

SUSAN BROOMHALL 

Gender, Feeling and the Making of Korean Christian Knowledge in Sengoku Japan*

This essay explores the production of Korean Christian knowledge in Sengoku Japan by analysing narratives about a vision said to have been experienced by an evangelised Korean woman, which circulated within Jesuit correspondence from Japan and in subsequent publications. These texts, about a convert's journey to diverse netherworlds, made affective experiences central to spiritual perception, and to Jesuit interpretation of faith. They held important implications for how women living in a society permeated by Buddhist beliefs and practices could be represented as producers of Christian knowledge and as faith guides to others, whose bodies did not hinder spiritual perception but rather offered tools for achieving it.

This essay explores how Korean Christian knowledge was produced in Sengoku Japan through gender ideologies and assumptions about women and men's spiritual lives and their feeling states. It considers both those of the local culture in which Koreans lived in Japan and the worldviews of missionaries and of the faith communities in which their texts circulated. Considering the influence of contemporary gender ideologies on mission work and behaviours adds to a growing scholarship that seeks to deepen and nuance historical understanding of mission activities and experiences in the premodern world.¹ To investigate this process of knowledge production, the essay examines a specific case study, narratives of a vision said to have been experienced by a Korean Christian woman, which circulated through the communication pathways of the Society of Jesus. Clara, Jesuit reports informed their readers, lived in Sengoku Japan but their texts gave the possibility of mystical revelation experienced by a marginal woman visibility far across the globe.

It was the Jesuit missionary João Rodrigues Giram, who included the first account presenting Clara's experiences in his annual letter of 1606, written in Portuguese, where it was one of a number of reports he produced about Korean converts who were living in

Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

1. See U. Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020); N. Amsler, *Jesuits and Matriarchs: Domestic Worship in Early Modern China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018); H. N. Ward, *Women Religious Leaders in Japan's Christian Century, 1549–1650* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); 片岡瑠美子 [R. Kataoka], *キリシタン時代の女子修道会 [Women of the Christian Era]* (Tokyo: Kirishitan Bunka Kenkyūkai キリシタン文化研究会, 1976).

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Japan.² Giram's narrative portraying her vision reached a wider public when his letter was published in a 1610 Italian translation.³ A further text describing Clara's experiences was included in Fernão Guerreiro's five-volume, Portuguese-language publication from Lisbon in 1611, which reported on the labour of Jesuit men in the field, from Goa and Ethiopia to China and Sierra Leone.⁴ In the early years of Europe's seventeenth century, Guerreiro provided an important service to the global Jesuit mission. He parsed the reports of his colleagues situated overseas and transformed their missives into what the Jesuits hoped would prove a compelling account of the successful expansion of the Christian community, one which argued for the power of the Christian message to reach even women who were among the most marginal in their societies.

The Production of Korean Christian Knowledge

Guerreiro's five volumes were a comprehensive account of many missions, including those in east Asia. However, the Jesuits had no mission established in the Joseon kingdom at this period. European missionaries and traders were reliant on information about its society from the Japanese or from survivors of shipwrecks and other mishaps. Nonetheless, evangelised Koreans did feature in Jesuit accounts. This was because Toyotomi Hideyoshi had launched two, ultimately unsuccessful, invasions of the Korean peninsula during the reign of King Seonjo, seeking a foothold from which to attack Ming China. One consequence of this violence was the capture and removal of many thousands of Joseon Korean people as a labour force in Japan and for trade throughout slave markets in east Asia. As a result, Jesuit missionaries came into contact with Joseon-born people, many enslaved, on the estates of Christian *daimyōs* and as a new population influx into Japan's towns, especially Nagasaki.⁵ In 1594, just two years after the first of Hideyoshi's invasions of the Joseon kingdom, Francesco Pasio, Superior of the Jesuit residence at Sakai, reported his impressions of Koreans as people "of great natural intelligence and capacity for our holy faith." Pasio claimed that even the Japanese brothers were "amazed to see what good understanding they have," "saying that Koreans are in no way inferior to the Japanese when it comes to receiving our holy faith."⁶ Jesuits' enthusiastic accounts describing the fervour of Korean converts, as transmitted in Jesuit missives from Japan, were positioned as evidence of the success of the Society's work there and part of a concerted push to develop a dedicated mission to Joseon Korea.⁷

2. Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter ARSI), JapSin 55, fols 320v-321r. All translations are my own.

3. João Rodrigues Giram, *Lettera di Giappone dell'anno M. DC. VI, del P. Giovanni Rodriguez* (Rome: Bartolomeo Zannetti, 1610), 38–40. Guerreiro's version of this narrative is available in modern published form, Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação anual das coisas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas suas missões [...] nos anos de 1600 a 1609*, ed. A. Viegas (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1942), 165–66. Dream and vision narratives related to Clara and other Korean converts are discussed in the context of Christian belonging in S. Broomhall, *Evangelising Korean Women and Gender in the Early Modern World: The Power of Body and Text* (Leeds: ARC Humanities Press, 2023), 45–51.

4. *Relação anual das Coisas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia e Jesus nas partes da Índia Oriental, e em algumas outras da conquista deste reino nos anos de 607 e 608, e do processo da conversão e cristandade daquelas partes, com mais uma adição à relação de Etiópia; Tirado tudo das cartas dos mesmos padres, que de lá vieram, e ordenado pelo Padre Fernão Guerreiro da Companhia de JESUS, natural de Almodôvar de Portugal; Vai dividida em cinco livros. O primeiro da Província de Goa, em que se contem as missões de Monomota, Mogor e Etiópia. O segundo da Província de Cochim, em que se contem as coisas do Malabar, Pegu, Maluco. O terceiro das Províncias de Japão e China. O quarto, em que se referem as coisas de Guiné e serra Leoa. O quinto, em que se contém uma adição à relação de Etiópia* (Lisbon: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1611).

5. See an overview of early contacts in J.G. Ruiz de Medina, S.J., *The Catholic Church in Korea: Its Origins, 1566–1784*, trans. J. Bridges S.J. (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korean Branch, 1991).

6. ARSI, JapSin 45, fol. 196r: "grande numero de corayes losquales fueron captivados de los Japones es esta guerra que con ellos tienan, y por que son naturalmente de buen ingenio, y capacidade para las cosas de nuestra santa fee," "admirados de uere quan buen entendimiento tienen," "diciendo que en nada son inferiores los corays a los japones quanto es para recibir nuestra santa fee."

7. Broomhall, 11–15, 87–96.

Although in many locales Jesuit missionaries learnt local languages to interact with those they sought to convert, this approach does not seem to have been considered for reaching out to Korean enslaved individuals in Japan. Consequently, evangelising strategies focused on identifying Korean men, who could read the Chinese characters used across China, Korea and Japan and be taught Japanese, to act as the Christian message's cultural mediators to their communities.⁸ The Spanish Jesuit Pedro Morejón, for example, recognised the value to the mission of men such as the Korean convert Kaun, baptised as Vicente, who "became a good teacher of catechism [...] and in this way greatly helped fellow natives, who later said that their becoming Christians and persevering in the faith was thanks to Vicente."⁹ Other missionaries played down any linguistic difficulties, as did Luís Fróis who insisted to the General of the Society of Jesus, Claudio Acquaviva, that "most of them pick up the language of Japan so easily that almost none need to confess through an interpreter."¹⁰ Nonetheless, questions remained for contemporaries, certainly voiced by those in other religious orders, as to the sincerity of the especially large number of conversions reported by Jesuits during these years.¹¹

Jesuits thus recorded instances of what they claimed were converts' own speech that conveyed their commitment and fervour. An unnamed servant girl in Arima whose devotional activities Giram had praised was documented as "saying that she might be a poor slave, but she meant to show her good will as well as she could, and win some merit."¹² Francisco Colín claimed to report the speech of Marina, another Korean convert, as she was processed through the streets of Miyako (present-day Kyoto) as a punishment by Japanese state officials for refusing to abjure her faith. Marina, Colín told his readers, "proclaimed through the streets, in her half Japanese (which, being Korean, she did not speak well), that she remained firm and constant in the faith of Jesus Christ, for whom she was prepared to die."¹³ Fróis reported to his colleagues in 1596 that, after the Good Friday religious activities at the Church of Saint Paul in Nagasaki, a group of Koreans had appeared at the church the following morning before the religious community, saying, "on their knees, with great humility: 'We are only Koreans, and because we are captives, we could not participate in yesterday's procession. Now we are all here together to ask God's mercy and forgiveness of our sins.'"¹⁴ Jesuits were keen to present voices of Koreans, making the several paragraphs that Giram, then Guerreiro, presented as Clara's visionary experience described in her own words and as her own interpretation of their spiritual meaning, significant.

However, the vision described as Clara's report of her experiences within these missionary accounts was clearly at least inflected by a series of Jesuit interlocutors, taking us to the heart of the question of how Korean Christian knowledge, as it appears in the Jesuit

8. Broomhall, 19–32, 58–60.

9. Macao, 31 March 1627, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Ms Jesuitas 9/2666, fol. 462v: "salio buen predicador del Cathecismo." "y assi ayudo grandemente a sus naturales, que despues dezian que ser cristianos y perseuerar en la fee era beneficio de Vicente."

10. 3 December 1596, ARSI JapSin 52, fol. 203v: "la mayor parte dellos toma la lengua de Japão con tanta facilidad que quasi ningunos tiene necesidad de fe confessar per interprete."

11. See, for example, San Martín de la Ascensión and Fray Marcelo de Ribaneneira, *Relacions e informaciones*, ed. J. L. Alvarez-Taladriz (Osaka: [the editor] 1973), 78.

12. Nagasaki, 25 February 1608, ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 405v: "que ja que era pobre & catiua pello menos como que podia queria mostrar sua boa contade & ganhar algum merecimento."

13. Colín, S.J., *Labor evangélica de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas*, ed. P. Pastells, vol. 3 (Barcelona: Henrich y Compañía, 1902), 504.

14. 3 December 1596, ARSI, JapSin 52, fol. 203v: "abriendo una ventana y preguntando quiceram responderam detrodillas con grande humildad somos Corays solamente y porque somos cautivos y no tenemos a paresse para ayer yr en laprocession agora uenimos acqui todos Juntos apedir a dios misericordia y perdon de nuestros peccados." See also discussion in L. de Sousa, *The Portuguese Slave Trade in Early Modern Japan: Merchants, Jesuits and Japanese, Chinese and Korean Slaves* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 118–9.

archive, can be understood. This concerns both the textual and archival sources available to us, and our historiographical approaches to their interpretation and use. I contend that Korean convert accounts were not a creative fiction of Jesuit authors. The experiences of almost every woman recounted in the Jesuit archives was presented through their Christian name, and with only as much information about their lives before conversion as was necessary to inform the narrative of their voluntary conversion being presented.¹⁵ Although Clara's existence has not been independently verified in other sources, that of other Korean converts who were recorded in the Jesuit archive in such ways has been.¹⁶ Perhaps the most discussed of all evangelised Korean women was an individual known in Christian sources as Julia. Her activities in Japan were recorded in a range of secular and religious European writings by men who claimed to have met and worked with her in the early seventeenth century.¹⁷ In 2023, a hitherto unknown Japanese-language letter from this woman was uncovered in the collections of the Hagi Museum. In this letter, she documented aspects of her experiences that reflect and extend the information and her letter texts found in varied Jesuit, and other, accounts.¹⁸

As scholars of women and gender seek to recover and analyse diverse experiences and expression of faith in times past, women's authorial agency in the production of spiritual texts has necessarily been a focus of scholarly investigation. Not all Korean women converts were known to have written accounts about their experiences, although some did, but the texts that presented their experiences relied for their existence on these women's engagement with local Christian communities and with missionaries. It is now well recognised that religious women and the male *amanuenses* who were sometimes responsible for recording their thoughts did not enjoy equal power in the production of these texts. Rather, and importantly, new research has demonstrated that this power was not held solely by the men participating in these complex spiritual relationships.¹⁹ Women and men held agency in different aspects of the creation of these texts, depending on their knowledge and access to such aspects as particular languages, dissemination tools and institutional support. These dynamics could range from exploitation to mutual benefit. The co-fabricated nature of the texts that resulted therefore requires careful consideration of the specific scribal contexts, social dynamics and personal relationships with which they were informed. Therefore, what I term "Korean Christian knowledge" is the product of both Korean converts' expressions of faith and their representation by missionaries such as the Jesuits in the Christian archive.

15. Broomhall, 5.

16. See, for example, biographical studies by H. Wong, "Marina Pak (c. 1572–1636): An Attempted Reconstruction of Her Years in the Philippines," *Religions* 13 (2022): <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070621> (accessed 6 April 2024); Ruiz-de-Medina, "The First Korean Catholic Nun in History, Pak Marina (1572–1636)," *The Japan Missionary Bulletin* 41 (1987): 233–35. The relationships between Jesuit missionaries and evangelised Korean women are explored in Broomhall.

17. 魯成煥 / 노성환 (S.H. No), 조선인 임란포로 오다 주리아에 관한 일고찰 [A study of the Christian Ota Julia]. *동북아 문화연구* 40 (2014): 477–99; Ruiz-de-Medina, "History and Fiction of Ota Julia," *The Japan Missionary Bulletin* 43 (1989): 157–67.

18. 平岡崇 [T. Hiraoka], 萩博物館所蔵村田家資料中のジュリアおたあ関係文書 [Documents related to Julia Ota in the Murata Family materials held at the Hagi Museum], *山口県地方史研究* [Yamaguchi Prefecture Local History Journal], 130 (2023): 77–87. I thank Dr Hiraoka for sharing the letter text with me ahead of its publication.

19. J. Hillman, "Writing a Spiritual Biography in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* 42, no. 1 (2019): 1–34; A. Weber, "Literature by Women Religious in Early Modern Catholic Europe and the New World," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, eds. A. M. Poska, J. Couchman and K. A. McIver (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 33–52; J. M. Molina and U. Strasser, "Women in the Eyes of a Jesuit Between the East Indies, New Spain, and Early Modern Europe," in *Western Visions of the Far East in a Transpacific Age, 1522–1657*, ed. C. H. Lee (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 117–36; J. Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

Central to the Jesuits' goal to represent convert voices was the compatibility of these individuals' experiences as Christians with the expectations Jesuits held about the spiritual and social agency of east Asian women and men. Haruko Nawata Ward has documented how missionaries foregrounded their own expectations of local women when they described the activities of Japanese women converts.²⁰ Texts representing Korean converts' voices published by Jesuits were thus likely to demonstrate at least substantial compatibility with their own ideas about spiritual experience. Unsurprisingly in an account that was surely intended to disseminate evidence of Jesuit evangelising success in Japan therefore, the narratives about Clara's vision substantially conform with Jesuit ideology. Yet, as the sections below explore, in several aspects, these texts also appear to present a distinctly female-oriented perspective of Christian community in Japan, and one intermingled with knowledge of contemporary Buddhist practices. These elements suggest potential evidence of Clara's personhood and her participation in the creation of the account, for they do not appear to reflect the social world of a Jesuit missionary. Indeed, in some points, the first known account, in Giram's letter, even diverged from contemporary Christian understandings conventionally expressed in mission works. That this was unacceptably divergent is demonstrated by subsequent re-workings of this component as it moved from Giram's manuscript source to wider circulation in print publications.

Narrating Clara's Vision

What Clara was presented as knowing and articulating of Christian tenets, and how it was expressed in feeling experiences, were communicated through Giram's report, its translation, and Guerreiro's volume, each text designed to be accessible and edifying to its specific readers. The summary of her vision here follows what was first recorded by the Society's local correspondent in Japan, the missionary Giram, as he transmitted it to his Jesuit colleagues.

Clara, "simple and devout," had fallen ill and on the third day of her illness lost all her senses, and was so unresponsive that her carers took her for dead.²¹ Her decline, and apparent demise, had occurred so suddenly that her carers decided to confirm her passing by sticking needles into her. This having no effect, they began to prepare her body in shrouds. However, after five hours, Clara just as suddenly revived, and related a remarkable account.

"First, that she had been taken to Hell," where "she said that she had seen many pots and boilers placed in a row on the fire, in which the many souls were roasting and frying." In front passed a river of very cold water, inflicting upon suffering souls "one extreme of heat to another of intolerable coldness."²² Clara saw others, "with nails in their foreheads, three on the breast, and others on their hands and feet, representing the sins that the souls had committed."²³ While in Hell, as she termed it, Clara met a woman she had known in life, who told Clara that she had sinned by aborting a child and dying without confession. The soul knew Clara by her name, and "Clara was astonished that the soul was speaking to her and telling her the cause of her torments, what had actually happened in this women's life."²⁴ The soul "told her further that she knew and had seen in that place many

20. Ward, 290.

21. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "simples e deuota."

22. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "Primeiramente, *que* fora leuada ao Inferno," "Ali dizia ella, que vira muitas panellas ou caldeiras postas *por* ordem ao fogo nas quaes se estauam assando e fringindo muitas almas," "passandoas de hum extremo dequentera a outro de intolerauel frialdade."

23. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "Vio tambem outras almas pregadas com pregos na testa, tres nos peitos e outros nas mãos e pes, conhecendo juntamente os peccados pellos quais erão as ditas almas atormentadas."

24. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "Clara ficara atónita por se ver nomear por seu nome e tambem por lhe fallar aquella alma, e dizer a causa de seus tormentos; o *que* na verdade assi passara em vida daquella mulher."

other people, both men and women, who were in torment for their particular sins.”²⁵ Next Clara found she was in a new site, one that was “very dark, where no one could be seen, but there were many in it, crying and screaming, as if they were saying, ‘Pray for us,’ which place, she said, must be Purgatory.”²⁶

Then Clara found herself elsewhere, in a place that was “very spacious, pleasant and beautiful, all carpeted and covered with rich tapestry, so that none of the ground was visible.”²⁷ “She saw a very beautiful gate enamelled all over with gold and silver, and many steps leading up to the top.”²⁸ These were lit by “many lamps, and on both sides there were many children, very beautiful, beautiful in the extreme, all with books open in their hands, praying for them.”²⁹ Clara recognised among them a young boy “who had died at the age of five, three years ago.”³⁰ He stepped forth, and after speaking to her, guided her up the steps. As they did so, “three robed priests appeared to her, and asked, ‘Who is this?’, to which the boy replied who the woman was. The priests said, ‘This is a place no dirty and filthy people can enter’.”³¹ Clara suddenly felt pricking on her face, the sensation of the needles with which her attendants were confirming if she was dead. Reviving quickly, she “said that she felt her heart completely changed” and Giram concluded the story noting that Clara “now goes about more devoutly than before.”³²

Representing Women’s Spiritual Experiences

Giram’s letter reported that Clara lived in Arima and Guerreiro’s published version embedded discussion of her in a wider account about Christian activities in that place. Christianity had taken strong roots there with the support of the *daimyō* Arima Harunobu (baptised Protásio, later confirmed as João), who had provided lands to the Society, and a supportive environment in which Christianity could thrive.³³ It was an area into which thousands of captured Koreans flowed, as Fróis documented to the General in 1595.³⁴ Guerreiro’s text described from the reports of missionaries how the Society could boast of a college for boys and a seminary in the town, where there were thirty members of the Society, including sixteen priests, and some eighty students.³⁵ These students were, he wrote, “raised in such a way in virtue and letters, that they become able instruments, for which their creation is intended.”³⁶ They were taught, in Latin and Japanese, the arts of rhetoric “to more elegantly be able to speak, and use it in preaching and interacting with noble and learned people.”³⁷ “They also practise playing instruments and singing here, to be able to help in

25. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: “Contou mais *que* conhecera e vira naquelle lugar muitas outras pessoas, assi homens como molheres, que estauam nos tormentos *por* seus peccados particulares *que* ella contaua.”

26. ARSI JapSin 55, fols 320v-321r: “muito escuro aonde não aparecia ninguem, masque estauam nelle *muitos*, chorando e gritando, e como *quem* dizia rogai por nos; o qual lugar, dizia ella *que* seria o Purgatorio.”

27. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “mui largo, ameno, e fermoso todo alcatifado e cuberto de ricapeçaria de modo *que* não parecia nada de chão.”

28. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “vio, estar *hum* portal fermosissimo esmaltado todo de ouro e prata, do pe doqual comecaão huns degraos *tambem* de ouro e prata, *que* heam subindo para cima.”

29. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “os quaes degraos estauam cheos de candeas, e de *huma* e outra parte *muitos* mininos mui fermosos por estremo todos com seus liuros nas mãos abertos, rezando *por* elles.”

30. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “Vira *hum* minino, *que* ella conhecera o qual morres de idade de cinco annos e avia tres *que* era morto.”

31. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “e *que* este minino lhe fallara e metera para dentro dos de graos pellos quaes subindo lhe apareceram tres sacerdotes reuestidos, e lhe perguntaram quem era; aoque respondendo o menino quem era adita molher disseram os Sacerdotes, este he *hum* lugar aonde não entra pessoa suja e immunda.”

32. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “dizia *que* sentia seu coracam totalmente mudado *doque* era dantes,” “sarando logo da duenca procede agora e anda *muito* mais deuota *que* primeiro.”

33. Guerreiro, 3, 159–60.

34. Nagasaki, 20 October 1595, ARSI JapSin 52, fol. 94v.

35. Guerreiro, 3, 115, 159.

36. Guerreiro, 3, 159.

37. Guerreiro, 3, 159.

the celebration of the divine services, from which so much profit follows in Japan, and so much credit and esteem to our holy Law".³⁸ A confraternity of the Annunciation had also been established, "such an effective means, [...] from which so much fruit follows across Japan."³⁹ It was a rich and dynamic environment for Christian activities, first and foremost for those boys and men who were able to enjoy its benefits directly, but also one the sonorous, visual and dramatic expressions of which may have been perceptible to many others who lived there, whether Christian or not.

Guerreiro included other accounts about Christian experiences among women in Arima, both Japanese and Korean, in addition to that of Clara. The Korean convert Ursula presented, for example, a worthy model to readers of a good death. To the attending priest seeking to confess her, Ursula, while "very weak in her body but strong in spirit," articulated her faith through her Christian devotional practices: "I, Father, am called Ursula, and since I am a Christian of just a few years, and of this age which you see, I am already more than fifty, yet I know the prayers, and by the grace of God I was baptised [...] every day I pray the rosary many times."⁴⁰ Passing through her final illness, she was said to have called out for Jesus, Mary and for her patron saint, Ursula. Reporting that he had rarely encountered "a soul as pure as hers, [the priest] greatly edified and comforted, praised the Lord, who everywhere has his chosen ones."⁴¹ Significantly, Ursula, a servant of the *tono*, was identified as "of Korean caste," a term used elsewhere to describe a servant (*moça*) of a Japanese Christian master in Arima, who later became a devoted Christian.⁴² The term "caste," rather than the more commonly used identity markers such as of "the Korean nation" or "from Korea," suggested not only these women's origins in the Joseon kingdom but also their social status, most likely as enslaved individuals, in Japan. Its use in this context appeared to emphasise Guerreiro's key message that Christian understanding could be bestowed on society's most marginal individuals.

Foregrounding women's experiences as converts to Christianity was important for Jesuits. Edification and consolation of the faithful were explicit aims of Guerreiro's publication, and accounts about new Christians such as Ursula and Clara had valuable lessons to teach readers in Europe.⁴³ In addition, Jesuits were keen to enlist women as networkers and funders of their activities, and the inclusion of accounts about female converts in what were far-flung regions for European women readers may have been intended to mobilise their support.⁴⁴ Certainly, there were influential women, such as Maria Guadalupe de Lencastre y Cárdenas Manrique, specifically identified by Jesuits as interested in the east Asian missions.⁴⁵

Ignatius of Loyola and his Society successors were also deeply engaged as interlocutors of women's own spirituality and their works supported the possibility that women as well as men could experience mystical revelation.⁴⁶ Visions and related spiritual phenomena

38. Guerreiro, 3, 159.

39. Guerreiro, 3, 159.

40. Guerreiro, 3, 157.

41. Guerreiro, 3, 157.

42. Guerreiro, 3, 157. On the ambiguous usage of the term *moço*, see L. Brockey, "Jesuits and Unfree Labour in Early Modern East Asia," in *Jesuits and Race: A Global History of Continuity and Change, 1520–2020*, eds. N. Millett and C.H. Parker (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2020), 77–8.

43. Guerreiro, 3, np.

44. G. Simmonds, "Women Jesuits?" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. T. Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 120–35.

45. J. Gillespie, "The 'Mother of Missions': The Duchess of Aveiro's Global Correspondence on China and Japan, 1674–1694," *Laberinto Journal* 9 (2016): 128–33; R. P-c., Hsia, ed. *Noble Patronage and Jesuit Missions: Maria Theresia von Fugger-Wellenburg (1690–1762) and the Jesuit Missionaries in China and Vietnam* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 2006); E. J. Burrus, ed., *Kino Writes to the Duchess: Letters of Eusebio Francisco Kino, S. J. to the Duchess of Aveiro* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1965).

46. Simmonds, 120. H. Rahner, S.J., ed., *St. Ignatius Loyola: Letters to Women* (New York: Crossroad, 2013), 9–10.

such as dreams and revelations broadly held power in Christian, Japanese and Joseon communities at this period for making sense of spiritual ideas. However, women's visionary experiences enjoyed ambiguous authority in contemporary Catholic life, and were not always readily accepted. Nonetheless, although Catholic officials were cautious in scrutinising the claims of contemporary female visionaries in Europe, as the investigations of Teresa of Ávila attested, visionary women continued to be consulted as powerful voices of insight for Catholic political leaders across a series of European courts.⁴⁷

Jesuits, in particular, promoted the voices of mystical women from their global missions. One was the Indian-born enslaved woman who, later freed, lived as a *beata* in colonial Mexico in the mid-seventeenth century, known by her baptismal name Catarina de San Juan. Her visions were reported in a range of contemporary texts.⁴⁸ Guerreiro's work also related examples of Japanese women experiencing visions. One involved a young woman from Shimabara who had experienced a vision in her sleep, in which she was rebuked for not yet becoming a Christian and advised to prepare for her death. She recalled this vision a few years later on her deathbed, telling her husband: "I woke up very happy, and soon resolved with myself to become a Christian, I have never forgotten the joy I received in that vision."⁴⁹ The experience, readers were told, had allowed her to prepare calmly for her own passing, and the account concluded with the edifying image that "she finally passed away very peacefully, always looking at the three images in front of her. And not only were the Christians comforted by this good death, but also some Gentiles, moved by it, promised to become Christians soon."⁵⁰ Another report was of a dream that led to conversion for the daughter of the martyr Belchior [Melchior] Kumagai Motonao.⁵¹ In her dream, her deceased father had taken from her hand the beads with which she was praying to Amida and thrown them to the ground, reproaching her for delaying becoming a Christian. Soon after she had misplaced the prayer beads, and later lost her only daughter to illness, "which she attributed as God's punishment for delaying her baptism."⁵² These spiritual experiences by Japanese women represented in Jesuit sources share similarities with the vision reportedly experienced by Clara, in that their core message was to affirm each woman's decision to become (or, in the case of Clara, become a better) Christian.

Significantly, in all three cases, the women involved were described as determining the meaning of their visionary or dream experience. Clara was identified as both subject and narrator of a vision by Giram and Guerreiro alike, who both indicated that this was the term the convert used to describe her experience. She was not reported to have reflected

47. J. L. Eich, J. L. Gillespie and L. Harrington, eds., *Studies in Women's Voices and the Politics of the Spanish Empire: From the Convent Cell to the Imperial Court* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2008); U. Strasser, "Una profetessa in tempo di guerra: il caso di Maria Anna Lindmayr (1657–1729)," in *I Monasteri Femminili come Centri di Cultura fra Rinascimento e Barocco*, eds G. Pomata and G. Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2005), 365–87; R. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); G. T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); M. S. Sanchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun: Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

48. J. M. Molina and U. Strasser, "Missionary Men and the Global Currency of Female Sanctity," in *Women, Religion and Transatlantic World*, eds. D. Kostroum and L. Vollandorf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 156–79; U. Strasser, "A Case of Empire Envy? German Jesuits Meet an Asian Mystic in Spanish America," *Journal of Global History*, 2, no. 1 (2007): 23–40; K. A. Myers, "La China Poblana, Catarina de San Juan (ca. 1607–1688): Hagiography and the Inquisition," in her *Neither Saints nor Sinners: Writing the Lives of Women in Spanish America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 44–68; Myers, "Testimony for Canonization or Proof of Blasphemy? The New Spanish Inquisition and the Hagiographic Biography of Catarina de San Juan," in *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*, ed. M. E. Giles (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1999), 270–95; G. A. Bailey, "A Mughal Princess in Baroque New Spain: Catarina de San Juan (1606–1688), The China Poblana," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 71 (1997): 37–73.

49. Guerreiro, 1, 91.

50. Guerreiro, 1, 92.

51. Guerreiro, 3, 208.

52. Guerreiro, 3, 208.

upon her vision with deathbed attendants, who as in the Buddhist tradition might have guided her interpretation of her experiences, or with the priest.⁵³ Clara, Giram wrote, simply told everyone what she had apprehended on her own: “There she said she had seen,” “There she said she had met,” “she said,” “as she said,” “according to her.”⁵⁴ A priest was mentioned only as a recipient of her information, “she recounted all this, which a priest heard her recount more than once.”⁵⁵ Clara, the marginal Joseon-born woman in Japan, was asserted in these Jesuit narratives as not only a legitimate subject of divine attention within a Christian framework, but also as the authoritative chronicler of her own experience.

Moreover, this account seemed to provide a female-oriented perspective on spiritual sociability and community in Sengoku Japan. As Clara’s vision was reported in these texts, it was the soul of a woman that instructed another living woman about her experiences, guiding Clara’s perception of netherworld experiences. This paralleled women’s circulation of knowledge in contemporary Buddhist culture, where travelling nuns such as the Kumano *bikuni* met and instructed women about Buddhist Blood Pool Hell ideas, acting, as Hank Glassman notes, as both producers and consumers of this spiritual knowledge.⁵⁶ The woman’s soul supported Clara’s edification by “speaking to her and telling her the cause of her torments; what had happened in that woman’s life.” The soul disclosed additional information about others who suffered: “She added further that she had known and seen in that place many other people, both men and women, in torment for their particular sins, which she recounted.” Just as Clara was narrated as the producer of meaning for her vision, simply relaying her understanding to a priest, so too did a woman, or rather her soul, guide Clara in her apprehension of hell.

The narrative may have reflected a marginal individual’s perspective of Christian institutional engagement in Japan. Clara was said to have recounted that the three men whom she identified as priests and thus officials of the Church neither knew her name nor indeed interacted with her directly. The shortage of priests available to service Christian communities in Japan may have made church officials seem rather distant figures for most converts. This was not necessarily a problematic feature to report within the Jesuit archive, however. Recognition of a dearth of Jesuit spiritual guides might stimulate support among readers and, whilst awaiting such patronage, mission accounts could celebrate the spiritual activation of devout converts to support each other. Describing activities in the Goto Islands, Guerreiro thus highlighted the vital work of community members in sustaining spiritual sociabilities, including a Joseon-born couple known as Paulo and Ana, from whom the visiting priest might himself take consolation after witnessing their devotion and good work among the Korean convert community, within which Paulo acted as godfather to baptised men and Ana godmother to baptised women.⁵⁷ Thus, the foregrounding of women’s spiritual agency and community leadership within the narrative about Clara’s vision was entirely compatible with Jesuits’ hopes for community spiritual mobilisation and their ambitions to enable more missionaries to participate on the ground in Japan.

53. On Buddhist deathbed rituals, see J. I. Stone, “With the Help of ‘Good Friends’: Deathbed Ritual Practices in Early Medieval Japan,” in *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*, eds. J. I. Stone and M. Namba Walter (Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 61–101.

54. ARSI JapSin 55, fols 320v–321r: “ali dizia ella, que vira,” “Ali dizia ella, que se encontrou,” “dizia que,” “dizia ella que seria,” “segundo dizia.”

55. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 321r: “contou tudo isto *que hum* padre mesmo lhe ouviu *huma* ou duas vezes contra.”

56. H. Glassman, “At the Crossroads of Birth and Death: The Blood Pool Hell and Postmortem Fetal Extraction,” in *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*, 185.

57. Guerreiro, 3, 156–7; Broomhall, 29, 52.

Affective Experience as Spiritual Perception

The question of how converts were perceived to live their faith was critically important to missionaries, for it could be represented as evidence of the success of their evangelising endeavours. Stimulating emotions and senses formed a key part of missionary endeavour, as affective behaviours and practices were performed, and interpreted, for spiritual apprehension and to enhance communal identity. Affectivity was central to Ignatian spirituality, as distinct feeling states acted as both method and response in the discernment of spirits.⁵⁸ Meditative practices involved an imaginative casting into the events in Jesus' life by activating sensory and affective modes of perception.⁵⁹ Yasmin Haskell and Raphaële Garrod have explored some of the specificities of Jesuit emotionality in different global settings, and their collection emphasises performative dimensions of Jesuit evangelization such as drama, music and literature that sought to engage through the affective and sensory experience of audiences and performers alike, and collaboratively, to enhance their spiritual disposition.⁶⁰

How could missionaries discern what Korean converts experienced? Jesuits looked to find evidence of Koreans' commitment to, and understanding of, Christian belief by reading their bodies and their activities, including their observance of Christian rituals and emotional displays.⁶¹ In missionary accounts, the spiritual experiences of Koreans as Christians were claimed by European eyewitnesses to be perceptible and commensurable.⁶² From "clear experience," Fróis argued in 1596, "they are people very well disposed to receive our holy faith. They are very affectionate, are baptised with joy and no less consolation to see themselves Christians."⁶³ Other authors judged Korean Christian experience through specific ritual practices and spiritual activities. Thus Giram documented how one evangelised man was "much given to penance and mortification, seeking these out in many ways," and recorded the devotional activities of a young, evangelised girl such as "fasting in Lent and on the other fast-days of the Church and undertaking many other devotions, she made it her duty to go each morning to the church to say her prayers."⁶⁴ Displays of affect, gestures and actions were thus rendered by Jesuits as perceptible evidence of faith, and employed as key tools to interpret Koreans' experiences as Christians.

Scholars of both Catholic and Protestant mission activity highlight the challenging complexities of interpreting perceived affect in cross-cultural contexts.⁶⁵ Converts' articulation

58. R. M. Doran, "Affect, Affectivity," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. M. Downey (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 13.

59. See examples in G. E. Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 148–151.

60. Y. Haskell and R. Garrod, eds. *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions Between Europe, Asia, and the Americas* (Leiden: Brill, 2018)

61. Also discussed in H. Wong, "Jesuits, Korean Catholics, and the State: Narratives of Accommodation and Conflict to 1784," (PhD Thesis, St John's University, New York, 2015), 59.

62. On cross-cultural commensurability, see S. Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

63. 3 December 1596, ARSI JapSin 52, fol. 203v: "esperiencia clara que es gente muy dispuesta por recibir nossa Santa fee. Son muy amorosos, bautizarze con alegria y no menos consolacão de uerse Cristianos."

64. Macao, 24 March 1627, ARSI JapSin 61, fol. 122v: "muito dado apenitencia e mortificação procurando por muitos modos"; Nagasaki, 25 February 1608, ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 405v: "que alem de leumar a Quaresma & outros jeiums da Igreja & fazer outras muitas devaçõens."

65. R. Macdonald, "Christian Missionaries and Global Encounters," in *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe, 1100–1700*, eds. A. Lynch and Broomhall (London: Routledge, 2020), 320–34; J. Van Gent, "Global Protestant Missions and the Role of Emotions," in *Protestant Empires: Globalising the Reformation*, ed. U. Rublack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 275–95; A. Chakravarti, "Between *bhakti* and *pietà*: Untangling Emotion in Marathi Christian Poetry," *History of Religions* 56 (2017): 365–87; A. Chakravarti, "Catholic Missionary Texts," P. A. Goddard, "Missionary Catholicism," and J. Van Gent, "Protestant Global Missions," in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. Broomhall (London: Routledge, 2017), 118–21; 310–13; 313–16; C. McLisky, K. Vallgård, and D. Midena, eds., *Emotions and Christian Missions: Historical Perspectives* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2015); Van Gent and S. E. Young, eds., "Special Issue: Emotion and Conversion," *Journal of Religious History* 39, no. 4 (2015).

of their spirituality in words was therefore particularly valuable, not simply to know how a convert felt in certain rituals and activities of Christian practice but to discern how their affectivity was grounded in Christian meaning and disposition, in relation to other Christians, and with God. The narratives about Clara's vision supported Jesuit attempts to appraise the contours of convert Christian experience, by placing emphasis on explicit discussion of feeling experiences with which they (and readers) could make this assessment. Before these analyses, however, feelings were also represented as central to Clara's own understanding of spiritual experiences. These texts gave significant attention to what were described as Clara's reports of her evolving affective and sensory disposition, as she moved across spiritual spaces and interacted with a range of others, including Christian adherents, official representatives of the Church, women and men, young and old, within the vision, and as she interpreted and reflected upon it afterwards.

Words could not always convey that perception, which was instead described through Clara's feeling states in Giram's account: "when she remembered what she had seen there, her flesh trembled and her hair stood on end."⁶⁶ At times, descriptions of emotion stood in for the understanding that these achieved. When she thought back to her time in hell, Giram wrote, "it gave her so great a fear that she could not put it into words."⁶⁷ The narrative reported other aspects of her experience through the prism of wonder. Encountering the soul of a woman who recognised her left her "astonished." The entire vision likewise left her "astonished and amazed."⁶⁸ This was the dominant response that Clara reportedly identified in describing her apprehension of individual subjectivity within Christianity.

Across the netherworlds that these texts described Clara visiting, connection with others and the affective response of compassion for their suffering was critical. Giram's account depicted Clara as engaged with others, in learning their stories, in hearing and seeing their torment, in order to understand herself as a Christian. Witnessing suffering hell-dwellers boiling, freezing and numerous nails hammered into the hands, feet, breasts and foreheads of these bodies, she had "seen many souls suffering miserably, that it was to have utmost pain and compassion."⁶⁹ Others were "crying and screaming, as if to say, 'Pray for us'." In compassion, Clara was called upon to support these souls in prayer, just as she saw many children on the heavenly steps, praying for those, Clara included, who were about to encounter the divine. From among these children, the narrative recounted, emerged the boy Clara knew from her community, to guide her onwards up the steps. It was this "knowing together," of the sins and of the suffering they produced, made in compassion and in Christian community, which was reportedly so vital to effect change in Clara's heart, "totally changed from what it was before."⁷⁰ The text positioned this as knowledge made through feeling and senses, which ultimately altered Clara's affective and thus spiritual disposition.

These narratives did not explicitly identify distinct states of affectivity leading to spiritual discernment as the exercises proposed by Ignatius, but they did appear to show Clara making decisions about her responses and subsequent actions as a Christian, through the affective mode each encounter or stage of the vision generated in her. In this way, the accounts presented her affectivity as determining the course of action to be followed. They presented expressions about the revelation and experience of Christian engagement

66. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "quando se lembrava do *que* ali vira lhe tremiam as carnes e se lhe arripiavaõ os cabelos."

67. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "o *que* vendo fora o seu medo tam grande *que* o não podia explicar com pallauras."

68. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "atonita e pasmada."

69. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "Vira penar muitas almas miseravelmente e em modo, *que* era para ter summador e compaixão."

70. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "conhecendo *juntamente*."

that were, unsurprisingly, commensurate with Jesuit expectations of converts' affective experiences. Implicitly these texts claimed that explicit description of those feeling experiences offered interpretable insights into a convert's understanding and practice of key faith principles.

Divergence? A Christian Woman in Netherworlds

In some aspects, Clara's vision narratives appeared to introduce distinctly unfamiliar elements to its non-local readers. As its protagonist traversed the spiritual landscapes of her vision, Giram's text described visual features that seemingly recalled Japanese conceptualisations of such netherworlds. Some elements in his account even appeared inconsistent with Christian ideology. Their appearance in his original report suggests evidence for Clara's personhood and spiritual formation in a Japanese context. This section explores how the varied texts of Clara's vision positioned such resonances in relation to contemporary Buddhist pedagogy and Christian principles.

Jesuits recognised that people encountered Christian practice in Japan through the prism of their prior beliefs, personal experiences and the spiritual systems that were embedded in Japanese social life. Jesuits invested considerable time in seeking to understand local religious concepts and terminology familiar to those they were seeking to evangelise.⁷¹ In Japan, contemporary spiritual ideas and cosmology reflected long histories of transmissions from India, through China and Korea, to Japan, which had occurred well before the era in which missionaries were active there. Although Buddhist terms and practices had flowed from Korea centuries earlier, Buddhism was no longer the dominant moral system under Joseon's Yi dynasty monarchs, which actively promoted neo-Confucian ideas. In the Joseon kingdom of the missionary era, Buddhism thus held a very different relationship with political power and ritual culture, although it continued to inform aspects of social and cultural life.⁷² In Japan, Joseon-born individuals encountered not only Christian teachings but Japanese concepts and practices related to *kami* and buddha worship. These sometimes reflected earlier spiritual circulations in the region. Jesuits related one example of such transmission in the account of Belchior's daughter, baptised Maria. Shortly after she was said to have converted, so too did her lady-in-waiting, an older woman with long-held devotion to other spiritual traditions. According to the missionary account, this woman, described as a *hotoke* (Buddhist), was very devoted to the *kami* of Miyajima, "so revered in those kingdoms, as she had been a queen of Korea, and coming from there, persecuted by her own people, and fleeing to Japan, she had come to avail herself of the help of the Japanese."⁷³ This understanding of the *kami*'s origins expressed contemporary ideas about histories of mobility of people, women specifically, from the Korean peninsula to Japan in times past and about the live possibility that historical Korean women could be perceived as spiritually significant in Japan. However, the missionaries argued that "it was a great blindness that men of such good judgment should adore and ask a dead Korean woman

71. See L. Zampol d'Ortia, L. Dolce, A. Fernandes Pinto, "Saints, Sects and (Holy) Sites: The Jesuit Mapping of Japanese Buddhism (Sixteenth Century)," in *Interactions between Rivals: The Christian Mission and Buddhist Sects in Japan (c. 1549–c.1647)*, eds A. Curvelo and A. Cattaneo (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021), 67–106.

72. E.-s. Cho, ed., *Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen: Hidden Histories, Enduring Vitality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011). Royal women in particular gave measured, but nonetheless important, support to Buddhism. See for example discussion in S. Yoon, "Power-Sharing and the Tug of War at the Royal Court: The Significance of Queen Munjeong's Restoration of Buddhism in Mid-Joseon Korea Reconsidered," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, 34, no. 2 (2021): 233–60; H. Kim, "Buddhism during the Choson Dynasty (1392–1910): A Collective Trauma?" *The Journal of Korean Studies*, 22, no. 1 (2017): 101–42; 황인규 (I. -G. Hwang), 조선전세 후궁의 비구니 출가와 불교신행 [Buddhism and Royal Concubine as Nuns in the Early-Joseon Dynasty], *불교학보* [Buddhist Studies], 57 (2011): 117–43.

73. Guerreiro, 3, 209. On the distinction of contemporary European understanding of *kami* and 'fotoques', see Zampol d'Ortia, Dolce, Fernandes Pinto, 86–7.

for help, who, when alive, had need of the help from the same Japanese.”⁷⁴ The Jesuit response recorded in the text to the older woman’s devotion positioned this *kami* identified as Korean in ways that seemed to reflect recent experiences of the powerless Joseon-born, often enslaved individuals, encountered in Japan in their own time.

Other flows of spiritual ideas across the region also informed both Joseon and Japanese notions of netherworlds. China, Korea, and Japan all related how male protagonists made pilgrimages to hellscape and appearances before the underworld tribunal, spiritual adventures undertaken in dream-like states.⁷⁵ Scriptures, miracle stories, carved images, scrolls, printed texts, itinerant preachers and communal storytelling made known Buddhist concepts of hell in Joseon and Japan.⁷⁶ In Japan, these were not static ideas, but continually evolving interpretations of hellscape that engaged women and men in distinct ways requiring specific ritual practices. In the period in which Clara reportedly lived, Kumano *bikuni* sought to instruct women using pictorial forms about ways to prepare for the particular hells that pertained only to women.⁷⁷

Jesuits in Japan were well aware that Japanese society had pre-existing concepts of heaven and hell, indeed multiple forms of hell.⁷⁸ The articulation by the Tendai monk Genshin (942–1017) in his *Ōjōyōshū* distinguished some eight hells, each allocated specific kinds of punishments for different sinners. The narrative of Clara’s vision of hell, by contrast, depicted a singular site that contained both women and men who had committed varied sins, but it did share with Buddhist versions, as they were expressed in visual and textual forms, distinctly physical punishments of a similar nature.⁷⁹ Many of the mechanisms by which sinners were punished in Buddhist materials were likewise those that inflicted torture on sinners in the texts related to Clara, including the iron implements of the blacksmith and the cooking vessels, pestles and mortars of the kitchen.⁸⁰ Moreover, the accounts of Clara’s vision described her witnessing “a river of very cold water passed through which, taking the said souls out of the burning pots or boilers, they placed them, and taking them out again, they placed them again in the same boilers.”⁸¹ This seems to echo a pattern of revival of those punished, in order that they might be punished again, which was included in some Buddhist hell sites such as Genshin’s Revival Hall and the thirteenth-century *Rokudō-e* scrolls analysed by Caroline Hirasawa that depicted similar inflictions upon the sufferers in the hell of revival, the hell of black ropes and the hell of crowding.⁸² Similarly, the final destination recounted as part of Clara’s vision, where steps were lit by “many lamps, and on both sides there were many children, very beautiful, beautiful in the extreme,” appeared to reflect aspects of Pure Land cosmology, including its remarkable brightness and the beauty that was the reward of those who attained

74. Guerreiro, 3, 209.

75. H. L. Na, “A Commentary on a Buddhist Tale: “Sōnyul comes back to life (Sōnyul Hwansaeng 善律還生) in *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (Samguk Yusa 三國遺事),” *Acta Koreana*, 19, no. 2 (2016): 170.

76. Na, 167. C. Hirasawa, “The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution: A Primer on Japanese Hell Imagery and Imagination,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, 63, no. 1 (2008): 1–50.

77. B. Ruch, “Woman to Woman: Kumano *bikuni* Proselytisers in Medieval and Early Modern Japan”, in *Engendering Faith. Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Ruch (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2003), 537–80; I. Kaminishi, “Kumano Images and Propaganda for Women,” in her *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoji Storytelling in Japan* ed. Kaminishi (Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 137–64.

78. Zampol d’Ortia, Dolce, Fernandes Pinto, 85.

79. Hirasawa, “The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution,” 2.

80. Hirasawa, “The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution,” 9–10.

81. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: “e por diante destas panelas passaua hum rio de agoa muito fria, no qual tirando as ditas almas das panelas ou caldeiras ardentes, as metiam, e tornandoas a tirar as tornauam outra vez ameternas mesmas caldeiras.”

82. R. F. Rhodes and R. K. Payne, eds., *Genshin’s Ōjōyōshū and the Construction of Pure Land Discourse in Heian Japan* (Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press, 2017), 187 and C. Hirasawa, “Cracking Cauldrons and Babies on Blossoms: The Relocation of Salvation in Japanese Hell Painting,” *Artibus Asiae* 72, no. 1 (2012): 6.

salvation.⁸³ The abundant, sensuous materiality of this heavenly place was striking. There, Clara was reported to have seen children, holding books and praying, perhaps as they did in the college at Arima.

The visualisation of hell- and heaven-scapes described in the texts of Clara's vision seemed to interact with Buddhist concepts, as too did its sonority. Genshin's Wailing Hall, for example, was filled with sufferers crying out to the wardens for compassion, begging them to stop their torture. Hell-dwellers sizzled in frying skillets and cried as they boiled in cauldrons.⁸⁴ Likewise, in a place which "she said, must be Purgatory," Giram's text presented Clara hearing in the darkness the "many in it, crying and screaming." However, unlike those in Genshin's Wailing Hall, these sinners reportedly cried out not to wardens of punishment but directly to her. The texts recounting Clara's vision described sinners asking her to alleviate their suffering. Clara was no bystander in these narratives; she was positioned as directly engaging with those whom she encountered on her way. These were not people she knew or could even see; they were simply suffering.

Interactions with those within particular hell-scapes were also common to Japanese and Joseon underworld pilgrimages. In the miraculous tale told by the monk Kyōkai in his *Nihon ryōiki* (written around 787–824), Fujiwara no Hirotari revives, after a three-day period where his attendant took him for dead, to tell the story of his visit to the underworld where he is brought before King Yama and asked if he is willing to share some of the suffering of his wife who died in childbirth. After Fujiwara agrees to help alleviate her suffering, he returns to the mortal world and fulfils his commitment by copying and reciting texts and giving services for her.⁸⁵ It was common for male protagonists to encounter women that they knew in such accounts. By the early modern period, there had developed in Japan new concepts about special hells for women, mostly reflecting negative ideologies about reproductive characteristics of the female body, including Blood Pool Hell and the Hell of the Barren Women.⁸⁶ The death of women in childbirth, as had befallen Fujiwara's wife, already presented challenges for their after-lives, but a text composed in China several hundred years after Fujiwara's underworld experience (around Europe's thirteenth century) supercharged this cult, especially in Japan. The sutra known as the Blood Bowl Sutra, *Ketsubonkyō* in Japanese, depicted its male protagonist travelling to hell to save his mother from a hell-scape where women were forced to drink menstrual and/or birth blood in punishment for the offence of such blood tainting the purity of earthly waters.⁸⁷ It was precisely these specific hells for which Kumano nuns sought to prepare women, by encouraging them to perform specific rituals such as copying and reading the *Ketsubonkyō* during their lifetimes. The narratives of encounter for Clara similarly involved a woman, or rather her soul, in hell. She too was described in terms of her parturient body.

Critically, Giram's text recounted that the sin that the woman whose soul Clara conversed with had committed was that she "had aborted her child and died without confession."⁸⁸ Abortion formed one of a number of birth control strategies, alongside infanticide, that operated in the Japanese society that missionaries encountered and with

83. Rhodes and Payne, 219.

84. Rhodes and Payne, 194, 199.

85. K. Motomuchi Nakamura, trans., *Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition: The Nihon ryōiki of the Monk Kyōkai* (1973, reprinted London: Routledge, 1997), 233–5.

86. Glassman, 175–206.

87. Glassman, 176–7. L. Meeks, "Women and Buddhism in East Asian History: The Case of the Blood Bowl Sutra, Part I: China," *Religion Compass*, 14, no. 4 (2020), 1–14; Meeks, 1–16; Y. Nakan, "Women and Buddhism – Blood Impurity and Motherhood", in *Women and Religion in Japan*, eds. A. Akuda and H. Okano (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1998), 65–86.

88. ARSI JapSin 55, fol. 320v: "por ter abortado hum filho e morrer sem confissão."

which they took issue.⁸⁹ Its commonality in Japan is suggested by the fact that, in the following line of Giram's text, Clara was depicted as expressing surprise about this encounter not at what the woman had done, but rather that the soul had known her name. While some degree of divergence from familiar Christian forms might be permissible in the narrative of an east Asian woman's faith experiences, an allusion to abortion was evidently an unacceptable degree of divergence, for this detail was altered from Giram's manuscript source to versions presented in printed fora intended for wider Christian consumption. In the published Italian translation of Giram's letter, therefore, this phrase became even more detailed than in the original, and elucidated that the woman "was eternally condemned to this torment, for having killed a creature while carrying it in her womb, and for having left this life without confession afterward."⁹⁰ This reality of Japanese women's lives was likely too controversial for wider global consumption. Significantly, the reference to abortion was replaced altogether for its publication in Guerreiro's text, where the woman had simply "delivered a son and died without confession."⁹¹ Reading Guerreiro's text alone might give the impression that Clara's vision reflected Buddhist notions about women's inherent sin as mothers who had died in childbirth, but analysed in the context of Giram's original narrative, it seems more likely that Guerreiro chose not to draw his readers' attention to the abortion practised by the woman.

The narrative of Clara's vision appeared to reflect aspects of contemporary Buddhist articulations of hell- and heaven-scapes, but it did not represent contemporary Buddhist pedagogy about these concepts. Instead, as noted above, the texts variously reject Buddhist ideas, meanings, and practices for Christian alternatives. Moreover, they did so in ways that repositioned women as individuals capable of spiritual agency and discernment. Most obviously, while east Asian cultures had tales of men who journeyed to spiritual sites of the dead, Clara's role as protagonist was far from usual in that tradition. Jesuits however were supportive of the possibility of women's mystical revelation. Furthermore, these texts showed Clara locating women not in an exclusive Buddhist hell of their own, but rather in a singular locus that included sinners who were explicitly noted as both women and men. Additionally, the women in the hell recounted in Clara's narratives were not there because of the inherent sin of their female form as might be expected in contemporary Buddhist pedagogy, but because of specific decisions and actions they had taken as individuals: "in torment for their particular sins."

The texts describing Clara's vision gave power to the body, in this case a body identified as female, to apprehend the spiritual through sensory and affective modes. As Jennifer Haraguchi has argued for early modern women exploring Ignatian spirituality in Europe, the female body could enjoy an affirmative role in spiritual practice.⁹² The texts concerning this Korean convert's vision could likewise be interpreted as presenting Clara in a positive relationship with her female form. Clara's affective and sensory experience within the vision was represented as a tool for spiritual perception. Her corporeal form could not therefore be inherently sinful. Where these narratives presented Clara speaking of her own uncleanness, it was not in connection to the female body. The priests standing upon the heavenly steps were described as rejecting entry to those whom they perceived to be "dirty and filthy," a state that Clara was said to have understood included her. However, the purification that these texts suggest Clara identified was required from her did not involve her reproductive or female body, but rather her heart. It was this attuned affective

89. Glassman, 176.

90. *Lettera*, 35.

91. Guerreiro, 3, 165.

92. Jennifer Haraguchi, "Teaching Ignatian Spirituality to Rich and Poor Girls through Dramatic Performance in Seventeenth-Century Florence," *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 47, no. 1 (2016): 25–51.

disposition that was perceptible for others who reported that she “now goes about more devoutly than before.” The accounts of Clara’s vision proposed an experience of Christianity that had important implications for how women living in a society underpinned by Buddhist beliefs and practices, as well as others beyond it, could see themselves as spiritual interlocutors as well as members of the Christian community.

Conclusions

This essay has explored how, within the Jesuit corpus, narratives about a convert woman’s vision could make Korean Christian knowledge, as they made it known to a wider Christian community. Joseon-born individuals formed a cohort that missionaries perceived to be among the most marginal that they encountered in Japan. These accounts narrating a woman’s journey to netherworlds foregrounded affect as having significant potential as a tool for missionaries’ assessment of evangelised individuals’ experiences as Christians, and evidence for the success of their mission work. These texts told readers how Clara witnessed, prayed, and conducted herself ever more devoutly: perceptible manifestations to missionaries of her appropriate affective living as a Christian. Furthermore, Clara’s journey to netherworlds was represented within the genre of mystical revelation that Jesuits in Japan (as elsewhere) accepted women as well as men could experience. Such texts made important claims for women’s statuses in the Christian world, asserting their capabilities as producers of Christian knowledge and as faith guides to others, whose bodies did not hinder spiritual perception but rather offered tools for achieving it. Women could certainly also be sinners and sufferers, but they did so in the narratives about Clara’s vision because of their actions, not their inherently sinful bodies.

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