A New Suit of Clothes: A Study of Japanese Catholicism In Endo Shusaku (1923-1996)

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A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES:
A STUDY OF JAPANESE CATHOLICISM IN ENDO SHUSAKU (1923-1996)

BY

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A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES:
A STUDY OF JAPANESE CATHOLICISM
IN ENDO SHUSAKU (1923 - 1996)

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ABSTRACT

Endo Shusaku (1923-1996) is one of the most well-known contemporary Japanese novelists whose inspiration and works are based on Catholicism. Though he also wrote humorous novels which are very popular among young Japanese, the essence of his literary work can be found in his numerous Catholic novels. Endo is highly esteemed as a novelist who has established a genre of Catholic novels in Japanese modern literature and sometimes is compared to Graham Greene and Francois Mauriac. Through his writing activity, he examined the fusion of Catholicism, literature and Japan.

However, does he fully understand Catholicism? Some say that it is almost impossible for the Japanese to understand Catholicism because Japan does not have roots in Catholicism at all. Suppose this is true, what kind of Catholicism does he express in his novels? Has he improved such roots by his writings? What is Catholicism for him? What is Japanese Catholicism for him? What is God for him? In this thesis I will discuss Endo’s character as a Japanese Catholic novelist and his concepts of Japanese Christianity, mainly in his Catholic works during his adulthood and in critiques about his works.

In this study I also want to represent the history of early Japanese Christianity and one of his works, Ryugaku (Studying abroad)-Chapter 2 Ryugakusei (A foreign student) which I translated from Japanese into English. This work’s original title is Ryugaku (Studying abroad) and was published by the Shinchosha in 1965. This consists of three
different stories; in particular, chapter two describes the historical person, Thomas Araki, who was baptized in his childhood and became the first Japanese to go to Rome in order to become a priest in the 17th century. His life, however, ended with his abandonment of Christianity.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Endo Shusaku (1923-1996) is one of the most well-known contemporary Japanese novelists whose inspiration and works are based on Catholicism. Although he also wrote humorous novels which are very popular among young Japanese, the essence of his literary work can be found in his numerous Catholic novels. Endo is highly esteemed as a novelist who has established a genre of Catholic novels in Japanese modern literature and sometimes is compared to Graham Greene and Francois Mauriac. Through his writing activity, he examined the fusion of Catholicism, literature and Japan.

However, does he fully understand Catholicism? Some say that it is almost impossible for the Japanese to understand Catholicism because Japan does not have roots in Catholicism at all. Supposed this is true, what kind of Catholicism does he express in his novels? Has he improved such roots by his writings? What is Catholicism for him? What is Japanese Catholicism for him? What is God for him? In this thesis I will discuss

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1 Japanese names are given in their original order, with their family name first and personal name last hereafter.

Endo's character as a Japanese Catholic novelist and his concepts of Japanese Christianity, mainly in his Catholic works during his adulthood and in critiques about his works.

"Spirituality" and "Inter-Culturalism" - these are key words that will direct how Japan will be understood in the 21st century. Japan is envisioned as "spiritually empty." To be exact, the vast majority of Japan's population is not religious. This is the reason why they can accept many kinds of gods in their hearts and why they praised the emperor as God in the early years of the 20th century. Now it is obvious that people in Japan are seeking for spirituality. Since Japan lost the Second World War, the Japanese have made the best effort to gain a better life; however, nowadays people seem to be afraid that they may be missing something in their traditional souls. For example, some modern Japanese novelists who are most sensitive to the stream of the times converted to Christianity.\(^3\)

Takahashi Takako, Sono Ayako, Inoue Hisashi, Tanaka Sumie, Miura Shumon, Ogawa Kunio, etc. Another example is a phenomenon that young people have become involved in new religions. They seem to be unsatisfied with Japan's modern materialism. They seek for some spiritual fulfillment in their ordinary lives.

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\(^3\)Before this phenomenon, there was a time when Japanese writers became Christians. In his article Endo says, "A long time ago, at a certain time in the Meiji period, there were many among the Japanese writers who became Protestants." See Shusaku Endo, "At the Baptism of One Friend after Another...", Trans. T. Uyttendaele, The Japan Christian Quarterly 43, no. 4 (Fall 1977): 210. However, in the end, most of them abandoned their faith due to Japan's traditional pantheism. Endo, who knew this event, thought a reason was that "they (those writers) had not been sufficiently aware of the immensity of the chasm that separated the two sensibilities." Quoted from "Shusaku Endo," Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook 1996, Vol. 99 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1997), 286.
Japan is said to be one of the most Westernized countries in Asia. Indeed, in its history Japan has been apt to accept something new willingly from Western countries. However, it is also true that soon after Japan imports things from abroad, the Japanese change them into something else that fits the Japanese way. Of all contributions from other countries, "Inter-Culturalism" is far away from total understanding by Japanese people. Since the Meiji era, Japan stressed its relationship with Western countries. Now people seriously doubt how much they have understood the West. They think that it is time to reconsider questions of "West and East" in the global society.

It was Endo Shusaku (1923-1996), a Japanese Catholic novelist, who presented these issues. It is extremely important to reexamine him now because he was a person who considered "Spirituality" and "Inter-Culturalism" all through his life. He combined these into the same level and tried to digest them from a Catholic and literary point of view. Understanding his values and thoughts about Christianity and culture through his works leads us to understand the essence of a Japanese way of thinking and difference between Japanese Christianity and Catholicism.

In this study I also want to represent the history of early Japanese Christianity and one of his works, Ryugaku (Studying abroad)-Chapter 2 Ryugakusei (A foreign student) which I translated from Japanese into English. This work's original title is Ryugaku

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*He won almost all major Japanese literary awards during his career as a novelist. It was said he would be the second Japanese Nobel prize winner, but the prize went to Kenzaburo Oe.
(Studying abroad) and was published by the Shinchosha in 1965. This consists of three
different stories; in particular, chapter two describes the historical person, Thomas Araki,
who was baptized in his childhood and became the first Japanese to go to Rome in order to
become a priest in the 17th century. His life, however, ended with his abandonment of
Christianity.

Though this is only a short story, I think it is worth presenting as a part of my theme
for two reasons. First, I definitely think we need to go back to the origin of Japanese
Christianity if we want to consider the two keys I mentioned above - "Christianity
(Spirituality)" and "Inter-Culturalism." Since Japan opened its door to foreign
missionaries in 1858, Japan has been eager to follow the West and absorb Western culture.\(^5\)
However, it is ironic that Christianity, the basis of Western culture and tradition, did not
take root in Japanese soil. Why did this happen? Endo gives us an answer by the way in
which he weights cultural difference. What about Buddhism at that time? It was imported

\(^5\)In 1858 the Treaty of Amity and Commerce granted that foreign residents in Japan
held the right to practice their own religions. As a result of this treaty, implementation of a
defumie, a tablet bearing an image of Christ, toward a suspected Christian was abolished in Japan. Soon some missionaries came to Japan with their hidden intention to practice
missionary work among the Japanese. However, the anti-Christian laws of the Tokugawa
shogunate were still being carried out. Therefore, missionaries were not under the
protection of the Japanese authorities and Japanese Christians were punished. It was in
1873 that the Meiji government, which was newly established in 1868, abolished religiously-oriented punishment under the pressure of diplomatic negotiations and the resentment of
foreign countries. The constitutional approval of religious freedom was met in 1889. "In
theory the abrogation of the anti-Christian laws permitted the different churches to begin
their work among the Japanese populace, although freedom of religion was not specifically
granted in Japan until the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889." See
too, but it became rooted in Japan. I assume the reason why Christianity could not develop in Japan originates in the early history of Japanese Christianity. To know Japanese Christianity before the Tokugawa government closed Japan will help give a clue to Endo’s work as well as the Japanese Catholic theme. Secondly, this study reflects Endo’s main vision of Christianity. He sees God as a gentle and maternal figure\(^6\) who always forgives us even if we commit sins many times and who holds us with unconditional love. Therefore, he often describes characters such as a “fallen priest” and an “apostate” in his literary works. *Ryugakusei* (A foreign student) is one of them.

My research is based on the Japanese original of Endo Shusaku’s works. I will use many primary sources by Endo Shusaku, and both Japanese and English critiques regarding Endo. My approach to Endo is organized into three elements: Endo’s life, his works, and historical Catholic background in Japan. First of all, I will examine Endo’s life, which shaped his religious and literary thoughts, biographically. I will stress three important factors that will provide a deeper understanding of Endo: influence of his mother on him, his study in France, and his serious illnesses. Secondly, I will clarify his view on Catholicism in his works, according to Catholic terminology. Through his interpretation of each term in his works, I will discuss his image of Catholicism. Thirdly, I will provide historical background of Japanese Catholicism which is vital especially to identify Endo

and his literary realm; in many of his works, he often chooses the early stages of Japanese Catholicism as backgrounds. Therefore, describing the historical perspective of Japanese Catholicism will enhance understanding of my research.

As already mentioned, my research will be based mainly on Japanese primary sources which are Endo's works. Endo wrote many humorous novels and essays. In addition, he also left some plays. Here in this analysis of Endo, only his serious novels revealing his image of Catholicism will be focused on, particularly *Chinmoku* (Silence), *Saigo no jyunkyosha* (The final martyrs), *Ryugaku* (Studying abroad) and so on. It is apparent that even though he described a different world in his humorous writings and essays, which are funny and receive attention of young readers, his literary theme is in his Catholic novels. Therefore, it is believed that we cannot consider his serious Catholic world and his other world at the same time.

It should be noted how "Christianity" and "Catholicism" are distinguished in this research. Of course, in theological terms there is distinct difference. Both Catholicism and Protestantism are orders of Christianity. Christianity is a generic name of all the orders in which people believe in God and Jesus Christ. When considering Endo, it would be more accurate to use the term "Catholic novelist" and "Catholicism." First, he often expressed how deeply he admired Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, in his writings. In Catholicism Mary is not just a woman but a unique saintly woman. However, Protestantism does not view Mary in that way. She is also one with all ordinary human beings. In that sense,
Endo obviously reflects his Catholic view in his works. Secondly, he often sets the stages of his Catholic novels on persecution of believers, which took place in the 17th century in Japan. In those days, of course, Christianity was only Catholicism. This fact also gives us the idea that Endo should be described not as a “Christian novelist” but as a “Catholic novelist.” As a result, this study will use the term “Catholicism” except where the word “Christianity” is more suitable.

The title of this thesis “A New Suit of Clothes” refers to an expression which Endo used to refer to Catholicism. This suit was not one which he chose, but one which his mother made. In addition, the clothes were not Japanese clothes. He had felt uncomfortable with Western clothing for a long time. The fact that this suit was given by somebody else rather than his own and that it did not fit well made Endo distressed and annoyed. Therefore, this circumstance seems to become one of the motivations of his works. In other words, his writing career seems to be considered as his healing process to get over his situation mentioned above. During his career he reached a certain idea.

Later in my life I made a decision not to take off (this suit of clothes). I thought I would make this suit of clothes a kimono suitable to me. I knew that human beings could not live for the purpose of many things but should live for the purpose of only one thing all through life. I came to think that it did not matter whether I was criticized and judged because I wore ill-fitting and big clothes. It would be literature to find and choose his own clothes since the point when he was naked like others. However, I came to feel that it would also be literature to make a life-long effort to make loose clothes, which were given by another, to fit my body.⁷

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⁷Shusaku Endo, *Ihoujin no tachiba kara* (From a viewpoint of an alien), (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1990), 284.
It is viewed that Endo received inspiration from the words “a suit of clothes” from the Bible. “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” As we can see in these verses, Endo was baptized and had clothed himself with Catholicism, apart from his own will.

*Galatians 3: 26-27. This quote is from the New International Version.*
CHAPTER II
LIFE OF ENDO SHUSAKU: AGONY BETWEEN JAPAN AND CATHOLICISM

Historical Background of the Early Japanese Catholicism

Early Japanese Christian history started from the middle of the 16th century to the 17th century before Japan closed herself off from outside influences. These times are important to know the condition of Christianity up to the present day in Japan. In the early stage of its history, Japan had accepted thoughts, ideas, inventions, arts, or technologies mainly from China and Korea. When Japan began its relationship with Western countries in the 16th century, the first encounter of Japan with the West was Christianity and advanced technology, particularly firearms which came to Japan in 1543.\(^9\)

Looking at Japanese Christian history, it is obvious that Christianity was influenced very much by each era's political situations or rulers. This statement can be made with reference to Buddhism

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\(^9\)These firearms were brought to Japan by the first Portuguese traders. "...it was primarily to the novelty of their firearms that the Portuguese owed their cordial reception in Japan, for the popularity attained by these new-fangled weapons was immediate and striking. Pinto, indeed, says that within six months of his first arrival more than six hundred arquebuses had been made by local armorers in imitation of the Portuguese model. Like others of his contemporaries, he evidently considered it a sign of disrespect to the multiplication table to let it rest unused, and the more modest estimate in the Teppo-ki of ten arquebuses within a twelvemonth is probably nearer the mark....The civil strife then endemic in Japan supplied a ready market for these guns, and for many years all firearms of this type were known as tanegashima after their original place of manufacture. This word was applied to pistols and carbines down to the nineteenth century, although gradually superseded by the word teppo for matchlocks and muskets in the meantime." Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1951), 28. As for Pinto (Ferdinand Mendes Pinto)(? - ?) and the Teppo-ki, see also Ibid., 18-28.
as well. Buddhism was also affected by outer political factors; however, the difference was
that Christianity was rejected in the early Edo period. On the contrary, Buddhism was
accepted. In one word, Christianity came to Japan at the wrong time. That seems
unfortunate for both Japan and the Roman Catholic Church from a Christian point of view.

Christianity brought turmoil to Japan:

The first sign that Hideyoshi (1537-98), the de facto ruler of Japan, was in earnest
about the persecution of Christianity came on 5 February 1597 when 26 Christians,
including six Franciscans and three Jesuits, were crucified at Nagasaki. Little action
was taken after this for some time, but in 1622 the Great martyrdom’ of 51
Christians took place at Nagasaki before a crowd of more than 30,000 and
thereafter persecution was relentless. Several thousand were executed in all, and
many apostasized under torture, including some missionaries who then spent the
remainder of their lives in Japan under house arrest.¹⁰

As a result, Christianity led Japan to close all relations with other countries.¹¹ On the
Roman Catholic side, it ended up sacrificing many missionaries and Japanese Christians
without achieving its goal, which was to make Japan a Christian country.

Christian history in Japan can be divided into three periods: 1) Sengoku (the


¹¹“... and it is clear from Japanese records that Iemitsu took a personal if sadistic
interest in the interrogation of captured missionaries and apostates which neither his father
not his successors ever evinced. The discovery of a relatively thriving Christian
community, complete with foreign bateren, in the shadow of his castle at Yedo came as a
severe shock to him in 1623. As a tyrannical megalomaniac he was particularly infuriated
to find that whereas the daimyo and leading samurai obeyed the anti-Christian edicts,
humble peasants and wandering ronin obstinately declined to conform. ‘ It must have been
quite inconceivable to him how these people without power and wealth could resist the
ruler’s will, unless they were mysteriously seduced and supported by a foreign power.
They were clearly traitors who deserved the sternest punishment, ’ says the Japanese
authority, Anesaki.” See Boxer, 362.
Warring States) era to the Tokugawa era, 2) the Meiji era, and 3) the period after the Second World War. Except the third period, in which Japan claimed the freedom of religion, Japan attacked and persecuted Christianity each time. It is not just a coincidence that those periods were the times when Japan definitely needed political and social unity and identity (Nationalism) to defend herself from Western countries. In other words, Christianity was viewed as an obstacle or even a dangerous thought system that brought crisis to Japan.

The first stage, which began with the landing of St. Francis Xavier (1506-52) and ended in the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867, is extremely important. In this time Japanese perception of Christianity turned around completely and that continues to overshadow Japanese Christianity up to now. To understand early Japanese Christianity is the key for examining the total image of Christianity in Japan. Before St. Francis Xavier arrived in Japan, Japan already had communication with the Christian faith through Portuguese traders. However, official contact started in 1549 when three Jesuits, Francis Xavier, Father Cosme de Torres (1510?-70), and Brother Juan Fernandez (1526-67), came to Japan.12

At that time Japan had long-enduring civil wars. This situation became the basis for spreading of Christianity. Japan was in a sort of "spiritual vacuum." From the point of


view of rulers, national unity was essential and a priority; however, Christianity seemed to prevent the exercise of political authority. Christians have faith in God before being loyal to lords. Even though rulers could get some advantages from advanced medical knowledge, scientific technology and cultural sophistication, that did not change the attitude of the majority of rulers.

According to an official document, the first Europeans who landed Japan were Portuguese; this took place in 1543. As I mentioned before, Japan’s religious contact with the Western countries was initiated in 1549 by St. Francis Xavier, who is called "the Apostle to the Japanese." The Japanese reacted to these strangers in a different way. The warriors were astonished at their powerful firearms which were far more advanced than Japanese traditional swords. On the other hand, feudal lords (daimyo) and merchants were very interested in overseas trade with European countries. There is great doubt whether Japanese people could understand teaching of Christianity fully. In fact, "Xavier was, at first, thought to be exponent of another Buddhism sect, seeing that - for the Japanese - Buddhist was theforeigner’s religion." In the same way, Christianity was seen as "a new school of Buddhism."

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15Ibid., 92.

16William K. Bunce, Religions in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity (Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle, 1948), 21.
The first edict to ban the Christianity faith was issued in 1550, but that was applied to in only local areas. As a result, St. Francis Xavier moved to Hirado to evangelize. It is said that about a hundred Japanese were baptized there in a short period. One reason of his rapid success on evangelism could be that he was willing to accept Japan. He reported on Japanese people as follows: "The people we have met so far are the best that have until now been discovered; and it seems to me that among heathen peoples no other will be found to surpass the Japanese." He himself favored Japan and the Japanese, but not from the stand of a missionary.

He also had an understanding of Japanese social and political systems. He realized the need for some superior patronage. He knew very much that the emperor’s approval would give his work great impetus. He failed to see anybody in Kyoto and learned there would not be any progress without using advantages of the West such as overseas trade, advances of technology or science. In fact, the spread of preaching and trade had to go together. The missionaries were accompanied by merchants dealing with attractive commodities. Of course, the chaotic conditions at that time did not allow the missionaries to be given any protection from any authorities. Relations between Christianity and foreign trade point out the fact that feudal lords gave their fiefs orders to become Christians. This

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17Hammer, 93.

18Ibid., 93.

trend was, of course, strong in Kyushu. This was obviously one of the reasons why Christianity spread quickly throughout the western part of Japan.

Another reason was that the missionaries often used Buddhist terminology to make Christianity more easily understood:

According to Yajiyo, the Japanese believed in one personal God who punished the evil and rewarded the good, the creator of all things, adored in a trinity surrounded by saints (one easily recognizes in this latter fancy a trace of the typical mandala representation). This Lord of All and God Creator was in Japan called Dainichi. Upon this point rests a most curious result. The dynamic force of perfect wisdom illuminating the universe - Daninchi of the Diamond Realm - was by the untutored layman identified with the personal omnipotence and wisdom of the Christian God, Deus. Yajiyo told Xavier the Japanese appellation of the Buddha Mahavairocana by way of translating the Christian concept “God.” And thus it was that Xavier upon landing in Japan commenced his missionary activity there by preaching Dainichi. Xavier’s use of the term Dainichi was based on his general desire to utilize existing native terms in order to make the new teachings more easily understood and acceptable.20

Though the missionaries adopted the terms from Buddhism, sources say they attacked Buddhism. Feudal lords who became converts were encouraged to tear down Buddhist temples. St. Francis Xavier left Japan in 1552. However, following him, success in the propagation of Christianity continued at the hands of the Jesuits.

Japan’s reunification was completed by three figures: Oda Nobunaga (1534-82), Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616). Throughout the eras of three unifiers, one of the most difficult problems was religion. Of course, the approach of religion by each of them was definitely different. Oda Nobunaga, who was originally from

20Ibid., 33.
the present Nagoya district, took the control of Kyoto in 1568. He favored Christianity and under his wings the missionaries could propagate their religion freely. There were some reasons for his generous attitude to Christianity. At first, Nobunaga was likely by nature to show an interest in innovation and new technology. This led him to become interested in Christianity. In addition, he thought European firearms would bring him tremendous benefits for winning the civil war. Nobunaga was also seeking for foreign trade in order to gain war funds. He felt that the importance of keeping good contacts with the missionaries might fulfill his ambitions.

Secondly, all through his life he had troubles with religious groups which were against him, especially the Buddhists. At that time Buddhism became powerful enough to overwhelm political leaders.\(^{21}\) Nobunaga attempted to remove the influence of Buddhism many times; therefore, he started to view Christianity as a rival to block Buddhism monks. The above reason concluded in his words to the missionaries; "As your bigoted opponents are many and you are alone, you will find it difficult to propagate your religion; you had better send to Namban and call some priests to help you, and spread abroad religion as

\(^{21}\) During his lifetime Nobunaga had made every attempt to eliminate the influence of other Buddhist schools; to that end in 1579 he tricked the Nichiren leaders into publicly swearing not to criticize or attack other religious teachings. He also used his armed forces at the Shingon center of Mt. Koya in order to keep the rebellious priests in line." See Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 141-42.
widely as possible. In these words "bigoted opponents" would indicate Buddhist sects which Nobunaga savaged. For Nobunaga, Buddhists were his opponents and for the Jesuits as well. Therefore, Nobunaga seemed to conclude that he and the Jesuits would be good partners.

As a result, Kirishitan's (Christians') power increased gradually and according to Hammer, there were approximately 30,000 Christians by 1570. Moreover, it is estimated that by 1579 the number of Christians reached 130,000, and by the beginning of the general persecution of 1614 they increased up to 500,000; taking into account that very few missionaries were preaching in Japan, these numbers are noteworthy by contrast with the total Japanese population at that time. With Nobunaga's support, Christianity was accepted not only by the poor but also by the educated and upper class people.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi succeeded Nobunaga in 1582. At the time of the death of Nobunaga, Hideyoshi proclaimed himself as a successor of his suddenly-deceased master. Hideyoshi followed some policies of Nobunaga on his way to unify Japan. Eliminating the influence of Buddhist centers was one of them. As his master "who savaged the True Pure


\[\text{500,000 Christians were about two per cent of the population of Japan in those days. "... the Jesuit Province had only 121 members, including 62 priests, of whom 7 were Japanese, and 59 brothers, the majority of whom were Japanese. At that time there were 245 Japanese seminary students and catechists." Hammer, 96.}\]

\[\text{Kitagawa, 142.}\]
Land sectarians and destroyed the Osaka Honganji, who put to fire and sword the Tendai monasteries of Mount Hiei and threatened the Shingon monks of Koyasan. As for the propagation of Christianity, Hideyoshi continued to favor Christianity.

However, it was on July 24, 1587 that he suddenly issued an edict outlawing Christianity. This was the first nation-wide edict against Christianity and the missionaries. In this he said that he permitted Portuguese merchants to keep coming to Japan, but he denied permission for the missionaries to come. This edict consists of five items and item one states the reason of banning Christianity; “Japan is the Land of the Gods. Diffusion here from the Kirishitan Country of a pernicious doctrine is most undesirable.” The fact was that the policy against Christianity was not enforced to the strict way for the next ten years.

There are many opinions about Hideyoshi’s sudden change of attitude. The merit of accepting the missionaries was that foreign trade could be carried on smoothly, but Hideyoshi started to think of overseas trade without the power of the missionaries. In fact, the missionaries and foreign trade were so related and influenced each other that Hideyoshi’s idea was difficult to practice. According to Kitagawa, “his anti-Kirishitan policy was motivated by many factors, including the power struggles of the Kirishitan daimyo, anti-Kirishitan factions among his advisers, pressures from Buddhist leaders who

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25Elison, 27.

26Ibid., 115.
were losing adherents to the new faith, and the internal disunity of the Kirishitan group. 

It is also said that Hideyoshi’s stay in Kyushu for a Korean campaign gave him a chance to realize how much Christianity was influential in the Kyushu area. Hideyoshi felt threatened by that situation. He tried to terminate Christianity before this external force could be rooted in Japanese soil.

When Nobunaga died in 1582 and Hideyoshi’s time started, “there were 150,000 Kirishitan with two hundred churches.” The Kirishitans and the missionaries had to consider some measure against the decree. One of the missionaries even tried to make a Hideyoshi’s favorite carpenter, who was always near Hideyoshi, a convert so that the missionary could manipulate Hideyoshi by using the carpenter.

Around this time the missionaries had formed a system of organization for the work of propagation in Japan. The Jesuits contained three groups; the fathers (padres), the brothers (irmaos), and the dojuku. The fathers were Europeans, at least until the time of Padre Valignano. In contrast, the brothers included Europeans as well as approximately seventy Japanese in 1592. The dojuku was a unique existence. They were not a part of Jesuit’s system in the strict sense of the word. It is estimated that a hundred men served as


28Ibid., 142.


30Ibid., 211.
Around this time propagation of Christianity in Japan entered the new period. In 1592 the monopoly of the Jesuits' mission in Japan ended. In 1592 the Spanish Franciscans from Manila started to doubt the propagation method of the Jesuits who were staying in Japan. They thought the Jesuits' way was too much oriented to Japanese society and culture and "the Jesuits were becoming 'Japanified' and so neglecting the poorer classes." Though the Jesuits' desire was to keep their monopoly and power in Japan, Hideyoshi gave the Franciscans permission to remain in Kyoto and this turmoil ended with the Jesuits' failure. It can be said that in Japan competition between some Roman Catholic orders resulted in the loss of power in the missionary work.

At the same time as with Hideyoshi's edict, the situation among Kirishitan daimyo was changing. Basically, the average daimyo's financial conditions were tight. The Kirishitan daimyo had the same circumstances. This monetary issue encouraged the Kirishitan daimyo to early formal retirement:

The majority of the daimyo were very poor in this world's goods. Their only extensive source of income was rice, most of which they had to dole out again to their samurai as their stipend in lieu of money. Thus a daimyo with an income of 500,000 koku of rice would in practice only have 40,000 or 50,000 koku left for himself, after doling out what was required to ensure his samurai a living wage, and

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31Ibid., 223.

32Boxer, 160.

33Hammer, 94.

34Ibid., 162.
this last was often enough on the level of bare subsistence.... The poverty of the
daimyo was aggravated by their custom of formal retirement (inkyo) at a
comparatively early age, which might, as with Otomo, result in the direction of
affairs passing from a pro-Christian father to an anti-Christian son and successor....
The Jesuits, not being feudal lords or warriors, had to pay their household personnel
on a more liberal scale. Finally, Christianity being a young and tender foreign plant,
the Japanese could not be expected to support its priests with the same readiness and
facility as the Buddhist institutions of their own compatriots.35

Therefore, Kirishitan daimyo who retired officially were succeeded by the sons of
successors who did not favor Christianity or even give any support toward missionaries.
Because Christianity was still new and not rooted strongly in Japanese culture, it was not
passed down generation to generation, and thus differed from Buddhism.

During ten-year persecution from 1587 to 1597, only a few missionaries complied
with Hideyoshi's edict and left Japan.36 Most of them pursued their missionary works
against the ruler's order. The era of persecution, which was generally mild, was over and a
harsh time for the Japanese Christians and the missionaries came. In 1596 a Spanish ship
had an accident near Japan.37 The captain of the ship, as a result, had a chance to contact
Japan and by the contact with him, Japan took it seriously that Spain tried to take over
Japan by using Christians. That incident became the final trigger for intense persecution by
Hideyoshi.

In 1597 a historical incident, that we call "the martyrdom of the Twenty-six"

35Boxer, 115.

36Kitagawa, 144.

37Ibid., 145.
occurred; Hideyoshi had the missionaries and Japanese Christians, who totaled twenty-six, crucified at Nagasaki. The twenty-six included “6 Spanish Franciscans, 3 Jesuits, and 17 Japanese converts.” At the same time Hideyoshi issued an order that all the Jesuits should leave Japan. It is not obvious how much this Spanish captain’s story and the martyrdom in 1597 were connected to each other. However, Hideyoshi had already felt a sort of crisis against Christianity. A martyrdom like this would have happened sooner or later. Then the history about Japanese Christianity shifted to the new period of harsh persecution in the Tokugawa era.

After the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the Toyotomi clan lost their political power. Hideyoshi’s son, Hideyori (1593-1615), lost the Sekigahara war in 1600. Instead of him, the winner of the war, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) came to hold political power. He was appointed by the court to the office of Sei-Taishogun (military dictator) in 1603. At first, he showed generous attitude to Christianity because he was desirous of the benefits of overseas trade:

When Tokugawa Ieyasu came to power, his policy toward the Kirishitan wavered because of many considerations. His chief preoccupation was with the establishment of the feudal regime on a solid political and economic basis, and he had high hopes for foreign trade. Thus he made concessions to the Jesuits in order to continue trading with the Portuguese, and maintained friendship with the Franciscans in order to promote trade with New Spain (Mexico). ... Ieyasu permitted the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Augustinians to

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38Bunce, 149.

39Kitagawa, 145.
carry on their missionary, educational, and social service activities until 1613.\textsuperscript{40}

Due to this policy of Ieyasu, Japan’s overseas trade seems to have expanded satisfactorily while he was alive.

In 1614, an edict to forbid Christianity was issued. Officially the second Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632), issued this decree. However, as a matter of fact, Ieyasu was still holding power and he was the real dictator behind Hidetada until his death of 1616. Compared with Hideyoshi’s edict, this edict of 1614 was enforced to expel Christianity and the missionaries completely from Japan. Ieyasu ordered that all the missionaries should leave Japan and that all churches should be closed. Japanese who practiced Christianity were to put to death. By 1614 the number of Japanese converts to Christianity had increased remarkably. It is hard to calculate how many Japanese Christians there were in Japan in 1614. One source says that the number of Japanese converts numbered about 370,000.\textsuperscript{41}

The fundamental reason for Ieyasu’s hatred of Christianity and his edict seems to be almost the same as Hideyoshi’s. He thought that Christianity would threaten the traditional social order of Japan. “He [Ieyasu] was moved... by exhibitions of religious fervour which seemed to endanger traditional patterns of behaviour. He felt that Christianity, if left uncurbed, would lead to an overthrow of established order and particularly undermine the

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., 145-46.

\textsuperscript{41}According to the same source, it was nearly 2% of the population. See “Christianity,” The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan, 1993 ed., 178.
loyalty of the people towards the Shogunate. As time passed, the policy against
Christianity seems to have become more and more strict. In 1616 another edict which was
ever stricter was issued. In the time of Tokugawa Iemitsu (1623-51), the third Tokugawa
shogun, for the missionaries and Japanese Christians matters became worse. Iemitsu had
not only an anti-Christianity policy but an anti-foreign policy. He issued orders
“forbidding Japanese ships or citizens to leave the country without his authorization,
establishing the death penalty for Japanese citizens abroad who attempted to return, and
designating the Japanese ports that foreign vessels would be allowed to enter subject to his
control.” At last, in 1639 all other foreigners were expelled. In this period between 1614
and 1639 the persecution of Christianity appears gradually to have become more severe
1639 was the year when Japan finally closed herself from all foreigners except for the
Chinese and the Dutch at Dejima, Nagasaki.

In 1637, in the time of Iemitsu, a remarkably great rebellion took place on the island
of Amakusa and on the Shimabara Peninsula in Kyushu. Kyushu had been and still was the
center of Japanese Christianity. Approximately 37,000 Japanese Christians in those areas
rebelled against the Tokugawa Shogunate and confined themselves to Hara Castle for half a
year. At last, on April 12, 1638 the rebellion was suppressed. It is estimated that more
than 30,000 people were killed in what we call “Shimabara Uprising.” The rebels were mainly farmers, peasants, and fishermen. However, quite a large number of warriors, women and children were also involved in this rebellion. The warriors were people who served the Kirishitan daimyo.

There were several causes for this rebellion. According to Paske-Smith, the fundamental cause was not to be against religious persecution, but to resist heavy taxation: “Foreign accounts have it that the rebellion was due to the heavy taxation levied by the new Lords of the two Fiefs, but Japanese tradition has it that the outbreak was purely Christian in character based on the expected appearance of a Saviour whose arrival had been prophesied.”

As a whole, the Shimabara Uprising became the turning point of Japan’s foreign policy and of Japanese Christianity. It was natural that persecution against Christians and the missionaries became severe. Christians were forced to abandon Christianity or they had to keep practicing their faith underground. The way of investigating and searching for Christians was more organized and complete. In addition, the Shimabara rebellion led the Tokugawa government to close all overseas trade except at Dejima, Nagasaki:

The shogunate, following the Kirishitan uprising in Shimabara, took the extreme measure of closing Japan to all foreign trade, with the exception of limited commerce with the Dutch at Nagasaki. The remaining Catholic missionaries and Kirishitan were hunted and tortured, and yet there were some Kirishitan who went

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45Bunce, 150.

46Paske-Smith, 51.
underground and preserved their faith stubbornly for generations until the reopening of Japan in the nineteenth century.⁴⁷

That meant the ninety-five-year-old trade with Portugal ended in 1639.

The Tokugawa government feared most that the remaining Japanese Christians, who persisted in their belief in Christianity, became close to the anti-Tokugawa warriors. As a matter of fact, quite a number of warriors, who had served Kirishitan daimyo, but later became lordless warriors, took part in the Shimabara Uprising. In other words, the Shimabara rebellion revealed an incident that always made the government nervous. The power and the influence of Japanese Christianity declined after this incident and at the same time, Christianity in Japan vanished officially in 1639.

Even though Japan was under the edict forbidding Christianity, some missionaries came to Japan, seeking to propagate their religion. It is recorded that the last missionary, Giovanni Battista Sidotti (1667-1714), came to Japan in 1708. The Italian Father was arrested soon and sent to the Kirishitan Yashiki (mansion). He died there in 1714.

Japanese Christians were isolated from the missionaries and their spiritual center, Rome. However, Japanese Christianity survived until Japan opened herself to other countries again and Christian missionaries were allowed to return to Japan by the Tokugawa government under the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858.⁴⁸

The most unhappy thing for both the missionaries and the Japanese was that their

⁴⁷Kitagawa, 148-49.

⁴⁸See author’s footnote 5 on page 4.
missionary work started at the wrong time. Christianity in Japan could not stop being involved in the political scene through Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the Tokugawa shogunates. Even after Japan accepted Christianity again in the late 50s of the 19th century, Japanese Christianity still influenced Japanese political situations, such as control on religion in Japan under World War II. The first misstep of Christianity in Japan still makes the position of Christianity in Japan minor. Currently the number of Christians in Japan is about 1% of all the population.\footnote{This number referred to the following quote: “In spite of the apparent Westernization of Japanese society today, less than 1% of the population are Christians...” See “Christianity,” \textit{The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan}, 1993 ed, 178.}

\textit{Endo's Life Theme and Characters of His Works—Chronological Influence of His Life Experiences}

He was born in Tokyo in 1923 and moved to Japan-controlled Manchuria with his parents at the age of three. His father was born in a family of a doctor, but when Shusaku was born, he was working at a bank. Seven years later his parents were divorced and his mother, he and his elder brother went back to Japan and started to live with his mother’s sister. It would not be exaggerated to state that his parents’ divorce changed his life completely and cast a shadow on his life. “Over the last 40 years I have kept thinking about that house which decorated that brightness and the darkness of my childhood.”\footnote{Bungeishunju, ed., \textit{Endo Shusaku no subete} (All of Shusaku Endo), (Tokyo, Bungeishunju, 1998), 319.} His worry, fear and powerless feelings remained in him even as he grew older and led him to
stick with Catholicism even though he resisted it in his adolescence and when his mother passed away. Since his aunt was a Catholic, his mother was strongly influenced by her and converted to Catholicism. All through his life he was influenced by his mother in both a good way and a bad way. His mother became completely absorbed in Catholicism and asked of him the same dedication which, of course, came from the best of her intentions toward her son. He looks back his memory about his mother. “I often saw that the light in her room was on at the freezing dawn of winter. I knew what she was doing in the room. She was praying with a rosary wound around her fingers. Then she would take me and ride the Hankyu Train to go to Mass.”

It seems to Endo that his mother’s loneliness and strictness are connected with Catholicism.

He was baptized at Shukugawa in Hyogo Prefecture on June 23, 1935 at the age of twelve. His baptismal name was Paul. In his essay, he describes his baptism as follows: “I am a man who as a child, without realizing it at all, was baptized at the command of my mother. And for a long time there have been periods when I was jealous of Rinzo Shiina and Junichiro Sako, who had received baptism on their own free will.” He simply wanted to please his mother. He wanted to materialize his love to his mother. Maybe, he did not understand what it meant to be baptized. In that sense, baptism was just a formality for him. He might have accepted Catholicism because it gave him a tighter relations

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51 Yoshio Toda, Nihon Katorishizumu to bungaku: Inoue Yoji, Endo Shusaku, Takahashi Takako (Tokyo, Japan: Taimeido, 1982), 96.

52 Shusaku Endo, “At the Baptism of One Friend after Another...,” 209-10.
between him and his mother.

His adolescence was full of struggle. His mother's pressure, expectation that he should become a good Catholic and her strict discipline made him feel constrained by and uncomfortable with Catholicism. His mother used to put all her heart into playing violin before her marriage. With the same enthusiasm she devoted herself to Catholicism after her divorce. For him, his mother was an awe-inspiring person; at the same time he intentionally resisted his mother. He tried to be a lazy and loose person, who was the opposite of his mother. Obviously, he had a love and hate relationship with his mother and Catholicism. He must have hated himself, too, as one who could not live up to his mother's expectations.

Endo admits that he tried to get away from Catholicism. Since Catholicism and his mother were deeply connected in his mind, a betrayal of Catholic faith was equal to a betrayal of his mother. There was a choice for him to abandon Catholicism in his adolescence when he started to doubt his place in Catholicism. However, he did not do it. If he had done it, it would have meant his abandonment of his mother as well. It was impossible for him to do so. The only way that he could take was to walk in line with Catholicism even though he felt he did not have sincere or pure faith in it. From a different point of view, it would be said that he always projected his mother on Catholicism and projected Catholicism on his mother. Here we can see the his essence of his unique brand

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of Catholicism.

Around this time he experienced a shocking event which seems to have made him take Catholicism less seriously. A foreign priest, whom his mother trusted very much and asked for guidance as a Catholic, abandoned Catholicism and married a Japanese woman. The father was always confident and strong in faith. His mother always admired the Spanish father and told Endo to be like the father. Whether or not Endo dedicated himself to the father, such a role-model stumbled in front of him. This must have been so shocking to young Endo that he wrote *Kageboshi* (Silhouette) in 1968 in his which was based on this incident.

When he was 20 years old in 1943, he entered a preparatory course of Keio University. During those times Japan was in the Pacific War, but he was exempted from military service because of his lung disease. In 1945 he went on to the department of literature in Keio University to study French literature. Here is another case of influence from his mother. Later on, Endo confessed that the reason why he chose to study literature in a university was his mother's way of living. He lived with his father for some period before entering college. Being away from his mother made him have dear feelings about

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54During his college days he became a devoted reader of Francois Mauriac. His works are remarkably influenced by Mauriac. In his work, *Nikki (Journal)*, he says, “I think Mauriac and Faulkner are the novelists I should study.” Akifu Kasai, *Endo Shusaku ron* (A view of Shusaku Endo), (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 1987), 37.

55Shusaku Endo, *Kageboshi* (Silhouette) (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1968), 26. This is Endo’s autobiographical work based mainly on his childhood and adolescence.
her which gradually deepened. The thing which came after that feeling was to idealize every thing about his mother. He even thought his mother's passion, which had made him feel that he had no way out when he was with his mother, was a dear memory. Eventually, everything that he held about his mother guided him to follow the same pattern a hers: strong passion and enthusiasm for art, which was music in case of his mother and in his case was literature, whether or not he noticed it at that point.

During his college days he met a person who seemed to influence him very much. The person was a Catholic philosopher, Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko. He was a superintendent of the dormitory where Endo lived. Endo mentions Yoshimitsu by saying, "There are some stimuli he gave me; one of them is he led me to start thinking about the Japanese people and Christianity."\(^{56}\) Though he could find only a dim light to follow, he was still roaming between his beliefs and his doubts as a Catholic. In fact, he admits he strayed from Christianity for a while.\(^{57}\)

In 1950 he went to Lyons, France to study twentieth-century Christian literature. He was one of the first Japanese students to study abroad after 1945. This incident became a turning point for him. By then he was not thinking about becoming a literary man. According to him, the course which he was thinking of was either to enter an editorial department in a magazine company or to serve as an assistant at a university. However, on

\(^{56}\)Kasai, 9-10.

\(^{57}\)He even thought about abandoning his faith sometimes. See more detail in Toda, 103.
board ship on his way to France he gradually came to feel that he would like to write novels. He does not mention the detail of what happened in his mind. The opportunity to study in France at the age of 27, in any case, became fruitful for his future career. He took on another life theme in addition to suffering as a Catholic who wore a "ready-made suit." 58 That suit, Catholicism, was "too long in some places, too short in others, too loose here and there." 59 The moral tradition in the West, which is shaped by almighty God, can never be truly understood by people in the East, which is a world of gods. The gulf between East and West is unbridgeable. 60 When he realized such thoughts, he was shocked. For example, in his work of 1955, *Kiiroi hito* (Yellow man), he puts words into the mouth of the hero: "A yellow man like me has absolutely no experience of anything so profound and exaggerated as the consciousness of sin which you Caucasians have." 61 Both in his daily life and in his study in France, he felt a sense of isolation and alienation. In fact, Western culture and Christianity which is deeply connected to it must have been heavy

58Higgins, 415.

59Ibid., 415.

60When *Ryugaku* (Studying abroad) was published in Japan in 1965, at the beginning he mentioned his transition to a view point about this issue for the last two decades. "As a result of continuous consideration of the concept of 'the unconscious' in my literature. I am now convinced that meaningful communication between East and West is possible. I have gradually come to realize that, despite the mutual distance and the cultural and linguistic differences that clearly exist in the conscious sphere, the two hold much in common at the unconscious level." See "Shusaku Endo," in *Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook 1996*, 290.

61Higgins, 418.
for him. He says, "I intended to study twentieth century Catholic fiction, so I kept reading the works of the novelists of those areas; however, after all, one thing I could grasp was that there was a long, long stream behind that."\(^{62}\) Later his insight became the result of his works. His stay in France for two years and nine months ended with his lung disease becoming worse. "Endo returned to Japan depressed in spirit and ill in body.... Endo sees clearly that Christianity, in effect, had made him ill."\(^{63}\)

After upon his return to Japan his health improved, he started his career in earnest. His first novel, *Aden made* (Until Aden) was published in 1954. In 1955 he published *Shiroi hito* (White man), which won the Akutagawa Prize in Japan and this led him to join leading contemporary Japanese novelists.

Endo's works are examined as two types-serious novels and an entertaining ones. Some of serious works are *Umi to dokuyaku* (The sea and poison) (1958), *Kazan* (Volcano) (1959), *Chinmoku* (Silence) (1966), *Ijesu no shogai* (A life of Jesus) (1973), *Samurai* (The samurai) (1980), and *Saigo no junkyosha* (The final martyrs) (1993). As entertaining novels, *Obakasan* (Wonderful fool) (1959) or *Hechima kun* (Mr. Gourd) (1961) are famous. It is true to some extent that Endo wrote humorous novels for the general public for the sake of money while he was writing serious novels. However, the same theme appears to exist even in entertainment novels; Endo seems to express his

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\(^{62}\)Toda, 106.

\(^{63}\)Higgins, 416.
feelings about Christianity in a way different from how he does in serious novels. If we say Endo’s serious works were from one side of Christianity, severe love which asks believers for complete dedication, his humorous works were based on the other side of Christianity, joy and inner peace for acknowledging everything. In fact, Endo kept exploring his life’s subjects: his spirituality as a Catholic and culture as Catholic tradition.

In and even after Endo’s childhood and study in France, as seen above, his mother should not be neglected when we examine his life. Other than these two influences, his delicate health has to be kept in mind. His weakness in health kept him from going to the battlefield in the Second World War. After he started his career, he suffered from tuberculosis. This forced him to spend three years in hospital and to have three operations. One of these operations was very serious and he was very close to death. As a result, one of his lungs was removed in 1961.64 Aside from this disease, he also suffered from diabetes, liver disease and kidney disease all his life. He mentions the influence of his health problems on him:

After I became a novelist I was sick in bed for two and a half to almost three years. Then I thought about Christianity. When I was ill while studying abroad, I still had an image of Christianity as something which compressed or oppressed me. There was Christianity in a thing which suppressed me. In other words, it was European Christianity.... In the second disease after I became a novelist, I came to understand gradually that Christianity did not belong only to Europe. In other words, I started to know a little that Christianity was not only a Western suit of

clothes but also an element of a kimono. 65

In Endo’s life there was an interesting and unique relationship with one person. He, Inoue Yoji, and Endo met each other on board the ship to France. Then Father Inoue was supposed to enter a monastery near Bordeaux in France. It would be easily guessed that seeing Father Inoue, who left everything in Japan and tried to face God with sincere faith in a foreign country far from Japan might have changed something in Endo. This may have led to his decision to serve as a layman by writing literature. Since then all through his life, he and Father Inoue kept a close and strong relationship. Father Inoue spent his life praying and doing missionary work; on the other hand, Endo devoted himself to creating works of literature. However, there was always Catholicism between them. They inspired each other. Endo absorbed many things from Father Inoue and introduced them into his way of life and his works. Among them the most fundamental issue was “the Gospel of Jesus and the Japanese.” Toda explains that Endo and Father Inoue shared a common interest and concern in terms of Christianity and Japan. Both of them considered that the Gospel of Jesus did not attract the Japanese because it was introduced to Japan with a strong Western color. 66

In the 1970s and 80s Endo’s publications were doing well. His career was

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65 Shusaku Endo, Watashi ni totte kami towa (What God is for me), (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1988), 14-15.

successful and he gradually established a reputation as a Catholic writer. Endo passed away from pneumonia in 1996. His will was to be buried in Nagasaki, which has a long Catholic history in Japan and is still an important place to Japanese Catholicism. Once he confessed he tried to abandon Catholicism several times, but he could not. At the end of his life, he chose to remain a Christian.

He started his true career as a Catholic novelist at the moment of a decision. He said in his testimony: "Later I decided not to try to take off clothes any more. I thought I tried to make these clothes into Japanese clothes, a kimono which fits me.... I came to feel that it might also be a way of pursuing literature for me to make my best efforts all through my life in order to make these outsized clothes, which another person forced me to wear, fit me." This idea is the basis of his literary work. As a matter of fact, Endo’s acceptance of Christianity, which was "like a Western suit which my mother made me wear when I was growing up," gave him another way of praying life as a Catholic. It appears that for Endo, writing novels was a part of praying, confession, singing a hymn, reading the Bible, etc. In other words, Endo gazed at his spiritual and internal world through the process of

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69Because his baptism was considerably due to his mother’s will, he seemed to crave a self-willed baptism. The process of writing novels was, for him, a sort of self-willed baptism. He says, "I have, up till now, continued to strive in every one of my works towards the day when I would see my own baptism as freely willed." See Shusaku Endo,
writing novels. Moreover, he saw a reflection of himself in a mirror which was his works. Endo might have tried to change his imbalance. His firm decision is represented by his words to Father Inoue, who was trained in France to become a monk: “We [Endo and Father Inoue] do not have predecessors whose footsteps we should follow, as if we were entering a forest where nobody had ever stepped in before. We have to develop by ourselves. I [Endo] think this is a task that requires a long time. It is fine only if we become footsteps for the next generation.”

Some of Endo’s works are autobiographical or, at least, he reflects on his personal experiences through his works. Endo seems to have tried to describe puzzles he cannot solve in his mind. Furthermore, those experiences are basically a relationship between himself and his mother, his days in France and his three serious operations. It may be said that his works are condensations of these experiences. As Toda explains, “Mr. Endo lived his religious life and cultivated his beliefs by creating literary works.”

As I mentioned before, he had two themes in his life: spirituality in Catholicism and culture between the West and Japan. It can be seen as one subject since Western culture could never be molded without Christianity and they cannot be separated. Through his study in Lyons for more than two and a half years, he realized that culture and tradition are

“At the Baptism of One Friend after Another...,” 210.

70Toda, 77.

71Ibid., 78.
totally different between the West and his country. It is noteworthy that in Endo’s early
career he emphasized “the image of the self” and “the moral-religious characteristics of
the ‘white’ and the ‘yellow’ man in a universe with or without God.” Since
Christianity and the Western cultures are connected to each other deeply, the Christianity
Endo was fond of in Japan was different from Western Christianity. Endo says, “There
was always the feeling in my heart that it was something borrowed, and I began to wonder
what my real self was like.” He may have asked himself, “Is my Catholicism real?”

Endo expressed his total reliance on Catholicism from time to time. Endo writes:

I think the teachings of Christianity are the most profound and highest truth for me
among any other thoughts. My feeling of reliance on the teachings of Jesus Christ
still exists at the bottom of my heart. The more I write novels, the more I cannot
think of any principles and aims of my life other than Jesus Christ. The more I have
written, the more I have believed in him.”

Even though he loved Catholicism, there was still something unfamiliar in it. In another
sense, it could be said that since Catholicism became important to him more and more, he
could not ignore and neglect those factors in Catholicism. He must have felt that he could
not stop writing his works. He seems to have held something urgent in his mind, which
forced him to write though he was highly criticized by theologians, fathers and Catholic

72“Shusaku Endo,” in Contemporary Literary Criticism, Vol. 54 (Detroit: Gale
Research, 1989), 159.

73Higgins, 415.

74Shusaku Endo, Houjin no tachiba kara (From a viewpoint of an alien), (Tokyo:
Kodansha, 1990), 270.
In the West, absolute morality, absolute value and absolute faith exist in the name of God. They consist of all aspects of society and culture in Western countries. By contrast, "In Japan things are different; morals are shaped by a sense of duty; honor and obligation take precedence; and virtuous behavior has little to do with the dictates of those who claim to speak for God."[75] Though this quotation is not from Endo, I assume he had exactly the same idea. He explains in one of his works the reason why Japan has never been able to understand Christianity is because there is no sense of God, death or sin in Japan.

Christianity is universal. Compared to other major religions such as Islam and Buddhism, Christianity seems that it is for all the human beings regardless of culture, country, race and nationality. Endo's core idea was "It is a unique character of Christianity that it always ties with a specific culture in terms of a cultural phenomenon; at the same time, Christianity is substantially beyond it. However, this, in other words, means that there was no Christianity which was not bound with culture and there will not be such Christianity in the future."[76] According to Endo, in the long history of Christianity, people emphasized some specific elements of it as time, culture and society demanded. If we recognize that side of Christianity as a fact, we also realize that Japanese are "forced to swallow Western Christianity, which is just one of the states of Christianity with special


[76] Toda, 214.
historic colors, without question in the name of universe. It is true that one dimension of Christianity often brings isolation of this religion in many non-Christian countries.

In the case of Japanese Christianity, in contrast to Buddhism and Confucianism, it was not allowed to be adjusted to the Japanese way. In other words, Japanese people could not digest, absorb and mix it with the soil of Japan. How were Buddhism and Confucianism transmitted to Japan? They came to Japan through books, literature and envoys; on the other hand, Christianity landed on Japan through missionaries who were born and grew up in Western world. Everything underlying them - culture, way of thinking and background - reflected one exaggerated factor of Christianity which was Western Christianity. Therefore, those missionaries and Catholic system behind them, which was already solidly established in the European world, did not give the Japanese space for another way of Catholicism in its start late in the 16th century. Endo, who studied in Europe in his late 20s, must have become keenly aware of this weak point of Western Catholicism in Japan. Father Inoue, who agrees with Endo in many ways in terms of Catholic problems in Japan, writes as follows:

I have realized Western Catholic theology which I had learned at a seminary in Europe is completely useless just as it is when the Gospel of Jesus is told to Japanese people. To teach the Gospel of Japan to the Japanese, without explaining it in accordance with Japanese feelings, making it our own thing, and expressing it in our own Japanese language, it is a failure.

77 Ibid., 214.
78 Ibid., 214-15.
Somehow he found certain answers in his mind. "The Japanese must absorb Christianity without the support of Christian tradition or history or legacy or sensibility." In other words, according to Francis Mathy, "He [Endo] meant that he must put aside any philosophy or theology that fosters the delusion that the Eastern and Western worlds are the same. Endo held that the Japanese must not think of the Christian West as being in their cultural stream, nor at the same time are they to hold it off at a respectful distance." Endo, who admitted Western thought to be "good medicine" and at the same time cautioned, "like all good medicine it had unpleasant side effects," kept following his own path, seeking for Japanese Catholicism.

Though he challenged an idea that the same image of Christianity can be transferred to different cultures, he seems to have changed his opinion about this gradually during his career. In an interview in 1991, Endo admitted there was a common thing between the East and the West. He said:

But now, I [Endo] have changed my opinion most dramatically, perhaps, during the writing of Samurai. Both Westerners and Japanese have something to seek for God in the state of unconsciousness. There is no difference between their unconsciousness. Scandal is based on this idea, as I mentioned. I surely wrote that there was a difference between the West and Japan in Silence and Samurai. And in Sea and Poison, too. But now, I view that everyone unconsciously has something in

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80 Ibid., 286.
81 Ibid., 281.
common which seeks for the help of God.  

From his viewpoint, what are Jesus Christ and God like? In terms of Jesus, Endo described his view in an interview as follows: “Jesus was a Jew. He spoke like a Jew, thought like a Jew and acted like a Jew.” He thought that the strict and judgmental image of God does not attract Japanese people’s feelings. That is because their mental image of God is not dominant but gentle and warm. The former image was imported by Western missionaries who started to propagate Christianity early in Japanese Christian history. God is, for the Japanese, like the Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy in Buddhism. We can see his image of God in the fact that he tried to make Japanese Christianity different from the Western one.

Needless to say, his reflections on God overlapped with his thoughts about his mother in his memories; his mother passionately sought for the truth of Catholicism, but at the same time, Endo in his childhood perceived that his mother was a pitiful and sorrowful woman who had been deserted by her husband. Therefore, his God is maternal and merciful enough to forgive people no matter how many times they commit sins. Endo describes the image of God by saying, “What I like best in the New Testament is the presence of God who suffers with us, the form of Christ who comes running to the worthless and the weaklings and bears half their suffering—the same form that is seen in a

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83c Shusaku Endo, ” in Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook 1996, 281.
mother. On the other hand, Endo says that he is not comfortable with God in the Old Testament.

The reason why Endo was likely to choose sin, betrayal, martyrdom and morality, and apostates his subjects in his works is because he attempted to find love, tenderness and forgiveness on the deepest level of Christianity. Endo always tried to see Catholicism in the eyes of human conditions. Often they are harsh toward characters in his works and people cannot do anything against those circumstances. Thus God’s unconditional mercy, grace, and love can be described clearly in his works. In Christianity a believer is a fighter who must strongly avoid evil, sin or the devil. However, Endo pointed out that weakness is also valuable since love exists in weakness: “Understanding of human weakness drove him to question the image of a judgemental, paternal Christian God which earlier and later Western missionaries had brought to Japan.” He emphasizes that Jesus Christ was “a man who could accomplish nothing, a man who possessed no power in this visible world.” However, at the same time, he says, “No matter what happened, he (Jesus Christ) was a man of sorrows, and he prayed for nothing but their (the people who deserted

84 Higgins, 425.

85 Shusaku Endo, Watashi ni totte kami towa (What God is for me) (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1988), 66.

86 Ibid., 417.

He became convinced that Christianity did not exist only in the West.

The theme of betrayal should be viewed as Endo’s own serious subject. Through his adolescence he rebelled against his mother and worst of all, at last, he stopped going to Mass. However, Endo always felt his mother’s unconditional love, especially after her mother’s death. There is no doubt Endo drew the themes of betrayal and forgiveness from his mother. His other betrayal was to Christ. His baptism, though he had little intention, had greater power on him than he thought. The fact that Endo could not abandon Catholicism though he intended to so many times would prove it. Endo always had a feeling of betrayal in terms of his baptismal commitment. Endo’s eyes toward people who not only are betrayed but also have betrayed are gentle in his works because he has the background mentioned above.

Endo seems to have struggled with the state between being a Catholic and a novelist, in addition to the situation between the West and Japan. Basically, an ideal of Catholicism and the reality of this world and human beings are incompatible with each other. When Endo stressed a real world and created a Catholic world with his own flavor and taste, which was based on the real world that Endo expressed in his works such as Chinmoku (Silence) and Saigo no jyunkyosha (The final martyrs), the Catholic Church felt offended. However, this is a unique aspect of Endo. Therefore, he is worthy of being evaluated more on this point. He himself mentioned his standing as a Catholic and a

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88c Shusaku Endo, ” in Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook 1996, 287.
novelist as follows: "A responsibility of a novelist, to the end, is to gaze at human beings. To remain responsible, a novelist must open his eyes and put his hands onto the ugliest parts of human beings as well as their beautiful parts. It is a responsibility for both a general novelist and a Christian novelist.

However, at this time, a Christian writer betrays himself as a believer by putting hands onto the dirtiest parts of men as well." 89 In other words, Endo was a pioneer as a Catholic novelist in Japan. Though many writers in Japan became Christians and experimented by writing Christian novels, they and their works were rarely highly esteemed. The difference between those novelists and Endo was the extent to which they could adopt the real world and the real Japan besides Catholic dogma and theology into their works. Endo successfully practiced this. In addition, he approached his works from the viewpoint of the New Testament. "To put it forcibly, a novelist, Endo Shusaku, strongly seems to choose a role of a New Testament theologian in terms of creation and conception of his works." 90 For Endo God in the New Testament is tender and always accepts us whatever happens. The New Testament is a promise of God with aliens such as the Japanese. Therefore, Endo seems oriented to the New Testament as a Catholic writer.

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89 Endo, Ihoujin no tachiba kara (From a viewpoint of an alien), 275.

CHAPTER III

ENDO’S CONCEPTS OF JAPANESE CHRISTIANITY IN HIS WORKS

God

Endo presents several images of God in his works and essays. Some may be in his favor and some may be not. However, it is interesting that many images of God can be drawn from a God who is the one, absolute and almighty. First of all, God is judgemental and paternal. In Chinmoku (Silence) a Jesuit missionary, Rodrigues’ God was such a God. God therein keeps his image in the long European background and forces all human beings to love Him. He is always glorious and victorious. People feel awe and fear before God. In Chinmoku (Silence) Father Rodrigues seems to play a symbolic role of this Western God. Rodrigues is brave enough to go to a primitive country, Japan, to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is fully motivated with great ambition and hopes to convert Japanese people to Catholicism. For him nothing was impossible because God was victorious. God was viewed as an extraordinary existence who swept away all enemies, banished betrayers and judged apostates. Even if people are humble before God and fully obey Him, he sometimes gave those people ordeals just as Job, who feared God and completely obeyed God and His will, was tested by losing all his children and money and having a painful skin disease. This type of God, in other words, the Western God or God who is seen in the Old Testament could not impress Endo and early Japanese Christians in Sukyandaru (Scandal) as well.
Secondly, Endo mentioned a mother image of God. This image is a compassionate God. Endo said, “What I like best in the New Testament is the presence of a God who suffers with us, the form of Christ who comes running to the worthless and weaklings and bears half their suffering - the same form that is seen in a mother.” Here Endo links the devotion to the Madonna in Catholicism with the maternal image of God. In other words, he focused and enhanced the image of the Madonna in his works and adapted it into the Japanese image of motherhood. At least, he could find some common things between Western Catholicism and Catholicism which he thought were suitable to Japan. Moreover, through his works Endo tries to convince readers to acknowledge this type of God - the God of love and forgiveness. For example, in Chinmoku (Silence), Rodrigues eventually finds this image of God who was totally new for him even though he served God as a father in Europe.

Though he understood God theologically, it was refined only in his head. Now a motherly image of God with unconditional love suddenly appeared when he was driven into a final corner, which was forced to step on a fumie. “This moment of revelation of Rodrigues’ abysmal weakness, is also a moment of revelation of a new image of God: a

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91Higgins, 425.

92It is a tablet bearing an image of Christ. It was made and used by the authorities in Japan mainly in the 17th century. The purpose of it was to check whether a suspect was Christian or not. “From around 1629 the practice of efumi, the rite of publicly trampling on a Christian medallion..., was introduced to detect secret Christians.” See “Christianity,” in Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983 ed., 307.
compassionate God, revealed in the kenotic Christ, ... Rodrigues, who had a strong belief and confidence in paternal God, was changed by God. He, a symbol of Western Catholicism and Western culture, was transformed into a person who was willing to accept another image of God. Some would say that he abandoned his faith. However, Endo seems to interpret it is a moment when a compassionate God revealed himself and showed his victory over the European image of God, at least in Japan.

Thirdly, God is silent. In Chinmoku (Silence) when Rodrigues cried out and prayed many times during persecution in Japan, God was always silent. When Japanese Christians were tortured and hung upside down in Chinmoku (Silence), God kept silent. Ferreira, who abandoned Christianity as a result of severe torture and, moreover, was cooperating with the authority, tells Rodrigues, “I was put in here and heard the voice of those people for whom God did nothing. God did not do a single thing. I prayed with all my strength, but God did nothing.” As seen here, God seems to desert people who have faith in Him. Obviously, we associate these situations with Jesus during his last moments in the world. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And there was no response to this grievous question.

It is understandable that Rodrigues started to doubt if God existed or not. “Is there

93Ibid., 423.
95Mark 15: 34 from the New International Version.
really a God? If God does not exist, my life, in which I crossed the many seas and brought a small seed here in this small barren land, was meaningless.  

Rodrigues demanded a sign and proof of God by listening to His voice. If we see only the surface of this situation, God seems loveless and merciless. However, everything that happened was prepared for the moment when Rodrigues stepped on a fumie. At the last moment he heard Jesus saying, "Step on me. I know best the pain of your feet. Step on me. In order to be stepped on by you, I was born in this world and in order to share the pain of you, I carried the cross on my back."  

The break of God's silence had to be at this moment. If God had answered Rodrigues' questions and broke His silence before this moment, it seems that Rodrigues would not have stepped on the fumie. God wanted him to step on a fumie and to awake a new relationship with God.  

Furthermore, God wanted to make Rodrigues do it by himself. Therefore, whatever Japanese persecution officers, Japanese Christians and the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church say, Rodrigues established a solid and deeper relationship with God. McFadden agrees with this idea. "The silence of God was a necessary feature of Rodrigues' conversion. Because God kept silent, Rodrigues finally came to realize that he did not know God."  

In other words, the silence of God was a voice and message of God.

96Shusaku Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1966), 177.

97Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 219.

God’s silence was a part of God’s great and extraordinary plans. And when Rodrigues stepped into His plan, he could understand the plan which God prepared for him. From a Christian point of view, Fujita explains, “Endo’s message is clear: God is not silent at all. In a mute but powerful voice, He speaks. It is the responsibility of people to open their ears to listen to Him. Through Christ, God is indeed eloquently telling of his eternally forgiving love.” As a whole, Rodrigues tried to teach Japanese Christians the way of Western Catholicism which he believed was absolute and the only truth. However, he gradually changed himself and his way of approaching Catholicism in the process of taking Japanese Catholicism into him. However, at the end he reached the goal which was to know the true love of God and true obedience to God. In Chinmoku (Silence), Endo writes: “I [Rodrigues] love the Lord in a different way from before. In order to know the love I needed everything which took place until today. I am still the last priest in this country. And our Lord was not silent. Even if He had been silent, my life until today would have spoken of him.” Rodrigues thinks God’s silence was an answer to him and led him to realize higher level of love from Jesus.

Endo also examined whether God in Japan is the same as God in the West. Is the God which the Japanese recognize the same God which people in the West have? This question is somehow theological. In Chinmoku (Silence), Endo explains the concept of

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100 Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 241.
God in Japan through the words of Ferreira:

The thing whom they [Japanese Christians] believed is not the God of Christianity. Japanese people... have not had a concept of God to this day and will not have one from now on either... The Japanese do not have the ability to think of God who is completely separated from human beings. The Japanese do not have the capacity to think about supreme existence which is beyond human beings.\(^\text{101}\)

Just as people might see the shape and color of the same object in a different way even though they see the same thing, Western Christianity and Japanese Christianity are likely to have different concepts of God. In that sense, from a Western point of view, there seems to be no God in Japan. Here Endo gives two meanings of no God: no God in the world and no God in Japan. Of course, as mentioned above, Rodrigues' doubt of no God in the world was solved later on when he found the Lord in a *fumie* and stepped on it. However, it seems that the other question, whether God exists in Japan or, to be specific, whether the true God exists in Japan, still remains. If we define the true God as the Western God, as far as *Chimoku* (Silence) is concerned, the answer would be "no." Therefore for Endo, "God of Christianity lost its substance in the feelings of the Japanese people without their noticing it."\(^\text{102}\) However, Endo was thinking that the true God is not necessarily to be the God of the Western definition, so we can still have hope for Rodrigues, Japanese Christians, Japanese Christianity and God in Japan.

Endo presented another image of God in his works. God is existence who shares

\(^{101}\text{Ibid., 192-93.}\)

\(^{102}\text{Ibid., 191.}\)
pain, suffering and difficulties with us. Though "the notion of God's pain certainly seems contradictory to the traditional theological concept of divine impassibility," Endo supports and shows favor for this image of God. In the theological world God is always splendid and victorious. He is almighty and sweeps away every evil to protect His believers from temptation. Here followers have to become strong as a faithful fighter. However, in the real world, does this attitude appeal Christians all the time? At least, this concept did not attract Endo. In Chinmoku (Silence), Kichijiro, a Japanese Kirishitan, who was awkward and betrayed Rodrigues for fear of persecution, said, "God created me weak and says that I should follow the pattern of a strong person. It is impossible and unreasonable."  

People in Christiandom need different types of God. Christians sometimes seek for a strong and powerful God. They sometimes want a trustworthy and reliable God. In the same way they need a God who comes down to our own level and cries with people who are crying in the darkness. God gives followers the light; but without going to the darkness where people are seeking for Him, how can He give those people the light? In this image God admits just as we are. We are weak, but God says in the New Testament, "my power is made perfect in weakness." In Chinmoku (Silence) Rodrigues finds this God and

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103 Fujita, 112.

104 Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 146.

105 2 Corinthians 12: 9 from the New International Version.

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maybe, it is the most important image for Endo. "Does God exist only to be furious at those people's lives and punish them? Does not God exist to pour love into those sorrowful human beings?... Jesus must have had the image of a God of love, who knew the sorrow of human beings."106

For Endo, God is not just an existence. God is existence of an action and always working for the best of human beings and everything that He created. God's words are equal to God's actions. It appears to Endo that every single thing that happens to us has meanings given by God. Endo explains: "I often say to people, 'You may leave God out of consideration, but God is concerned about you. As long as God is concerned about you, He does various things to you in different forms.' I have a sort of trust that God leads us to the better way."107 Human beings do not see God Himself. Therefore, like Endo, trusting God is trusting things that God gives us. Trusting God is trusting what God does for us.

Jesus Christ

Endo seems to find an answer to a question which he brought up in Chinmoku (Silence). In Chinmoku (Silence) Endo had Jesus in a fumie say, "Step on me." Is this the only image of Jesus which Endo held in his works? The matter of Jesus was one which

106 Shusaku Endo, Jesu no shogai (A life of Jesus), (Tokyo, Shinchosha, 1973), 31.

107 Shusaku Endo, Watashi ni totte kami towa (What God is for me), (Tokyo: Kobunsha, 1988), 204.
Endo could not neglect. In fact, Endo touched this issue not only in his literary works but in research-like works which are *Jesu no shogai* (A life of Jesus) and *Kirisuto no tanjo* (Birth of Christ). Through these two works, Endo tried to reach the true figure of Jesus who existed about 2,000 years ago in Nazareth. Here he needed to think of Jesus and Christ differently. Jesus who is symbolized in a *fumie* in *Chinmoku* (Silence) and the glorious resurrection of Jesus are truly opposite. Endo describes Jesus on a *fumie* as follows:

The priest [Rodrigues] lifted a *fumie* with two hands and brought it close to his face. He wanted to press his face against the face in the *fumie*, which was trampled by many people's feet. That man on the *fumie* was worn away because he was stepped on by many people. He remains hollow and is staring at the priest with a sorrowful look. From the eyes of the face a tear seemed to drop.\(^{108}\)

How should these two realities be combined into one? Endo seems to have faced this issue and tried to solve this problem as his theme. Of course, Endo's Jesus is based on his view as a Japanese and a novelist. As a result, criticism was predictable. Endo testifies, "When *Jesu no shogai* (A life of Jesus) came out, someone said to me, 'We must teach Endo who Jesus is from the dogmatic point of view, for he is advocating Jesus from the point of view of 19th century Liberal Theology.'"\(^{109}\)

However, Endo and every follower of Jesus have their own Jesus. Endo's view of Jesus might not be correct and accurate from the point of Catholic dogmas and theology.


In *Samurai* (The samurai), a former Japanese monk, who is living in a small Indian village in Mexico, states: “I believe in my own Jesus. My Jesus is not to be found in palatial cathedrals. He lives among these miserable Indians.” Here Endo reveals his Jesus, who does not live in the doctrine or sacraments in a church. It was Endo’s approach not to add any decorative things to Jesus and to see Jesus with simplicity. Endo believed that it would lead us to understand the true meaning of Jesus Christ in this world and how the world was changed before and after Jesus’ death on earth.

As mentioned above, all believers have their own Jesus in their hearts to some extent. However, if they understand Jesus as he is, their own Jesus, to whom each one of them had added something, would also be more meaningful for them. They can figure out what they ask for from Jesus if they understand what they had added to a life-sized statue of Jesus. It appears that Endo was in the process of doing this when he researched Jesus and reached a certain conclusion for this. He dealt with this from the perspective of being both just a layman and a novelist.

At first, the Jesus whom Endo described was a powerless Jesus. Though Jesus performed miracles in the Bible such as healing people and providing enough food for many from a small amount of bread and fish, when he was captured, cross-examined and executed on the cross, he did nothing. Literally, he did not do anything. He did not even

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curse people who betrayed and deserted him for their actions. He had no power in this world when he needed to express it most. His life ended without exercising his miraculous powers as he had done before.

Why did Jesus do nothing? Endo must have thought the same thing. People who believe in Christianity and the Bible generally face this question in their Christian lives. When this problem is viewed from the opposite point of view, because of Jesus’ weakness, he could become the Christ. Because Jesus was weak just like others, he could understand human beings who are weak, selfish, easily tempted and sorrowful. When a person who cannot understand others’ feelings, can he become identical with them? Jesus could become Rodrigues when he stepped on the *fumie*. Jesus could become Kichijiro when he betrayed and sold Rodrigues. It was as though Jesus could fully understand Judas and Peter in the Gospel. In the same way Jesus also reflects Endo’s weakness. Endo’s total relief at Jesus proves it. Endo says, “It seems for us that Jesus could perform no miracle and did not do so from the time he was arrested until he died. Moreover, God also seems to have offered no practical help or relief to him.” As Endo says, we can see that there was no miracle when Jesus was crucified. However, Endo uses a word “seem” here in his above statement. When this is taken into consideration, it would be possible to conclude that no miracle performed by Jesus was, in fact, a miracle and that the powerlessness of Jesus was in fact a great power. These realities ended up making him a part of people in their minds.

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and making his love highlighted in their minds.

Secondly, another aspect of Jesus is described by Endo as sorrow. He was always on the side of people who were weak, scorned, and oppressed. His sorrow was with those people: “And he did not say a word of resentment toward those who deserted him and betrayed him. In spite of it, he was ‘a man of sorrow’ and prayed only for our relief.” 112 Jesus felt sorrow as a result of being a human being. He felt sad over living as a human being. He could understand those feelings because he took the form of a human being when he was born in this world.

Another source of sorrow for him was that he was not understood by anybody in this world. He often deplored his disciples who were the men closest to him. He was not treated well by people in his homeland when he returned there. He was alone among people. Though he helped people, they always wanted visible signs from Jesus and did not understand the intentions behind Jesus’ behavior. Because of people’s own advantages they set Jesus up as a savior who should have liberated those who were politically suppressed. They raised their expectations, away from Jesus’ intentions and were disappointed at Jesus afterwards. In Chinmoku (Silence) what Endo described as a face of Jesus on a funie appeals sorrow of Jesus: “The face of Jesus at his [Rodrigues’] feet was emaciated and worn out.” 113 Endo also presents the same image of Jesus in the same work:

112 Ibid., 215.

113 Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 223-24.
"The face became rubbed and hollow on a wooden fumie and it is looking at me with sorrowful eyes. The sorrowful look said to me, 'Trample on me.'" For Endo, however, sorrow did not mean hopelessness or spiritlessness. It is always linked with the core image of Jesus in the Bible, which is love.

Thirdly, Endo described Jesus as an ordinary man in his appearance. Jesus was just a young carpenter from Nazareth, who was not conspicuous in any way. His name, Jesus, was common and he seems to have had a life which was not so different from other people's. If he had a peculiar appearance, great intelligence or family background, he would have attracted more attention. However, God did not create Jesus as such.

Furthermore, in Endo's explanation, the divine nature of Jesus was growing gradually and he did not have it in a perfect way in the early stage of his life. Brannen explains this as follows:

According to Endo's recounting of Jesus' life, Jesus never called himself Messiah.... In his life leading up to his passion, there was developing in Jesus an increasing awareness of his divine nature. Endo draws a sharp distinction between the "Jesus of Passion Week" and the "Jesus of Galilee."... In Endo's account, Jesus did not expose himself early. He made only one visit of Jerusalem and that was for the Passover Feast. This is in line with Endo's insistence on the fact that Jesus had a growing consciousness of his mission and divine nature.115

In fact, in the Gospels of the New Testament there are few descriptions regarding Jesus' childhood and adolescence. As already mentioned, this fact reminds us of Endo's account

114Ibid., 240.

which is that "Jesus" and "Christ" should be treated differently when Jesus Christ is described. And Endo was persistently particular about an ordinary "Jesus." He could find hope in human beings by seeing God gave such a Jesus to human beings.

Here it must be pointed out that even though Jesus appeared to be a common man when he was alive, he was the Son of God and his miracles were performed in ways people never expected. To be exact, all of Jesus’ miracles were based on his love and forgiveness: love to God and people and forgiveness to people. When Jesus is compared with Rodrigues, the difference between these two men is apparent. This shows that Jesus was not just a human being. Jesus suffered from many difficult trials. They were enough to make him curse God and doubt the existence of God. However, Jesus was never disappointed with God. Jesus said to God, "Everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." On the other hand, Rodrigues could not stand God when he had difficulties. He could not keep faith in God when he was tempted.

Endo describes Rodrigues as a representative of all human beings. According to Endo, every single human being is exactly the same as Rodrigues. If we try to see a miracle in a story of Rodrigues, it was after Rodrigues trampled on the fumie. When he did so, a rooster cackled. That description was the same as the one in which a rooster crowed when Peter denied that he was a disciple of Jesus, as Jesus had predicted. After Jesus died, this

\[\text{Mark 14: 36 from the New International Version.}\]
wicked and weak Peter was transformed into a strong man. He was redeemed. This became possible because of Jesus’ love and forgiveness. Endo seems to have the same perception since he also changed Rodrigues by redemption of God after he stepped on the fumie. Therefore, in *Chinmoku* (Silence), this part seems most important because this contains every essence of God and Jesus: love, forgiveness, mercy, power, grace, etc. Here Endo focuses on Jesus’ power after his death and this is the opposite of the powerless Jesus.

Therefore, another image of Jesus described by Endo is the strong Jesus after his death. Hall points out, “In Endo’s story Jesus became vocal, alive, and real, at the point where Rodrigues had to let go of his idealized image of the beautiful, conquering Christ. Jesus could speak to the priest only when the priest found he could no longer sustain a religious faith that was out of kilter with his daily experience in the ‘swamp of Japan.’”

The same thing happened to Rodrigues as what happened to the Jesus’ disciples. They were changed by Jesus after his death. In other words, the powerless Jesus changed into a powerful Jesus in the disciples’ minds after Jesus’ miserable death.

Endo tried to follow this in accordance with the historical facts in his work, *Kirisuto mo tanjo* (Birth of Christ). In this work, he explains that Jesus not only changed his weakling disciples but started to be called “Christ”; in addition, Endo says that Jesus became an eternal companion of human beings. In Endo’s account based on his research of

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historical fact, he states, "A man, who was crucified on the hill of Golgotha in the spring of April, began to be deified just ten years later. Furthermore, for his disciples and followers, he became not an ideal human being (for example, like Buddha) or an ideal believer (for instance, like founders of other religions) but an object of belief itself."  

Here Endo sees the absolute difference between Christianity and other religions and the absolute existence of Jesus Christ. When we understand what exactly happened after Jesus' death, we also understand the meaning of resurrection.

Endo clearly defines the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus:

After the death of Jesus, Jesus started to live in the hearts of his disciples in the form of Christ (the Messiah). It means that the substance of Jesus is Christ and the essence started to be alive. He started to live as the true Jesus rather than the actual Jesus; this is the first meaning of the resurrection. Thus the resurrection of Jesus is confirmation that he returned to a great life. He did not perish but was even more alive in the great life of God than when he was living on the earth and continued to do so; I think that this is also called the resurrection.

Thereafter Jesus changed all values for people who believe him and he himself was a part of this transformation of values; he changed from the most "powerless" man to the most "powerful" man and from the man who was abandoned to the man who was welcomed by people. However, even though we understand this fact, we still have substantial questions: Why did Jesus, who was weak, did not perform any miracles at the time of his death, thereby satisfying people's hopes and desires? He became an object of faith for around

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118 Endo, *Kirisuto no tanjo* (Birth of Christ), 243.

119 Endo, *Watashi ni totte kami towa* (What God is for me?), 80.
people only after his death; why was he not able to change his disciples’ lives 180 degrees though he did not live on the earth? Why could Jesus’ disciples not forget about their useless master? Even Endo could not reach a conclusion about these questions. Endo concluded by just referring to them as the “mystery of Jesus.” Endo says, “This mystery of Jesus has something mystical which we cannot solve, no matter how we try to solve it rationally.”\(^{120}\) People who believe in Christianity will call this God’s work without hesitation.

Endo focused on an image of a sufferer in Jesus. He describes Jesus as a man who “left not a mere memory or remembrance but something decisive in the hearts of the disciples and people who came into contact with him in Galilee.”\(^{121}\) For Endo, Jesus is an eternal companion, crying with people when they are crying and carrying heavy burdens in their place when they are nearly overwhelmed by those heavy realities. Endo’s interpretation is likely to make us have an illusion that he was just an extremely good man instead of God in another form with a divine nature. In such a way, Endo gazed at Jesus who stood on the side of ordinary and weak people.

It seems that this type of Jesus was most suitable to the Japanese people of the late 16th century to the early 17th century. Though some people, such as merchants and low-class warriors, became Christians in order to gain some advantages, many people who

\(^{120}\) Endo, *Kirisuto no tanjo* (Birth of Christ), 251.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., 244-45.
became faithful Christians were poor peasants.¹²² In those times they were quite oppressed by the government and for them, Jesus was the man who could fully understand their sufferings and comfort them before being God himself. In fact, since the arrival of Christianity in Japan along with Father Francis Xavier until the government started to persecute Christians, Christianity spread among the Japanese rapidly.¹²³ The Japanese believed in this gentle and warm image of Jesus. Missionaries who had a European background, of course, must have taught another image of Jesus, a strong and glorious image, to Japanese followers. However, it is doubtful how much the Japanese were attracted by such an image. It would be more reasonable to assume that Japanese believers absorbed more an image which made them feel comfortable. In fact, Endo seems to have had this idea. When he wrote works which were based on the historical background of Japanese Christianity in the 16th and the 17th century, he described Jesus not as a glorious and victorious image but as an endlessly tender image. In addition, according to Kuribayashi, the European image of Jesus was created later on in a history. He compares Jesus as a companion with this image of Jesus.

Endo's "companion, Jesus" obviously breaks the European tradition of a non-suffering Jesus, a Christ who does not suffer and Christ as the Lord who shines with glory and power. "Non-suffering Jesus" contributed to absolutism of religious authorities in Rome and the Vatican in ancient Europe. And it also functioned to appease people and make them prostrate themselves before ecclesiastical authority. Endo's "suffering Jesus" offered a possibility for transforming Jesus (Christ who

¹²²Bunce, 150.

¹²³Kitagawa, 139.
became a form of a fighter for an authoritative monarch and imperialism) and restoring Jesus in hands of powerless citizens.\textsuperscript{124}

Therefore, Endo’s view of Jesus, which is Jesus who suffers with us, means that we try to return to the original image of Jesus before Roman imperialism changed Christianity. As an example of this image of Jesus, Endo described an interesting scene in \textit{Shikatino hotori} (Near the Dead Sea). There a Jewish monk, Kobulsky, was just about to be executed by hanging in a Nazis concentration camp. Endo describes the scene in this work as follows:

“Kobulsky was following quietly but staggering. Then I, only for a moment, saw with my own eyes that someone else was staggering and dragging his feet just like him on the right side. The man was dressed as a miserable prisoner like Kobulsky and was walking with urine dropping on the ground like Kobulsky.”\textsuperscript{125} It is easily guessed that the man beside Kobulsky was Jesus Christ. Like this example, Endo’s Jesus shares suffering with human beings to the limit. He might not take people’s burdens and pains away, but he is, for sure, helping them carry the burdens just like he was carrying the cross on the way to the Mt. Golgotha.

In short, Jesus was himself true love. Endo considers that the way that Jesus showed love was absolutely different from the ways other people have. In other words, Jesus showed the love which God wanted to show to human beings and to the world, and


\textsuperscript{125}Ibid., 300.
made the love which was invisible visible to the eyes of humanity. For instance, Endo states, "While alive Jesus did not stress a religious life filled only with duties and religious precepts and without hearts though he lived a daily life which did not give him embarrassment as a Jew. Jesus valued the sorrow of human beings and love most rather than such things in name only." 126 That was one form of Jesus' love. On another occasion, his love took another form, powerlessness. Sometimes love worked in suffering and sorrow. Therefore, Endo's many images of Jesus all come together in love. In this sense, Endo never leaves his fundamental position which is Catholic, even though sometimes he was controversial because his Catholicism and his Jesus were Japanese-oriented. However, we see this Japanese-oriented type of God and Jesus as a tender and mother-like image. Therefore, it could be said that Endo extracted this image of God which had existed when Christianity first arose and in the process of growing up in the world civilization.

Endo's image of Jesus is that Endo's Jesus does not focus on changing society. Endo's Jesus is not connected with society and starts and ends within individuals. Kuribayashi points out, "As a companion, Endo's Jesus can comfort the broken heart of one who has been defeated in a competitive society and has fallen behind, but does not seek to change society." 127 He also mentions that Jesus is nearly incompetent in the real world.

126 Endo, Kirisuto no tanjo (Birth of Christ), 84.
127 Kuribayashi, 304.
If we see this opinion from a realistic point of view, it would be correct. However, first of all, Jesus lives in each believer and what we need to change most are people’s minds. Every change starts from minds of persons.

Furthermore, basically, Christianity is a religion that works on each one in terms of his/her relationship with God and after that God’s disciples spreads it to others. Eventually, these actions change society. That is the Christian approach to the society. If we take these points into consideration, faith in Christianity would never be acceptance of being incompetent in real society. In addition, if this issue is examined from a theological view point, changing society is in God’s purview. Even though people are working on it visibly, theologians and Christians would say that God is leading people to change it and using people for this purpose. Endo’s Jesus as a companion, in fact, has survived from the birth of Christianity down to the present.

Another of Endo’s works, *Obakasan* (Wonderful fool), also seems to feature a good Christ-like figure. In this work Endo introduces a Frenchman named Gaston Bonaparte. He would be the easiest example for non-Christian readers to understand who Jesus Christ is in Endo’s works. He came to Japan solely out of love. From Japanese eyes, he seems to be foolish and stupid. He never ceases to trust people and show love for them no matter how many times he is betrayed by such people. In this work he seems to have attempted to teach most Japanese people, who are not interested in Christianity, about God and Jesus Christ, the essence of Jesus Christ through the character Gaston Bonaparte. First, he wrote
this novel with a humorous flavor. His novels are categorized into two types: serious novels and humorous novels. In fact, his humorous novels, such as *Obakasan* (Wonderful fool), or humorous essays are more popular among ordinary readers in Japan. Therefore, it would be imagined that Endo had ordinary people, maybe who are not Christians, as readers of *Obakasan* (Wonderful fool) in mind. Secondly, he sets the stage of this work in modern Japan. This is also Endo's idea of trying to make readers feel close to the man who existed on Earth almost 2,000 years ago.

In addition, Endo set the Christ-like main character a Frenchman, not a Japanese. It appears that he was afraid that if he had had a Japanese as the main character, it would have been unrealistic to express aspects of Jesus. Throughout this novel, we cannot stop asking ourselves whether we can do the same things as Gaston does. It also reminds us how Jesus Christ and human beings are far apart. In this sense, Endo's experiment in this work is successful. Willis points out that "His (Gaston's) actions - which are ridiculously foolish in the eyes of contemporary Japanese society - are used by Endo to question our notions of foolishness and wisdom." ¹²⁸ Endo seems to have succeeded in reproducing the essence of the character of Jesus in his work, who was removed from contemporary Japan both in terms of time and distance.

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Love

Love is an abstract word. Love does not have a concrete definition. According to The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, love is explained as follows:

Love as a concept enters philosophy at one point through religion, particularly when the origin of the world is expressed as an act of procreation or the Creator is conceived of as loving his creation either as a whole or in part (i.e., the human race). But the concept of love is also a subject for philosophic meditation in regard to ethical problems. Love, as one of the most powerful of human impulses, was early seen to be much in need of control, especially if man as rational animal was to be able to use his rational capacities. Much of the ethical writing on love is designed to suggest some means whereby the pleasures and other values of loving may be preserved without entailing the supposed evils of intemperate sexuality. Love can take on many forms, from gross sexual passion to a devotion to learning, but, it was argued, the ultimate object of love is the beautiful. The goodness that God sees in his creation is its beauty and to feel the beauty of the world is to love it and its Creator.\textsuperscript{129}

However, the ultimate teaching of Christianity is love. The Bible endlessly repeats love. For example, the Scripture says, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."\textsuperscript{130} Hence, love is a concept that cannot be missed when the theme is Christianity. Of course, Endo also presented his own interpretative love in his works.

First of all, love rules out abandonment. People may abandon others and God, but God never abandons people, without exception. According to the Bible, it is God’s promise and therefore, it will never be broken:


\textsuperscript{130} 1 Corinthians 13: 13 from the New International Version.

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Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. 131

This type of love is expressed exactly In Chinnoksu (Silence): “He [Rodrigues] assures them [Monica and Juan] that the Lord will not be silent forever and hears their confessions.” 132 Why could he be certain of it? Because it was God’s promise. And later, “He [Rodrigues] seems to hear Christ saying: ‘I will not abandon you.’ He feels that for an instant his heart has been purified.” 133 As already seen, Jesus Christ was the one and only who practiced love in a perfect way. In the story of the Bible, this Jesus’ perfect way, at the end, was death.

Love does not abandon anybody; on the contrary, it can be said that love is always with us. In this case, love can be replaced by God and Jesus Christ. In Endo’s mind all this could be traced back to his idealized late mother. In his mind, his mother was merciful and accepted everything. And he believed that other Japanese people had the same concept in terms of motherhood and love as non-abandonment. Therefore, it would be understandable that Endo convinced readers of accepting the idea that apostasy from weakness and Christ’s love behind its action could exist at the same time.

131 Isaiah 46: 3–4 from the New International Version.


133 Ibid., 158.
Secondly, love is the capacity to accept ugliness. Jesus loved victims of leprosy. In the time of Jesus, those people were not allowed to live among ordinary people, nor even allowed to talk to them. However, Jesus treated people with leprosy the same as others. Real love should not be initiated with outer or inner attraction. In Chinmoku (Silence) Endo describes this type of love as follows:

It could be shown by anybody charmed by something attractive and beautiful. Such a thing was not love. It was love not to abandon human beings, who faded and became like a skull, and their lives. The priest knew it in theory, but he still could not forgive Kichijiro. Again a face of Jesus came close to him and gazed at him with wet and tender eyes. Then the priest was ashamed of himself.134

Father Rodrigues could not love Kichijiro who not only had ugliness in his appearance but also showed his mental ugliness by betraying Rodrigues. True love covers all human beings’ personalities, even ones which seem to be ragged and useless. Furthermore, Rodrigues also confessed that he could not love a crowd who were screaming at him when he was arrested and taken around as a warning to others. Each person in the crowd looked ugly from his eyes. Rodrigues’ faith is tested, his faith had matured through theology, and he found that he was not perfect enough to practice this type of love - accepting even the ugliness of human beings. Rodrigues finally was able to feel compassion for Kichijiro. He was peaceful in front of Kichijiro toward the end. In other words, Rodrigues could achieve this type of love by giving up his status which forced him to love something that was viewed as dirty and ugly. This action was also worthy of being called love.

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134 Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 149.
Endo also expresses love of obedience. Obedience is to place trust in everything and to blindly follow commands. In Christianity love of obedience is to believe in everything that is done by God and to follow God’s will without doubt or hesitation. We do not know what will happen if we obey God’s will. It may not be good from our eyes even though it is always good from God’s view point. When we take this into account, why Rodrigues trampled on the fumie can be interpreted differently. Startzman mentions: “In the last analysis Rodrigues tramples because Christ commands him to do so. His betrayal is thus an act of submission and obedience to Christ, a real act of love as well.”

This part in Chinmoku (Silence) has been considered controversial. Does Jesus direct his follower to betray him? He would absolutely forgive a person who betrayed him by trampling on a fumie bearing his picture after the person did so. However, does he actively lead a believer to be an apostate? These are the points of a controversy over Rodrigues’ trampling on a fumie.

On this issue one scene in the Bible is called to mind. Judas, who was one of Jesus’ disciples, tried to betray Jesus by selling Jesus for money. Then Jesus said to Judas, “Friend, do what you came for.” These words are obviously linked with Jesus’ words, “Trample on me,” to Rodrigues in Chinmoku (Silence). In this work Endo gives us a clue

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136 Matthew 26: 50 from the New International Version.

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to this question: whether Jesus suggested his believer should commit apostasy: "‘I [the Lord] was not silent. I was suffering together.’ ‘However, you told Judas to leave. What became of Judas, who was told to leave and do what he should do?’ ‘I did not say so. As I say to you that you may trample on a fumie, I said to Judas what he may do. As your feet pain, there was pain in Judas’ heart.’”\(^{137}\) Here Endo presents two ideas about Judas’ betrayal. That was to say that Rodrigues’ betrayal of Jesus was in faith. First, Jesus was, to the very end, on Judas’ side. His thoughts turned to Judas’ sorrow and pain. He shared those feelings with Judas. His figure was exactly the “companion, Jesus” which Endo proposed.

Secondly, Judas’ betrayal was a part of God’s plan. Even though that would lead to the death of Jesus, that betrayal must be done to save sins of human beings. In an extreme sense, Judas was picked to play his role by God. And Jesus understood all of these matters. He could not stop feeling sorry for Judas. Therefore, Jesus said to Judas, “Do what you came for,”\(^{138}\) in order to soften the meaning of Judas’ betrayal and to declare that he would accept it as God’s will. Therefore, even in this case Jesus was the essence of love. He did not lead Judas to betray him. It was already decided and Judas was a man of sorrow from Jesus’ perspective. Here this conclusion can be applied to the case of Rodrigues. Rodrigues was supposed to trample on a fumie. It was a part of the great plan: “I love the

\(^{137}\) Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 240.  

\(^{138}\) Matthew 26: 50 from the New International Version.
man (Jesus Christ) in a more different way than before. For me [Rodrigues] to come to know this love, everything up to today was necessary. 

Therefore, Jesus, who knew this plan, treated Rodrigues just as he did Judas. He permitted Rodrigues to step on a fumie out of love. He led Rodrigues to deeper love which Rodrigues had not be able to understand before.

As seen above, Endo described love of obedience to God. Furthermore, at the same time, he presented love of neighbors. In Chinmoku (Silence) Rodrigues was forced to choose one of them: love of God or love of neighbors. Whether he trampled on a fumie meant which love he chose. If he stepped on a fumie, it meant that other fellow Japanese Christians were saved from severe persecution. It was irony to Rodrigues because he came to Japan to serve Japanese Christians, but now he had to sacrifice these people if he wanted to keep his faith in God. The Bible clearly says that love is most important, but if there exists two different kinds of love, which is more important? It was not easy for Rodrigues to come to a conclusion. However, at the very end, at the moment of hearing the Jesus on the fumie say that Rodrigues may trample on him, Rodrigues realized that love of God which he had in his heart, to tell the truth, was not real love, or at least, was merely superficial love. In other words, it was close to self-sufficient type of love. The love which Rodrigues learned at a seminary in Europe satisfied him as one who looked up to God and Jesus Christ. In fact, he had been satisfying his own desires when he dedicated all his

\[139\] Ibid., 241.
attention to God. Therefore, in Japan Rodrigues found a weak area in which he could not
love ugliness because it was opposite to the nature of God. Rodrigues could not love
Kichijiro who had an ugly heart and betrayed him. At the moment of trampling on the
fumie, Rodrigues must have understood everything. That was the moment of his
transformation.

Rodrigues chose love of neighbors. He understood love to God and love of
neighbors in the following Scripture:

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of
them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the
greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God
with all you soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest
commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.  

His love to God was not the truth. Rodrigues did not have an option. As a matter of
course, he stepped on the fumie for the purpose of showing love of neighbors and
replacement of his complacent love of God by new and complete one. Rodrigues' love of
God, which he believed was true, demanded the lives of Japanese Christians. On the other
hand, love of neighbors required Rodrigues to sacrifice everything: his status, fame,
reputation and respect. Love meant sacrificing something. For Rodrigues, love of
neighbors was the truth because he had to sacrifice everything in his life. Endo utilized
conversations between Rodrigues and Ferreira to express this love.

"... It is said that a priest should live by following the pattern of Jesus. If Jesus had

\[140\] Matthew 22: 34-40 from the New International Version.
been here, ” Ferreira kept silent for a moment and soon said clearly and strongly, “he would surely have betrayed for them. ”... “ Christ would have betrayed for love even if he had to sacrifice everything. ”... “ Come on, ” Ferreira said gently, placing his hands on the shoulders of the priest, “ You do the most painful act which nobody has ever done. ”"141

Here what Ferreira says points out that love means sacrifice and what is missing in Rodrigues. Rodrigues stomped on the fumie not because of Ferreira’s words, but as a result of understanding the truth in Ferreira’s words on his own; he took an action which would have been done by Jesus if he had lived.

We can see the same kind of love in an action of betrayal in Saigo no jyunkyosha (The final martyrs). Kisuke, who was so timid and cowardly that he abandoned his faith because of harsh persecution with his fellow believers in a village, heard someone calling him: “ It was neither man’s nor woman’s voice. However, the voice sounded clearly against the sound of waves in the black sea. ‘ It is fine just to go with everybody. You can run away if you suffer torment once again and are afraid of it. You may betray me. However, at any rate, go and follow everybody. ’ "142 It is clear that the voice was Jesus Christ’s. Like Jesus who suggested Rodrigues that he should choose neighbors rather than Jesus by stepping on the fumie, in this situation Jesus also allowed Kisuke to betray him and instead persuaded Kisuke to choose love of neighbors.

In both Chinmoku (Silence) and Saigo no jyunkyosha (The final martyrs) Jesus’

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"141Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 216-17.

"142Endo, Saigo no jyunkyosha (The final martyrs), 27-28.
attitude and love are consistent. By letting believers choose neighbors rather than Jesus himself, he was sacrificing himself. And this love of Jesus is persuasive in Endo’s works, because this love is one which Jesus demonstrated by his death on the cross, which amounted to sacrificial love. Kisuke practiced love of neighbors and the result was that Jinzaburo, a fellow Christian of Kisuke, kept his faith. By then, Jinzaburo’s faith was shaken by seeing that even small children were put to torture. As God changed Rodrigues’ faith, God saved the faith of Jinzaburo and changed it into a deeper level through Kisuke’s return. God’s work is shown in words of Jinzaburo to Kisuke, “If you feel hardship, you can betray. It is fine to betray. Jesus is pleased only that you returned here. He is pleased.”$^{143}$ The state of mind which Jinzaburo had attained was exactly the same as Rodrigues’.

Another definition of love is action. Jesus preached how love is important and love is the only thing that we human beings must keep in our hearts. However, if he had just said love, it would not have influenced and changed the world. What Jesus made Christ is rather his action, especially his final action, death on the cross. “Jesus proved his love, not only by his words, but proved the love that he showed his disciples by his death in the prayer at his death. His disciples had nothing to say when confronted with proof of his tremendous love of life.”$^{144}$ In nature human beings want something visible; that is to say,

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$^{143}$Ibid., 28.

$^{144}$Endo, Kirisuto no tanjo (Birth of Christ), 237.
love is an action.

On the other hand, Endo also explains that love is powerless, just as he stated that Jesus was powerless. According to Endo, the men around Jesus got to know the importance of love; at the same time, Jesus already understood that after knowing the powerlessness of love, those people would betray him. As has been said, men seek what they see, but love is not effective in this world. Perhaps, because it is very difficult to define what love is in this world of humans, the followers of Jesus made Jesus himself a symbol of love or even love itself.

It is noteworthy to describe Endo’s interpretation of a famous quote from Jesus: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Endo gives his readers a explanation of this verse: “Here Jesus desperately tries to protect men who ‘did not have love.’ They are not ones who ‘do not have love.’ They are poor at showing love. They have not had a good grasp of what love is yet. This is what verse means.” Even in his most desperate situation Jesus not only did not curse the people who had brought about his death but also forgave them. This quotation shows that love is summarized in Jesus and Jesus is summed up in love.

**Faith**

In Endo’s works “faith” is often a key concept underlying them. Perhaps, it

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146 Endo, *Iesu no shogai* (A life of Jesus), 181.
derives from his personal background in which he became Catholic not because of his own will but because of his obedience to his Catholic mother’s will. He seems to feel indebted to Catholic faith in terms of his faith and this makes him choose this as a topic. Therefore, his view of a betrayer and an apostate are basically compassionate in his works. He seems to think that he may belong in part with those types of people. The faith which Endo describes in his works is also one of tolerance. As there are all sorts of believers in Christianity, faith also has a wide range of meanings. To be specific, every believer has his/her own standards of faith. In the case of Endo, his ideal faith accepts both weakness and strength. Baynes points out, “The most characteristic feature of Endo’s faith is the tension between the superhuman strength and courage of Christ and the human weakness of Peter.”

In the New Testament two types of disciples of Jesus are shown; they were weak before Jesus was killed but after Jesus’ resurrection they became strong. Jesus loved weak disciples and he must have loved strong disciples too after his death. Endo seems to show the same kind of compassion or mercy in Chinmoku (Silence). In this work loyalty shown by trampling on a fumie is treated as faith. It may not be excellent faith, compared to the strong and solid faith from which martyrs have died as a result of their appreciation of God. However, at any rate, weak faith is also the faith found in Endo’s works. Endo admits sorrow in faith as well as strength in faith. Endo’s attitude which we can see here is not defiance against Christian faith; rather it reminds us of Jesus Christ’ attitude and the

attention he paid to weak and oppressed people.

In Chinmoku (Silence) Rodrigues saw a village set on fire by the persecuting officers during his escape. He had to desert the village to flee his pursuers. Then he thought:

You are probably one of only two priests who are now in this country. If you die, it means the church itself will disappear in Japan. Whichever humiliation and pain you have to bear, you and Garbe must survive.... A priest is above martyrdom and must survive in order not to put out a fire of a church during the period of such persecution. 148

This logic is also another type of faith and it cannot be simply evaluated whether it is acceptable or not. One must accept various types of faith - this is Endo’s stance as a Catholic writer and as a Catholic believer. In addition, this seems to be associated with his status as a Japanese. A stern and narrow definition of faith is not compatible with Japanese nature since Japan has a long history of absorbing many things from abroad. Endo’s claim is that "a good believer is not necessarily the only one who sternly adheres to the teachings of the church sternly. Such a man has poison in his own way. A lazy believer has good points as well as bad points and both of them are deserving of God’s love." 149 After all, there is no concrete and complete standard that divides strong faith from weak faith. Faith which seems strong at a glance may in fact be weak and the opposite is true too. Endo must have known that. He, whose faith was given him by his mother and who had tried to

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148 Endo, Chinmoku (Silence), 91-92.

abandon his faith, continued to be Catholic until his death. He understood that both strong and weak faith are fluid.

Between strong and weak faith, it is obvious that Endo stresses weak faith rather than the stronger one. He seems to feel human nature in weakness. It was not a bluff to admit weakness in belief but reflected the humility of Endo as a believer. Believers are weak, so they know that they need God for an absolute and complete existence. Endo refers to faith in weakness. He writes, “Even Christians are human beings, so they may slap their wives and make mistakes. Still, Christians regret mistakes, stand up, stumble and stand up; this is history of Christians. It is my feeling that believers finally try to get closer to the teachings of Christ.” Endo mentions that it does not matter where in faith believers stand as Christians and which faith they have now. What matters is whether they have a will to seek Jesus’ principles. Endo, who shows an understanding of weakness, warns further about that weak point of strength in faith in Kageboshi (Silhouette):

“However, an unpredictable trap and thin, ice-like danger are hiding in such strength....” Endo consistently observes opposite concepts of faith, which overshadowed Western Christianity. Weak, useless and minute faith, in fact, has a possibility of growing, just as Kichijiro and Kisuke were changed, becoming stronger like Peter, Thomas and the other disciples. It seems that Endo tries to follow the central theme

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150 Endo, Watashi ni totte kami towa (What God is for me), 130.

151 Endo, Kageboshi (Silhouette), 22.
of the Bible and Jesus Christ faithfully, not factors which were added later on in the flow of history. Strong faith had grown and developed in European Christianity. However, Endo tried to think about faith from a different point of view. In his *Iesu no shogai* (A life of Jesus) he describes, “If we do not read the Bible in an ordinary way that Jesus is in the center but read it by making the disciples as heroes, the theme becomes only one - how weaklings, cowards and useless men became men with strong faith.” In fact, ten out of the eleven disciples of Jesus died in persecution in order to spread the Good News. Strong faith cannot be strong. It only can stay strong. However, weak faith can be strong. It is a stunning transformation and can be an excellent theme about which to write novels. As a novelist and as a Catholic, for Endo it must have made sense most that the definition of faith is weakness which in turn strengthens faith.

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\(^{152}\)Endo, *Iesu no shogai* (A life of Jesus), 92.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

No matter how, when, or where a religion is born, since it can only exist among people, society, culture, history and country, it never fails to change. It is a natural process and a part of physical processes. Christianity has the same destiny. Of course, the dogma is universal and unchangeable at all times; however, I admit that interpretation of the doctrine of Christianity or some inner and outer circumstances of Christianity have changed in each era and each place by the hands of human beings. Present-day Christianity, which has had a long history in the West, is supported by its historical background, absorbing the essences of society, era and culture.

Endo Shusaku perceived this through his experiences and study in France; therefore, he had groped for Japanese Christianity in his activities as a novelist. That is the same way the Japanese create something new on the basis of a thing which originally came from abroad. As a matter of course, it was not a easy process. The fact that he was a believer in Christianity made things more difficult. He was often categorized as a Catholic in a Japanese society and in the Christian circle he seemed to persist in a Japanese version of Christianity. As a result, he was torn between Japan and Christianity. It may have led him to cast the stories in his novels not in contemporary Japan but in Japan of a few hundred years ago.

Endo mentioned a mother image of God. This image is a compassionate God.
Endo links the devotion to the Madonna in Catholicism with the maternal image of God. In other words, he focused and enhanced the image of the Madonna in his works and adapted it to the Japanese image of motherhood. At least, he could find some common things between Western Catholicism and the Catholicism which he envisioned as being suitable to Japan. Moreover, through his works Endo tries to convince readers to acknowledge this type of God - the God of love and forgiveness.

For Endo, God is not just an existence. God is existence of an action and always working for the best of human beings and everything that He created. God's words are equal to God's actions. God is alive right now. It appears to Endo that every single thing which happens to us is related to God.

Endo focused on an image of a sufferer in Jesus. For Endo, Jesus is an eternal companion, crying with people when they are crying and carrying burdens instead of people when they are almost pressed down by those heavy realities. Endo's interpretation is likely to make us have an illusion that he was just an extremely good man instead of God in another form with divine nature. In such a way, Endo gazed at Jesus who stood on the side of ordinary and weak people.

Jesus was love himself. Endo considers that the way that Jesus showed his love was absolutely different from the love of which people had ever thought. In other words, Jesus showed the love which God wanted to show human beings and to the world, and made the love which was invisible visible to the eyes of men.
Endo also expresses love of obedience. Obedience is to trust in everything and to blindly follow commands. In Christianity love of obedience is to believe in everything which is done by God and to follow God's will without doubt and hesitation. We do not know which result is waiting for us if we obey God's will. It may not be good from our eyes even though it is always good from God's view point.

Endo stresses weak faith rather than the stronger one. He seems to experience human nature in weakness. It was not a bluff to admit weakness in belief but reflected the Endo's humility as a believer. Believers are weak, so they know that they need God for absolute and complete existence. Endo refers to faith in weakness.

Basically, his activities as a novelist did not go beyond literature. His "serious" works have a strong Christian color, but his Christianity has a special meaning in his works. In other words, the uniqueness of Japanese Christianity which he intimated in his many works was too distant from the present-day Christianity in Japan and modern Japanese society. Therefore, it is assumed that the impact of his works could be seen on literatures rather than on Christians because he tried to be mutual between literature and Christianity. Christianity admits only one truth and one faith. For example, as a literary figure Rodrigues in Chinmoku (Silence) is a character that can be accepted, but in Christian circles the father seemed to be an illusion created by Endo in order to justify the double standard in his faith.

However, we have to admit he created and developed a genre, the Catholic novel, in
Japan. He described and defined Christianity through the eyes of a Japanese. At the same time, his works contain a universal dimension since his theme is based on Christianity. Therefore, Endo has become one of the best known novelists to the West among many contemporary Japanese novelists. So far Christianity which blended with Japanese society and culture have not realized or have many problems on the process of making it realized. In a sense, when Endo's works are accepted more by Japanese readers, a new way of Japanese Christianity may be born. Though he passed away in 1996, his works will never lose their luster.
APPENDIX

*Ryugakusei* (A foreign student) is one of three different stories in Endo’s work, *Ryugaku* (Studying abroad). This short story is the same as one of his masterpieces, *Chinnoku* (Silence), in terms of a setting of time. Though we cannot compare *Ryugakusei* (A foreign student), which is less than 20 pages, with *Chinnoku* (Silence), I think this short work, which was published in 1965, has value as a preparation for *Chinnoku* (Silence) published in 1966.

This story, which is based on historical fact, is about a real figure, Thomas Araki. Endo describes about him with journalistic eyes. Araki was educated in a seminary and later went to Rome to become a priest. The favors he received in Rome as the first Japanese to study in Europe and expectations placed on him became a burden to him. In the midst of persecution by the rulers of Japan he returned to his homeland. Gradually he was driven into a corner and, at last, he was arrested. Soon after severe torture he betrayed Christianity and became an apostate.

By supposing Araki’s transition of thought, Endo says, “The missionaries imposed a dream of martyrdom on Christians. They expected martyrdom. They thought that martyrdom was the only way to unite with God and that rejecting it meant betraying God. However, does faith endure such harshness?” Contact with Western Christianity, culture and society made him aware of his blind faith in Christianity. This meant, according to the

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153Shusaku Endo, *Ryugaku* (Studying abroad), (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1968), 58

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Roman Catholic Church, that Araki had weakened spiritually. Obviously, Endo inquires in this work: what is true Christianity and what is true faith?
RYUGAKU (STUDYING ABROAD)

Chapter 2  Ryugakusei (A foreign student)

By Shusaku Endo

In some Christian documents there is only a brief mention of Thomas Araki, who went to Rome as a foreign student in the 17th century. We do not know for certain when and where he was born. It is not clear what his real Japanese name was, though we know his Christian name, which was Thomas. In Christian history priests or theological students who died as martyrs during the persecution of Christians have been researched relatively well. However, research concerning Christians who betrayed and went over to the enemy or abandoned the teachings of Christianity are set aside ambiguously. Probably that is because in those days the missionaries or the Roman Catholic authorities tried to ignore and hide as completely as possible people who left a stain on the Roman Catholic Church.

According to one view it is said that Thomas Araki was a descendant of Murashige Araki who was suspected of treason and wiped out by Nobunaga Oda. Murashige Araki tried to share the fate of his castle in Itami in spite of advice by Hideyoshi Hashiba. However, it is said that his clan fled to Kumamoto in Kyushu.

There is another version of the story which holds that Thomas Araki is a relative of Sotaro Araki, who was a trader in Nagasaki, playing an active part by having trading ships

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154Later Hideyoshi Toyotomi.
authorized by the shogunate. Sotaro Araki was born in Higo\textsuperscript{155} and was a samurai\textsuperscript{156} at first. Later he became a merchant after he moved to Nagasaki and traded with Siam\textsuperscript{157} or Annam\textsuperscript{158} on a large scale.

In any case, it is certain that Thomas Araki grew up in Kyushu, was already baptized in his boyhood and had a Catholic education by a Western priest.

In documents there is no mention of the school of divinity where he studied theology; however, it is not difficult to conjecture. At the time Padre Valignano\textsuperscript{159} was visiting Japan from Macao to observe missionary work in Japan. He sensed the need to train Japanese clergymen as soon as possible and established two seminaries.\textsuperscript{160} One was

\textsuperscript{155}Presently known as Kumamoto.

\textsuperscript{156}Japanese warrior. "Samurai" is also called "bushi" in Japanese.

\textsuperscript{157}Presently Thailand.

\textsuperscript{158}Indo-China. Now Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

\textsuperscript{159}Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), an Italian Jesuit who came to Japan as a visitador. During his three visits in 1579-82, 1590-92, and 1598-1603, he contributed to reorganize the way of the Jesuit mission such as promotion of Japanese-language studies for the missionaries. He died in Macao in 1606. "Alessandro Valignano," Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983 ed. His contribution to missionary work in Japan is enormous. Differing from earlier missionaries, he recognized very well that Japan and Europe were different in many aspects. His idea of missionary work should be "like children beginning to learn again." According to him, the propagation of Christianity must be done in a way the Japanese could accept. See Elison, ibid., 18, 56.

\textsuperscript{160}Padre Valignano promoted education, especially Christian education to the Japanese. He planned to establish three schools of divinity in areas important for missionary work, which were Shimo, Miyako and Bungo; however, the plan of building a school in Bungo failed. For more details, see Elison, ibid., 63-64.
set up in Arima in Kyushu and the other was founded in Azuchi by Lake Biwa. These schools remained until the great persecution of Christians in 1614, though they experienced various difficulties and adversities. It is supposed without a doubt that, of these two divinity schools, the seminary in Arima was the one where Thomas Araki studied.

At present we know about this seminary in considerable detail. Students of the first graduating class of the school numbered 22. The new students studied in an old Buddhist temple which a feudal lord in Arima contributed. Subjects included Latin and Portuguese which were necessary to become a priest, the fundamental science of religion, ethics, Japanese literature, and calligraphy. An athletic field and a bathing place were made for physical education. Among the students who finished this school of divinity were Padre Sebastian Kimura who was burned at the stake like the 26 Saints at Nishizaka Hill in Nagasaki and Padre Kasui Kibe who had studied in Rome, was caught after coming back to Japan, and died in anatsuri.

Today there is only a shrine on the hilltop where the Arima Castle was. That is the site of the former castle and is said that a field 100 meters down from there was the site of the seminary. When we stand on the hill on an autumn day, in the distance we can see

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161 Latin and Portuguese were a part of the essential education to become a clergymen. In fact, some of the Jesuit missionaries did not want the Japanese Brothers to learn those languages, so that they could make distinguish themselves from the Japanese Brothers. Elison, ibid., 15.

162 A way of punishment involving suspension in a pit. It is also called "anatsurushi" in Japanese.
clearly the plateau of Hara Castle, which is well-known for the Shimabara Uprising.

In those days Japanese students who finished a seminary usually assisted missionaries who had difficulties communicating in Japanese, playing the role of an *iruman*\(^{163}\) or a sort of missionary called a *doshuku*.\(^ {164}\) People who made a vow to dedicate their lives to God became an *iruman*. In the end, those outstanding among them could go on to become a priest. The person called a *doshuku* did not take a vow. These people were engaged in missionary work, remaining as secular or lay persons, but they also lived in the church, having their heads shaved and wearing black robes. There is no documentation by which we can discern whether Thomas Araki became an *iruman* or a *doshuku*.

By 1587 the propagation of Christianity in Japan expanded quite smoothly, though there were some obstructions or difficulties. Oda Nobunaga, who always showed a friendly attitude, died in Honno Temple;\(^ {165}\) however, Toyotomi Hideyoshi who succeeded him also formed a friendship with the missionaries and many samurais who were Hideyoshi’s attendants were converted to Christianity. Therefore, Christianity became fashionable. Thomas Araki was, so to speak, a new type of cultured man who learned Latin or Portuguese and a smattering of ethics or the fundamental science of religion. It is not clear that the place where he propagated the faith with the missionaries was Kyushu or Kansai,

\(^{163}\) Brother. This word is from Portuguese “irmão.”

\(^{164}\) The literal meaning is “lodging in the same house” in Japanese.

\(^{165}\) In 1582 he was betrayed by one of his followers, Akechi Mitsuhide, who set fire to Honno Temple where Nobunaga stayed.
but then Thomas Araki must have felt taken pride in himself as an intellectual wherever he went.

At the time there was a man named Sanuemon in Settsu.\textsuperscript{166} We do not know whether he was a \textit{samurai} or a merchant. Though he was a Buddhist, he witnessed the life of the Franciscan missionaries by chance and was impressed by them; he became interested in Christianity, which dictated such a life style, and decided to study Christian doctrines in Nagasaki.

It was precisely Thomas Araki who guided Sanuemon in Nagasaki. In contrast to Thomas, who became an apostate, called a betraying \textit{bateren},\textsuperscript{167} his pupil, Sanuemon, changed his name to Joannes Sanuemon and became a martyr, having been stabbed with a sword three times at an execution ground in Omura. In any case, as we see from this example, Thomas Araki then engaged in the propagation of Christianity with joy.

Until 1587, missionary work was carried out favorably, but in July of that year there was an unexpected event. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had showed a tolerant attitude toward Christianity earlier, suddenly issued a decree prohibiting Christianity.

To this day the reason for this prohibition is unclear. In the previous year, when in

\textsuperscript{166}Presently parts of Osaka and Hyogo.

\textsuperscript{167}Padre. This word is derived from the Portuguese word "padre," as it came to be pronounced in Japanese.
Osaka Hideyoshi met the well-known Padre Luis Frois\textsuperscript{168} or Padre Coelho who was the deputy head of a parish, he was in a good humor and even declared that he would contribute the land of Nagasaki to the Society of Jesus after the subjugation of Kyushu. In spite of that, why did he change his policy suddenly? The missionaries could not understand it. When we read the statement of prohibition carefully, we can find it mentions only that, since Japan is a country of gods, it is a mistake to introduce the heretical religion from Christian countries and vandalize a shrine or a Buddhist temple, which is very confusing for the people.

However, the missionaries had to take measures to deal with this as soon as possible. In the statement of prohibition there was a provision which said it was not suitable to allow padres to remain in Japan, so they should make arrangements to go back to their own countries within twenty days. The missionaries thought that because of this provision that foreign missionaries would be expelled from Japan sooner or later and that the seminaries in Azuchi and Arima which had been set up to train Japanese clergymen were destined to be closed in a short time. Padre Valignano, who was the visitador of Japan, decided to establish a new school in Macao and, as a last resort, to send the Japanese there.

\textsuperscript{168} Luis Frois S.J. (1532-1597). He was a Portuguese who was born in Lisbon and came to Japan in 1563. He met many Japanese leaders such as Ashikaga Yoshiteru (1536-65), Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi and recorded various events of those times in Japan. His reports are important in relation to missionary work and Japan in the 16th century. “Luis Frois S.J.”, \textit{Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan}, 1983 ed.
Probably it was at this time that Thomas Araki left Japan and went to Macao. Japanese theological students who studied in the school of divinity in Macao are nearly all known nowadays, but we cannot find the name of Thomas Araki. The Church Padres did not see the necessity of keeping him in the school of divinity because he had already learned both Latin and Portuguese. The Church Padres thought they would provide Thomas Araki a greater opportunity. They considered letting Araki see and hear more of the world overseas and train him to be a priest, enabling him to study the same theology or philosophy as Westerners studied.

Thus Araki became the first foreign student from Japan who went to Europe. Of course, there were five Japanese who had gone to Europe before him. The first was a certain Bernard in Kagoshima. He went to Goa accompanied by St. Francis Xavier and after that went to Lisbon. The other four were boys¹⁶⁹ who were a mission to convey the correspondence of *kirishitan daimyōs*¹⁷⁰ to Rome. However, Bernard died of an illness.

¹⁶⁹ Mission to Europe of 1582. The mission comprised of four young Japanese boys was approved by Alessandro Valignano and was organized by three *kirishitan daimyōs* in Kyushu. The aim was to demonstrate Jesuit work in East Asia and, hopefully, to get financial support and approval for Jesuit monopoly in Japan from the Pope. An additional aim was to introduce Europe to the Japanese and Japan to Europe. Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1951), 73.

¹⁷⁰ Christian feudal lords. They existed in the middle of the 15th century to the early 17th century. Some were baptized to gain a better means of foreign trade; however, some became Christians due to their serious dedication such as Takayama Ukon (1552?-1615) and Omura Sumitada (1533-1587). See “Christian daimyo,” *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1983 ed.
The boys were merely on a mission and they did not visit Europe to study. Thomas Araki was the first foreign student from Japan in the true sense of the word, one who actually studied in Europe.

Araki left Macao by ship and went to Goa in India. This city was an Oriental base of Portugal. St. Francis Xavier had stayed there to prepare for missionary work in Japan. In the city Western-style buildings were prominent and missionaries who propagated the faith in India or the Far East gathered there.

There he heard about the situation in his homeland for the first time. In Japan oppression of Christianity grew more and more severe and 26 priests and Christians were crucified in Nagasaki. Six missionaries, from Franciscan Pedro Bautista\textsuperscript{171} down, and 20 Japanese Christians were burned at the stake at Nishigaoka in Nagasaki. Araki knew Pedro Bautista. A long time ago he also met some of them who became martyrs. Whereas Araki was secretly thankful to have escaped from such a country, perhaps he thought of his destiny and questioned the plan that he must go back to Japan. He might have thought it would be some time before he would return to Japan, so circumstances might be different by then.

There were two routes to go to Europe from there. One route was via Hormuz in the Persian Gulf and then on to Italy from Palestine, joining a caravan, as had Kasui Kibe, who became a martyr afterwards. The other was via Portugal by sea and then on to head Rome.

\textsuperscript{171} Also Baptista.
It is supposed that Araki probably chose the latter route.

Thomas Araki’s movements until he arrived at Rome are not at all clear, but it was some time in 1600 or 1601 that he reached Italy. It was both a happy and an unhappy circumstance that Japan’s first foreign student arrived at Rome in that year, due to an interest in Japan that was spreading among Christian society in Europe in those days.

It had been only about ten years since the boys on a mission had come to Europe way from Japan and, after receiving an ardent welcome in every part of Italy, returned home from Lisbon. The emotions experienced by the Europeans from the missions had not cooled down. The citizens of Rome remembered clearly the four Japanese boys who marched in step to ms with a bishop or an archbishop under the Popolo Gate, led by cavalry or papal officials. On that day people crowded in the streets and the square like ants and great cheers arose like a storm from windows and balconies. When they reached St. Peter’s Basilica, a gun salute resounded in their honor from both the Angelo Castle and the Vatican Palace. Pope Gregory XIII bent over and kissed them on their foreheads as they kneeled. They went to Venice after Rome and to Milan after that. In each city they received a welcome which was equal to a parade of a triumphant return. Some Christians were so moved that they kissed the boys’ clothes. In Venice innumerable gondolas with full of decorations followed the four-boy mission’s ship and a famous portrait painter, Tintoretto, painted their portraits.
Thus curiosity about Japan and missionary fever regarding Japan lasted in European churches even after the boys’ mission went back to Japan, just as lava still gushes from a volcano even after its eruption. It is said that there was no time like this for the Society of Jesus, which was swamped with applications of those wishing to go to Japan pouring in from various quarters. This was the time that *A History of Missions to the East* by the famous Degelman and Archbishop Theotonio’s *Correspondence from the Society of Jesus in Japan* were edited.

Araki arrived finally in Rome, completely exhausted from a long and difficult trip. He hardly imagined such situations in churches. This was at first a source of happiness for him, but he did not consider that this would be the source of his misfortune which would burden him in the end. People surrounded Araki and tried to force their dreams of missionary work in Japan on him only merely because he was a Japanese.

In case of Kasui Kibe who went to Rome to study ten years later, they leave him on record pretty much to do honor to him as a martyr afterward. The Collegium Romanum\(^{172}\) which he attended kept his school records. In addition, we clearly know in which monastery he was trained and when he became a priest. However, in the case of Thomas Araki, a betrayer, the facts are quite unclear, just as they are in Japan. Nevertheless, it is

\(^{172}\)Presently the Pontifical Gregorian University.
true that Araki was ordained a priest in Rome, so without a doubt, he probably went to the Collegium Romanum and took exams as well.

We can easily imagine how his life in Rome was from a story that was passed on. The story is that “Cardinal Robert Bellarmine was exceedingly attached to Araki and repeated daily prayer of devotional offices together with Araki.”

This is an important description. In those days Bellarmine was a famous person for his faith and learning in the Christian society. He was a clergyman and a scholar who was later conferred the title of “Saint” by Pope Pius XI. It was belief that a Cardinal, who occupied a high position in the Vatican, would repeat daily prayers of devotional offices with a mere theological student or a simple priest.

Why did Thomas Araki enjoy such favor? The reason is clear. That is because he was a Japanese and the only Japanese foreign student who had gone to Europe in those days. People were deeply touched by the fact that the youth from an island country in the Far East studied the same religion as theirs. Young missionaries were seized with enthusiasm about propagation of the faith in Japan, following St. Francis Xavier, and visited him one after another to learn about the situation in the island country in the Far East. Christians looked at the foreign student in their own dreams and were pleased to invite him for dinner or to their houses at times.

Although he enjoyed favor and was respected by people, Thomas Araki gradually felt gloomy. He felt uneasy with himself with just a devout attitude toward Cardinal
Bellarmine in front of him; on the other hand, he found himself not able to reject the favor. Humane feelings and kindness that people had extended to him in Rome were gradually becoming a painful burden without his realizing it. He became worn out by trying to satisfy people’s expectations in front of them every day and wearing a smile all day long.

Araki thought about Japan, which he would have to return before long. The story about the 26 martyrs he heard of in Goa remained in his memory. What astonished him was the fact that among the martyrs were Pedro Bautista and Christians he had known. Of the 26 martyrs, he had once talked with Paul Miki,\(^{173}\) who had graduated from the seminary in Azuchi, and Pedro Bautista who had often visited the seminary in Arima. “Like them, I might be arrested as well when I get back to Japan. Then I would be executed the same as this company. Could I die as they did?”

However, nobody presumed that such a secret lay in his heart there in Rome. When people in Rome learned that the 26 Japanese Christians had become martyrs, they applauded Araki as if he had been one of them. They had thought that Araki would do the same when he went back to Japan. Araki must have wished secretly that the conditions in Japan would change and a day when missionary work was allowed would come, as in the

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\(^{173}\) Paulo Miki (1564-1597). Also Paulo Miqui. In 1568 he was baptized along with his father. After graduation from a seminary in Azuchi, he became the Jesuit iruman. In 1597 he was arrested along with the Franciscan missionary, who was running the chapel in Osaka, and persecuted. “Paulo Miqui,” Catholic Great Encyclopedia, 1940 ed.
past. It was because this was the only way to save himself. One of his classmates wrote: "One evening I entered Thomas' private room. At that time he did not notice that I had knocked on the door. He was burying his face in his hands, bathed in the light from the window. His look was painful and lonely as if he had been crying."

We cannot determine way which he returned to Japan after his stay in this holy city; however, it was in 1615 and again in Macao that he was seen after this. In Macao, where Araki stopped on his way to Japan, his former teacher Padre Valignano had died, but the number of new Japanese who came to study in the school of divinity there had increased. Araki felt he had been deprived of his last hope when he heard a rumor from the Japanese students. After the martyrdom of the 26 the oppressive policy towards Christianity did not lighten up at all. On the contrary, it became even more so. While he was in Rome, the Toyotomi family had died out and leadership had been changed over to the Tokugawa Era. Ieyasu, like Hideyoshi, ordered a ban on Christianity, banished kirishitan daimyos such as Takayama Ukon\(^1\) or Naito Tokuan and destroyed many churches. In Kyoto Christians were arrested one after another. It was said that persecution was growing gradually not

\(^{1}\)Takayama Ukon (1552?-1615). He was a well-known kirishitan daimyo. He was baptized in 1564. While he was a feudal lord, he tried to convert the people in his territory. According to Hideyoshi's Anti-Christian edicts in 1587, he was dispossessed. In 1614 a general persecution brought about his exile from Japan and he died in Manila in 1615. "Takayama Ukon," in Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, 1983 ed.
only in Kyoto but even in Yamaguchi or Tamba.

Padre Valignano, who was ill, issued his will. The will urged Araki to return to Japan that he not extinguish the fires of missionary work by concealing himself. In 1614, Ieyasu gave a strict order to deport missionaries and priests from Japan; in spite of this deportation order, 37 Padres could not bear to desert Japanese believers and remained in hiding. They longed for any assistance, since only 37 priests remained to guide in secret Christians who were scattered all over the country. It was a common view of missionaries in Macao in those days that Japanese priests were especially necessary.

The reason was that a foreign missionary could not disguise himself. Foreign missionaries in times of persecution had their heads shaved so as to pass themselves off as Buddhist monks or propagated the faith under the guise of Portuguese traders, yet they stood out none the less. Christians in Japan were also expected Japanese priests who would be in a less dangerous situation than foreign priests.

They thought as a matter of course Araki was duty-bound to get back to Japan. As expected, the foreign student who had studied in Rome was a source of hope of the missionaries and the Japanese in Macao.

He could not reject this expectation. He must have calculated that he would stay on in Macao until the oppression subsided. However, how others would think of him was obvious if he would confess it to them. Everybody thought unconsciously that it stood to reason that a person who had studied abroad would be expected to be worthy of heroic acts.
In winter of 1617, he despondently boarded a Portuguese ship bound for Japan. It was two months before he saw the Japanese Isles. He was over 45 years old.

When he secretly arrived in Nagasaki, he knew that Christians in this district had been cornered and persecuted beyond belief. This was because a feudal lord had been scolded by the Shogun and completely changed his attitude. Until then he had been tolerant of Christians as a grandchild of a kirishitan daimyo, Omura Sumitada, regardless of the shogunate’s order. In Kikitsu, near Nagasaki, Franciscan Padre L’Assomption was arrested and put in jail in Omura. After this, Jesuit Padre Tavora received a surprise attack from officials for his arrest when he was performing a Mass in a farmhouse near Hirado. These two men were decapitated in a district execution ground two ri\(^*\) away from Nagasaki. Dominican Padre Navarette and Padre Joseph were also taken to one of the scattered small islands in Omura Bay and assinated.

Priests, including Araki, moved from place to place every day and thus escaped from the officials. However, it is said that Araki wept bitterly, holding his head in his hands when he learned that Joannes Sanuemon, whom he had formerly taught doctrines and converted, was killed at an execution ground in Omura because of an action of a Buddhist.

Thus as foreign missionaries were killed one by one, Christians in hiding visited

\(^*\) A Japanese measurement of distance. One ri is about 2.42 miles.
Araki’s hideout by night seeking a sacrament or to make a confession. Araki became a last hope for them. As a Japanese priest he had to hold secret Masses for Christians, listen to confessions and encourage them. However, his words to encourage believers always got caught in his throat. He must have known that he did not have the qualifications for speaking such words.

In 1619 the number of Christians who were arrested began to increase more and more. On January 31, a blind Christian named Anjiro was killed and on March 14, because of an action by a Buddhist, Dominican Padre Mena was taken to a jail in Omura from a farmhouse where he was in hiding. A house where Christians were hiding themselves was set on fire and they also died in the fire.

Around this time, Thomas Araki’s attitude gradually began to change. He sometimes came to utter anti-Christian words to the people around him. Though there is no documentation to clarify what his feelings were at this time; probably they were predicated on the following situation:

Foreign missionaries smuggled themselves into Japan one after another, knowing full well of the prohibition against Christianity. They had an intense desire to make Japan a Christian country and were obsessed with heroism, for which they were ready to die. However, what should the poor Christian farmers who became involved with them do?

The missionaries imposed a dream of martyrdom on Christians. They expected martyrdom. They thought that martyrdom was now the only way to unite with God and
that rejecting it meant betraying God. However, does faith have to be so harsh? That was Araki's logic.

Then he compared Japanese Christians who were under the missionaries' influence regarding their ideals with himself in Rome. He thought about his life of studying abroad in which he had pushed himself so hard to adapt himself to these people's dream that he had come not to move at all. He wanted to say: We have had enough. Leave us alone. Do not force your ideas on the Japanese.

On August 10, 1619, when officials came from a magistrate's office in Nagasaki, he was tied with a rope, trembling. When, in the magistrate's office, he was ordered to abandon Christianity, he immediately shook his head in defiance. However, he betrayed Christianity easily under torture.

Araki was put in jail in Hirado for a while. That was because they wanted to see whether his abandonment of Christianity was true or not. A rumor that he abandoned Christianity spread among the Christians in Nagasaki. The fact that a person who had the duty of a priest, though he was a Japanese, betrayed Christianity was a great shock to Christians. Immediately, Araki was nicknamed "Padre of betraying bateren," which means boss of betraying Christians.

The following story proves the fact that this nickname was spreading not only
around Nagasaki but even to Arima or Omura.

In 1620, a Japanese Christian who was from Arima was dragged off to a magistrate’s office and water was poured into his mouth and nose while he was lying on a cross-shaped timber. Officers said that if he revealed a dwelling where priests were hiding, they would forgive him. He murmured at last after a long cross-examination, “I know a Padre’s address. He is in Hirado.” An officer shouted, “Who is in Hirado?” He answered in a delicate voice, “The Padre of betraying bateren.”

He was continuously tortured and finally died around dawn.

After he was imprisoned in Hirado for two years, Thomas Araki was moved to a jail in Omura. Officials became convinced that this coward would not return to Christianity. Then they decided to give Araki a duty. The role was to urge Christians who were in the jail in Omura to abandon Christianity.

In 1622, eight foreign missionaries and a considerable number of Japanese Christians were imprisoned in Omura. At present we know almost everything about their lives in jail. It is said that because 30 prisoners were crowded into a 12-tatami\(^{176}\) room, they could not move at all and had to cross their legs all day long. Their food was a bowl of brown rice and a small salted sardine and occasionally they had turnip soup. In the middle of the night the prisoners said prayers in unison and after that prayed silently for two and a half hours.

\(^{176}\) A Japanese traditional mat used as flooring material.
It is not clear whether Thomas Araki was placed in the same room as theirs. However, it is certain that he was dragged out as a witness every time Christians were questioned. In those days there were many Christians who protected each other in front of officers and insisted on not knowing whether others were Christians or not. In such times a magistrate’s office needed a witness like Thomas Araki.

There is almost no Christian documentation about his life after that. We do not know how long he lived. Only a conversation which he had with Dominican Padre Miguel de Ozaraza\textsuperscript{177} in a magistrate’s office in Nagasaki in 1637, 15 years after he was moved to a jail in Omura, is recorded.

In 1634, a Spanish ship drifted ashore in Ryukyu.\textsuperscript{178} Four missionaries who wore the dress of laymen were on board.

They were immediately arrested and sent to Satsuma\textsuperscript{179} with their hands tied. Three of them were taken to Nagasaki.

Upon investigation, the three missionaries honestly confessed that they were priests who had come to Japan from the Dominicans in Manila to propagate the faith. They also said that though the number was small, some Japanese students had studied in a school of divinity in Manila.

\textsuperscript{177}Also Osaraza.

\textsuperscript{178}Presently Okinawa.

\textsuperscript{179}Presently Kagoshima.
At this moment, Thomas Araki was in the magistrate’s office and he spoke to one of the missionaries, Padre Ozaraza, in fluent Latin. Araki said plenty of Christians’ blood had been shed and that whenever missionaries smuggled themselves into the country, Japanese blood had to be shed. Araki said, “Roman Catholic Church, please do not interfere in Japan. Do not force your ideals and dreams on these Japanese any more.”

Padre Ozaraza was silent until Araki finished talking. Then he uttered a single sentence when Araki’s was finished, “Your Latin is good, but your faith is detestable; your studies abroad were useless.”

The three missionaries were put to terrible water torture. A large quantity of water was poured into their mouths and noses, and in addition to that the persecutors put a plank on them and trampled on them. This torture lasted for several days and the three died one after the other.

There is a rumor that Thomas Araki, the first Japanese student who studied in Europe, was so conscience-stricken that he died a martyr afterwards. Of course, this is unreliable. A Catholic historian writes about him as follows: “The Japanese apostate had gone to Europe to study and was welcomed warmly in each place. As a result, he became proud and arrogant.”
GLOSSARY

Chapter 1

Endo Shusaku 遠藤周作
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Sono Ayako 曽野絵子
Inoue Hisashi 井上ひさし
Tanaka Sumie 田中澄江
Miura Shumon 三浦朱門
Ogawa Kunio 小川国夫
Meiji 明治
Ryugaku 留学
Ryugakusei 留学生
Shinchosha 新潮社
Thomas Araki トマス荒木
Oe Kenzaburo 大江健三郎
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Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康
Nagoya 名古屋
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Endo Shusaku ron 遠藤周作論
Sobunsha 双文社

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Yoshimitsu sensei no koto 吉満先生のこと

Kiiroi hito 黄色い人
Aden made エデンまで
Shiroi hito 白い人

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Bateren パテレん
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Kadokawashoten 角川書店

Fukai kawa 深い川

Juichi no irogarasu 十一の色硝子

Kare no ikikata 彼の生きかた

Bungeishunyushinsha 文芸春秋新社

Kuchibue wo fuku toki 口笛をふく時

Mari Antowanetto 王妃マリー・アントワネット

Nihonjin wa kirisutokyo o shijnitareru ka 日本人はキリスト教信じられるか

Shogakukan 小学館

Ningen no naka no X 人間のなかのX

Chuokoronsha 中央公論社

Ogon no kuni 黄金の国

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Shodensha 祥伝社

Watashi ga suteta onna わたしが・教えて・女

Yukiar u kotoba 勇気ある言葉

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