nothing is known of his family save that his father's name was Jinkurō or Jingorō. In the northwestern corner of the Nishi Sonogi 西彼杵 District of Hizen, there is a village called Nakaura. It lies on the Yobuko 呼子 Channel, which connects maritime regions that were notorious in the sixteenth century as breeding grounds of pirates. If that is where Julião's roots were, his family were most likely members of that ambiguous social group called *dogō* 土豪, a rural elite that both bore arms and participated in village life, erasing the borders between samurai and the farming populace. Perhaps they also bridged two other worlds, figuring among the leadership of a population that made its living not only off the land but, by whatever means, also on the sea.

"Youths of the highest descent, and of royal family" is how these four would be described by a Jesuit orator, Gaspar Gonçalves, in Rome. Having announced that they had come "to prostrate themselves at the feet of the Supreme Pontiff, not in order to seek friendship in their Kings' name as among equals...but to

offer obedience as that of subjects,” Padre Gonçalves took some time out to make sure that his grandiloquent discourse was festooned with enough historical analogies and biblical quotations. Satisfied that he had amply established his gravitas, he returned to his main theme, continuing his presentation before Pope Gregory XIII as follows: “You see here before you, most blessed Father, these royal youths, who bring you the mandate that they have received from their Kings, to whom they are joined by the closest ties of blood and of love.”¹⁰ But they were not quite what they were made out to be.

Their journey to the West took them from Nagasaki to Macao, Malacca, Cochin, Goa, and then again to Cochin, where they boarded a ship that would take them across the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope, and (after a stop at Saint Helena in the South Atlantic) safely to Lisbon, where they disembarked on 11 August 1584, two and a half years after they left Japan. Valignano planned to accompany his protégés all the way to Europe, but was prevented from doing so by his appointment to a provincial superior’s duties, which kept him in India. Until its very end, however, he retained a great interest in the mission on which he sent the youths, exerting considerable influence on its course. His firm views regarding how to proceed are set down clearly in the detailed “Regimen” that he wrote in Goa on 12 December 1583 as a set of instructions for Padre Nuno Rodrigues, designated to act as the Indian Province’s agent and advocate in Rome, who was to sail with the Japanese to Portugal. It is noteworthy that Valignano refers to the presumed ambassadors as *meninos*, “boys,” throughout this document, marking them as children to be kept under tutelage, controlled, and manipulated.

The purpose of their journey, Valignano states, consists of two things: “The first is to seek the relief that is needed in both the temporal and the spiritual regard in Japan. The second is to imbue the Japanese with the glory and grandeur of the law of Christ, and with the majesty of the princes and lords who have embraced that law and with the grandeur and wealth of our kingdoms and cities, and with the honor and influence that our religious order enjoys among them.” When the boys return to Japan and report on what they have witnessed in Europe, their testimony is sure to give a great boost to the Jesuits’ credit in the eyes of their countrymen. Fact is, Valignano goes on to say, that the Japanese, reluctant to believe what none of them has ever seen, have so far failed to accept the Jesuits’ accounts of their background. Hence the reasons for the padres’ coming to Japan continue to be widely misunderstood in that country: “It seems to them that we are poor folk, belittled in our own countries, and that we therefore go under the cloak of preaching heavenly matters to seek relief in

10. For the original Latin, see *Iaponiorvm regvm legatio* 1585, folios 4v and 5r. Many contemporary translations into European languages are extant. Cf. *Blyde Incomste* 1585, 11 and 12 (Dutch); *Warhafftiger Bericht* 1586, 248 and 252 (German); and *FRÓIS* 1942, 165 and 166 (Portuguese).

Japan” (VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 52, para.13). Here the boys’ instrumentality is perfectly evident: Used in a *tableau vivant* to represent Japan in Europe, they would then be reused to present a grandiose picture of Europe to Japan. Part of that picture would be the splendors of the Society of Jesus.

Although temporal and spiritual relief both figure in this statement of purpose, it subsequently becomes apparent that the Jesuit Order’s temporal needs were uppermost in Valignano’s mind. His rationale is unambiguous. He deals explicitly with the problem of procuring, maintaining, and increasing funds. An assessment of the requirements is accompanied by projections of the pledges of financial assistance to be drummed up for the Jesuits’ Japanese enterprise in the course of the boys’ tour of Europe (VALIGNANO 1583, fols. 53–54, paras. 21–29).

It is essential, Valignano stresses, that “His Majesty [King Philip of Spain and Portugal] and His Holiness and the cardinals and other European lords” get to know the boys directly, interact with them, come to an appreciation of their excellent capabilities, and become convinced that the Jesuits’ reports on the admirable qualities of the Japanese were by no means fabrications. “In this manner the princes shall be moved to help Japan.” Toward that end, “it seems best for these boys to go as so highly honored and so very noble (*tan honrrados y tan nobres*) recipients of a mandate from the King of Bungo and the King of Arima and Don Bartolomeu to visit His Majesty and tender obedience to His Holiness in their name.” Presenting the “letters that they bear from the said lords, having put them in their gilt *fubacos*”¹¹—the japonesque touch was important—they would ask the king and the pope for assistance in the conversion of Japan. Obviously, if they were to make an impression—if they were to “stir the souls” of European princes—they had to be accepted as persons worthy of credence and respect. So they had to be presented properly; that is, the role they played before their lofty European audience had to be validated by the display of ceremonious treatment appropriate to their putative status. How could the desired verisimilitude be attained, however? After all, the boys did not travel in state; they brought with them no court that would provide the requisite pomp in their presence. The Jesuits themselves would have to take care of that: “It is necessary that the padres validate them by treating them with the proper honors and decorum in their colleges” (VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 52, para. 14). In other words, at successive stops in their travels in Europe, the local Jesuit establishment was to supply the stage and the staffage for the development of the boys’ ambassadorial personas.

The General of the Society should therefore be asked, Valignano told Rodrigues, to instruct “all the [Jesuit] houses and colleges of Italy and of Spain” along the boys’ route to “welcome them with much affection,” accommodate them in the “best lodgings” to be found in the college, have them view the “most

11. The plural of a word adopted into the Portuguese language from the Japanese *fubako* 文箱, “letter box.”

noble” and edifying sights to be seen, and “keep them from seeing the contrary” (VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 51v, para. 7). The lords they were to visit should be coached beforehand to “show them very great affection and extend grace and favor to them” (fol. 52, para. 13). Treated graciously in such a way, the boys will become fully aware of the grandeur of these lords’ estates. Not only that, they will come to appreciate “the beauty and wealth of our cities and the credit and authority that our religious order enjoys among all.” Everywhere they go—“at the court of His Majesty, in Portugal, and in Rome and the other cities they shall pass through”—they are therefore to be regaled with the choicest that each place has to offer: “richly adorned churches, palaces, gardens and the like, such as table services of silver, sumptuous sacristies, and other things that are apt to edify them, without letting them see or become aware of anything that might cause them to embrace a contrary opinion” (fol. 52v, para. 15). In general, Valignano is not an economical writer; he is subject to the vice of excessive repetition. To be sure, all the heavy stress he lays on this one point by reiterating it does impress it with perfect clarity: The boys were to be given the Grand Tour, all right, but while Valignano certainly intended it to be an expansive educational experience, at the same time he meant it to be highly restrictive.

Put another way, they were to be conducted past the glories of Europe with blinkers on. Witness the following paragraph:

They should be taken to see all the noble and grand sights of Rome and some of the other principal cities of Italy, taking care, taking care always that they are guided in such a manner that they become aware of and see only what is good and not become aware of anything bad. Toward that end I beg His Paternity [the General of the Society] to give orders that they stay all the time in the house of the padres and not stay in either the German College or Seminary, although they should see both the one and the other. And they are not to have any dealings with outsiders, so a padre and an irmão are to be with them always wherever they may go. Because nothing is so important as having them return well edified and with a high appreciation of European Christianity; and they must therefore on no account have any dealings with persons who might set a bad example for them, nor should they be told of the disorderly ways current at court and among the higher clergy or other similar things.

(VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 56, para. 48)

Evidently, Valignano considered even that staunch Jesuit institution, the German College of Rome, to be a place that might occasion scandal—one where the Japanese might learn something “bad.” After all, what were the Germans doing there but preparing for a fight with the Lutherans back home? The extent to which heresy had spread in Europe had at all costs to be kept from the Japanese because the image of perfect Roman Catholic unity was an essential part of the “high appreciation of European Christianity” that they were meant to bring

back to their country. They had to be well protected in order to induce and preserve an illusion.

Abundant documentation of the boys' progress through Europe exists,¹² and there is every indication that things went according to plan. In other words, they were taken on a supervised tour through a theme park; let us call it Europeland or Catholic World. The enhanced reality presented there was that of a Christian Commonwealth where secular rulers all honored and obeyed their religious suzerain, the Supreme Pontiff, lived in perfect peace and brotherly harmony with one another, made sure that government served the public interest, and exercised justice humanely. Evidently, the lords along the boys' route through Portugal, Spain, and Italy were indeed well coached beforehand, as they were fêted everywhere they went. And they certainly got their fill of "richly adorned churches, palaces, gardens and the like," as ostentation was the order of the day. The spectacle in which the boys played a part of the performing cast and of the audience at the same time was staged in accordance with a political principle well known to potentates of all ages but enunciated best by that incarnation of Baroque splendor, Louis XIV of France: The people enjoy dramatic displays; "and in regard to foreigners, when they see that a state is otherwise flourishing and orderly, what might be considered as superfluous expenses make a very favorable impression of magnificence, power, wealth, and greatness upon them" (LOUIS XIV 1970, 102).

That the backdrop painted for the Japanese youths was bogus does not detract from the wonders of the actual landscape which they traversed. It is difficult to pick one highlight from what must have been a truly overwhelming nonstop sequence of dazzling places and sensational events. Perhaps the initial stage of their travels in Italy—through Tuscany and northern Latium to Rome—ought to be singled out, because that particular stretch may well be the quintessential segment of anyone's Grand Tour. Having landed in Leghorn on 1 March 1585, they proceeded through Pisa to Florence and, after seeing the major sights of that city, made an excursion to Pratolino, a nearby country villa built for the regnant grand duke of Tuscany, Francesco de' Medici. There they could admire a pleasure garden that was a chef d'œuvre of mannerist design, cram full of hydraulically operated moving statuary and other aquatic marvels (sadly, little of what they saw has survived to the present day). They then bid farewell to Florence and went on to Siena. After a few days there, they continued via San Chirico to Viterbo; visited the nearby summer residence of the bishops

12. *Dai Nippon shiryō* 1959 and 1961 is the most important compendium of sources on their European travels. In addition to excerpting important secondary accounts, namely Bartoli's *Dell'Historia della Compagnia di Giesv*, Fróis's *Tratado dos Embaixadores Japões*, and Gualtieri's *Relationi della venuta de gli ambasciatori Giaponesi*, this source book presents a good number of otherwise difficult-to-access archival materials. BOSCARO 1973, a catalogue of sixteenth-century imprints devoted solely to the topic of the Japanese "embassy," shows how widely spread its exotic appeal was in Europe.

of Viterbo at Bagnaia, a place that the landscape architects of Cardinal Giovan Francesco Gambara had in the late 1570s transformed into a mannerist phantasmagoria on a par with Pratolino in its abundance of fountains, waterfalls, surprise jets of water, and hydraulic automatons; took in Caprarola, the magnificent country residence commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese two and a half decades previously; and on the evening of 22 March entered the Eternal City, where the best was yet to come.¹³

The boys were engulfed by the swirl of Roman ceremonial. To the roar of artillery salutes from the Castel Sant'Angelo and the rattle of fusillades from the Swiss Guards formed up in Saint Peter's Square, they were conducted to the Vatican, where Pope Gregory XIII received them in public consistory, in the presence of all the cardinals and the rest of the papal court. Not quite three weeks later, the pope died; the boys witnessed the pomp of his funeral and the festivities attendant on the election of his successor. The new pope, Sixtus V, dubbed them knights as the ambassadors of the King of France and the Republic of Venice assisted him with the insignia, girding on Itō and Chijiwa's consecrated swords.¹⁴ Then the four aliens were naturalized by the Roman senate and people; they were made citizens of Rome. The archivists who inscribed the recipients of this exceptional honor in the records of their ancient city were evidently unable to cope with Japanese names, toponyms, and titles. Thus Miguel figures in their compilation of public decrees as "Cigiua Regis filius," the son of the King of Chijiwa. Rarely was a backwater so exalted, one might think, but fact is that Mancio's native place, Tonokōri 都於郡 in Hyūga, was likewise promoted to a kingdom in the Roman records (*Dai Nippon shiryō* 1959, 310).

Without a question, the most interesting account of the four youths' travels and experiences is the one cited in the references to this essay as *De missione* 1590. Put into English, the long view of this title would read: "Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia and the Things to Which They Directed Their Minds in Europe and on Their Entire Journey. Put Together from the Ambassadors' Own Diary and Translated into Latin Speech by Eduardus de Sande, a Priest of the Society of Jesus." Appropriately, from the title page on down, this book manifests a tone as false as the faux embassy that it describes. To start with, that a diary kept by the "ambassadors" themselves was the main source of the "Dialogue" will be credited only by those willing to assume that the four teenage travelers had the educational background to grasp

13. Although they surely were unaware of it, from Siena to Rome the four boys were following in the footsteps of none other than Michel de Montaigne, who had taken the same route three and a half years before; see MONTAIGNE 2003, 1249–55. Montaigne considered Caprarola beyond compare in Italy. He was highly impressed by the marvels of Bagnaia and adjudged it superior to Pratolino, which of course he had also seen (more than once: MONTAIGNE 2003, 1131–33 and 1229–30).

14. Their two companions had to be satisfied with the ministrations of an ordinary marquis. *De missione* 1590, colloquy 26, 280–81; *Diálogo* 1997, 253–54.

complex cultural issues and address them in the clever way the book does—in other words, by those ready to suppose that tyros of the Arima seminary, whose academic training during their travels was episodic at best, had somehow become capable of a high level of sophistry. The title leads one to believe that Duarte de Sande wrote the text, but that was not the case. In a letter addressed to the General of the Society from Macao on 25 September 1589, Valignano “clearly states that he himself has composed the book” in the Spanish language and has charged Sande, “a skilful Latinist,” to put it into Latin.¹⁵ The book’s imprint notes that it was published at the Jesuit house in Macao in 1590 “with the permission of the Ordinary and the Superiors,” and those authorizations are dated September and October 1589. So the “Dialogue” was written, translated, approved, and printed before the “ambassadors” left Macao for Japan on 23 June 1590; yet the *mise en scène* of the thirty-four colloquies that form the book is Japan after their return. Such an arrangement is unexceptionable for a work of fiction. Because this work pretends to be a veritable record, however, one can scarcely ignore the fact that its rhetorical frame is ahistorical.

When all is said and done, however, the “Dialogue” has great value as a historical source: Having been put together by Valignano, it is a revelation of his fancies. It shows clearly what the mastermind who planned the four youths’ journey to the West wanted and imagined that journey’s effect to be on the minds of his actors. And it shows the image of the West that he hoped, with their help, to see implanted in Japan.

The most striking aspect of this book is the incessant exaltation and glorification, not to say abject adoration of Europe, combined with the denigration of most of what lies between it and Japan. Early on, Valignano’s mouthpiece Miguel informs anyone interested in finding out why the Portuguese ventured to India that the spirit of benevolence inspired their expeditions across the seas: Their kings’ intention was “to uplift the peoples of all Asia, infinite in their multitude and barbarous in their savagery, that lead a life without true law and without true religion, resembling cattle, & to train them how to adopt a better mode of life” (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 4, 29; *Diálogo* 1997, 48–49). An even more unpleasant tone dominates when Africa and the appearance of its inhabitants come under discussion: “That they were condemned to a type of fatal punishment may be concluded from the fact that the Æthiopians not only are of a coal-black color but generally also of a gloomy & misshapen countenance, & that they are of a wild and uncultivated nature, one inclined to every sort of inhu-

15. LAURES 1957, 32. On the evidence of this “Dialogue” and according to the standards of the sixteenth century, Padre de Sande was beyond doubt “a skilful Latinist.” Those who enjoy the affectations which characterized that breed in the expiring Renaissance are certain to be appreciative of his style, one in which saints appear as “divine,” a convent of nuns is a “parthenon of sacred Virgins,” God is *Deus Optimus Maximus*, Portugal is known as Lusitania, Eridanus is the preferred name of the Po River, and all marble comes from Paros.

man conduct and ferocity. So it is likely that this race of people was cursed in some way with dreadful afflictions for some ancestor's crime." A page or two later it is determined that "a certain European philosopher was correct in saying that these people were born for no other purpose but slavery" (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 5, 41 and 44; *Diálogo* 1997, 59–60 and 61). Remarkably, even that darkest part of the world, Africa, gains in attractiveness in proportion to its geographical proximity to Europe: "Its inhabitants, especially those located in the interior, are for the most part barbarous and savage, black in color, and alien to all human civilization; whereas those who live along the shore that is close to Europe approach European elegance to a certain degree" (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 34, 406; *Diálogo* 1997, 349).

How does Japan rate on the scale of civilization, as far as the author of this book is concerned? Inevitably, it must be accounted inferior. After all, to imbue the Japanese with the firm notion of the superiority of Christian Europe was one of Valignano's main objectives in sending his four envoys abroad, and that superiority is the relentless theme of the "Dialogue." Sande's Latin version was intended for use as a textbook for seminarians, but there were plans to translate it into Japanese for a general audience. How, then, to develop the case for Japan's inferiority? Valignano, who lacked neither common sense nor diplomatic skills, knew that he would not capture many hearts and minds by outright derogation. It is rather a steady drizzle of deprecation that descends upon Japan in this text, permeating the book. There are constant reminders that Japan is a violent, lawless, and anarchic place; that compared with Europe's, its civilization is backward.

Here and there some tidbits are tossed to the Japanese, permitting them to save face, as in the following exchange between Miguel and his cousin Lino Ōmura. To be sure, the compliment offered here is left-handed:

LINVS. ...It is by virtue of having perfected [the liberal arts] while at the same time being illuminated by the light of the faith that the Europeans conduct themselves in such a laudable manner in the administration of kingdoms and republics. And it is hardly remarkable that our people, who are deprived of these forms of assistance, blunder so in matters having to do with government and the knowledge of nature.

MICHAEL. On the contrary, it is indeed remarkable that our people, even though they lack both these forms of assistance, have attained to such a degree of nobility and urbanity that in this regard we judge them, of all the peoples that we have seen, to be the most similar to Europeans.

(*De missione* 1590, colloquy 14, 151; *Diálogo* 1997, 148)

In the final analysis, Japanese "military science, greatness of spirit, observance of refined manners, and ranks of nobility" are singled out for praise. In these regards, Japan is superior to China, the only other Asian country to be treated

with a measure of respect in this book. China, on the other hand, is ahead of Japan in its “wide extent, peace and tranquility, mode of government, wealth, & abundance of goods” (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 34, 409; *Diálogo* 1997, 351). But China, too, is a flawed civilization, because it has barely been exposed to the true religion. “So this nation, which in other respects is superbly gifted, has always lived in utmost error & the ignorance of truth and, pulled every which way by a variety of opinions, has followed a multiplicity of sects.”¹⁶ For a truly superior culture, both Japan and China must look to Europe, which is united in the One Church.

Christianity has given Europe perfect stability, is what the reader of the “Dialogue” is meant to believe. Disinformation is marshaled, history expunged, and actuality ignored in order to prove this thesis:

Such is the force of the Christian religion that it binds the souls of Christians to each other with, as it were, a marvelous chain, & renders them compliant to their kings and faithful to their closest princes. All the more because the Christian doctrine curbs, for the most part, the passions that are wont to inflame us, making us reach after what belongs to another; teaches with many precepts that all should live content with what they have; and constantly exhorts Christians to imitate Christ, the founder of all peace & concord. Hence it comes that the entire Christian people, which is governed by so many Christian kings and princes, lives in uttermost peace & the secure enjoyment of its possessions.

(*De missione* 1590, colloquy 4, 32; *Diálogo* 1997, 51)

According to Miguel’s discourse in the eighth colloquy, which deals with secular monarchy, peace in Europe is guaranteed by the perfect functioning of the hierarchy of authority, rank, and governance: The supreme pontiff, the vicar of Christ, consecrates the emperor, the highest dignity among laymen; the emperor presides over the Christian Commonwealth; kings, who need obey no lay prince, nevertheless reverence the emperor as their superior; princes, dukes, marquises, and counts honor as their sovereign the king in whose territories they have revenue-producing estates. “As for violence, in no wise does it take place among Christian princes. For they are imbued with the Christian religion, which curbs & restrains the unbridled passions of the soul; so they are open to the exercise of law and justice, and assuredly not to the lust for power.” (To digress for a moment into contemporary European history: In March 1585, as the four Japanese youths were being entertained by the supreme pontiff in Rome, the so-called War of the Three Henries started in France. It was the eighth and most vicious of the French wars of religion, a series that began in April 1562 and continued, with interruptions, until May 1598, when the ninth war fought

16. *De missione* 1590, colloquy 33, 394–95; *Diálogo* 1997, 340. The Christian mission in China had begun just seven years before, in 1583, when the two Jesuit priests Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci took up residence in Kwangtung Province.

between Catholics and Huguenots within the span of thirty-six years came to a halt; not that this spelt the end of armed conflict between those two parties, which were divided by their common Christian faith. Needless to say, there is no hint of any of this in the “Dialogue.”¹⁷) In Japan, by contrast, “we see all human and divine laws discomposed by force, arms, and the passion for power” (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 8, 76–78; *Diálogo* 1997, 88–89). This text constructs Japan as politically chaotic. And in that context, religion is seen above all as a pathway to the reform of the polity.

Only Christianity will bring about a restoration of good government in the lawless country. This message is repeated time and again in the “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia.” It was still the party line of the Jesuits in 1605, when their premier Japanese apologist Fabian Fucan (still an *irmão*; not yet an apostate) set it down in *Myōtei mondō* 妙貞問答 (The Myōtei Dialogue) with style: “Unless all of Japan turns Kirishitan, the country cannot be put to order perfectly. That is because Kirishitan doctrine teaches: Worship the Lord [God]. Next, love and honor your master from the bottom of your heart; serve and obey him, from the emperor and shogun on down to each and every lord below. This is the constant exhortation of our faith. For that reason, I have heard it said, for more than one thousand years there has been nothing describable as war, and not the slightest trace of treason or rebellion in Kirishitan lands” (ELISONAS 2005, 179). Alas for Valignano and Fabian, even as they wrote, their basic premise—Japan, a realm ripped apart by wars, treasons and rebellions, could and should be reconstituted by Christianity—was losing whatever validity it may ever have had. When Valignano composed the “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia,” Toyotomi Hideyoshi was on the verge of unifying Japan, which had been plagued by political fragmentation and military conflict for more than a century. When Fabian wrote the “Myōtei Dialogue,” Tokugawa Ieyasu was past the verge of unification and little short of the complete pacification of Japan. (He would achieve that goal in 1615 by eliminating Hideyoshi’s son and heir, the last plausible focus of resistance to Tokugawa rule.) Christianity was not a positive factor in the formula of either unifier. Valignano’s propaganda was not about to sway the powerful of Japan, men inhabiting a different conceptional sphere from that of the elite of Europe, who had applauded the creative spectacle devised by him.

What is the “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia” if not a fantastic pageant in narrative form? The Japanese youths’ tour of Europe, an enormous dramatic production, was a sumptuous product of

17. About the only concrete indication that all is not well in the Christian wonderland is the mention of an anonymous queen of England who, “steeped in the perverse errors of the heretics, has dragged a great part of that nation along with her into perdition.” To be sure, in the same passage there are dark allusions to Germany’s “suffering severe difficulties at this time.” *De missione* 1590, colloquy 23, 250; *Diálogo* 1997, 229.

the imagination. Some of its most intriguing scenes were those where the leading participants in the piece of theater contrived by Alexandro Valignano, called “The First Japanese Embassy to Europe,” and played as a road show in Portugal, Spain, and Italy saw themselves portrayed in a performance by others. For example, in a town in La Mancha, the name of which is recalled as Belmonte, they were received in December 1584 with pyrotechnics, including a particularly ingenious display of the fiery combat between a ship and a sea monster; later, they watched the students of the local Jesuit college put on a play representing their voyage across the oceans. In Venice, the Corpus Christi procession was postponed by more than just a few days in June 1585 so that the Japanese youths could see the grand spectacle with its parade of upward of one hundred forty floats bedecked with silks and golden brocades and bearing priceless exemplars of the goldsmith’s art, pearl- and jewel-encrusted reliquaries, and “images depicting the many mysteries of the Christian religion.” On the very last of the floats, taking pride of place, the four youths’ expedition from Japan to seek the favor of the Roman pontiff was “rendered magnificently.” In Zaragoza, which they visited on their way back through Spain in September 1585, a group of students of the Jesuit college presented a “most agreeable dialogue” in which three personages named Italia, Hispania, and Japonia were shown discoursing on their mission. These were but preludes, however—light episodes, compared to the truly elaborate, multi-act finale.¹⁸

Nearing the end of their travels in Europe, the boys spent Christmas 1585 and New Year’s 1586 in the university town of Coimbra. In the university’s college of arts, where Jesuits were in charge of the instruction, the professors decorated the walls of their lecture halls with tapestries, told their auditors to come dressed in their finest clothing, and welcomed their Japanese guests with theatricals put on in their classes. Here is the synopsis of one of the pieces performed by the apprentice scholars of Coimbra:

Enter Asia. Distressed over the long absence of her four nurslings, she engages in a long lamentation. Ocean makes his appearance, to be queried on their well-being, and gives assurances that he has treated them gently and indulgently and has delivered them safely into the care of Europe. Asia, still full of concern about their fate, summons and interrogates Europe, who calls on her daughters Lusitania, Castile, and Italy to recount in detail with what delight they entertained the boys in their cities and towns. Acknowledging their hospitality, Asia pledges Europe her undying gratitude; henceforward, she vows, the two of them shall be “tied by the bond of a perpetual alliance.” She then turns again to Ocean, whom she begs to treat her wards with the same indulgence and benignity on their way home that he accorded them on their voyage abroad. Exeunt.

In another class, a student playing the part of a recent returnee from Japan

18. *De missione* 1590, colloquy 19, 210 (Belmonte); colloquy 28, 314–16 (Venice); colloquy 30, 343 (Zaragoza); colloquy 31, 358–59 (Coimbra). *Diálogo* 1997, 195; 281–82; 303; 314–15 respectively.

and India declaimed on the objectives of the four youths' mission and dilated on the successes achieved in Japan in the propagation of Christianity. Others then joined in; in the ensuing colloquies, "everything" experienced by the four Japanese on their way to Rome and back was "exhibited beautifully." (In view of such comprehensiveness, no wonder this piece took "several hours" to run its course—as, undoubtedly, did the others performed in Coimbra. Inevitably, the students' performances were complemented by lengthy demonstrations of the art of rhetoric on the part of the instructors.) Fittingly, the most pompous allegory was presented by the most advanced class of rhetoricians. The Guardian Angel of Europe called on the Guardian Angel of Japan to give an account of the situation in that country. A relation of the great feats accomplished and many victories won there by Christianity's servants ensued. To provide clear evidence of the truth of the angel's report, Faith then appeared with a grand cortège of saints and delivered a paean on the Japanese Church, attributing its successes to the symbol of the cross, which all present venerated fervently. The Guardian Angel of Europe reclaimed the stage to describe in a long speech how much he had exerted himself to make certain that the Japanese youths would be received with plaudits wherever in Europe they went and to ensure that the Roman pontiffs would welcome them by showing them the signs of love with which parents greet sons "newly born to the light." He then entrusted the boys to the Guardian Angel of Japan. So their safe passage to their fatherland was assured. Their guest appearance in the European comedy was over, and they were ready to go home.

Having gone to Europe in the guise of Japanese ambassadors, they returned to Japan in the entourage of a Portuguese embassy. Again, they were shepherded by Alexandro Valignano, who was charged this time not only with the duties of a visitor plenipotentiary of the Society of Jesus but also with the responsibilities of an ambassador extraordinary accredited to Toyotomi Hideyoshi by the Portuguese viceroy of India. Among other things, the viceroy recommended the Jesuit padres to Hideyoshi's favorable attention. But the outlook had changed drastically for Christianity in Japan since Valignano's first visit. After Oda Nobunaga's violent death in 1582, the mantle of the national unifier had passed to Hideyoshi, who followed up his conquest of Kyushu in 1587 by issuing a decree banning the padres from what, he emphasized, was the "Land of the Gods."¹⁹ The edict had not been enforced draconically, so Valignano may have had some grounds for cautious optimism in evaluating his mission's chances of success; but he surely knew that he had a difficult task on his hands. On 3 March 1591, he appeared at the Juraku no Tei 聚楽第, Hideyoshi's nonesuch in Kyoto, to be received in audience by the parvenu who was by then the all-powerful ruler of

19. "Decree" dated Tenshō 15/6/19 (24 July 1587); ELISONAS 2005, 168. Hideyoshi's rationale for the decision to expel the missionaries is found in his "Notice" of the previous day; ELISONAS 2005, 166–68. Also see Hideyoshi's "Letter to the Viceroy of India," dated Tenshō 19/7/25 (12 September 1591); ELISONAS 2005, 168–71.

Japan. In Valignano's ambassadorial suite, along with two Jesuit padres and two irmãos, thirteen Portuguese merchants, and seven servants, were the "four Japanese *fidalgos*, dressed opulently in their garments of black velvet trimmed with gold braid, the ones that the Supreme Pontiff had given them in Rome" (FRÓIS 1984, 298–300). Hideyoshi received this delegation with the requisite ceremoniousness, entertained its members at a banquet, and treated them affably. Singling out the "four Japanese noblemen" who were masquerading as Europeans, he took the time to question Itō and Chijiwa personally on their background. After a musical interlude at which the quartet showed off some of their Europe-acquired skills by playing the cembalo, harp, lute, and small rebec (brought along in the anticipation of a chance to impress), Hideyoshi dismissed Valignano and his companions with assurances of his friendly sentiments toward the viceroy of India. "He appeared so cheerful this day, so happy, and so satisfied that nothing was left to be desired" (FRÓIS 1984, 308–9). Appearances deceive, and deception was a constant in Hideyoshi's show.

Of positive results this embassy had little to report. Indeed, perhaps the most remarkable thing associated with it in the history of diplomacy is the rude, bumptious, and threatening language of Hideyoshi's response to the courtly letter of amity that Valignano had brought him from the viceroy. Adding injury to insult, in August 1592 Hideyoshi "destroyed and obliterated" the large Jesuit house and its attached church in Nagasaki, a town that was obviously no longer a safe haven where the Society enjoyed sovereign powers. (On conquering Kyushu, the hegemon had confiscated the foreign enclave and absorbed it into his own demesne.) Half a dozen padres and irmãos found refuge in the house of the charitable organization operated by Christian laymen of Nagasaki and known as the *Misericórdia*.²⁰ When Valignano set sail from Nagasaki for Macao soon after Hideyoshi's clear demonstration of hostility, on 9 October 1592, he could tell that hard times were ahead. Patently, the atmosphere was not right for the sensational revelations of "magnificence, power, wealth, and greatness" with which his boy ambassadors to Europe had been intended to dazzle and enlighten Japan.

Their command performance at the Juraku no Tei was the last star turn of the four "boys"—now young men—before the mighty of this world. On 25 July 1591, upon returning from Kyoto to Kyushu, all four entered the Society of Jesus. Three of them performed as expected, were in due course ordained priests, and exerted themselves for the Christian cause until the end. One was different.

Padre Mancio Itō succumbed to disease in Nagasaki in 1612. Padre Martinho Hara was forced to leave Japan in 1614 with the onset of the Tokugawa shogunate's general persecution of Christianity and died in 1629, an exile in Macao.

20. See "Catalogus Domiciliorum ac Residentiarum necnon ecclesiarum, personarum ac Christianorum totius Viceprovinciae Japonicae, mense Januarii anni 1593," SCHÜTTE 1975, 328.

Padre Julião Nakaura was martyred in Nagasaki, expiring on 21 October 1633 after bearing for three days the dreadful torture of suspension head down in a pit filled with ordure (RUIZ-DE-MEDINA 1999, 720). Irmão Miguel Chijiwa apostatized from the Jesuit Order and the Christian faith; it is not known when, or where, or why. His name is listed along with the three others' in a catalogue of the members of the Jesuit Province of Japan as of 1 January 1593; in the next extant catalogue, that of October 1603, it is missing (SCHÜTTE 1975, 306–25 and 441–55).

A few years ago, a gravestone at Ikiriki 伊木力 in what now is Isahaya 諫早 City, Nagasaki Prefecture, but used to be part of the Ōmura domain was identified as the memorial of Chijiwa and his wife. If the attribution is correct, then Miguel died on Kan'ei 寛永 9/12/14 (23 January 1633), the date inscribed on the headstone, in the same year—not by the Japanese calendar but the one decreed by Pope Gregory XIII—as Julião, with whom he shared little else at the end. That attribution, however, is conjectural; it is not without a certain appeal, but it is based on incomplete information.²¹ In any event, Chijiwa's true monument is not a stone but a piece of literature.

That literary work, a product of the early years of the Tokugawa period (perhaps as early as 1606), gathered dust for a long time in manuscript form in the storehouse of a Buddhist temple in Usuki, the sometime castle town of Ōtomo Sōrin in Bungo, and was not published in its entirety until 1984. It is known under the provisional title *Kirishitan kanagaki* 喜利志祖仮名書, "Account of the Christians in Simple Letters" or, more simply, "Christians in Plain Text." In a previous essay, I described this work as "the earliest, longest, most complex, and best informed though also most scurrilous of all the popular anti-Christian narratives of the Tokugawa era," noted that its narrator "demonstrates the kind of knowledge of Christian culture that could only have been gained by an insider," and stated that he "fully manifests the subversive power of an imagination freed from controls."²² Magic and harum-scarum adventure are the very substance of "Christians in Plain Text," which is a fantasy novel *avant-la-lettre*. The man responsible for concocting this extravagant hotchpotch is identified in its last paragraph:

As it happens, in the Ōmura domain there was a samurai called Chijiwa Seizaemon ちぢゐは清左衛門. Long ago, he had gone to Rome in the company of

21. In essence, it rests on the following propositions: the reverse of the gravestone is inscribed Chijiwa Genba no Jō 玄番允, and Miguel is known to have had a son who bore that title; his mother and father are the most appropriate people for Genba no Jō to have honored by this memorial stone; and Ikiriki is known as a place where Miguel held a fief from Ōmura Yoshiaki. The elaborate but not entirely persuasive rationale is laid out in ŌISHI 2005, 84–122. An illustrated description of the gravestone is found in ŌISHI 2005, 77–83. Needless to say, not "Miguel" but a Buddhist posthumous name (Honjūin Jōan 本住院常安) is to be seen on the stone.

22. ELISONAS 2001, 35. In this earlier essay I treat *Kirishitan kanagaki* in greater depth and detail than space permits here.

some *bateren* 伴天連 (*padres*) and after ten years of studies returned to Japan, where he was a *yuruman* ゆるまん (*irmão*) of the *ekirensiya* えきれんしや (*ecclesia*; church). Something happened, however, that made him feel bitter against the *padres*; so he left their temple and entered Lord Ōmura's service. Chijiwa knew very well that the Kirishitans had been usurping countries since ancient times. He therefore gave an extremely detailed account of the scheme of Zesu Kirishito ぜすきりしと (Jesus Christ), the battles of Sanchiyāgo さんちやあご (Santiago), the armed forces that Kirishitans had again and again sent to invade Japan, and other facts. At that time Lord Ōmura was heard to say: 'What a great surprise! How mortifying! To think that I actually had faith in a band pursuing such evil designs!' Immediately he expelled all the *padres* and *irmãos* from his house and packed every last one off to Nagasaki; and he ripped down their many *ecclesias*. As for himself, he invited a holy priest of the Lotus sect, the Venerable Myōten 妙典, from Higo 肥後, and entered the Direct Way of Truth. From that time on the preaching of the pernicious Kirishitan doctrine faded away to just a minor nuisance and then, little by little, was reduced to the point where it no longer has a place in society.

(*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 259)

So Miguel Chijiwa had shed the identity that had been his persona in Catholic World. He had reconfigured himself as Chijiwa Seizaemon, a samurai in the service of Dom Sancho Ōmura, and had assisted at his lord's reconfiguration as Ōmura Yoshiaki. This was the same Sancho who had endorsed and countersigned the cession of the harbor city of Nagasaki to the Society of Jesus in 1580. Ironically, the immediate cause of his apostasy in 1606 was an exchange of territory forced by the Tokugawa shogunate, in which a prosperous portion of Ōmura's domain that was contiguous with the harbor city was confiscated and absorbed into the Tokugawa demesne. By way of compensation, the shogunate fobbed rural areas off on Ōmura.²³ Dom Sancho could not resist the supreme power in Japan, but he was highly dissatisfied with the treatment that he had received. As described in the last paragraph of "Christians in Plain Text," he vented his anger on the Jesuits, whom (rightly or not) he blamed for complicity in what he considered a land grab and an unfair deal. It is fully believable that in doing so, Ōmura was encouraged by Chijiwa, who fed his discontent with tales of "a band pursuing such evil designs." Plots, after all, were Seizaemon's stock in trade. But perhaps one should speak in the singular. The plot of *Kirishitan kanagaki* is the Christian conspiracy to take over the world.

Actually, this conspiracy antedates Jesus Christ. It can be traced back to the exiled and aggrieved princely pair Adan あたん and Ewa えわ and the master

23. The document ordering the seizure and exchange of property, addressed to Ōmura Yoshiaki, dated Keichō 慶長 10/9/11 (22 October 1605), and signed by Honda Masazumi 本田正純, Itakura Katsushige 板倉勝重, and other high officials of the shogunate, may be found in ŌISHI 2005, 180–81.

strategist Monsesu もんせす (Moses). It does not reach critical mass, however, until the magician Jesus, having obtained promises of assistance from daimyo all over the world, enrolls five million samurai in a bid to overthrow Seizaru Agusuto せいざるあくすと (Caesar Augustus), who has usurped the throne from Moses' lineage and rules the empire from Rōma らうま. In the end, Jesus' ambitious plan to make himself emperor fails. His super-powers are of no avail; he is betrayed, captured, and crucified. His followers, however, refuse to abandon the endeavor begun by him. They take the fight to the enemy, with varying success. Sanpei Doro 三平とろ (São Pedro), appointed their first generalissimo with the title of Pappa はつは, is captured before he can do any damage and is decapitated in Rome along with his apprentice in sorcery San Pōro さんほうろ (São Paulo). Pappa Pedro's disciple Santiago (Apostle Saint James the Greater) avenges the first pope by putting an end to Caesar Augustus, who dies in the flames of his burning palace, and making himself the master of Rome and the empire. But the Christians only wield power for twenty-four years until the Mandate of Heaven passes to a descendant of Caesar Augustus by the name of Korinchīno こりんちいの (Corintino?), a heathen. Santiago is defeated and crucified. "After this Korinchīno became the emperor of Rome. He restored the shrines of his tutelary deities and of the other gods to their former state. He and the descendants who succeeded him reigned, report has it, for three hundred and seventy years. This is what happened after São Pedro" (ELISONAS 2001, 35–41).

At this juncture Seizaemon's story takes an abrupt turn that puts him, without any caesura, back on the road to Montefalco:

Santa Karara さんたからゝ (Saint Clare), a marvelously beautiful woman who is about twenty-five years old, plots with Santa Maruya さんたまるや, the mother of Jesus Christ, to take over Geresho げれしよ (Greece), the realm of the anti-Christian Emperor Achiriāno あちりあゝの (Hadrian?), "by foul means if necessary." Karara dresses herself in festive attire and goes to the capital city of Greece, where she insinuates herself into the harem of the emperor, a man "addicted to sex," and becomes his favorite, gaining preference among his thirty-six concubines. So smitten is Achiriāno that he agrees to her request for a special seal that would permit her to pass freely through any gate or guard post, by day or by night. Late one evening, the emperor lies alone by himself in a drunken stupor. Karara comes to him as if to inquire after his well-being. No one is about, so she draws a sword and cuts off Achiriāno's head. She wraps the head in her sheer silk gown and takes it straight out of the palace, using her special permit to get unquestioned past the guards. Then she makes her way from Greece to Betaniyāno へたにやあの (Bethania) in the country of Zesusaren せすされん (a slip of the pen or a conscious word play: Jerusalem or Jesusalem?). She presents her bloody trophy to Santa Maruya, who is consoled at the demise of "the very one who, in league with Judea, killed my son Zesusu." They show the head to Sanjuan Ewanzerishita 三寿庵ゑわんせりした (Saint John the Evangelist),

who rejoices, realizing that with Achiriāno out of the way, this is the moment to strike. Some 130,000 samurai follow his call to arms, and the Christians conquer Greece easily. Sanjuan establishes himself in the imperial palace; Santa Karara, too, ensconces herself in an estate given her in the capital city, where she dies at the age of fifty-eight (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 208–11). Santa Maruya, incidentally, is hanged in Egypt.

Obviously, Seizaemon was citing the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes—even if he called Bethulia, the beleaguered town where the heroine brings the enemy general’s head in the Old Testament’s Book of Judith, by the name of Bethania, another place altogether (one familiar from the New Testament). That story was a topic taken up by quite a few Renaissance painters, including Botticelli, Correggio, Giorgione, Lotto, Mantegna, and Tintoretto among others, and it is entirely possible that Seizaemon’s inspiration came from a work of art that Miguel saw on his tour of Europe. He could scarcely have missed Donatello’s statue *Giuditta e Oloferne*, a magnificent work that stood in front of the Palazzo Vecchio when the Japanese youths visited Florence. To be sure, it is not mentioned in the account of that visit in the “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors,” although some other sculptures are.

But why did Seizaemon call the heroine Santa Karara, and what does she have to do with any Saint Clare known to hagiography? That he was recalling Clare of Montefalco only becomes clear from the coda of his weird tale: “According to what the Kirishitans say, at the time of Santa Karara’s death, thinking that there must be some meaningful particulars inside such a saintly person’s breast, they cut open her breast and inspected it. Inside were the instruments used to torture Zesusu. This was because she had faith in Kirishito—is what they say.” Up to this point, Seizaemon might just as well be citing the record of the canonical proceedings in Clare’s case for sainthood. But then follows the denouement: “These were no instruments of torture. Rather, Santa Karara had a double pupil in each eye, and a person with the double pupil is the world’s most effective medicine. For that reason Sanjuan had Karara’s breast cut open and her liver extracted to be used as medicine. That is what the instruments of torture refer to” (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 211).

This seems anticlimactic. The “double pupil” is known transculturally as the sure sign and effective transmitter of supernatural powers, but Seizaemon does not exploit its fascination, although elsewhere in “Christians in Plain Text” he makes the most of witchcraft. What good is the liver of a person who has the *pupula duplex*? It remains a mystery until much later in the text, when it is revealed that such a liver, along with mummy oil and milt, was used to compound an unguent which was instrumental in changing the history of the world.

In the year 430 after the birth of Jesus Christ, at a time when the Christians have been practically eradicated after centuries of relentless persecution, the pagan emperor of Rome, Don Jusuto どんじゆすと (Dom Justo), is stricken

with leprosy. Distraught at the disease and disgusted at the gods who have failed to protect him even though he has worshipped them faithfully, the emperor agrees to the proposition put before him by the sole surviving Christian priest, Herunando へるなんと (Fernando): If he becomes a Christian, he will be healed. Fernando mixes the wondrous unguent that he “calls by the name *bōchisumo* ばうちいすも (baptism)” and smears it all over the body of the mikado; after seven days, the emperor is cured completely. “Have you a wish, padre?” the grateful Dom Justo asks Fernando, and the priest responds, “Only that you make all of your dominions without exception Kirishitan.” The emperor fulfils this modest wish, which, however, turns out not to have been the end of Fernando’s demands. Having tracked down a direct spiritual descendant of São Pedro, a man called Pappa, in the land of Ejitto ゑじつと (Egypt), Fernando confronts Dom Justo with an ultimatum: Make Pappa the emperor and ruler of Rome or be damned to the fires of hell forever. In the face of such a threat, the mikado capitulates and goes off into exile. That, we are told, is how Rome was delivered into the hands of Pappa “until the end of the world” and how an enduring pattern of conquest—first, conversion of the people; then, usurpation of the country—was created (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 239–42).

In this story Seizaemon adapts the well-known legend of the cure and conversion of the leprous emperor Constantine by Pope Silvester. More than one fictional tale related to the establishment of the Church of Rome is connected with the seminal figure of Constantine, an emperor who, famously, was not baptized until just before his death in AD 337. (His baptism notwithstanding, the Roman senate deified him, elevating him to the pagan pantheon. He is also numbered among the Christian saints, though not by the Roman church.) That Constantine, a lifelong heathen and deathbed convert, promoted Christianity at the expense of paganism throughout his reign may be paradoxical but is historical fact. That he conferred secular power on the papacy is, however, fiction based on an eighth- or early ninth-century forgery called the “Donation of Constantine,” a fabricated edict from the emperor to the pope. In this document Constantine not only cedes vast stretches of territory to Silvester and all his successors on the papal throne out of gratitude for having been restored to health, he bestows imperial rank and the imperial regalia on the popes “until the end of the world.”²⁴ The fictional elements are what captivated Seizaemon, who reveled in stories of the accretion of papal power.

24. See CONSTANTINE I 2003, 109–10 and 112–13. There is no need to assume that Chijiwa used the “Donation” as his source. The locus classicus of the legend of the leprous emperor’s cure by baptism is *Vita Sylvestri*, a work that was apparently “well developed by the fifth century” and “became so popular in the Middle Ages that the large number of versions and of manuscripts has made it difficult to reconstruct an *Ur-Text*,” LIEU 1998, 139. The story of Silvester and Constantine is also a staple in anthological compilations of lives of the saints, such as the thirteenth-century work *Legenda aurea*; VORAGINE 1995, 64–65.

In the “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia,” Seizaemon’s alter ego Miguel was made to pontificate on the glory of the Holy See and the veneration extended by all to the vicars of Christ. One of the lines of his script had him declare that he was at a loss for words to describe what “benevolence, love, & high-mindedness” radiated from the two popes who had vouchsafed him and his fellows admission to their presence; but he was not so tongue-tied as to fail to acknowledge that “the majesty, & grandeur of this, so to speak, supreme dignity impressed on our souls the highest form of reverence and admiration, feelings never to be extinguished” (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 26, 282; *Diálogo* 1997, 255). In “Christians in Plain Text,” Seizaemon speaks with his own voice in depicting the sacred monarchy as thoroughly profane, ecclesiastical history as an iterated sequence of subversive activity and imperialist expansion, and the popes of Rome, far from being benevolent, loving, and high-minded, as malignant and rapacious schemers. What does Seizaemon make of the Holy City from which they rule their empire (*De missione* 1590, colloquy 22, 232; *Diálogo* 1997, 215)? In a word—if it is permissible here to borrow Miguel’s word, one full of awe, from the “Dialogue”—Rome is the world’s “dominatrix.”

That, apart from their other qualities, the popes also tend to be fornicators adds a certain pungency to their portrayal, as in the following episode.

The Roman daimyo Girerime ぎれりめ (Guilherme), a man known for his sagacity, does not like the fact that Pappa wields secular power; priests, he believes, should stick to teaching about the next world and keep their fingers out of this one. He deposes Pappa. Forced to cede Rome to Guilherme and go into retirement, Pappa ponders his next step. Taking into account his adversary’s reputation for astuteness, he concludes that an attempt to poison Guilherme is unlikely to succeed and a straightforward attempt on his life even less likely to work. A stratagem is his best bet, Pappa decides. Making Riyanoru りやのる (Leonor), Guilherme’s beautiful wife, the target of his attentions, he overwhelms her with all kinds of precious gifts. Leonor “not being made of wood or stone,” and Pappa “being beyond compare the most handsome man in the realm,” little wonder that “before long” he has his way with her; but she demurs at her seducer’s suggestion that she do away with her husband. “In that case,” Pappa tells her, “go and mingle with three hundred poor folk next Thursday. Invite the poor folk inside your palace. Give them all alms” (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 220–21).

So far, this story has been sheer invention. At this juncture, however, it connects to an established European hagiographical tradition. “Put cherry blossoms inside your bosom,” Pappa instructs Leonor. “When Guilherme inquires, take them out, saying, ‘These are flowers,’ and show them to your husband.” Leonor agrees to do as she is told.

It is the last Thursday of Lent, and Guilherme is away from the palace, occupied with his vassals at a social event scheduled for this day. Pappa collects a

crowd of the poor at the gate, Leonor comes outside, bearing cherry blossoms in her bosom. She also brings with her “an overabundance of gold,” which she distributes to three hundred and four persons waiting for alms. Guilherme, back from his engagement, comes across this scene. Naturally, he wants to know what is going on; in particular, he inquires about the unusual bulkiness of Leonor’s bosom. Leonor boldly tells her husband that she has been sharing out gold to the poor, but some was left over; intending to hand it out, too, she was counting the surplus when she saw him approach; so she hid the remaining gold in her robe, she says. When Guilherme opens the folds of her robe, however, what he sees is cherry blossoms. A wind aroused by Pappa’s magic scatters them across the palace garden (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 221–22).

Convinced that he has just witnessed an “unparalleled miracle” and that his double-dealing wife is a saint, Guilherme gets religion. Leonor eggs him on. “Worldly glory is a phantasm within a dream, more transient even than the gloss on a flower,” she tells him. The repentant Guilherme is persuaded by her words to give Rome back to Pappa and go dwell in the wilderness. As for Leonor, she builds a “new temple” called Miserikōriya ミせりかうりや (Misericórdia) and becomes its head. She resides there with a number of women, purportedly her disciples in the pursuit of a religious vocation, actually the paramours of priests. “Night after night,” the priests frequent the Misericórdia, “Pappa first and foremost.” Those are the origins of the institution known by that name.

In the denouement, Seizaemon shifts from contrived history to the equally fictional here and now, pointing an invidious finger at the current members of the organization. The “hundred irmãos of the Misericórdia,” he explains, is a cover name for the hundred priests’ paramours that have indwelt the institution from its very beginnings. “This sort of thing indisputably goes on inside the Misericórdia of Nagasaki in Japan as well” (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 222–23).

What is behind this scandalous tale? Here Seizaemon outdid himself: At the same time, he took on the two most revered queens in all of Portuguese history, Dona Leonor (1458–1525) overtly and Dona Isabel (1271–1336) surreptitiously. The latter, hallowed as Saint Elizabeth of Portugal by Catholics,²⁵ is not named by Chijiwa—or, rather, is effaced by him—but she is unmistakably present in the background. By combining the two figures into one, Seizaemon simultaneously embroidered and streamlined his story.

Dona Leonor, the queen of Dom João II, is historically associated with institutions of relief and medical care. The thermal hospital that she founded in 1485 in Caldas (a town now appropriately named Caldas da Rainha, hot springs of the queen), which is still active today, is but one example of her social concerns. She was present at the creation of the Confraria da Misericórdia (Confraternity

25. The native country of this Portuguese queen was Aragon; hence she is also called Elizabeth of Aragon (Isabel de Aragão).

of Mercy), which was established in Lisbon in 1498; indeed, the initiative for its foundation was hers (SÁ 1997, 59). This was a confraternity of laymen. Its mission, according to its famous “Pledge” (*Compromisso*) of 1516, was to dispense spiritual and corporal works of mercy to the poor, the sick, and the incarcerated. Its membership was restricted to men “of good reputation, sound conscience and honest life, fearful of God and observant of His commandments,” and was fixed at one hundred irmãos, that is, lay brothers, although in practice this number was greatly exceeded.²⁶ The Misericórdia of Lisbon was widely replicated. By 1525, more than sixty similar institutions had come into existence in Portugal; by the 1580s, they were found in cities throughout the vast overseas realm traversed by the Portuguese, including Macao (1569) and Nagasaki (1583).²⁷ By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the administration and financing of many of the principal hospitals in that realm as well as in Portugal itself was in the hands of local Misericórdias, which in effect provided the hospitals with everything except the actual medical staff. Healing the sick was only one of the responsibilities assumed by the brotherhood, however. Among the many others were providing dowries for orphan girls; visiting prisoners; ransoming captives; supporting children who had lost their fathers; giving alms to the poor “that were abashed;” and burying the dead, not only fellow members of the confraternity but all those who requested this last act of mercy (ALMEIDA 1993, 191–93). In short, the Misericórdia was a ubiquitous and comprehensive welfare institution, one of the cardinal structures of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Portuguese Catholic society. That was more than enough reason for Seizaemon to want to tear it down.

That Chijiwa was acquainted with this brotherhood’s main features is obvious from his story. His mention of a social event that kept Leonor’s husband and his vassals occupied on “the last Thursday of Lent” is revealing. To take part in a penitential procession on Good Thursday was one of the fundamental duties of the “hundred irmãos of the Misericórdia,” one of the three occasions on which they were all required to assemble at the house of the confraternity every year. Chijiwa, who had passed through the Portuguese cultural realm from east to west and then again from west to east, had undoubtedly become familiar with more than a few branches of the Misericórdia. Surely he knew from experience that it was an exclusive, all-male group, which did not permit entry to women. And it goes without saying that he knew full well how the Misericórdia of Nagasaki, in particular, functioned. That did not keep him from slandering it, along with the whole intercontinental institution. Inside knowledge is what his audience expected from the former Jesuit irmão, and Seizaemon seized the opportu-

26. ALMEIDA 1993, 185–90. The 1577 revision of the “Pledge” raised the membership of the Lisbon Misericórdia to six hundred, specifying that half that number were to be noblemen and the other half “artisans and artificers.” See ALMEIDA 1993, 189.

27. The Misericórdia of Nagasaki had one hundred irmãos by October 1585. SCHÜTTE 1968, 725.

nity to dispense what passed for confidential information, spreading rumor and scandal.

What was it, however, that brought Queen Leonor and Queen Isabel—Saint Elizabeth— together under the same roof in Seizaemon’s *Misericórdia*? The two queens had in common a reputation for charity to the poor and care for the sick. There is little possibility that Seizaemon simply confused the one with the other in confecting his story. This was an artful conflation.

Miguel, it may be inferred from one of the speeches assigned to him in the “Dialogue about the Mission of the Japanese Ambassadors to the Roman Curia,” had prayed before Elizabeth’s tomb in Coimbra as he had before Clare’s in Montefalco:

There is in this same city, among other things, a parthenon of sacred Virgins who follow the rule of the Divine Francis, which, not to mention the nobility of the religious women and other things that I omit, is magnificently adorned by the sepulcher and the sacred cadaver of the Divine Elizabeth, the queen of Lusitania, king Dionysius’ wife, whose singular virtues and exceptional holiness are attested by numerous miracles, recounted in so many books that it is surely unnecessary for me to rehearse them here.

(*De missione* 1590, colloquy 31, 353; *Diálogo* 1997, 310)

Like Clare, Elizabeth was not yet a saint, properly speaking, when Miguel and his companions paid a visit to Coimbra at year’s end in 1585. She had, however, been beatified in 1513, and the process of her canonization, formally initiated in 1576, was under way. (It was successfully concluded in 1625.) In other words, Elizabeth’s sainthood must have been a topic of general interest and importance in Coimbra and elsewhere in Portugal when the Japanese passed through.

The queen of Dom Dinis, Dona Isabel, played an important role in Portuguese—indeed, Iberian—affairs on more than one occasion during her husband’s reign. Known as a peacemaker skilled at restraining bellicose adversaries at the very edge of mayhem and reconciling them, upon being widowed in 1325 she retired to a palace built for her adjoining the Monastery of Saint Clare in Coimbra. This “parthenon” was a convent of Poor Clares, that is, nuns who followed the rule of Saint Clare of Assisi, Saint Francis’ great disciple. It had been erected at Isabel’s behest and with her funds in 1318. There, in the ambient of Franciscan religiosity, she lived a life of private devotion and public charity (ROSA 2000, 470–80). Isabel did not take religious orders but remained secular; she emerges from her hagiographies as the model par excellence of the saintly laywoman.²⁸

28. One of the themes pursued in Maria de Lurdes ROSA’s perceptive treatment of Dona Isabel is the “appropriation of the figure of the queen by Franciscan hagiography;” ROSA 2000, 471. The context is a discussion of the forms of female spirituality encouraged by mendicant monks and embraced by secular women at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century.

Needless to say, in those hagiographies her political accomplishments are overshadowed by her pious deeds.

According to the earliest known account of Dona Isabel's "Life and Miracles," ascribed to her Franciscan confessor Frei Salvado Martins (ROSA 2000, 477), her reputation for generosity to the poor was so great that whenever it became known that she was to "go from one place to another," a great number of men, women, and children would be found sitting along the roadsides and crowding the entrances to the towns to beseech her help—"and, many as there were, none left without alms." During Lent, Isabel distributed alms openly and to those "that were abashed." On Good Thursday she washed the feet of some "poor women who were disfigured by infections" and kissed them (*Vida e Milagres* 1921, 42–43). She engaged in the rehabilitation of prostitutes, for whom she founded a halfway house. "She clothed the naked, and those who were hungry or thirsty she ordered to be fed and given drink. And the sick she visited, and had others visit them. And she arranged for the dead to be buried and gave what was necessary for their funeral; she paid on behalf of those who were oppressed [by debt]; and she freed from error those in the ruinous state of sin and counseled them to persevere [in rectitude]. And she maintained a hospital, redeemed captives, paying the ransom from her own funds, and to others she gave assistance so that they could ransom themselves" (*Vida e Milagres* 1921, 61–62).

This may be nothing other than a routine enumeration of the traditional works of mercy, but Isabel's "Life" also contains passages that strike one as being much more than conventionally laudatory prose. For instance, the following dramatic, highly touching, and entirely realistic account of the great famine of 1333 makes it clear that in the case of this holy queen, the dispensation of charity was far from a pro forma exercise.

Using her own funds, Isabel distributed "great amounts of alms in the form of bread and meat" to the multitudes that sought refuge from starvation in Coimbra. The need was so great, however, that of those who wandered about, tormented by hunger, many collapsed and died. On hearing of their lot, the queen ordered that they "be provided with winding-sheets and candles, and that pits and trenches be made for them to be buried in." To make sure that they were buried properly, with the rites of the Church, Isabel sent priests to wherever the victims of famine had fallen. In a word, she was steadfast in her love of humankind:

Such a dearth of bread had not been witnessed in the land in living memory. Starving men and women fed on grass and ate carrion and other things that are not for men or women to eat. And at that time this queen succored many of those in need with bread and with money, ...and she did it so generously that certain people of her household reprehended her for not holding on to

what she was giving away; for one never knows what the morrow will bring. And she answered that if she did not succor in whatever way she could succor those whom she saw withering away from hunger, and if they were indeed to wither away for lack of succor, what then? She would be guilty of their deaths, it seemed to her. May God succor her hereafter! For now, she would continue providing for her supplicants. *(Vida e Milagres 1921, 68–69)*

When the time came to put the case for Elizabeth's canonization before the pope in 1625, she was credited with numerous miracles. Six of them, according to the official report, she had worked while still alive: (1) she had given the gift of eyesight to a girl blind from birth by touching the girl's eyes; (2) had healed a woman of a tumor by making the sign of the cross onto the afflicted part; (3) cured a severe head wound by applying egg white to it; (4) healed an incurable cancer by kissing the ulcerating sore and making the sign of the cross onto it; (5) changed water into wine; and (6) changed into roses the alms that she was carrying in a fold of her robe to distribute to the poor. She produced the roses when intercepted by her husband, Dom Dinis, who challenged her "not in order to keep her from her philanthropy but to take advantage of his power as a king and a man" (*Relatio* 1867, 207–8).

The sixth miracle became the definitional event in the construction of Elizabeth's image as a saint, and it has remained the key ingredient of that image to the present day. The story of the roses is not found in the fourteenth-century "Life and Miracles," a source that does, however, stress the objections made by people in her immediate presence to the queen's generosity. In the near-contemporary account, those people are anonymous. But the legend of Saint Elizabeth grew, and its plot became more poetic, until the queen's principal faultfinder was identified as her husband, a man intent on demonstrating his authority, whose aggressive pride she defeated with flowers. Was that version current when Miguel Chijiwa and his companions visited Portugal? Of course.

To be sure, there is little doubt that the "miracle of the roses" is a relatively late accretion to the hagiography of Dona Isabel. As far as can be determined, its first mention in print occurred in 1562 in a chronicle compiled by a Franciscan Bishop of Porto, Marcos de Lisboa, who was interested in glorifying the deeds of members and affiliates of the religious orders founded by Saint Francis of Assisi. This first mention is relatively brief: "Once when the holy Queen was carrying many coins in her lap to give to the poor, she unexpectedly met the King, who asked her what she was carrying, & she said, I carry roses here. And roses is what the King saw, though it was not the season for them. And it is with this miracle that the Holy Queen is depicted in some parts" (MARCOS DE LISBOA 1562, cxcvii). Bishop Marcos' last sentence indicates that by the 1560s the rose imagery occupied a firm place in the popular tradition.

By the next century, roses had become indelibly associated with Saint Eliza-

beth of Portugal.²⁹ The “miracle of the roses” is the subject of an intriguing scene in the Spanish “Golden Century” play by Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, *Santa Isabel, Reina de Portugal* (ROJAS ZORRILLA 1866, 263–64). A magnificent painting by Zurbarán, who portrays Isabel as a crowned, sumptuously dressed lady bearing roses in the folds of her skirt, may be admired in the Prado Museum in Madrid.³⁰ But these exemplary works are products of the 1630s. Long before then, Seizaemon had brought Isabel’s legend all the way to Japan, even if he failed to name its heroine properly and perverted its meaning.

In the final analysis, this raconteur must be admired if for no other reason, then for his grasp—and, indeed, when it comes down to it, also for his manipulation—of the sources. In view of Miguel’s tour of Europe, his knowledge of Roman Catholic legendary materials is not surprising. Moreover, those materials were part of his Jesuit training. But Chijiwa had a healthy curiosity that took him beyond what the Jesuits taught him. He was culturally acquisitive—eclectic if not omnivorous, so much so that it is difficult to explain where he acquired all the stories that found their way into “Christians in Plain Text,” to be deconstructed there. For instance, his full-blown citation of the “History of the Valiant Knight Pierre, Son of the Count of Provence, and of the Beautiful Maguelonne, Daughter of the King of Naples,” to put the title of the presumed prototype into English, is little short of amazing (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 223–30). This chivalric romance, commonly but not unanimously assumed to be of French origin and to date from the middle of the fifteenth century, is not one of the better-known books of its genre. The Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon lists no Portuguese version printed before 1737. It is true, however, that a Castilian version was published as early as 1519 (*La historia de la linda Magalona* 1995, xxxi). In any event, this is not the sort of book that his Jesuit masters would have encouraged Miguel to read. But he could have picked up the story through an oral transmission. Perhaps he heard it, along with other amorous tales, at the scuttlebutt on board ship or, for that matter, from a Portuguese merchant or sailor in Nagasaki after he left the Jesuits.

Of course Seizaemon garbled the story,³¹ although an argument can be made that his introduction of the demon Inkanto Burushiya いかんとおるしや

29. Roses are associated with Elizabeth of Portugal indelibly but not uniquely. About ten other men and women canonized or beatified by the Roman Catholic Church have similar miracles attributed to them. The most famous of them—outside of Portugal—is Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (alias Elizabeth of Thuringia, 1207–31; canonized 1235), who not only was Dona Isabel’s great-aunt but also the person for whom she was named. Among the others are Saint Casilda of Toledo and Saint Flora of Beaulieu.

30. A magnificent painting by Zurbarán, who portrays Casilda in the same pose as Isabel and in a similarly sumptuous costume, but without the royal attribute of a crown, may be admired across the street from the Prado in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza.

31. In doing so, he was in the best of company. Don Quixote, as one might expect, knew of *la linda Magalona*. But he cited the book incorrectly; II: xli.

(Encanto Bruxa) into the plot is actually an improvement. His male protagonist, Donpei Doro とん平とろ (Dom Pedro; Pierres in the Castilian version), is a prince of Portugal whose ladylove Magarōniya まかろうにや (Magalonha or Magalona) is transplanted in his stead to Purunsan ふるんさん (Provence). Not only are the locales of the action different, many of Seizaemon's other details also differ from what is found in orthodox versions of this romance in European languages. But the basic pattern is unmistakably the same: the lovers' meeting in the palace garden arranged by a complicit nurse, the theft of a precious item by a crow, the drift across the seas in an abandoned wreck of a boat, the shipment of a prize of great value in pottery jars—it is all there. In orthodox versions, Magalona after being separated from Pierres becomes the foundress of a hospital, and the hospital becomes the unexpected beneficiary of a treasure of gold and silver shipped by Pierres in fourteen jars (*La historia de la linda Magalona* 1995, 328–29 and 334–35; *Die Schön Magelona* 1537, J ii and K ii–iii). In Seizaemon's variant, there are fifteen jars, and their contents, supplied to Dom Pedro by Encanto Bruxa, are rare ingredients used in poisons and magical charms. These devilish drugs have been distributed all over the world, from Rome as far as Japan, wherever there are Christians; members of the Osupitari おすひたり (Hospital) Confraternity, expert poisoners all, are in charge of mixing the components (*Kirishitan kanagaki* 1984, 230). As though the Misericórdia were not enough, Seizaemon has found himself another charitable organization as a target. He takes aim here at the Hospitalers of the Order of Saint John of God, a brotherhood that was active not only in Europe but also in Portuguese settlements on the Indian Ocean (SÁ 1997, 81). And because of her association with a hospital, the story of Magalona, too, is turned into material for discrediting Christian institutions.

What we observe in Seizaemon is an aggressive defiance of the European example that Miguel had been indoctrinated with. It would be inadequate to say that Seizaemon mocks sanctity and leave it at that. He demeans, defames, denigrates, debases everything that he has been taught to hold sacred. He takes the most exalted models of Christian culture off their pedestals and drags them in the dirt. The question is why.

What was it that that made Seizaemon “feel bitter against the padres” and leave? Was it a trivial disagreement or a serious clash? And who was at fault? The Jesuit missionary Afonso de Lucena, who spent long years in Ōmura and knew Miguel well, is regrettably opaque in his reminiscences: “He was dismissed from the Society because he asked and deserved to be dismissed.” That Miguel—or Seizaemon—was not easy to get along with is the message one gets from Lucena, who states that after entering the service of Ōmura Yoshiaki, Seizaemon behaved like such an odious misfit that Yoshiaki more than once considered having him killed. Eventually, according to Lucena, he sought refuge

with his other cousins, the Arima, but there, too, he lived dangerously until he was “thrown out.”³²

Lucena’s most revealing statement about Seizaemon is: “He became such a heretic or atheist (not a heathen, after all, because he adored neither Shaka nor Amida) that I realized during a leisurely talk I had with him after his retrogression that he had truly lost at heart the faith which he had received in Holy Baptism. He thought so badly of Christ Our Lord that he compared Him with Mohammed. Just as this accursed Mohammed thought that Christ was not God, so does this accursed Miguel also think.” This was obviously not a frivolous conversation. From it one may deduce that Miguel’s rebellion was the result not of a momentary pique but of a fundamental disagreement. It is difficult to believe that such a one had a genuine priestly vocation, and easy to assume that he was burdened with doubts. At some point during his Jesuit training, he must have experienced a crisis of faith. Perhaps it was insensitivity on the part of a superior or a spiritual director that kept the crisis from being resolved. Or perhaps he had simply reached the limit of his willingness to accept tutelage without question. He made a clean break and not only rejected the system of beliefs that had been implanted in him but vindictively turned against those who thought that they had molded his very being.

Or could it be that Miguel’s rebellion started during his “boyhood,” that not all of the four Japanese tourists being conducted through Europeland were innocents abroad, and that despite Alexandro Valignano’s best intentions not to let them “see or become aware of anything that might cause them to embrace a contrary opinion” (VALIGNANO 1583, fol. 52v, para. 15), one of the four had kept peeking behind the curtain?

Valignano’s hoped-for coup de théâtre did not take place. The main speaker of his “Dialogue” decided to write his own script. The journey to the West ended with a radical case of apostasy.

32. See LUCENA 1972, 132–35. Cf. MOREJON 1621, fol. 49v: “Don Miguel was dismissed from the Society because he was sickly and more or less crippled.” Unfortunately, chronicles and other records of the house of Ōmura, which are by no means reluctant to mention Chijiwa and his travels to Rome, say nothing that would clarify Lucena’s story about a fatal break between him and his lord. *Shinsen shikeiroku*, the previously cited genealogy of the retainers of that house, not only notes that Yoshiaki granted Seizaemon a six hundred-*koku* fief but says, surprisingly, that he sent Chijiwa to an unnamed “barbarian country” (other sources indicate that it was Luzon) in order to determine whether the “Jesus religion” was good or bad; moreover, the same document states that Genba, Seizaemon’s fourth son, was married to Yoshiaki’s niece and lived in the Second Enceinte of the daimyo castle of Ōmura, making a total rupture between the Ōmura and Chijiwa families appear unlikely. To be sure, this document also states that Seizaemon’s eldest son, Tomanosuke 度馬之助, “for a certain reason” left the service of the Ōmura, becoming a *rōnin*, and obtained employment with the Arima (after the shogunate had transferred the Arima from Hizen to Nobeoka 延岡 in Hyūga in 1614). That Tomanosuke should later have left the service of the Arima “for a certain reason” makes the genealogy’s account of his career a curious parallel of Lucena’s story of Seizaemon’s vagaries (ŌISHI 2005, 90–91). The male lineage of the Chijiwa family died out with Tomanosuke and Genba’s generation.

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