

Penance in the Jesuit Mission to Japan, 1549–1562

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The early modern Japanese Church developed syncretistic practices in which Roman Catholicism came to function similarly to Buddhism and Shintō. This study examines the development of such practices, with particular focus on penitential rituals. It argues that certain of these rites were produced in the very early years of the mission through extensive discussions between European priests and Japanese Christians. They were compromises that were both hard-fought and intentional.

The religious syncretism that developed in the early modern Japanese Church was in part due to the basic conditions of the mission. In the early years, before the conversion of the regional Japanese lords, the mission only counted about 6,000 members and the half-dozen priests were stretched, but not overwhelmed in their duties.¹ Matters changed in 1563, when the nobility began to adopt Christianity and institute mass conversions in their territories. By 1600 the number of Christians had grown to as many as 370,000 members.² The mission severely lacked priests. In this situation, converts often received minimal religious training – learning a catechism and some prayers before being baptised. Many villages were only visited by clergy once every few years.³ After the Shimabara Rebellion, in 1637, the situation grew even more

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¹ For the numbers of converts cited here see Gonoï Takashi 五野井隆史, *Nihon Kirisutokyooshi* 日本キリスト教史 [History of the Japanese Church], Tokyo 1990, 6.

² *Ibid.* 11.

³ On the mass conversions within the *daimyō* domains see Ikuo Higashibaba's excellent study, *Christianity in early modern Japan: kirishitan belief and practice*, Boston, MA 2001, 12–16. On the isolation of some local churches due to understaffing see Johannes Laures, *The Catholic Church in Japan: a short history*, Notre Dame 1954, 193–4.

difficult as repression intensified, the European priests were exiled and the remaining Christians were forced underground.

Under these conditions, unique religious practices developed, mingling Roman Catholicism with local folk religion. The most famous example is that of the *kakure kirishitan*, the Christians who held to their faith in secret for over two hundred years. When European priests contacted them in the late nineteenth century, they noted significant religious differences. On the one hand, the *kirishitan* upheld many Roman Catholic rituals, such as baptism and the veneration of Mary. However, they also had introduced elements of ancestor worship and their pantheon had grown wider to include some local divinities.⁴ Scholars have offered varying interpretations of this. Church historians of the mid-twentieth century regarded the *kirishitan* traditions with regret and sympathy, noting the difficult circumstances of the Church and emphasising the resemblances with traditional Roman Catholicism.⁵ More recently, scholars have revalorised these traditions. Instead of treating them as deficient forms of Christianity, they have examined them as legitimate religious expressions in their own right.⁶ Behind these revaluations are continuing discussions about the phenomenon of syncretism in general.⁷

This article focuses upon the dynamic interaction between the European missionaries and the Japanese Christians in this syncretic process. Understandably, historiography has focused more upon the local Christians and their methods of adapting religious practice. The role of the missionaries, on the other hand, is often viewed in terms of disengagement and accommodation. ‘Disengagement’ refers to the shortage of priests, which required them to leave much of the business of the church to lay leaders known as *dōjuku*.⁸ ‘Accommodation’ refers to Alessandro

⁴ See Stephen Turnbull, *The kakure kirishitan of Japan: a study of their development, beliefs and rituals to the present day*, Richmond, VA 1998.

⁵ Joseph Jennes, *History of the Catholic Church in Japan*, Tokyo 1959, 194–201; Laures, *Catholic Church*, 191–9.

⁶ See, for example, Takao Abe, *The Jesuit mission to New France: a new interpretation in the light of the earlier Jesuit experience in Japan*, Boston 2011, 165–200, and Higashibaba, *Christianity*, pp. xv–xvii. This is also the position of Turnbull, *Kakure*, 9–18.

⁷ For a broad theoretical introduction to notions of syncretism see Anita M. Leopold and Jeppe S. Jensen (eds), *Syncretism in religion: a reader*, New York 2005. For a helpful discussion of the different meanings of the term ‘syncretism’, and the cultural processes that it entails in the context of Christianity, see David Chung, *Syncretism: the religious context of Christian beginnings in Korea*, Albany 2001, esp. pp. 83–90. On the impact of Europe upon Confucianism and Shintō see Peter Beyer, *Religions in global society*, New York 2006, 225–53. For a discussion on syncretic Christianity in China, in particular in regard to Hong Xiuquan, leader of the Taiping revolution, see Jordan Paper, *The spirits are drunk: comparative approaches to Chinese religion*, Albany 1995, 245–64.

⁸ On the *dōjuku* (同宿) see Neil S. Fujita, *Japan’s encounter with Christianity*, New York 1991, 74–6.

Valignano's strategy of adaptation, which called on European churchmen to conform in their behaviour to Japanese custom, rather than *vice-versa*.⁹ From this perspective, then, the syncretism arose from both the physical and the cultural withdrawal of the European missionaries, which opened up space for Japanese tradition.¹⁰

This approach has much validity, in particular for the later years of the mission, when the number of baptisms increased and repression intensified. However, it does not serve as well as a model for the early years of the mission, prior to 1563. During this period, European priests were more actively engaged in the everyday life of the Church. The syncretic tendencies which were already perceptible at this time require a different theoretical model. This study argues that the role of the priests was in this case marked less by disengagement than by negotiation. The missionaries took a proactive, even coercive stance. However, the Japanese did not always agree, and a resolution had to be found that was acceptable to both sides. It was by means of these compromises that Roman Catholicism was adapted to Muromachi Japanese culture, and a measured form of syncretism arose.

This study thus focuses on the initial period of the mission, from 1549 to 1562. It follows, in particular, the development of penitential rituals. Three forms of satisfaction will be examined: alms, mortification and fasting, all of which underwent notable changes.

Sources and methodology

For the period from 1549 to 1562, the nature of the sources is somewhat problematic. While the seventeenth-century Japanese Church offers a somewhat broader range of historical materials, the early period has only one significant primary source: the Jesuit correspondence.¹¹ The priests

⁹ Valignano's policy of adaptation has been examined in several excellent studies. A good introduction is in Andrew C. Ross, *A vision betrayed: the Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742*, London 1994, 32-46. A close examination of the development of this policy can be found in Josef Franz Schutte, *Valignano's mission principles for Japan*, trans. John J. Coyne, St Louis 1985, ii. For an analysis of the broader historical context that grounded this policy see J.F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in sixteenth-century Japan*, New York 1993, passim, but especially pp. 161-77. For a case study which explores some of the theological dilemmas that this policy presented see Asami Masakazu, 'Lord-vassal relations in feudal Japan as seen by Alessandro Valignano', in Adolfo Tamburello, M. Antoni J. Üçerler and Marisa di Russo (eds), *Alessandro Valignano S.I.: uomo del Rinascimento*, Rome 2008, 159-74.

¹⁰ Higashibaba, *Christianity*, 12-28.

¹¹ The Jesuit correspondence is collected in two volumes of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu*, both edited by Juan Ruiz-de-Medina: *Documentos del Japón, 1547-1557*

wrote annual reports for their superiors in Goa, Lisbon and Rome, reports which give rich information on both the Church and the region. They are a priceless historical resource, not only for their detail, but also for their preservation. While many other sources from that time have been lost, this correspondence reached Rome safely where it was carefully archived.

Other than the Jesuit correspondence, there are few other sources on the early mission. The Japanese Christians during this period were generally poor and illiterate – few were capable of keeping records.¹² In addition, the numerous battles and fires of the Warring States period meant a low rate of documentary preservation. Consequently, the only extant writings from these Christians are those that the Jesuit priests translated and included in their correspondence. The records of the *daimyō*, the regional lords, offer scraps of information. For example, the annals of Ōuchi Yoshitaka, lord of Yamaguchi, contain a brief mention of Francis Xavier’s visit and the gifts that he brought.¹³ A map made for Ōtomo Sōrin, lord of Bungō, shows the precise location of the church in the city of Funai.¹⁴ However, these sources are fragmentary, and such mentions of the Christians are rare.

Thus, the Jesuit correspondence has an overwhelming importance in early mission historiography, to the point of becoming problematic. The priests were honest and perceptive observers, but they had biases and did not always understand what they saw. Without any counter-balancing primary sources, it is difficult to evaluate the trustworthiness of their statements. Scholars have thus turned towards cultural history. In comparing the activities of the Christians with those of contemporary Buddhist sects and folk religion, general patterns of behaviour can be inferred, patterns that can be used to check the priests’ observations. This approach has

(*Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu* cxxxvii, 1990); and *Documentos del Japón, 1558–1562* (*Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu* cxlviii, 1995).

¹² On the preponderant role of the poor in the mission see Léon Bourdon, *La Compagnie de Jesus et le Japon: la fondation de la mission japonaise par François Xavier (1547–1551) et les premiers résultats de la prédication chrétienne sous le supériorat de Cosme de Torrès (1551–1570)*, Paris 1993, 340–1.

¹³ This document is discussed, for example, in studies on the history of optics in Japan, because Xavier gave a gift of glasses to Yoshitaka: Fujiwara Hirofumi 藤原裕文, ‘Rōgan no azayaka ni miyuru kagami 老眼のあざやかに見ゆる鏡’ [‘A lens for making old eyes see clearly’], *Kōgaku* 光学 [Optics] xxviii/5 (1999), 283–4.

¹⁴ On the map of Funai and the layout of the city see Kage Toshio 鹿毛敏夫, ‘Bunken / ezu kara mita Ōtomo yakata to Funai no machi – toshi to kokusai-sei 文献・絵図からみた大友館と府内の町—都市と国際性’ [The Otomo Palace and the town of Funai as seen in texts and drawings: a city and its cosmopolitanism], in *Nanban toshi Bungo Funai: toshi to kōeki* 南蛮都市・豊後府内: 都市と交易 [The ‘southern barbarian’ city (a euphemism for the Portuguese): Bungo Funai: the city and trade], Oita 2001, 26–31.

led to enormous advances, as pioneered in the work of Okada Akio.¹⁵ However, it has also presented certain challenges. Syncretism becomes a methodological assumption, with the result that it comes to seem an all-pervasive phenomenon. This makes it difficult to distinguish the limits of religious assimilation, points at which European priests simply could not accept Japanese traditions, or when Japanese believers rejected European ecclesiastical practices.

This study follows the method of comparative religion, but also tries to complement it by focusing on the dynamic interaction between the European priests and the Japanese laity. It is argued that syncretism did occur, but as a dialogic process, rather than as a one-sided strategy of reception. In discussing the three penitential practices the first to be examined will be alms.

Alms

Before coming to Japan, Francis Xavier set up a policy concerning alms for all Jesuits in Asia. Priests were not to collect money for themselves, but rather to set up a *Confraria de la Misericórdia* which would receive the funds and distribute them to the poor.¹⁶ These directions were standardised in India and Malacca.¹⁷ The Japanese mission, however, did not follow them, because it did not have a *Confraria*. No explanation is ever offered for why one was not established. Most likely, the Church was simply too young and too small. In this situation, the mission superior of Japan, Father Cosme de Torrès, chose not to collect alms at all.

Soon, the Japanese Christians became dissatisfied with this state of affairs. Brother Pedro de Alcaçova visited the church in Yamaguchi in 1553, and in his report to his superiors in Goa he gave the following account:

At this time, the bonzes began to murmur, saying that the Japanese were becoming Christians to avoid giving alms to the pagodas. Knowing this, the Christians came to speak about it with Father [Torrès], saying that it seemed good to them, since we do not accept money, that we keep a box at the door of the Church, and that the

¹⁵ See, for example, Okada Akio 岡田章雄, *Nanban shūzoku kō* 南蛮宗俗考 [Study of the religion and customs of the 'southern barbarians'], Tokyo 1942. See also his *Kirishitan shinkō to shūzoku* キリシタン信仰と習俗 [The beliefs and customs of the Christians], Kyoto 1983.

¹⁶ See Francis Xavier, 'Regimento que o B. P. Francisco costumava dar aos padres da Companhia da India, que mandava a fructificar ás fortalezas d'ella', in *Monumenta xaveriana*, Madrid 1900, doc. 150, pp. 858–80 at p. 866.

¹⁷ On the *Confrarias* of India see Anthony D'costa, *The Christianisation of the Goa islands, 1510–1567*, Bombay 1965, 138–42.

Christians put in there whatever they wish, and that this money be given to the poor who would come to beg for alms, both Christians and pagans. The Christians also ordained that once a month they should feed the poor.¹⁸

The initial move to give alms was thus not initiated by Torrès, but by the Japanese Christians themselves. This was doubtless because alms already formed an integral part of Muromachi religious culture. It was common to Buddhism and Shintō, to nobility and commoners. Itinerant holy men, *hijiri*, travelled about collecting funds for temples, appealing to all social classes – this is probably why the Christians were accused of not giving ‘to the pagodas’.¹⁹ That said, the nobility bore particular responsibility. They generally sponsored multiple local temples, monasteries and shrines. For example, the *daimyō* who ruled over Yamaguchi during the initial period of the mission, Ōuchi Yoshitaka, supported the Tendai, the Shingon and the Rinzai Zen sects, with favour for Rinzai Zen.²⁰

Behind the request of the Japanese Christians lay not only a religious culture of alms-giving, but also of mutual social aid. This period witnessed the rapid growth of small groups, centred upon local shrines and temples, known as *kō*, which pooled funds to support members.²¹ The proposal of the local Christians seems to follow this model. As to the specific form of charity – meals for the poor – it had precedents in the Jōdo and Jōdo Shinshū sects, which, like the Christian Church, tended towards populism.²² For special feasts and celebrations, local Shintō groups also held communal feasts.²³

¹⁸ ‘Neste tempo alevantarão os bonzos hũa murmuração, dizêdo, que os Iapões se faião Christãos, por não darê esmolos aos pagodes, e sabêdo isto os Christãos vierão no dizer ao padre, e que lhes parecia muyto bê, ja que nos não tomavamos dinheiro, que tivesseos hũa caixa â porta da Igreja, e que os christãos lançarião ahy o que quisessê, e este dinheyro se daria aos pobres, que viessem pedir esmola, assi Christãos, como gentios. Tambem ordenarão os Christãos, que hũa vez cada mes dessem de comer aos pobres’: Pedro de Alcaçova a los jesuitas de Portugal, Goa, Mar. 1554, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 88 at p. 422. All translations are my own.

¹⁹ On the itinerant *hijiri* (聖), who conducted giving campaigns targeting the humble classes, see Janet R. Goodwin, *Alms and vagabonds: Buddhist temples and popular patronage in medieval Japan*, Honolulu 1994, 114–15.

²⁰ See Fukuo Takeichirō 福尾猛市郎, *Ōuchi Yoshitaka* 大内義隆 [Ōuchi Yoshitaka (an eponymous title)], Tokyo 1959, 102–5. It should be noted that the nobility was not always completely faithful in these patronal activities of local temples and shrines. See, for example, the case of Asakura Yoshikage: Makoto Suitō 水藤真, *Asakura Yoshikage* 朝倉義景 [Asakura Yoshikage (an eponymous title)], Tokyo 1981, 135–44.

²¹ On the growth of the *kō* (講) during the Muromachi period see Nagahara Keiji 永原慶二, *Gekokujo no jidai* 下剋上の時代 [The age when inferiors overthrew superiors], Tokyo 1965, 411–12. For a discussion on the relationship of these groups with local temples and shrines see Carol Richmond Tsang, *War and faith: Ikkō Ikki in late Muromachi Japan*, Cambridge 2007, 28–30.

²² William Wayne Farris, *Japan’s medieval population*, Honolulu 2006, 180–2.

²³ See Abe, *Jesuit mission*, 171.

Thus the rumour that the Christians were converting in order to avoid giving was an accusation not only of impiety, but also of social irresponsibility. Like the other religious groups, the Christians wanted to contribute to the well-being of the whole society. This explains why they asked that alms be distributed to both Christians and non-Christians. The benefit was not necessarily turned inwards towards the group, but outwards towards the community. The Christians wanted the Jesuit mission to meet cultural expectations of how religions should function within the social fabric.

There were also political motivations behind this request. The entire region was undergoing a period of turmoil. In 1551, just prior to Alcaçova's report, Ōuchi Yoshitaka was in fact overthrown, and in his place was raised Ōuchi Yoshinaga, surrounded by the factions of Naitō Okimori and Sue Harukata.²⁴ Influenced by his older brother, the *daimyō* Ōtomo Sōrin, who had welcomed Francis Xavier, Yoshinaga encouraged Christianity.²⁵ According to Luis Frois, Sue Harukata himself came and worshipped in the church in 1554, spreading wonder and fright among the congregation.²⁶ In this context, in which the nobility needed to establish its legitimacy, charitable activities were essential. The fallen Ōuchi Yoshitaka had supported many religious groups that were active in the community. Ōuchi Yoshinaga needed the Christians to be equally dynamic.

It should also be noted that the nobles supported the Christian Church using the same methods that they used towards Buddhism and Shintō. Just as they gave large donations to the Buddhist sects at funerals, so also did they give to the Christian Church, offering gifts of money, jewellery and clothes after the passing of loved ones.²⁷ Just as they gave land to Buddhist temples that could be rented out for profit, in the same way Ōtomo Sōrin granted plots to the mission.²⁸

Now, Father Torrès was clearly delighted by the request for charitable activities. In fact, this vision of a charity that reached out beyond the Church,

²⁴ On the fall of Ōuchi Yoshitaka and its aftermath see Yoshinaga Masaharu 吉永正春, *Kyūshū Sengokushi* 九州戦国史 [History of Kyushu during the Warring States], Fukuoka 1981, 146–53.

²⁵ On the relationship between Ōtomo Sōrin and Ōuchi Yoshinaga, and the complex regional tensions surrounding Yamaguchi and Bungo, see Toyama Mikio 外山幹夫, *Ōtomo Sōrin* 大友宗麟 [Ōtomo Sōrin (an eponymous title)], Tokyo 1975, 32–46.

²⁶ Luis Frois, *Nihonshi* 日本史 [History of Japan (a translation of the original title *Historia de Japam*)], trans. Masuda Kiichi 松田毅一, Tokyo 2000, vi. 107–10.

²⁷ See, for example, Baltasar Gago a los jesuitas de la India, Funai, 1 Nov. 1559, *Documentos, 1558–1562*, doc. 15 at p. 187. On the practice of giving at funerals see Higashibaba, *Christianity*, 123, and Goodwin, *Alms*, 120–7.

²⁸ On the use of the *shōen* (莊園) system as a form of patronage to temples see Goodwin, *Alms*, 11–14. On Ōtomo Sōrin's relationship with the Buddhist and Shintō temples see Toyama, *Ōtomo Sōrin*, 237–44.

towards the broader community, fitted well with the Jesuit spirit.²⁹ Torrès quickly moved to respond. However, the system that he set up doubtless surprised the Japanese. Certainly, there were some resemblances between the Christian and Buddhist views of feeding the hungry: both groups saw it as an expression of compassion towards fellow human beings and of piety towards divinity. However, Torrès added an additional dimension: that of penance. It was a way to ask for God's mercy by showing mercy to others.³⁰ Before coming to Asia, Torrès had spent nearly four years in New Spain (1538–42), where he had been personal confessor to a Spanish nobleman.³¹ During this period, he was deeply influenced by the Franciscans.³² The friars had instituted meals for the poor through which they encouraged the Spanish colonists and former Nahua nobility to take on the role of servants to the poor. Strikingly, the conquered Nahua were made to humble themselves before people who had once been their slaves.³³ The activity was well-meant, but it was likely experienced as a humiliation.³⁴

Cosme de Torrès tried to organise the meals in Japan in this tradition. Alcaçova reports that he had the oldest, most respected Christians serve the poorest.³⁵ In doing so, however, he altered the meaning of the act according to Muromachi culture. He changed the nobleman from protector and benefactor to lowly servant.³⁶ This reversal of roles caused

²⁹ On Ignatius of Loyola's use of confraternities as outreach towards socially denigrated communities see Lance Gabriel Lazar, *Working in the vineyard of the Lord: Jesuit confraternities in early modern Italy*, Toronto 2005.

³⁰ See, for example, the explanation of the penitential act of alms in Luis de Granada, *Quinque de poenitentia conciones, habitae in Quadragesima post meridiem*, Antwerp 1581, 76–8.

³¹ Torrès eventually joined Ruy López de Villalobos's disastrous expedition to the Moluccas, which brought him into Portuguese Asia. There he met Francis Xavier. On Torrès's early life see Diego Pacheco, *El hombre que forjó a Nagasaki: vida del P. Cosmé de Torrès, S. J.*, Madrid 1973, 9–15.

³² See, for example, Torrès's autobiographical letter which praises the Franciscans: Cosme de Torrès a Ignacio de Loyola, Simón Rodrigues y demás Jesuitas de Europa, Goa, 25 Jan. 1549, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 16 at p. 95.

³³ See Toribio de Benavente, *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, ed. Claudio Esteva Fabregat, Madrid 2001, 172, and Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Mexico City 1770, 435.

³⁴ On the complex interplay between colonial domination and pastoral care in the Franciscan practice of penance in New Spain see Viviana Díaz Balsera, *The pyramid under the Cross: Franciscan discourses of evangelization and the Nahua Christian subject in sixteenth-century Mexico*, Tucson 2005, 117–58. See also Osvaldo F. Pardo, *The origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua rituals and Christian sacraments in sixteenth-century Mexico*, Ann Arbor 2006, 79–130.

³⁵ Alcaçova a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 88 at p. 422.

³⁶ Adapting to Japanese social structure often proved challenging for the missionaries. For example, on Francis Xavier's initial frustrations with this matter see Charles Boxer, *The Christian century in Japan*, Los Angeles 1967, 210.

discomfort – certainly among the nobility, and perhaps among the poor as well. Alcaçova notes this with carefully chosen words. He says that these practices were ‘contrary to the people of the land. Before converting, all were generally very proud’.³⁷

In general, Torrès’s strategy of placing the poor at the heart of activities seems to have disturbed the Japanese. The presence of outcasts, and in particular sickly outcasts, in church buildings had disturbing implications of ritual impurity.³⁸ The European priests mistakenly thought that they would impress the Japanese by overcoming such hesitations in their efforts to serve.³⁹

The discomfort of the Christians caused the practice to evolve over the years. Alcaçova’s letter is the last time that it is reported that the elders, specifically, were made to serve the poor. It is also the last time that all were reported to eat together as equals, poor and rich, priests and laypeople. In contrast, the reports of 1555 indicate that the meal time for the Christians was separate from that for the poor.⁴⁰ In 1557 this separation between the two was stated even more directly. Father Gaspar Vilela’s annual report, from the city of Funai, describes a great Easter feast for which a cow was imported, and beef and rice served to all. Vilela says that the Christians ate first, and that after the meal the leftovers were served to the poor.⁴¹ After that year, there is no more mention of any communal meal, at least in Funai. It seems that the Christians henceforth gathered together in private homes after Sunday mass in order to eat and discuss.⁴²

After a few years of experimentation, then, charitable meals seem largely to have been abandoned. In this area, a satisfactory compromise between

³⁷ ‘cousa contrária à gente desta terra. Porque todos geralmente antes de se converterem são mui soberbos’: Alcaçova a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 88 at p. 422.

³⁸ On the historical development of the class of ritually impure people, the *eta hinin* (穢多非人), see Keiji Nagahara, ‘The medieval origins of the eta-hinin’, *Journal of Japanese Studies* v (Summer 1979), 385–403. On the struggles of the Jesuits in serving this population see Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits*, 104–6.

³⁹ On the conflicting attitudes of Europeans during this period towards the sick, and in particular in times of plague see Brian Pullan, ‘Plague and perceptions of the poor in early modern Italy’, in his *Poverty and charity: Europe, Italy, Venice, 1400–1700*, Aldershot 1994, vii, pp. 101–23. On the Society of Jesus, specifically when confronted with disease, see A. Lynn Martin, *Plague? Jesuit accounts of epidemic disease in the 16th century*, Kirksville 1996, passim but esp. pp. 175–88.

⁴⁰ Duarte da Sylva a los jesuitas de India, Bungo, 10 Sept. 1555, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 110 at p. 521.

⁴¹ Gaspar Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, Hirado, 29 Oct. 1557, *ibid.* doc. 127 at p. 698.

⁴² Baltasar Gago a los jesuitas de la India, Funai, 1 Nov. 1559, *Documentos, 1558–1562*, doc. 15 at p. 182.

the European and Japanese traditions was never found. However, this was not the end of all charitable activity. In fact, the church-organised meals were basically replaced by another system, one which found greater success.

1557 marked a watershed year. In that year, Cosme de Torrès launched Japan's first *Confraria de la Misericórdia*.⁴³ After eight years, the mission was finally brought into concordance with Francis Xavier's original instructions. It was also brought closer to the practice of the Jesuits of India. With the establishment of the *Confraria*, alms were no longer collected by the priests, but by the major-domos of the brotherhood. Gaspar Vilela reports, in 1557, that a box was still used to collect alms.⁴⁴ However, the local Christians themselves now held the keys to it. In addition, care for the poor shifted from the priests to the major-domos. Consequently, activities such as feeding the poor were no longer under the direct administration of Father Torrès.

With the Japanese Christians playing a more prominent role, the *Confraria* was able to serve the community in a manner that better fitted with local custom. A Japanese man, baptised Paulo, was the first major-domo of the *Confraria*. He visited homes, personally distributing money to the poor and the widows. Skilled in Chinese herbal medicine, he also helped to care for the sick during these visits.⁴⁵ This system pleased both the Japanese and the Europeans. From the missionaries' perspective, such personal visitations were fairly common. The European confraternities had developed a broad panoply of charitable methods that included both public meals and private house calls.⁴⁶ From a Japanese perspective, such visitations were also fairly common. *Hijiri* often worked as ambulant healers, entering homes to pray for the sick and to exorcise spirits.⁴⁷ The *oshi*, of the Shugendō sects, played a similar role, except that they were less ambulant, serving specific villages or families.⁴⁸ Such holy men could, in principle, defend themselves from impurity, and thus they

⁴³ Juan Ruiz-de-Medina, 'Apéndice 2: los Jesuitas y la beneficencia', *ibid.* 667.

⁴⁴ Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 127 at p. 689.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ On the various forms of relief for the poor that were developing in Europe during this period see Brian Pullan, 'Support and redeem: charity and poor relief in Italian cities from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century', *Poverty and charity*, v, pp. 177–208.

⁴⁷ On the charitable activities of the *hijiri* see Ichiro Hori, 'The concept of *hijiri*', *Numen* v/3 (Sept. 1958), 224–5.

⁴⁸ For an excellent introduction to Shugendō see Miyake Hitoshi, *Shugendō: essays on the structure of Japanese folk religion*, ed. H. Byron Earhart, Ann Arbor 2001. On the parish system of one Shugendō sect see H. Byron Earhart, *A religious study of the Mount Haguro sect of Shugendō*, Tokyo 1970, 60–6. On the historical development of the *oshi* (御師), in particular in their role serving specific aristocratic houses, see Miyake Hitoshi 宮家準, *Kumano shugen* 熊野修験 [The Shugen of the Kumano region], Tokyo 1992, 31–40.

could work more directly with the sick and outcast, without transgressing social norms. It is interesting to note that Paulo was a former Buddhist monk and *hijiri*. His charitable methods found a meeting point between the two cultural worlds.

After Paulo's death, this method of distributing alms was further institutionalised within the Confraria. In 1559, Father Baltasar Gago said that two major-domos were appointed who collected money from the box and distributed it to the poor, travelling throughout the countryside.⁴⁹

Mortification

In order to follow the evolution of mortification, it is important to determine how the ritual was initially practised. Unfortunately, in the earliest reports, the missionaries give no details on this matter. Because of this, a key source is Luis de Almeida's letter of 1562. Here, he describes his trip to Kagoshima, which no Jesuit had visited since Francis Xavier's arrival in 1549. Almeida met some Christians who had been following Xavier's teachings for the past twelve years. They showed him the lash that Xavier had given to them and the techniques that they used for mortification. He reports that they would meet once a week. Each Christian had a turn with the lash, taking three blows (in order to not wear down the sacred object), before handing it to another.⁵⁰ In other words, Xavier had taught them a simple, unadorned style of practice, in the tradition of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises.⁵¹ They apparently did not use music or imagery; they did not practise harsh mortification, instead using a leather whip that would not draw blood.

After Francis Xavier departed from Japan, the ritual underwent dramatic changes. Since the mission superior, Cosme de Torrès, adhered to the Spanish Franciscan tradition, he infused mortification with more colour and intensity. On a general level, he departed from contemporary Jesuit practice by introducing music into the liturgy.⁵² In one of the first reports to describe the practice, from 1555, Baltasar Gago says that, during flagellation, they sang the traditional penitential psalm, Psalm li, the *Miserere mei*.⁵³ This custom seems to have been adopted from New

⁴⁹ Gago a los jesuitas de la India, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 15 at p. 186.

⁵⁰ Luis de Almeida a los jesuitas de Europa, Yokoseura, 25 Oct. 1562, *ibid.* doc. 60 at pp. 546–7.

⁵¹ Ignatius of Loyola, *Exercitia Spiritualia*, Avignon 1835, 57–60.

⁵² Alcaçova a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos*, 1547–1557, doc. 88 at p. 421.

⁵³ Gago a los jesuitas de India y Portugal, Hirado, 23 Sept. 1555, *ibid.* doc. 114 at p. 558.

Spain.⁵⁴ Torrès added other dramatic elements, which varied from year to year. Sometimes the veneration of the Cross was conducted before mortification, and at other times it was during the ritual itself.⁵⁵ In 1557, after Good Friday Vespers, the candles were blown out and flagellation was conducted in darkness.⁵⁶ Torrès sought to shape the ritual into a powerful and moving experience.

In addition, mortification underwent other changes, changes that had less to do with the priests than with the local Christians. All the sources agree that the Japanese responded to the practice with enthusiasm. Luis de Almeida reported that they disciplined themselves the most fiercely of any group that he had ever seen.⁵⁷ Gaspar Vilela said that he was struck that a people so new to the faith would show such sorrow in penance.⁵⁸ The popularity of the ritual grew quickly. By 1561 there were so many flagellants that there were not enough garments for everyone, necessitating penitents to take turns.⁵⁹

Flagellation also seems to have become more physically severe. In 1557 Portuguese sailors wintered in Funai. On Maundy Thursday, the priests recruited them to do a Holy Week procession, and in it the sailors openly practiced harsher methods, that drew blood. Gaspar Vilela described the reaction of the Japanese:

Thursday night, 400 men or more gathered at the hour, ... to which came all of the Portuguese and children, dressed in black albas and hooded, disciplining themselves with much blood which ran over them due to discipline. In regards to which, the Japanese, who only discipline themselves with things that do not draw blood, only with strips of raw ox leather, seeing the blood, the women especially began to cry, and all felt remorse for their sins.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ For more information on the Spanish use of the *Miserere* in New Spain see, for example, Diego Basalencque, *Historia de la provincia de San Nicolas de Tolentino de Michoacan, del Orden de N.P. S. Augustin*, Mexico 1886, 87. See also the 'Códice Franciscano: siglo xvi', in *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México*, ed. Joaquín García Icazbalceta, Mexico City 1889, ii, 147.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Gago a los jesuitas de la India, *Documentos, 1558–1562*, doc. 15 at p. 180, in which it is reported that veneration was done before mortification. For a case where veneration was conducted during mortification see Juan Fernández a Antonio de Quadros, Funai, 8 Oct. 1561, *ibid.* doc. 45 at pp. 426–7.

⁵⁶ Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 127 at p. 692.

⁵⁷ Luis de Almeida a Antonio de Quadros, Funai, 1 Oct. 1561, *Documentos, 1558–1562*, doc. 44 at p. 377.

⁵⁸ Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 127 at pp. 695–6.

⁵⁹ Almeida a de Quadros, *Documentos, 1558–1562*, doc. 44 at p. 377.

⁶⁰ 'Quinta-feira à route, 400 homens ou mais se ajuntarão às horas ... às quaes vierão todos os portugueses e moços vestidos com allvas pretas cubertos, deceprinando-sse com muito sangue que lhe corria da disciplina. Do quall os japoís que se não disciplinavão com cousa que não tiravam sangue, senão com humas tiras de coura de boi cruas, vendo o sangue, as molheres especialmente, começarão a chorar

The Japanese were struck by the practice and apparently wanted to emulate it. After that year they also began to practise sanguinary mortification, as reported in 1559 and 1561.⁶¹

From the Japanese perspective, this enthusiasm doubtless reflected the indirect influence of the Shugendō sects. The Shugen worldview suggested that sin could not be purged unless the sinner passed through a difficult process of retribution. Accordingly, during long mountain pilgrimages, priests and acolytes underwent fasting, physical exhaustion and even self-inflicted punishment, such as self-immolation and self-flagellation. These hardships were called *kugyō* and the retribution was called *tsugunai*.⁶² From this perspective, Christian mortification seemed a natural response to sin, with its strong emphasis upon physical retribution. Indeed, when the Jesuits translated the catechism into Japanese, they crystallised this view of penance. The *Dochiriina Kirishitan*, published in 1591, defined penance using Shugen terminology, saying that satisfaction is ‘the act of humbly preparing a retribution (*tsugunai*) for Jesus Christ for our sins’.⁶³ This borrowing of terms doubtless was not intended to be an endorsement of Shugendō. It does not reflect a syncretism of doctrine or theology, but something more indirect, concerning the underlying logic of ritual: assumptions about how sin functioned, what penalties should be expected for wrong-doing, and what rewards should be expected for proper expiation.

Certainly, Shugendō shaped expectations concerning the benefits of expiation. It shared with Christian asceticism the notion that physical suffering in this life could also impact the afterlife. It should be noted that the Muromachi period, in general, saw a broadening popular interest in the afterlife, as witnessed in vivid Buddhist artwork depicting the realms of existence.⁶⁴ The ascetic practices of Shugendō offered a method for directly intervening in this cycle of death and rebirth by moving the practitioner more quickly towards Buddhahood.⁶⁵ From this perspective, the

e sentir cada quall a dor de seus peccados’: Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos*, 1547–1557, doc. 127 at p. 695.

⁶¹ See Gago a los jesuitas de la India, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 15 at p. 180; and Fernández a de Quadros, *ibid.* doc. 45 at p. 426.

⁶² On *kugyō* (苦行) see Gorai Shigeru 五来重, *Shugendō no shugyō to shūkyō minzoku* 修験道の修行と宗教民俗 [The ascetic training and religious folk practices of Shugendō], Kyoto 2008, 24–6. On *tsugunai* (償い), also called *aganai* (贖い), see p. 24.

⁶³ 「我等が科の償ひを御ぜず一きりしとへ調へ奉る事なり。」 ‘Dochiriina kirishitan ドチリイナ・キリシタン’ [Christian doctrine], in Ebisawa Arimichi 海老沢有道 (ed.), *Kirishitancho, haiyasho* キリシタン書・排耶書 [Christian documents and documents renouncing Christianity], Tokyo 1970, 13–81 at p. 72.

⁶⁴ On the growth of popular interest in the six realms of existence see, for example, Nagahara, *Gekokujo*, 406–8.

⁶⁵ On the relationship between Shugendō asceticism and Buddhahood see Miyake, *Shugendō*, 119–29.

Japanese doubtless could appreciate the missionaries' use of mortification as a form of correction that ultimately contributed towards salvation.

Shugendō viewed ritual self-punishment as a pathway not only towards other-worldly transcendence, but also towards worldly well-being.⁶⁶ Unresolved sin could bring disaster and misfortune. By purging it, one could protect oneself and one's community. Christians doubtless were turning towards mortification for the sake of such assurances.⁶⁷ One example is in Luis de Almeida's afore-mentioned letter. He refers to a woman who, in the midst of grave sickness, asked for Xavier's lash and flagellated herself. She was then miraculously healed.⁶⁸ The ritual logic was that of Shugendō: she used flagellation to purge the sin that was causing the disease. The *Dochiriina Kirishitan* contains another echo of this view. In introducing the meaning of penance, it highlights one particular analogy: penance is like medicine for the soul that is sick with sin.⁶⁹ The analogy was also traditional in European penitential manuals, but it is significant that the *Dochiriina* gives it special priority, making it the introduction to the section.⁷⁰

The subtle influence of Shugendō also helps explain one of the most striking features in the evolution of the ritual: the tendency towards intensification. This reflects the same thinking found in Shugen *kugyō*, with its ideal of ultimate physical sacrifice. Beyond typical ascetic training, the initiated priests, known as *yamabushi*, could make the extreme gesture of sacrificing their own lives. They leapt off cliffs or sank into the ocean. This was known as *sutemi* and it was considered the ultimate act of piety.⁷¹ It was a tradition that was alive in the region of the mission, for Alcaçova mentions it in his report on Japanese religion.⁷² The Japanese Christians held a similar attitude, as greater piety became equated with greater physical sacrifice. This appears in a letter written by a Japanese Christian from Hirado who visited Funai during Holy Week in 1561. Brother Juan Fernández translated it in his yearly report:

It almost seems impossible to me that anyone who has been present here could be a mediocre Christian. Because this whole day and night, I have heard nothing

⁶⁶ For a general introduction to the notion of the here-and-now benefits of religion, *genze riyaku* (現世利益), in traditions of Japanese Buddhism, see Miyake, *Shugendō*, 199–215. It should be noted that each sect approached this question differently.

⁶⁷ On this tendency see Okada, *Kirishitan shinkō*. See also Higashibaba, *Christianity*, 117.

⁶⁸ Almeida a los jesuitas de Europa, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 60 at p. 547.

⁶⁹ 'Dochiriina', 71.

⁷⁰ This analogy is used, for example, by Alain de Lille, *Liber de penitentia*, Augsburg 1518, fo. A2v.

⁷¹ On the practice of *sutemi* (捨て身) among the *yamabushi* (山伏) see Gorai, *Shugendō*, 27–32.

⁷² Alcaçova a los jesuitas de Portugal, Goa, *Documentos*, 1547–1557, doc. 88 at p. 426.

which did not move me to tears. And everyone disciplined themselves in such a way that blood was running in the streets like water. For this reason, if you can, do not fail to come here.⁷³

This passage should be read with some caution, as Fernández may be translating freely, but it seems to capture something of the attitude of the Japanese Christians: a fervent belief in the sacredness of physical suffering.

At the same time there was a significant difference between Shugen and Christian flagellation, one that helps further to explain the popularity of the ritual. *Kugyō* was generally reserved for a select few: the *yamabushi* and their acolytes, and special patrons whom they guided. Among the poor, very few were able to participate. Generally, they only witnessed the *genjutsu*, public demonstrations in which the *yamabushi* performed dramatic gestures of physical endurance, such as walking on ashes.⁷⁴ The Christian processions of flagellants may have appeared like a form of *genjutsu*, except that it was open to any social class. It allowed the poor to participate in an intense ritual, the likes of which they had previously only watched from afar.

The missionaries were both pleased and confused by this enthusiasm. There was clearly some anxiety, but it was not due to awareness of Shugendō's influence. During this period, the priests did not understand the mountain religion. Their writings portray the *yamabushi* as mere charlatans and magicians.⁷⁵ Their worries concerned less Japanese religious culture than European. Mortification had become a topic of some controversy in Europe during this period.⁷⁶ Loyola himself expressed deep reservations about certain of its practices.⁷⁷ Although Cosme de Torrès was more favourable, he also was aware of the debates.⁷⁸

⁷³ 'Quasi me parece imposible poder ser ruim christiano el que estuvo acá presente. Porque todo aquel día y aquella noche no ouvo cosa sino para llorar. Y assi todos se disciplinavan de manera que la sangre corría por el camino assí como agoa. Por esso, si pudierdes, no dexés de venir acá': Fernandez de Quadros, *Documentos, 1558-1562*, doc. 45 at p. 426.

⁷⁴ On *genjutsu* (験術) see Miyake, *Shugendō*, 63.

⁷⁵ On the missionaries' perception of Shugendō see Nei Kiyoshi 根井浄, *Shugendō to Kirishitan 修験道とキリシタン* [Shugendō and the Christians], Tokyo 1988, 85–95.

⁷⁶ On the controversy surrounding mortification see Katharine Jackson Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer (eds), *Penitence in the age of reformations*, Burlington 2000.

⁷⁷ The most striking example of this is Loyola's struggle with Simão Rodrigues: Cândido de Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola: founder of the Jesuits*, St Louis 1985, 208–10.

⁷⁸ For example, Cosme de Torrès was a friend of Antonio Gomès, who quarrelled with Francis Xavier in part due to his more dramatic view of penance. For more information on Gomès's striking career see Ines Županov, *Missionary tropics*, Ann Arbor 2005, 113–46. Xavier mentions the friendship between Gomes and Torrès in the letter '[Xaverius] P. Antonio Gomes, Goam', Kagoshima, 5 Nov. 1549, *Xaveriana*, ep. xciv at p. 647.

Thus, Torrès set up liturgical structures around the practice that addressed the fears of the Society – fears of scandal and excess. During flagellation, the sexes were separated, with the women moving to a side wing of the church whose doors were shut.⁷⁹ This was another practice that came from New Spain.⁸⁰ In addition, penitents were required to wear black tunics provided by the church. When the number of flagellants exceeded the number of garments, they had to take turns.⁸¹ This prevented overcrowding and imposed something of a dress code. Finally, Christians were to flagellate themselves only for the duration of one *Miserere mei*.⁸² This not only heightened the emotional impact of the ritual, but also placed temporal boundaries upon it. For example, Luis de Almeida anecdotally says that Torrès was once so shocked at the harsh blows of the flagellants that he asked the musician, Father Gaspar Vilela, to speed up the rhythm of the *Miserere* in order to finish the session.⁸³

With these safeguards established, mortification was made acceptable to both the Japanese and the Europeans. It responded to local understandings of sin and punishment; it conformed to European standards of orderly worship. For both sides, it expressed intense piety.

Fasting

In the beginning, Cosme de Torrès wanted the Japanese Church to practice a rigorous form of fasting. Again, this was partially due to his personal background. Spanish Franciscans idealised a deep asceticism, exemplified by figures such as Martín de Valencia.⁸⁴ In addition, Torrès had a further motivation. Early on he noted the tradition of fasting among Buddhist

⁷⁹ Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos*, 1547–1557, doc. 127 at p. 692; Gago a los jesuitas de la India, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 15 at p. 180.

⁸⁰ This practice is not mentioned in the correspondence of the Jesuits of India, but it seems to have been common in New Spain: Basalencque, *San Nicolas*, 87. See also Benavente, *Historia*, 124.

⁸¹ Almeida a de Quadros, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 44 at p. 377.

⁸² The use of the *Miserere* as a time-marker is reported on multiple occasions: Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos*, 1547–1557, doc. 127 at p. 695; Gago a los jesuitas de la India, Funai, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 15 at p. 180; Fernandez a de Quadros, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 45 at p. 425; and Aires Sanches a los jesuitas de India, Funai, 11 Oct. 1562, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 59 at p. 524.

⁸³ Almeida a de Quadros, *Documentos*, 1558–1562, doc. 44 at p. 377.

⁸⁴ On the deep asceticism of the early Franciscan mission in New Spain, and the challenges that it entailed, see Steven E. Turley, *Franciscan spirituality and mission in New Spain, 1524–1599*, Burlington 2014, 29–81.

monks. His early letters describe Zen and Shugendō asceticism with both awe and a certain scepticism.⁸⁵ In any case, he wanted Christianity to be a worthy rival.

Accordingly, Father Torrès modelled the Church's ascetic practices after those of the Buddhists, and to some extent, after those of Japanese culture in general. On a personal level, he ate sparingly and did not consume meat. He wore simple, light clothing and walked barefoot in the mission.⁸⁶ Furthermore, he also forced the brothers to live a similar lifestyle. Torrès has been cited as a precursor to Alessandro Valignano and the Jesuit policy of adaptation.⁸⁷ However, these decisions caused some confusion among his colleagues. When his superior, Belchior Nuñez Barreto, visited in 1556, he criticised Torrès for ruining not only his own health, but also that of the brothers.⁸⁸ Even Father Baltasar Gago expressed apprehension at the mission superior's rapid weight loss.⁸⁹

Torrès's efforts to fit into Japanese culture not only confused the other Jesuits, but, ironically, it confused the Japanese Christians as well. When Pedro de Alcaçova visited in 1553, he remarked that the Christians of Yamaguchi did not like fasting, as they were used to eating immediately after waking in the morning. Furthermore, he noted that while some men fasted for the entire period of Lent, no women wished to, instead only doing so on Saturdays.⁹⁰ The Christians were not as enthusiastic as Torrès had hoped. The problem doubtless concerned social class. The majority of Christians were not trained monks, but poor farmers, fishermen and beggars. Muromachi society did not require rigorous asceticism from these classes.⁹¹ For them, fasting could only mean more hunger, in addition to what they already endured. Thus, the practice quickly faded from prominence. In 1555, large-scale Lenten fasting is briefly mentioned, but without insistence.⁹² After this, church-wide fasting is no longer reported in the annual reports. Christianity thus diverged from Shugendō and Zen, which often catered to the nobility, and followed the

⁸⁵ Cosme de Torrès a los jesuitas de Goa, Yamaguchi, 29 Sept. 1551, *Documentos, 1547-1557*, doc. 41 at p. 215.

⁸⁶ This is reported by Father Belchior Nuñez Barreto, in 'Informaciones P. Melchioris [*sic*] Núñez Barreto', in Josef Franz Schütte (ed.), *Monumenta historica Japoniae: textus catalogorum Japoniae, 1553-1654* (Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu cxi, 1975), doc. 5 at p. 41.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Antonio Cabezas, *El siglo ibérico de Japón*, Valladolid 1994, 127.

⁸⁸ Nuñez Barreto, 'Informaciones', doc. 5 at p. 41.

⁸⁹ Gago a los jesuitas de India y Portugal, *Documentos, 1547-1557*, doc. 114 at p. 556.

⁹⁰ Alcaçova a los jesuitas de Portugal, *ibid.* doc. 88 at p. 423.

⁹¹ On the varying degrees of abstinence from meat and fish in Japanese society at the time see Igawa Kenji, 'Descriptions of Japanese society in Valignano's writings', in *Alessandro Valignano S. I.*, 185-202.

⁹² Sylva a los jesuitas de India, *Documentos, 1547-1557*, doc. 110 at p. 522.

trend of more populist sects, such as Jōdo Shinshū, which placed less emphasis on physical privation.⁹³

Although large-scale fasting faded, certain individuals did welcome the practice – most notably former Buddhist monks and nuns. For example Paulo was reported to fast constantly. Luis Frois's letter of 1556 speaks of his asceticism with words of wonder.⁹⁴ Another example is the woman baptised Clara. She was a former *hijiri* who had travelled around the region, collecting alms to build temples.⁹⁵ After baptism, she gathered together in Yamaguchi a group of women who followed a highly ascetic lifestyle. The missionaries described it as like a convent: a life of poverty, alms and service.⁹⁶

The Christian Church thus adopted a two-tiered structure, with an inner circle that practised more rigorous fasting and an outer circle that did not. Not incidentally, the inner-circle, such as Paulo and Clara, were also the key lay workers within the Church, performing roles that would later be formalised as those of the *dōjuku* and *kambō*.⁹⁷ This two-tiered response to fasting was acceptable to both the Europeans and the Japanese. On the one hand, it followed the model of Buddhist monasticism, and the Christian lay

⁹³ On Jōdo Shinshū's view of asceticism and self-punishment, which differed strikingly from that of Shugendō, see Amino Yoshihiko 網野善彦, *Chūsei no tsumi to batsu* 中世の罪と罰 [Sin and punishment in the Middle Ages], Tokyo 1983, 79–106.

⁹⁴ Luis Frois a los jesuitas de Goa, Malaca, 7 Jan. 1556, *Documentos, 1547–1557*, doc. 122 at p. 648.

⁹⁵ Clara presents an interesting and mysterious case study. Her formal religious status prior to conversion is unclear. For a general overview of the place of women within medieval Japanese Buddhism see Katsuura Noriko 勝浦令子, *Kodai/Chūsei no josei to bukkō* 古代・中世の女性と仏教 [Women and Buddhism in the ancient world and the Middle Ages], Tokyo 2003. During the Muromachi period, women *hijiri* were often not allowed to fill the same roles as men. See Miyake, *Shugendō*, 143–60, for a case concerning the Shugendō sects. None the less, in other sects, nuns and priests sometimes shared in the same functions. See, for example, Lori Chaele Meeks, *Hokkeji and the reemergence of female monastic orders in premodern Japan*, Honolulu 2014, 210–49. It should be noted that the Jesuits also displayed conflicting attitudes towards the role of women: Haruko Nawata Ward, 'Jesuits, too: Jesuits, women catechists, and Jezebels in Christian-century Japan', in John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy (eds), *The Jesuits, II: Cultures, sciences, and the arts, 1540–1773*, Toronto 2007, 638–57.

⁹⁶ Gago a los jesuitas de la India, *Documentos, 1558–1562*, doc. 15 at p. 187. On the continuing development of monasteries and monastery-like women's groups in the Japanese Church see Haruko Nawata Ward, *Women religious leaders in Japan's Christian century, 1549–1650*, Burlington 2009, in particular pp. 297–346. See also Konishi Mizue 小西瑞恵, 'Jūroku seiki no toshi ni okeru kirishitan josei 16世紀の都市におけるキリシタン女性' [Christian women in sixteenth-century cities], *Ōsaka shōin joshi daigaku ronshū* 大阪樟蔭女子大学論集 [Research Bulletin of Ōsaka Shōin Women's University] xlvii (2009), 177–88.

⁹⁷ On the growing importance of the *dōjuku* and *kambō* (看坊) in the Japanese Church see Gonoi, *Kirisutokyōshi*, 4–5.

workers occupied a similar place within the social structure as their Buddhist counterparts.⁹⁸ On the other hand, it also resembled European monasticism, with a separate class of individuals who gathered together in an ideal of poverty and asceticism. Certainly, the missionaries explicitly compared these Japanese assistants to monks and nuns.⁹⁹

This study has emphasised the dialogic processes through which the penitential rituals of the Japanese Church developed. The priests were by no means disengaged or absent. In these early years, they worked closely with the laity. Furthermore, they did not always wish to adapt their traditions to local culture, and even when they did seek to do so, their efforts sometimes failed. The missionaries and the Japanese Christians had differing goals and expectations, and both sides pushed to make themselves understood. Consequently, negotiation was necessary. In each of the three cases examined in this study – alms, mortification and fasting – the discussions eventually led to a compromise that met the needs of all parties. The resultant traditions might be considered moderate forms of syncretism, sanctioned by the mission itself. In the following decades, as the Church became increasingly understaffed and priests were killed or exiled, the rituals continued to develop and the syncretism grew outside the bounds of Roman Catholic orthodoxy. However, the fundamental cultural processes were present from the very beginning of the mission.

⁹⁸ On the role of the *kambō* in preserving the traditional village structure within the Church see Higashibaba, *Christianity*, 27–8.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Gaspar Vilela's reaction to the desire of some Christians to take the vow of chastity: Vilela a los jesuitas de Portugal, *Documentos*, 1547–1557, doc. 127 at p. 693.