

Postscript to *Remaining Shadows of Yokoku Castle*

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Abstract

Yōkoku-jō no Zan'ei (Remaining Shadows of Yokoku Castle) is a novel dramatizing the life and death of a Christian *samurai* who made it his life's work to at once protect the fief of Hiji from downfall and secure its Christian converts against persecution in the early seventeenth century. The novel was written in Japanese in 1998 by a local author named Minoru Iwafuji, who is based in Hiji, Oita, Japan, whose past identity as a castle town remains symbolized by the ruins of Yōkoku-jō. Among the small number of readers of this little-known historical novel were leaders of the Japanese Catholic Church who were pleasantly shocked at the magnitude of what the novel's protagonist, Kagayama Balthazar Hanza'emon, did for the cause of Christianity. Their concerted efforts to visit the history to reconstruct the life and ultimate martyrdom of Kagayama as a historical figure led the Roman Catholic Church to glorify his self-sacrifice by beatifying him.

This paper is an attempt to critique *Remaining Shadows of Yokoku Castle* (hereafter abbreviated as RSYC), but in view of its worth as enlightenment on one of history's unsung heroes, it aims primarily to bring this history-based novel to the attention of broader Western readership. Thus more space is devoted to outlining the story and telling about main characters than appraising the quality and artistry of the novel as a literary work. RSYC is only available in Japanese. Hopefully, the present paper will provide a general picture Mr. Iwafuji painted of the Catholic *samurai* who is expected to make a triumphant return to his hometown as the Blessed in the year 2007.

Key terms: Hiji, Catholicism, Kagayama Hanza'emon, converts, apostasy

1. Background

In Ludoico Teisera Auctore's *Iaponiae Insulae Descriptio* (1595) what we now call Kyushu Island is flattered by the different color, enlarged representation, and the uncommonly large number of place names adorning it (see Exhibit 1). A closer look at the island (see Exhibit 2) will reveal that BVNGO and Bungo are juxtaposed in such a way that the upper-case and lower-case names stand in superordinate/hyponymous relation with each other, thus indicating the ascendancy—economically, militarily and politically—of Lord Otomo Sorin of Bungo (1530-1587) in the last part of the sixteenth century. Given that Lord Otomo was in possession of the majority of Kyushu provinces around that time,¹ it is hardly surprising that a contemporary European applied Bungo by extension as almost coterminous as the southernmost of the Japanese islands. In making this first reliable printed description of Japan's geography to appear in a Western atlas, the Portuguese cartographer and Jesuit Teisera must have relied heavily on information afforded by Portuguese merchants and Catholic missionaries then active in western Japan under the patronage of Lord Otomo of Bungo. In that sense, Teisera's *Iaponiae Insulae Descriptio* is a testimony to the prosperity of foreign trade and the spread of Christianity in Bungo and environs around the time the map was in the making. Alas! Bungo as Lord Otomo's home province was to be split up into seven small fiefs after his death.

Of the Bungo places noted by Teisera on his map, such as Funay, Vsugi, Figi, Xanganoxeque, etc., it is Figi (present-day Hiji) that is going to receive exclusive attention over the spread of this paper. By Christians in general, and by Roman Catholics in particular, Hiji must be remembered in association with the great Basque missionary Francis Xavier because when St. Francis made the long distance from Yamaguchi to Funai (present-day Oita City) in 1551, he set foot in Hiji on his way to a historical meeting at Funai with Lord Otomo Yoshishige² of Bungo. Two months thereafter, St. Francis Xavier left for Goa, India, concluding a brief yet infinitely significant 27-month stay in Japan.

The year 2006 happens to be the fifth centenary of the birth of St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552) who introduced Christianity to Japan in 1549. In commemoration, Hiji Town inaugurated the "St. Francis Xavier's Road Walking Tour" on October 15, 2006, inviting the general public to retrace in this memorable year the very trail the Apostle of Japan laid out half a millennium ago in Hiji. The organizing committee's hope was for their locality to win wider recognition as St. Francis Xavier's approach to Funai as the capital of the province of Bungo that had turned out to be one of the most enthusiastic recipients of his teachings and concomitant Western cultural knowledge.

In terms of its contact with Christianity, Hiji Town has another noteworthy page in its history, written in blood sixty-eight years after St. Francis Xavier left Japan. Much relegated to the background of history, the martyrdom suffered by Kagayama Balthazar Hanza'emon in 1619 would not have come to the present writer's notice without painstaking efforts of Mr. Minoru Iwafuji to reconstruct it, albeit in a novel form. The novel is thus aptly called *Remaining Shadows of Yokoku Castle*. It sounds as if the drama that had been unfolded during the reign of the first lord of Hiji Fief were asserting itself as history's grandeur never to be forgotten.



[Exhibit 1] Ludoico Teisera Auctore's
Iaponiae Insulae Descriptio (1595)

2. Lord Kinoshita Nobutoshi

The novel, which is set in the southernmost extremity of Kunisaki Peninsula in the early seventeenth century, begins by recounting how the fief of Hiji originated in 1601, introducing in the process two of the five main characters, namely Lord Kinoshita Nobutoshi of Hiji and his minister Kagayama Hanza'emon. Not just the account of the fief's origin but the whole story of the novel is by and large so faithfully based on historical facts and figures that one can safely identify RSYC as a historical novel as defined by scholars in modern Japan.³

As a reward for his contribution to the victory gained by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) on the occasion of the great civil war at Sekigahara in 1600, Kinoshita Nobutoshi was enfeoffed to an estate in Hiji that would be in receipt of an annual revenue of a meager 30,000 *koku* of rice. At the mention of Kinoshita, a sensitive Japanese might hit upon the familial tie between this man and the former ruler of Japan Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) whose posthumous power was radically weakened and virtually taken over by Tokugawa Ieyasu with the above-mentioned battle of Sekigahara as a turning point because Kinoshita was an old surname assumed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and was passed down through generations of his extend families. The fact

that Kinoshita Nobutoshi was one of Hideyoshi's nephews-in-law put the fief of Hiji in an extremely delicate situation right from the beginning of the fiefdom as part of the Tokugawa regime. To no one's surprise, Kinoshita Nobutoshi is depicted as a kind-hearted yet timid leader preoccupied with self-protection and survival as the fief's most important policy.

3. Kagayama Hanza'emon

Into this backdrop is introduced Kagayama Hanza'emon as a minister to Lord Kinoshita in charge of the fief's treatment of Christian converts.⁴ After Francis Xavier brought the Christian religion to this part of the country, and especially after Lord Otomo Sorin was baptized as a Roman Catholic in 1578, the province of Bungo famously produced so many converts that the Tokugawa shogunate were paying close attention to the province in the expectation that the remnants of the defeated Otomo clan who had sided against the Tokugawa camp at the civil war of 1600 could league with the converts and stir up insurrections once the Tokugawa government banned propagating and following Christianity. The ban on Christianity was not a hypothetical policy for long; it became a reality in 1612.

Such was the precarious status of Christianity in Japan at the dawn of the seventeenth century, Lord Kinoshita justifiably feared that a mishandling of Christian converts within his fief might be used by the shogunate as a pretext for its abolition. In the analysis made by Kagayama Hanza'emon himself after he was appointed as a minister, "The former Toyotomi-camp *samurai* who became masterless after they lost the battle of Sekigahara have been assembling in our fief in great numbers. They may coalesce with our converts and revolt against the Tokugawa government any moment with Hiji, the only fief related in blood with the Toyotomis, as a stronghold" (RSYC, 336). Such being the case, Lord Kinoshita's appointment of Kagayama as a minister authorized to take care of the fief's religious affairs comes to the reader as logical and understandable. According to the novel's account, "Kagayama, who had spent years in Nagasaki as Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki's retainer, was recommended and hired as an expert on Christian matters"(RSYC, 11).

Lord Kinoshita is not a Roman Catholic, but Kagayama is. He was baptized by a young missionary, Benedetto Cino⁵, and received the baptismal name Balthazar while he was of service to Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki of Buzen. Is it that Kinoshita did not know his Christian background when he hired him in response to Hosokawa's recommendation? The answer appears a surprising yes. It is suggested in Chapter 4 that Lord Kinoshita and three other ministers of the fief are all ignorant of Kagayama's commitment to the Christian religion, at least at that stage of the story (see RSYC, 77-78). The reader might be curious about this description because on the face of it, it defies comprehension that Kinoshita, on the one hand, is extremely sensitive to behaviors of the converts within his domains and, on the other, so careless as to unwittingly



[Exhibit 2] A close-up of *Iaponiae Insulae Descriptio*

entrust a Roman Catholic minister with the fief's religious matters. But then, it is stated in the same chapter that "Kagayama's discretion leads him not to disclose his identity as a Roman Catholic to his master and fellow ministers, fearing as he does that his fairness as an official in charge of religious affairs might be doubted if his adherence to the foreign religion was brought to their knowledge"(RSYC, 78). Compared to Kagayama's meticulous care, Kinoshita's contrastive nonchalance strikes the reader as a bit puzzling.

Those who acquaint themselves with the history of early missionary work in Japan are likely to be surprised at the abundance of examples of apostasy as well as the ease with which people in those days abandoned the religion that once gained their hearts. The manner in which Christianity was propagated by early missionaries and the prevailing perception of that religion on the part of the recipients should be held accountable for this obvious setback behind the outwardly spectacular achievements of the missions.⁶ Be that as it may, this is a good occasion for us to confirm that there was much clay mingled with iron among the converts obtained by the early missionary labors, although it is not always easy to tell nominal converts from real converts. As one foil character⁷ says two years after Christianity is outlawed by the shogunate, "Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki⁸ and most of his retainers apostatized, and so did Lords Kuroda, Arima, Mōri and other *daimyo* in western Japan. Come to think of it, those Christian *daimyo* didn't convert themselves so much because their hearts believed in Christianity as because they were interested in foreign commerce. That's the reason why they could betray God without the slightest compunction"(RSYC, 143). Beyond doubt, they typify the first type of converts. What is worthy of note in this connection is the fact that Kagayama Hanza'emon is "a handed-down of Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki,"(RSYC, 11) whose sister happens to be the first wife to Lord Kinoshita. Given all this, the fact of the matter looks like that Kinoshita did not care much about Kagayama's religious background in the belief that the minister, even though he was a Roman Catholic, could renounce his faith as readily as his old master and most of his retainers. Contrary to his expectation, Kagayama proved to be a real convert. Small wonder that Kinoshita had to make a vain effort to induce Kagayama to recant, although he had been well aware by that time of Kagayama's resolute faith in the Christian God (See RSYC, 334).

What brought Kagayama to the Christian faith? Why, unlike most of Hosokawa's retainers, could he adhere to the religion to such a degree as to lay down his life in the name of God? As to this question of crucial importance, a decided clue is provided in Chapter 20 where Kagayama reminisces about his life shortly before his execution. After recollecting his long-lost childhood spent without a shadow of his father, he says to himself: "As a child, I hated war more than anything else because war rendered me fatherless. Therefore, I did go to war a number of times after I grew up as I was born into a warrior family. But I always stayed away from killing people, though there were times when I wounded a few. I've believed and still believe that it's a sin to fight a war. Why do we have to fight? What does it profit us? Nothing. Then, why? I finally found a key to this string of whys in the teachings of Christ. That's the sole reason why I embraced Christianity"⁹(RSYC, 349-350).

As noted above, the so-called Christian *daimyo* who were more or less driven by the sense of advantage to be taken of their friendship with missionaries displayed blatant opportunism and reemerged as apostates after the proscription of Christianity of 1612. But certainly not all were false friends. Notable exceptions were Lord Takayama Justo Ukon of Takatsuki (1552-1614) and Lord Konishi Augustine Yukinaga of Settsu (d.1600). Justo Takayama, who was baptized at the age of 14, lived an exemplary Christian life and died in Manila where he was banished by Ieyasu's son Hidetada, while Augustine Konishi, who was condemned to death as a loser at the battle of Sekigahara, is said to have declined an offer for him to commit an honorable yet suicidal

seppuku and been beheaded, offering prayers to God. Lord Otomo Sorin of Bungo lived the better part of his life as a non-Christian, but after he was baptized and named Francisco after St. Francis Xavier, his first teacher of Christianity, in 1578, Francisco Otomo could be labeled a real Christian as well. It was quite fortuitous that Christianity was brought to Japan at a time of civil strife. Had they not found themselves in such a bloodthirsty age, the Christian teachings might not have penetrated into the hearts of those Catholic *daimyo*. This is the precise light in which Kagayama's reminiscences must be put and interpreted. When Kagayama participates in the Osaka Summer campaign of 1615 that brought about the complete collapse of the Toyotomi family, he philosophizes about the mutability of all things under the sun and sighs, "Except for the Infinite, there's absolutely nothing secure and everlasting under heaven"(RSYC, 251). When he said that, he gave expression to the feeling presumably shared by all Christian *samurai* who lived in that period of civil strife to see a spate of wars change the landscape of the human situations.

4. Roman Dengoro

So the arrival of Christianity in Japan *fortuitously* synchronized with its epoch of civil wars. By this it is meant that the soil of the war-ridden Japan turned out to be hospitable to the religion preaching happiness in the next life. It is seldom that one who wants nothing in the earthly life sees God. To the degree that the late sixteenth- to early seventeenth-century Japan was crowded with people who hungered in this world, the age was on the side of Christianity. The implication of this fortuity was more significant with regard to the grass roots for the simple reason that the populace was the real victim of political instability and military turmoil that characterized Japan's Christian era: Just think warriors stood on the side of creators of history, but that the grass roots were at the mercy of the historical conditions created by them. As Kagayama puts it, "Amidst the ravages of war, the peasants are poverty-stricken and utterly helpless. Precisely because they are so, they turn to the powerful for relief and liberation"(RSYC, 41-42). With a bit of a modification, Kagayama's words may be rephrased as, "Precisely because the populace has to give up this world for lost, they cannot but look up to the Christian God." That would explain the point here. And herein lies the drama of the Japanese experience. For the first time in their spiritual history, Japanese, led by peasants, began to think of life in the twofold sense of the word, *i.e.*, the life here and now and the life hereafter. In other words, with new horizons called the kingdom of heaven opening up, they began to turn their attention to the hereafter in preference to the here and now. Well, they had to, given no alternative in practical terms. That situation might be compared to the case of ancient Jews who had to wait patiently for the Messiah to come to save them from the yoke of Roman rule. *Remaining Shadows of Yokoku Castle* captures the mood of that period in Japanese history when the word *paraiso* (RSYC, 258 *et passim*) carried an extremely vivid connotation and its entity was merely a prayer away from people.

Roman Dengoro is a character created by the author and another of the converts of iron will. It is easy to realize that he is designed by the novel's plot as a linkage between Father Benedetto Cino and Balthazar Kagayama because all information about the missionary's visit to Bungo and activities therein is disclosed to Kagayama by Dengoro. This does not mean, however, that Dengoro is a foil to the main characters. The present writer has no hesitation whatsoever to count him as a principal character in his own right. Dengoro is depicted as a fisherman living at subsistence level and remaining unshakable in his faith despite the fact that he is not just ostracized from the village but on top of that has his seven-year-old son killed on account of his Christian background. Even more importantly, Dengoro is characterized as one of the three Christians who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of others. Understanding that unless he is arrested by shogunate

officials, Kagayama and other Christians of Hiji will be forced into a corner, he resolutely decides to stop lying in hiding (see RSYC, 301). Although he is dissuaded by Kagayama and his sympathizer at the last moment, the fact remains that he epitomizes the spirit of self-sacrifice so highly valued in the Christian traditions. Five days after Dengoro narrowly escapes being captured, Kagayama discovers him lying dead in front of the mound where the head of the late Father Benedetto is buried. Two sacrificial souls are gone, leaving Balthazar to himself. In all probability, this fisherman convert is intended to play no small part within the architecture of the novel. It is as though the author is saying that the role played by peasants in bygone days in rooting Christianity on Japanese soil should not be overlooked. Dengoro is the name the author has given to one such nameless salt of the earth. If there is one thing laudable about the early Christian missions in Japan despite the afore-mentioned flaws (see page 154), it is the fact that they could win the hearts of the grass roots. It is those nameless Christian peasants who kept the faith underground throughout the days of persecution and carried it into modern times.

5. Father Benedetto Cino

Benedetto Cino is another created character and the single most important source of influence on Kagayama the Catholic. After Christianity is outlawed by the Tokugawa government in 1612, Father Benedetto, who has preached in Nagasaki for seventeen years, comes to Bungo partly because the shogunate vigilance is most ruthless in Nagasaki. But the more important reason is that he needs to meet Balthazar Kagayama to alert him to the danger the latter's activities are likely to create. In his capacity as a high-ranking Hiji Fief official in charge of Christian affairs, Kagayama has been busy with two self-assigned tasks since his appointment. For one thing, he has been making ceaseless efforts to deter Christian converts within Hiji from joining forces with ex-Otomo *samurai* who sided with the Toyotomi camp at Sekigahara and being politically organized against the Tokugawa government, because any such action might lead to Lord Kinoshita's downfall. At the same time, he has been walking tirelessly not just within his domains but more extensively beyond feudatory boundaries with a view to surveying the distribution of Christian converts in western Japan. When he walks beyond boundaries, his intention is to safeguard as many Christian converts as possible against danger. To that end, he needs to know how they are distributed in Kyushu. As a minister to Lord Kinoshita and a Roman Catholic, Kagayama is convinced that it is incumbent on him to "dedicate [his] life to the everlasting prosperity of Hiji Fief and the relief of as many Christians as possible both in and out of Hiji at the same time"(RSYC, 130). So the two tasks Kagayama has assigned himself with are expressions of this dual theme of his life, inasmuch as they are the marriage of two differing needs to be met by Kagayama the minister and Kagayama the Roman Catholic. In his mind, therefore, there is nothing wrong about his activities, which he believes are for the best interests of both the fief of Hiji and Christians in general. Father Benedetto, knowing as he does what Kagayama has been doing as well as what disaster his activities may invite, is so alarmed as to bother to come and meet him in Hiji. Kagayama is shocked to learn that what he has been doing clandestinely has been brought to Father Benedetto's knowledge because if Father Benedetto knows it, oppressors may know it as well and his best intention may be seriously distorted and co-opted. When he lets Balthazar realize the need to take the utmost care in handling the report on the distribution of converts the minister has written based on his field work, one mission is fulfilled by Father Benedetto.

Amidst the severe persecutions after 1612, Benedetto Cino, who could flee to Macao or the Philippines, is determined to stay in Japan and "suffer until summoned by God."(RSYC, 155). He is apprehended just across Bungo-Higo borders not long after he bids farewell to Balthazar and, in keeping with his own words, dies

after seventy-five days of excruciating torture. He teaches Balthazar the importance of "suffer[ing] until summoned by God." Another mission is accomplished.

6. Sergeant Sakakibara Mondayu

After Christianity is proscribed by the shogunate in 1612, Magistrate Office of Nagasaki, the state police and court put together having Kyushu under its jurisdiction, sends out officials to different parts of the island to watch over the implementation of the government policy by each feudal fief. Now in charge of the former province of Bungo is Sergeant Sakakibara Mondayu, a middle-aged man of resources. Afraid of the authorities behind this government official, every feudal lord visited by Sakakibara is only too ready to demonstrate a wholehearted support of the policy. Higo becomes the first fief to please Sakakibara by imprisoning 42 converts hiding in its domains, obtaining the apostasy of 37 of them, and handing the disobedient five over to Magistrate Office of Nagasaki. Higo's example is imitated in quick succession by Funai, Usuki, Oka, Saeki and other neighboring fiefs, with a consequence that within a short space of five years or so Sakakibara can report to Nagasaki on mass apostasies and substantial reduction in the number of Christians in Bungo (see RSYC, 266). Strange to say, while the number of fallen Christians keeps increasing in those fiefs, Hiji alone is devoid of any arrests or persecutions. This is too good to be true. How can it be that a fief crowded with well over 200 converts by his count can hunt down none? Sakakibara has known all along that Kagayama is behind the scenes and that elaborate precautions have been taken by converts of Hiji under his guidance.

The latter half of the novel could be enjoyed in terms of a tag of war between Kagayama the protagonist and Sakakibara the antagonist. Only, the author's portrayal of Sakakibara is such that this shogunate official is not a villain by any means but a man of sensibility and compassion. Admittedly, his interest in Kagayama begins with suspicion, but on further acquaintance, it develops into sympathy and even respect for the Catholic minister. Therefore, when he proposes a deal with Lord Kinoshita, it is out of consideration for the two themes of Kagayama's life, namely the safety of Hiji Fief and the relief of Christian converts in its domains. To put it bluntly, Sakakibara's proposal is that the safety of Hiji Fief and its converts could be paid for by the life of Kagayama. With groans of anguish Kinoshita consents, thus setting the stage for the final drama whose scenario is written by Sergeant Sakakibara.

7. Kagayama's martyrdom

Kagayama's execution takes place on October 15, 1619.¹⁰ While drawn along the familiar streets to the execution ground in Tsujima, Balthazar Kagayama "is filled with a sense of joy springing from the core of his being"(RSYC, 356). For one thing, he is led to liken himself to the Son of God when He was dragged along to Golgotha—an analogy only a martyr is privileged to enjoy. "After my death, Hiji people will jeer at my defeat, Bungo people will censure me for my faith, and the country at large will hold me in contempt."(RSYC, 356). But is that not exactly what happened to Christ? That is one reason for his boundless joy. At the same time, Kagayama is reminded that as a newly appointed minister to Lord Kinoshita he resolved to give himself wholly to the service of the Lord of Hiji and the Lord of Heaven, but wondered fearfully what if his faithfulness to the two masters would be incompatible (see RSYC, 53). Kagayama's youthful fear is the one presumably shared by most Christian *samurai* who actually lived in that period and had two masters to serve. Torn between contradicting claims of Caesar and God, the majority ended up prioritizing feudal loyalty. In Kagayama's particular case, dying a martyr to God does not conflict with loyalty

to Caesar. He is confident that his death can more than atone for whatever disloyalty he has demonstrated to Lord Kinoshita. He can now fulfill what he resolved to do twenty years before. That is the second reason why he is visited by a sense of rare happiness. His is the death of a Christian and the death of a *samurai* exquisitely rolled into one.

On witnessing the execution duly administered, Sergeant Sakakibara phrases the following lines for his subordinate to carry to Magistrate Hasegawa Fujimasa of Nagasaki:

Dear Magistrate Hasegawa,

I am pleased to inform you that all the 275 adherents but one to the unauthorized religion residing in the 30,000-*koku* fief of Hiji, the province of Bungo, ruled by Kinoshita Nobutoshi, have apostatized. The only unrepentant *Kirishitan* named Kagayama Hanza'emon was duly executed together with his four-year-old son Shintaro on this fifteenth day, tenth month, fifth year of Genna by order of Lord Kinoshita of the same fief. Therewith, the Christian religion is extirpated as far as the fief of Hiji is concerned.

Respectfully,

Sakakibara Mondayu

Sergeant, Magistrate Office of Nagasaki

(RSYC, 363)

Based on Pagés (1870, vol. 2, chap. 4) and other Western sources, *Chronicle of Hiji—The main volume* (1986:738) says that on the day of Kagayama's execution his son Giacomo knelt down and pleaded with Kagayama to take him along to heaven in such a tenacious manner that Kagayama finally gave in. This account is twisted by the author of the novel in such a way that in the fiction Kagayama only allows Giacomo to come to the execution ground. The son's decapitation happens due to miscommunication between the execution inspector and the executioner.

Kagayama Balthazar Hanza'emon (1572-1619) and Kagayama Giacomo Shintaro (1615-1619) remained the only Christian martyrs Hiji Fief produced throughout its history, while on the other hand the fief of Hiji (1601-1869) lasted for 270 years until after the Meiji Restoration. It is something of a moving experience to look back and confirm that the fief owed its survival to the life and death of Kagayama Hanza'emon. What about the survival of Christianity? Although the Tokugawa government never lifted its ban on Christianity, *Kakure-Kirishitan* (crypto-Christians) of Hiji continued to practice the religion secretly, often assuming the outward appearance of Buddhists. This is evidenced by such artifacts unearthed there as a *Maria-Kannon*, Christian graves, and baptismal basins and incense burners with crosses inscribed on them.¹¹ The modern Hiji is almost destitute of visible vestiges of its Christian past. However, the afterglow of the faith that gave Balthazar Kagayama a dramatic end is still tangible in the presence of the Oita Trappist Monastery standing on a hilltop within the municipality, where the torch is kept alight.

8. About the author

Remaining Shadows of Yokoku Castle was written by Minoru Iwafuji and published by the author himself in 1998. It is the fourth novel written by this 80-year-old late bloomer. In 2004, Iwafuji wrote *Zabieru no Tōta Michi* (The Footsteps of St. Francis Xavier), retracing geographically as well as spiritually the steps

Francis Xavier marked when he came to Funai (present-day Oita City) in 1551. Of the dozen novels authored by Iwafuji thus far, these two are the only works dealing with Christianity. His commitment is not to the Christian religion but to something else. In Iwafuji's own words, "I'm motivated to write about and for the sake of my beloved home province"(personal communication with the present writer). "[His] beloved home province" means Bungo, including Hiji, where he has been based nearly all his life and emotionally attached. Unlike the days of Otomo Sorin, Bungo is no longer an administrative division but merely a historical and cultural notion. But that is where Iwafuji's heart is. No wonder, all his works have as their heroes and heroines historical personages who hailed from the province of Bungo. RSYC must be read and appreciated within that broad context. Therefore, its failure to furnish penetrating analyses of religious psychology, inspiring quotes from the Bible, and other essentials of a serious Catholic novel should be tolerated.

Minoru Iwafuji will go down in history as the one who "discovered" and breathed life into Kagayama Balthazar Hanza'e'mon who has been consigned to oblivion for 380 years. Two things that happened in reaction to RSYC's publication must be mentioned here. First of all, on March 31, 2006 Hiji Town Office put up a notice board at the center of the former execution ground in Tsujima, Hiji. The notice reading as follows is bound to attract public attention:

On the seventeenth day of Keichō (1612) the Tokugawa government issued the decree proscribing Christianity. The then minister Kagayama Hanza'e'mon of the fief of Hiji did not succumb to repeated inducements for him to abjure his faith in the forbidden religion, was deposed from office, and was sentenced to death. ...It is reported that Kagayama Balthazar Hanza'e'mon aged 47 and his son Giacomo Shintaro aged 4 were martyred at this point on the fifteenth day, tenth month, fifth year of Genna (1619).

[Exhibit 3] The notice board in Tsujima and Mr. Minoru Iwafuji



Second, Roman Catholics in and out of Japan were swift to take action in response to the novel. Among the small number of readers of this little-known novel were leaders of the Japanese Catholic Church, who were pleasantly shocked at the magnitude of what Balthazar Kagayama did for the cause of Christianity. The concerted efforts made by an array of local Catholic leaders to reconstruct the life and ultimate martyrdom of Kagayama as a historical figure prompted the Roman Catholic Church to consider glorifying Kagayama's self-sacrifice by

beatifying him together with his son Giacomo and Petro Kibe Kasui (1587-1639).¹² It is interesting to note that Petro Kasui, also hailing from Bungo, finds his way into our novel as a young Catholic convert who is encouraged by Kagayama to leave the persecution-laden Japan to see a wider world and live large (see RSYC, 208). In 1619, *i.e.*, the year of Kagayama's martyrdom, Petro Kasui as a historical personage became the first Japanese to set foot in Jerusalem. That was one year before he was ordained in Rome and eleven years before he returned to Japan as a Jesuit missionary. Father Petro was arrested in the domains of Sendai Fief and was tortured to death in Yedo in 1639. If the Society of Jesus of which Francis Xavier was a founding member was the product of the age of the Reformation, the martyrdom suffered by Balthazar Kagayama and Petro Kasui was the product of the age of persecution. But it demonstrated to posterity that it was not beyond

Japanese but in their power to absorb the Judeo-Christian view of life at the profoundest level. To this day their martyrdom remains not just a window to the spiritual reality of the early seventeenth-century Japanese but also a powerful example for the faithful in general.

Notes

1. In addition to Bungo and Higo that Otomo Sorin inherited from his father Yoshiaki, Hizen, Chikuzen, Chikugo, and Buzen were under his rule (see, Oita City Educational Board Cultural Properties Division, 2006, 13). The information given in Carey (1976, 90) that "five of the nine provinces in Kyushu" were in Sorin's possession is slightly misleading.
2. It is in 1562 that Otomo Yoshishige became a bonze and acquired the Buddhist name Sorin, whereby he is better known to posterity.
3. *A Cyclopedia of Modern Japanese Literature* (1994, 457) quotes Tsubo'uchi Shōyō (1859-1935) as claiming that a historical novel must be factually based as far as what and when are concerned. RSYC largely follows Tsubo'uchi's guidelines. However, a few perplexing deviations from history have sneaked into the novel, as exemplified below. From the general nature of the discrepancies between these descriptions and historical facts, it can be surmised that the novel's accounts are errors committed inadvertently.

<i>pages</i>	<i>errors</i>	<i>corrections</i>
143, 309	The description of Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki of Buzen	Historically Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki was never a Christian <i>daimyo</i> , yet he is described as an ex-Christian in RSYC (see Note #8).
363	The given name of Magistrate of Nagasaki	Hasegawa Gonroku is the name of the actual Magistrate of Nagasaki at the time of Kagayama's martyrdom, yet RSYC renders it as Hasegawa Fujimasa.
363	The date of Kagayama's execution	October 15, 1619 is the actual date of Kagayama's execution, yet it is described as taking place on October 14, 1619 in RSYC (see Note #10).

4. This is the author's intentional distortion of history. In history Kagayama Hanza'emon was a minister in charge of tax collection (see *Chronicle of Hiji—The main volume*, 1986, 737).
5. Reporting on a real European martyr around that time, historian Watanabe touches on a Catholic missionary named "Benedictino who was tortured to death in Bungo in 1614" (Watanabe, 1984, Appendix). The name Benedetto Cino is borrowed from that real missionary. However, Father Benedetto's relationship with Kagayama Hanza'emon is the author's fabrication. Benedictino and Kagayama did not meet as a matter of historical fact.
6. Boxer (1974, 321) cites Carvalho's figure of 300,000 as a largely reliable number of Japanese converts in the first decade of the seventeenth century and says, "[T]his is a remarkable figure considering the total number of missionaries (143) then working in Japan," while Anesaki (1980, 244) reports that "[t]he greatest number of Kirishitan converts attained was in the first years of the seventeenth century, and it is estimated at 750,000 (in 1605). *i.e.*, four per cent.[sic] of the whole population."

7. This character named Kagayama Diogo Hayato is Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki's leading subject both in history and in the fiction. As a fervent Catholic and a cousin to Balthazar Kagayama, he exerts influence on the latter. Both are martyred.
8. Here the author departs from history because Lord Hosokawa Tadaoki as a historical figure was never a Christian (see Boxer, 1974, 339; Carey, 1976, 139). Just in passing, his wife Grace Hosokawa is one of the most illustrious names in the catalogue of Japanese converts in that period.
9. The novel does not specify the "key to this string of whys" found in the Christian teachings, but Kagayama's reminiscences seem to be allusive to the following Biblical phrase: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"(Matthew, xvi, 26).
10. The novel erroneously describes the execution as happening on October 14, 1619 (see Note #3). In the expectation that a future edition of RSYC will have the mistake duly rectified, the historically correct date (October 15) is employed here.
11. *Kannon* is a Buddhist image of the Goddess of Mercy. The ownership of its Christian version, *Maria-Kannon*, a statuette of the Blessed Virgin in Buddhist disguise, is definite proof that the owner is a *Kakure-Kirishitan*. The recovery of a *Maria-Kannon* and other relics mentioned in the text from various places within Hiji substantiates the claim that Christianity was practiced underground in Hiji even in days of persecution. The accounts of *Chronicle of Hiji—The main volume* (1986, 739) say that at the present stage of historical studies the existence of *Kakure-Kirishitan* in the fief of Hiji can only be traced back to the 1660s. Whether they endured into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries remains to be studied.
12. Boxer (1974, 390) gives the spelling 'Pedro Kasui.' It appears that the manuscript of a Latin letter signed by 'Petrus Casui' supports the spelling 'Petro Kasui'(see Kanzaki, 1998, Frontispiece).

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