

# Kapitel 9

## Translation Policies, Material Book Culture and the *Contempt for the World* in the Early Jesuit Mission in Japan



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### 9.1 Introduction

The East Asian Catholic mission in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a prime example of a form of globalization that was systematically planned by policymakers tied in one way or another to the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> These globalizing efforts involved both linguistic and cultural translation. Indeed, the two cannot meaningfully be separated. Despite the sometimes highly strategic translation policies employed by Catholic missions, no instance of translation remained entirely unidirectional, that is, from source to target culture. Forms of translation in both source and target cultures evolved dynamically as a result of individuals' personal encounters, both in relation to the missions, and in relation to international trade. Such dynamic translational processes resulted in a third, shared space that was the locus of new and unique cultural phenomena. The cultural phenomenon in question is the emergence of a (short-lived) Japanese Catholic book culture which was the result of cultural translation in the context of the linguistic translation of Christian works. Although the Christianization of Japan ultimately failed, Japanese printing culture was influenced by the solutions provided by the Jesuits and their teams who were involved in preparing the books and works for printing. Translation culture is complex. It is more than the content

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<sup>1</sup> The mission has been assessed differently in modern academia, see e. g. Casanova (2016) with regard to connectivity; Ditchfield (2007) and (2010), who advocates decentering the Catholic reformation, and Eire (2007) on the role of translation.

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of the translated text and the negotiations and policies of the translators, cultural brokers and other social agents. Translation culture also involves various media such as the writing system, the translations' production methods and the resulting material forms of the linguistic translations, even though these aspects are often sidelined in academic studies. Mediality and materiality in missionary translation are important cultural filters that can significantly obstruct or facilitate the translation process.

The chapter discusses some aspects of mediality and materiality in the translation activity of Japanese Jesuit mission: (a) choosing and creating an appropriate "alphabet", and (b) working with an imported European letterpress. The intense engagement with writing and printing was connected with the early Jesuits' discovery that the acceptance of the Christian creed depended on providing a scholarly Christian culture as sophisticated as—or even possibly surpassing—traditional Japanese scholarship. The Japanese possessed a highly developed book culture and professed learnedness in all areas of life. Especially challenging for the missionaries was the Japanese' use of an elaborate and complex writing system. While all early European missions were deeply concerned with the translation of Christian texts into the local languages, the Japanese case differs in that the Europeans engaged with a learned, scriptural culture and a well organised state that resisted successfully and with much conviction colonization.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the leading religion in Japan, Mahāyāna Buddhism, was a monastic creed that had been introduced nearly one-thousand years before the advent of the first Jesuits in Japan. Mahāyāna Buddhism was a religion that had been firmly established and fully incorporated into Japanese culture and society. The Jesuits, therefore, encountered a formidable competition to their missionary project in Japan. The decisions leading to the production of a 'Christian book' such as the choice of scripts, linguistic orientation and printing technology were thus particularly influential cultural filters in early Jesuit translation culture in Japan.

In the case of the Jesuit mission in Japan, the translation process also resulted—unintentionally—in new religious phenomena. The emergence of new cultural and religious phenomena is, for the most part, the result of both the search for equivalents and the focus on differences, in short, of comparison. While the operation of comparison is at work during cultural transfer, it, of course, can never be devoid of strategic decisions, neglect, errors, insensitivity or misunderstanding on the part of the social actors. Looking at the role of book printing and the material textual culture in addition to the production of the translations and their outcomes in the early missionary context in Japan necessarily implies a comparative perspective on the part of the researcher. This perspective does not pass judgement on whether translation policies were appropriate or not but

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<sup>2</sup>For missionary translation policies in a region colonized by European powers, see Schrader-Kniffki et al. in this volume (see Chap. 4). For a discussion of the cultural translation of indigenous ideas on human society, centering on an early Jesuit missionary, see Nardini in this volume (see Chap. 8).

considers how those involved in translating regarded book printing as suitable or useful for what they intended to achieve and how they approached translation via various policies. Historian Michel Espagne states that when comparison merely entails charting out hierarchies and path-dependencies that see the source culture as higher and the target culture as a mere copy, such comparison has to be relativized in the social sciences and the humanities.<sup>3</sup> The present chapter explores how the individuals and institutions involved made comparisons in their efforts to make Catholic Christianity the world's religion. In this way, the global history of religions can be studied as part of a 'comparative history of comparison', as the historian of religion Christoph Kleine observes.<sup>4</sup>

Japanese Jesuit prints bear witness to early attempts at translating both well-known and newly composed texts for the Catholic mission in Japan. The Jesuits followed various translation policies for their missionary project during the so-called 'Christian century' (1549–c. 1639)<sup>5</sup> in Japan. They relied mainly on the distribution of their texts in the form of printed books, as they recognized the importance of the medium of the book in Japan, and experimented with printing various scripts to represent the Japanese language. Natalia Maillard Álvarez provides important insights into the role of books in early modern Catholicism.<sup>6</sup> She particularly addresses the desire for control over books. Indeed, the Jesuits and their teams in Japan pursued the goal of creating a veritable Catholic literature in Japanese. To this end, it was important to them to strictly control the importation of books from Europe in order to prevent the spread of "dangerous and heretical opinions." Their aim was to transmit only legitimate teaching after censorship and "purification".<sup>7</sup> The same rationale was applied to the selection of works to be translated into Japanese with 'neutral', i. e. non-religious, Japanese works being selected for teaching Japanese to European missionaries. The thinking behind this was that it would prevent Europeans from coming into contact with 'heathen' teachings and thus being compromised.

There are many modern academic approaches to mediality and materiality of Catholic book culture. Among the studies that focus on the materiality of the book culture and the Japanese Jesuit mission press is a paper by Mia Mochizuki.<sup>8</sup> Mochizuki explores the agency of printed books and other printed products of the letterpress that the Jesuits introduced to Japan, by applying the approaches of Arjun Appadurai and Bruno Latour regarding self-generated social networks

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<sup>3</sup> See Espagne (2013), pp. 1–2.

<sup>4</sup> Kleine (2019), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> This term was coined by Charles Boxer (1951). The term 'Iberian period' is also used in modern studies. In Japan, the period is often referred to as *Nanban jidai* 南蛮時代, 'the age of the Southern barbarians', because the Portuguese arrived from the 'South', i.e. their Asian colonies or trading posts, during this period.

<sup>6</sup> Álvarez (2014).

<sup>7</sup> Valignano, quoted in Farge (2009), p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> Mochizuki (2014).

of material objects. She places the book printing press at the center of her considerations. Mochizuki's focus is on the European printing press in Japan and its print products—beyond the underlying aspirations of the people and institutions involved. Her study encourages us to investigate the objects in their materiality and mediality. She addresses the illustrations on the title pages of Japanese Jesuit prints as an expression of a “mimetic desire”, as imitations in the service of mission<sup>9</sup>, but the pictures and the book design themselves are less of a priority for her.<sup>10</sup> Sociologist Filipe Carreira da Silva follows a similar approach to the book and highlights the book as both an object and a subject. Carreira da Silva applies a pragmatic approach to books as sociological objects by which he means an approach that “affirms that no text exists outside of the materialities that propose it to its readers or listeners, as opposed to a Platonist perspective which postulates that a work transcends all of its possible material incarnations.” He wants to explore “the social lives of things in order to better understand how people operate” because, in his view, “meaning is produced in a process of mutual constitution between people and the world around them, including physical objects”.<sup>11</sup>

This chapter follows the book as a transcultural material product created by a large group of people. It considers the period between the end of the sixteenth century and about 1620, and investigates a particular case: the *Contemptus mundi*, or ‘Contempt for the World’—a popular devotional work compiled by Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471), but ascribed to Jean Gerson (c. 1362/3–1429) at the time of the early Japanese mission. The following section explores aspects of Catholic book culture and discusses the cultural filters of mediality and materiality that controlled the selection of the texts to be translated such that core Catholic teachings could be presented as printed books. After exploring the logistics of how the Jesuits brought a printing press to Japan, the chapter considers scripts and alphabets, and then linguistic matters that were of major concern in the translational work of the early Japanese Jesuit mission. Missionary letters and reports about translation policies, censorship and cultural accommodation are analysed. In the final section, two different *Contemptus mundi* translations (1596, 1610) will be analysed as a case study. Only three prints of the 1596 version of the translation of *Contemptus mundi* survived, and there is just one extant print of the

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<sup>9</sup> Mochizuki (2014), p. 123.

<sup>10</sup> Susanne Lang (2012) presented a comprehensive art-historical study of Jesuit-illustrated mission reports. Lang not only presents the reports and their illustrations, but also investigates the authors and their networks involved in book production. The role of art, but less of book art, in the Asian Jesuit mission has also received attention, for example in the monograph by Gauvin Bailey (1999), on Japan: pp. 52–81, the anthology by John W. O'Malley, S.J. et al. ([1999] 2006), as well as in articles by Michael Cooper e.g. (1996) esp. pp. 30–45, Clement Onn (2016) and Antoni Ucerler (2018), p. 320. The global exchange of “earthly goods” via the networks of Portuguese Jesuits was the subject of a museum exhibition: Weston and McMullen Museum of Art (2013).

<sup>11</sup> Carreira Da Silva (2016), p. 1186.

1610 revised and abridged version. Prints from the early Japanese Jesuit mission with religious content are rare today because of the persecution of Christians and the associated destruction of Christian books and other materials. The surviving prints and print fragments of the religious texts are nevertheless able to give an impression of the Jesuits' translation work, and their networks, and provide a rare window on the dynamism of Jesuit translation in this early period.

## 9.2 Translation Policies: Choosing the Printed Book

By the start of the Jesuit mission in Japan with the activities of Francis de Xavier (1506–1552) in the second half of the sixteenth century, the printed book was already playing a central role as a medium in the Counter-Revolutionary mission in Europe. When Francis de Xavier landed in Japan at Ignatius de Loyola's (1491–1556) behest in 1549, he had already learned from a Japanese informant in the Portuguese trade settlement in Macao (China) and described to his colleagues back in Europe how the book played an important role in scholarship and religion in Japan as it did in Europe. In a report, he complained about the lack of formal education of his Japanese informant, Paul (Anjirō) (dates unknown), stating that

since he does not understand the language in which the *ley*<sup>12</sup> is written, which his countrymen possess written in books, and which corresponds to our Latin, he is also unable to give us complete information about that *ley* as it appears in their printed books.<sup>13</sup>

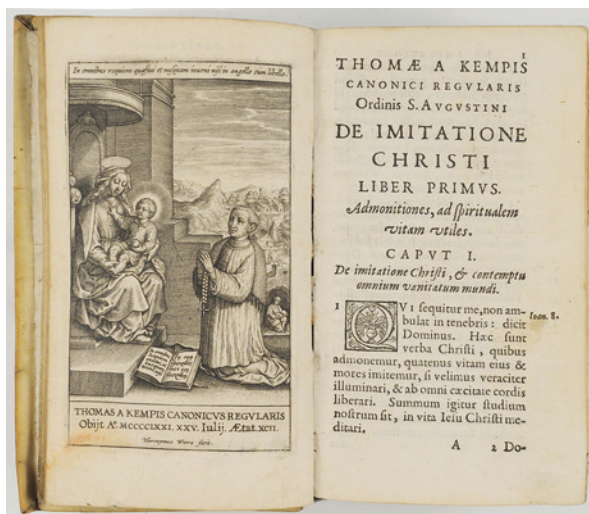
The missionary also reported how awed one of the local rulers was when he was shown a beautifully illuminated bible and a bible commentary and how he made compliments about these books as media for the Christian “law”.<sup>14</sup>

The printed book in Europe allowed an increasing circle of readers to study by themselves and contemplate the teachings of medieval authors such as the Augustinian monk Thomas à Kempis and his *De Imitatione Christi* (‘About the Imitation of Christ’, autograph manuscript dated 1441), a work that had been translated into Japanese by about 1587. The fact that spiritual edification through reading a book had become a cultural technique in Europe can be gleaned from the cover picture of the 1617 Antwerp edition of *De Imitatione Christi*. The cover picture demonstrates the way the book was meant to be enjoyed: The copper engraving shows the author, Thomas à Kempis, kneeling in devotion in front of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. In front of the author's knees lies an open book with his personal motto: “In Omnibus Requiem quaesivi, et numquam inveni nisi / in een Hoecken met een Boecken”, ‘I seek peace in everything, but cannot find it anywhere except in a nook with a book’ (Fig. 9.1).

<sup>12</sup>“Ley”: ‘law’, i.e. the Buddhist teachings.

<sup>13</sup>Schurhammer and Wicki (1944/45), vol. 2, p. 39, quote adapted; *emphasis* as in the original quote.

<sup>14</sup>See App (1997), p. 54.



**Fig. 9.1** Thomas à Kempis, *De Imitatione Christi*. Antwerpen: Ex Officina Plantiniana, 1617. Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

In the background, a reader sits alone and secluded in a cave or vault and reads a book, presumably the *De Imitatione Christi*. The devotional work, which the monk composed in Latin between 1418 and 1427, was printed not too long after, in around 1488.<sup>15</sup> This early date in the development of European book printing shows how cherished the work was at the time. By the time the 1617 edition was published, the book had already established itself as the most popular and widely read Christian devotional work.

Like many of his contemporaries, Ignatius de Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, was deeply attracted to the instructions for Christian discipleship found in the *De Imitatione Christi*, and created his spiritual exercises on the basis of these instructions. Francis de Xavier, the founder of the Jesuit mission to Japan, was one of his companions with whom he practiced these exercises. In the Iberian world, the work became known under the title *Contemptus mundi*, 'Contempt for the World', and appeared on a 1554 list of items in Portuguese that Father Melchior Nunez Barreto (c. 1520–1571), his brethren and five orphan boys took from India to Japan where they disembarked in the summer of 1556.<sup>16</sup> The list of books gives a sense of the first Jesuit library in Japan that Jesús López Gay, S.J. reconstructed from this much-noted source (1959/1960). On the book list are also

<sup>15</sup>For outlines of the Imitation Christi literature, see e. g. von Habsburg (2011) and Kubsch (2018).

<sup>16</sup>The list contains presents to various dignitaries the Jesuits planned to visit, clothes, devotional items and books, some personally owned by the missionaries. Wicki (1948), vol. 3, pp. 197–205.

‘works by Thomas à Kempis’, “As obras de Tomás de Kempis”<sup>17</sup> and “Jersão”, i. e. Jean Gerson. As *De Imitatione Christi* was attributed to the French theologian Gerson at the time, López Gay assumes that the *Contemptus mundi* and the “Jersão” in the list are one and the same work. The reason for ascribing the work to Gerson ultimately goes back to the first edition of Gerson’s collected works, published in Cologne in 1483, in which the book appeared as his.<sup>18</sup> In 1496, a Castilian edition under the title *Tratado de contemptus mundi* was also attributed to Gerson. The work was henceforth known under this title among Spanish and Portuguese speakers. According to López Gay, the Jesuit missionaries probably brought the edition prepared by Luis de Granada (1504–1588) to Japan. The Dominican monk published his translation, a work characterized by its ease of understanding<sup>19</sup>, in 1536, not long before the Jesuits first set sail for Japan. The Jesuit scholar Josef Wicki suggested that the *Contemptus mundi* mentioned in the list was Luis de Granada’s translation, printed in Lisbon by Germão Galharde in 1542.<sup>20</sup> It seems that this edition circulated widely in Portugal and its colonies (Fig. 9.2).<sup>21</sup>

From the above, we can conclude that the ‘works by Thomas à Kempis’ cannot have been the *De Imitatione Christi* / *Contemptus mundi* as it was thought to have been written by Jean Gerson, but other spiritual works by the Augustinian monk whom the Jesuits appreciated because of his affinity for interiority and a devotional life. His works were part of the roughly one hundred volumes that made the journey from the Portuguese trading port in Goa to Japan where they became part of the first library of European books for the mission.

Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) became the new organizer and superior of the Jesuit missions in the Middle and Far East after the death of Francis de Xavier. As Jesuit visitator Valignano requested that more books be shipped to Japan. It was also Valignano who urged the authorities in Rome to establish a printshop in Japan with the latest European technology and to print books for the mission. A printing press arrived at the Jesuit seminary in Goa in 1588, and was subsequently shipped to Macao, before arriving in Japan in 1590, almost 40 years after the Japan mission was established there. The press was imported from Portugal by a Jesuit delegation. Among the members of the delegation was a group of four Japanese men from the Tenshō embassy who had been sent to Europe eight years before, in 1582, to visit the Pope and various European dignitaries in order

<sup>17</sup> Wicki (1948), vol. 2, p. 203.

<sup>18</sup> See López Gay (1959/1960), pp. 372–374.

<sup>19</sup> Oiffer-Bomsel (2014).

<sup>20</sup> See Wicki (1948), vol. 2, p. 201, n. 24. The short-title catalogue Iberian Books, Wilkinson (2010), lists the edition as IB 3708. According to the online database Iberian Books, one copy is held at the General Library of the University of Coimbra, Portugal and once belonged to a Carmelite convent, another copy, published in 1542, is at the Real Academy of History in Madrid. Accessed: 13 March 2021.

<sup>21</sup> See López Gay (1959/1960), p. 373.





**Fig. 9.2** Granada, Luis de (transl.). 1542. *Contemptus mundi nueuamente romançado*. Lixbona [Lisbon]: Germão Galharde. Real Academia de la Historia Espania, 4/3152(1)

to foster good relations with the foreign powers. Two of the young men were representing influential Christian samurai families from the island of Kyushu; the other two went along as their companions. Valignano, who could not accompany the embassy in 1582 as originally intended and remained in Asia, made sure that the first texts for the Japan mission were printed in Goa and Macao where the delegation stayed on their return journey to Japan. After the press finally arrived in Japan, it was used there until 1614. After the expulsion of Christians from Japan, the press and other printing equipment were brought back to Macao and continued to print for the Jesuit mission after some years. It was hoped that a grammar and



introduction to the Japanese language, printed there in 1620, would be of use to future missionaries.<sup>22</sup>

### 9.3 Choosing a Script for the Missionary Prints

During the Jesuit mission's translation project prior to printing, Valignano and his team were particularly aware of the problem of the complex writing system used in Japan, in addition to the problems they had with the Japanese language itself. The Jesuits not only wanted to produce appealing Japanese translations of key Christian texts but also intended to print them in large numbers and distribute them free of charge—a major undertaking that was complicated by an increasingly hostile environment for the Christian mission in a Japan, devastated in some regions by an ongoing war between factions of local rulers.

A Latin-Chinese alphabet for representing the Japanese language, printed in Macao in 1585 under the supervision of Valignano, presumably using a woodblock since the letterpress had still not arrived from Portugal, serves as an early example of the experimental translation policies of the Jesuit mission in Japan. The alphabet was probably the mission's first printed product intended for Japan, according to Laures.<sup>23</sup>

#### 9.3.1 *A First Attempt*

Valignano wrote in a letter to the General of his order (Goa, January 14, 1586) that

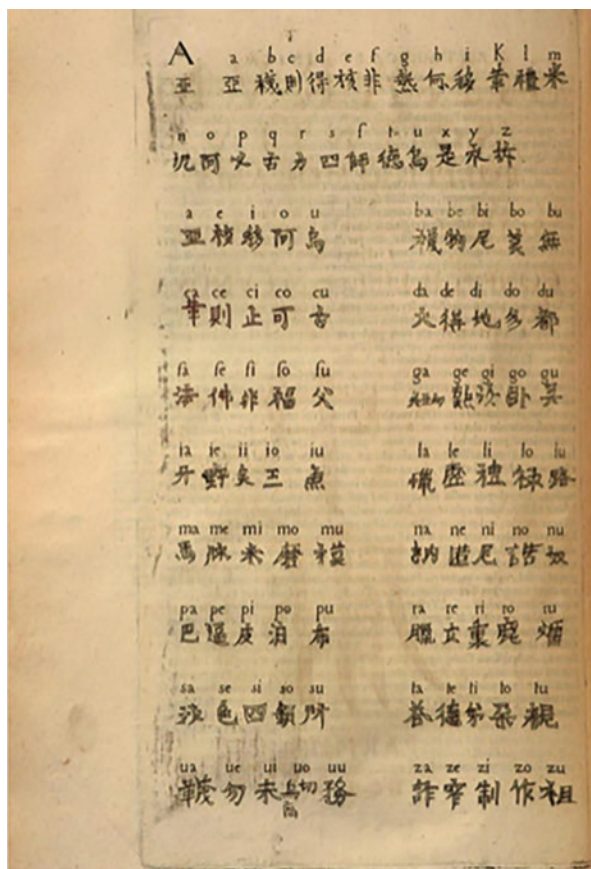
[w]ith this letter I am sending an Abecedario which was made in China with the intention to see whether we could print there Latin books to be used in Japan; for it is impossible and immensely expensive to get them from Portugal. Hence we have printed this page which gives us hope that we can turn out all we need here. Together with our (Latin) Abecedario another one in the Chinese language was printed and so I thought it would be interesting and give Your Paternity and perhaps His Holiness also pleasure to see it.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The relocation of the European printing press is described in various modern academic works, among them Mochizuki (2014), pp. 219–220.

<sup>23</sup>See Laures (2004), ID JL-1585-KB1-1; see also Schilling (1940).

<sup>24</sup>Schütte (1958), vol. 1, part 1, p. 269, n. 127; Laures (2004), ID JL-1585-KB1-1; Jap. Sin. 10 I, f. 145.



**Fig. 9.3** “Latin-Chinese Alphabet”, Thévenot, Melchisédech. 1673. *Relations de divers voyages curieux* IV.2: Voyage à la Chine des PP. I. Grueber et D’Orville, plate 1, before p. 1, Paris: Clousier. John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island

The reason for choosing Chinese characters for this alphabet<sup>25</sup> was probably an awareness that Chinese characters were also used in Japan (Fig. 9.3). Throughout East Asia, religious texts are written in Classical Chinese. Some Chinese

<sup>25</sup> Only one copy of the alphabet seems to have been preserved, so it can be assumed that it was not widely distributed or that it had any practical impact. It was printed in Melchisédech Thévenot’s (1620–1692) anthology of previously unpublished writings and materials from various Europeans’ journeys, including the journeys of the Jesuit fathers Albert D’Orville (1621–1662) and Johannes Grueber (1623–1680) through Asia. Both had served on the China mission. Thévenot assumes that they had had access to the sheet and gave it to Father Michele Ruggieri, S.J. (1543–1607). Ruggieri, in turn, passed it on to others, and the sheet finally fell into the hands of Thévenot himself. Thévenot (1673), p. 19; Laues (2004), ID JL-1585-KB1-1.

characters are also used in traditional Buddhist texts because of their sound, namely for the transcription of Sanskrit terms. The Jesuit alphabet was not particularly original as it lists characters that were used to transcribe Sanskrit and other Asian languages. The alphabet consists of two parts: (1) Lines 1 and 2 show equivalents for Latin letters. Words from Latin and theoretically also from other European languages that use Latin script can be written with these characters. (2) Below these first two lines, there are 16 groups of five syllables (a total of 80 syllables). These syllables represent the spoken Japanese language of that time.

The Chinese characters in this chart are used solely because of their sound, not their meaning. The advantage of using this alphabet would have been that the transcription of special religious terms from Latin would have mimicked the traditional and therefore recognizable way that many religious terms from Sanskrit were presented in classical Buddhist texts. By representing 80 syllables with a fixed set of Chinese characters, both Latin loanwords and Japanese words could have been typed using a homogeneous typeface.

However, hundreds of years earlier, the Japanese had been confronted with the problem of representing their language, which is very rich in syllables, with Chinese characters, which almost always represent just one single syllable. They initially used a rather cumbersome and time-consuming writing system that involved using several complex Chinese characters (some of which involve 15 or more strokes) to write a multisyllabic Japanese 'word'. This cumbersome system was soon abandoned in favour of the *kana* system: Purely phonetic Japanese characters were developed from the cursive form of Chinese characters to write the so-called *kana* syllables of the Japanese language. The two *kana* scripts, which sometimes served different functions, each contained 50 characters, and covered the entire phonetic range of the Japanese language. As such, a simple solution to a difficult problem had long been established in Japan when Valignano and his team developed their Latin-Chinese alphabet and printed it in Macao. Offering a new, but more complicated solution for the mission was certainly not the way to go. This may be why Valignano ultimately decided against using the Latin-Chinese alphabet. Valignano, who made three visits to Japan and stayed there for several years each time,<sup>26</sup> initially expected good results from books printed with the movable Latin letters that the Jesuits used to represent the Japanese language. In a 1592 report, he explained that the Jesuits were not printing texts with Japanese characters because there were too many such characters. Ultimately, however, he would go on to use European printing technology to print books in Japanese using Japanese characters.

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<sup>26</sup> For a detailed outline of Valignano's biography and his missionary principles, see Josef Franz Schütte, S.J. ([1951] 1958); see also Moran (1993).

### 9.3.2 *Missionary Scripts*

Valignano's intention was to create books for a more general readership. He had correctly observed that texts with many Chinese characters or those written solely in Chinese could only be read by a learned audience. The matrices he requested from Europe for the casting of type for *katakana*, one of the two Japanese sets of syllable characters, as well as matrices for some Chinese characters that are used in *kana* texts, in order to create 'simpler' texts, were, however, never delivered to Japan. The Jesuits in Japan first experimented with wooden printing type for Japanese characters. Some fragments of the products made with this technique have been preserved in the bindings of later prints. Eventually, however, they rejected this technique and employed skilled craftsmen to cast metal type. In addition, the Jesuits created some new characters for Christian expressions such as 'Deus', 'apostolo' and biblical names such as 'Jesu', 'Job' and 'Paulo'. Japanese studies scholar Małgorzata Sobczyk lists eleven such monograms found in a manuscript translation of the *Tratado de la oración y meditación* ('Treatise on prayer and meditation').<sup>27</sup> The Jesuits also used Greek or Latin letters in texts otherwise made up of Japanese characters, for example the Greek letter 'chi' as the first letter for Christ, which was then read 'Kirishito' in Japanese.<sup>28</sup>

It is important to emphasize that from the beginning, the books printed by Jesuits on Japanese soil were printed in Japanese in both the Latin alphabet and in the Japanese writing system with its Chinese characters and syllabaries, using movable type. However, the complexity of a Japanese, or rather 'Sinitic',<sup>29</sup> text which uses both Chinese characters, along with glosses, as well as syllabaries, remained a challenge for the European missionaries and their teams although they could have used the more convenient and more economical technique of woodblock printing. During the entire period of missionary work, the Jesuits did not use this printing technique in Japan—with one possible exception<sup>30</sup>. Woodblock printing was the dominant printing technology in Japan at the time of the mission. In addition to woodblock printing, movable type made of clay or wood had been used for centuries in China and Korea, a technique that had not caught on in Japan for reasons that are also not entirely clear. Printing with movable metal type—made of copper—has been documented in Korea since the thirteenth century. The type was made with the lost-wax casting process, meaning

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<sup>27</sup> Sobczyk (2020), p. 167. The work was ascribed to Pedro de Alcántara (1499–1562) but, in fact, is more likely based on the *Libro de Oración* by Luis de Granada that Pedro had edited. Sobczyk (2020), p. 159; p. 159, n. 31.

<sup>28</sup> See Farge (2009), p. 91, n. 26; see also Mochizuki (2014), p. 125.

<sup>29</sup> See Clements (2015), pp. 99–100.

<sup>30</sup> A Christian devotional in Japanese letters was printed in Kyoto in 1610 probably using the woodblock printing technique; see below.

serial type production was not possible.<sup>31</sup> We do not know exactly why, faced with various difficulties, the Jesuits insisted on using their letterpress and decided against woodblock printing. One reason may have been, in my view, that they felt the European printing technology to be fundamentally superior to woodblock printing and that this could be seen by the members of the host culture as a hallmark of excellence.

As of 1591, at least, catechisms, prayer leaves and other texts were printed with the European letterpress at the Japanese College of the Society of Jesus in Kazusa, not far from the port city of Nagasaki.<sup>32</sup> In addition to imported books, these printed materials were used for the Catholic mission until the suppression and expulsion of the missionaries after 1614 ended production on Japanese soil.<sup>33</sup> Over the decades, cultural filters of a practical nature such as creating or choosing an appropriate writing system persisted in an environment dominated by a religious culture that for the most part consisted of Buddhism, a ‘translated religion’.<sup>34</sup> Buddhists cherished the written word and one of their pious practices was to copy Buddhist texts (*shakyō* 写経) and images in great numbers, often with superb craftsmanship. As such, the target culture of the Jesuit mission in Japan was open to accepting printed materials from the European letterpress. In addition, Japanese Buddhists were used to reading texts in a language they did not speak or understand well since they did not, in fact, translate Chinese Buddhist texts into classical Japanese but instead worked with glosses and syllabaries developed from Chinese characters. These were used to apply a century-old system called *kundoku* 訓読, literally ‘reading by gloss’, when reading Buddhist or, indeed, any other Chinese (Sinitic) texts. Performing *kundoku* involves reading a Chinese text as if it were in Japanese. The Japanese version of the Chinese text, mentally constructed by the glossing system, was not written down as in other translation systems but was either said aloud or voiced mentally. *Kundoku* is “a form of highly bound translation”<sup>35</sup> that evolved primarily because Chinese characters, in principle,

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<sup>31</sup>In his 2018 study, Peter Kornicki, a specialist on East Asian book culture, addresses the important role of book printing in seventeenth-century East Asia. His main focus is on the role of book printing in the vernacularization of classical Chinese texts.

<sup>32</sup>Due to ongoing persecution and political unrest, the Jesuits moved the massive letterpress and the printshop several times within Japan but remained on the island of Kyushu.

<sup>33</sup>The press was moved to Manila and Macao where more works for the Japanese mission were printed with the hope to continue the mission in Japan in the future.

<sup>34</sup>That Buddhism in Japan is a ‘translated religion’ would seem to work in favor for the acceptance of yet another ‘translated religion’ (Christianity). Indeed, in the early decades of the Jesuit mission in Japan, Christianity was seen favorably because it was held to be a form of Buddhism, especially because the missionaries came from (their college in) India, the revered region of origin of Buddhism. The Jesuit missionaries insisted that Catholicism was not, in fact, a form of Buddhism, and that it was superior to it. Increasingly, a powerful resistance by Japanese Buddhists, among other groups, formed against the Christians, so that, in the end, the early mission in Japan came to a halt.

<sup>35</sup>Clements (2015), p. 105.

represent words, not sounds. These logographs can theoretically be used to write any language. As a consequence, medieval and early modern Japanese authors never felt any immediate need to drop Chinese (Sinitic), or to produce written translations into classical Japanese of important religious texts. The traditional characters remained in use in Japan, but over time, the Japanese simplified some characters and also created some unique Sinitic characters (*kokuji* 国字). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Japanese Christian (*Kirishitan*) texts include new monograms that are in many ways similar to Chinese characters, to convey Christian terms and names.<sup>36</sup>

The cultural filter that the early Jesuits and their teams perceived in relation to scripts and the technology of letterpress printing led them to a policy of adaption of the local scholarship and book culture they encountered in Japan, which is a process of domestication. But they also tried to demonstrate the superiority of European printing technology and Catholic scholarship and devotion and thereby engage in what we call, speaking with Venuti, a process of foreignization.

The early Jesuits in Japan also had to grapple with the problem of language itself which is in Japan connected, as I have shown above, with Japanese religious history and the introduction of Chinese texts. Language, whether written or spoken, is perhaps the most ‘impermeable’ cultural filter the early Catholic missionaries in Japan had to deal with in translating Christianity, as I will show in the following section.

## 9.4 Material Book Culture and the Translation of Religion

In the early days of the Japan mission, the focus was on translating and rendering Christian terminology. The solution to the ecclesiastical language problem was initially to translate the terms with functional equivalents from the Sino-Japanese.<sup>37</sup> The best-known example is choosing “Dainichi,” which is the name of the cosmic Buddha, for “God.” It was later decided that using terms in Latin, but also in Portuguese, would be preferred, for example to use “Deus” for “God” (*Deus*)—often abbreviated in texts as “D” or represented by a monogram character as pointed out above. The aim was to prevent Christianity from being viewed as a form of Buddhism in Japan, as was initially the case. Both for theological and practical reasons and, in my view, also because of the nature of

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<sup>36</sup>For more on Jesuit innovations in the Japanese writing system such as ligatures and punctuation of words, see Shira'i (2008).

<sup>37</sup>See the pioneering work on the Japanese mission's ecclesiastical language problem by Georg Schurhammer, S. J. (1928); see also Joseph F. Moran's essay on language barriers experienced by the Jesuit missionaries, in which he presents lengthy quotes from Valignano's writings in English translation (1992); see also Moran (1993).



the Japanese language and writing system, a mixture of translations and loanwords ultimately prevailed. An example of such a hybrid form is the rendering of the term and book title “(Christian) doctrine” as *Fides no kyō*: *fides* plus the Japanese genitive particle *no* combined with *kyō* 教, the Sino-Japanese word for ‘teaching’.

### 9.4.1 Language Problems

Another problem the missionaries grappled with was the Japanese language itself. In his Japan *Sumario*, Alessandro Valignano reported on the great complexity of the Japanese language, and its ways of speaking and address:

All residents have one and the same language. It is the best, most elegant, and richest that one knows in the region of discovery; for it is richer in words and expresses its concepts better than our Latin language. Not only does it have a great variety of words that denote the same thing, but it also has inherent subtleties and honorable titles, so that the same nouns or verbs cannot be used for all persons or for all things. Rather, depending on the status of the person and things, one must use high or low, honorable or contemptuous words. They express themselves differently in speaking than in writing, and the way men speak is very different from that of women. The difference in writing is no less; for letters are written differently, books differently. In short, since the language is so rich and elegant, it takes a long time to learn it. If one speaks or writes differently from what they usually do, it seems ridiculous and not very considerate to them, as if someone spoke wrongly with us and with many mistakes in Latin.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to these insightful observations, Valignano also noticed the many different registers employed in spoken Japanese, which was a key issue when it came to presenting Christian content in sermons. A further persistent problem was that foreign priests did not have sufficiently good Japanese to address Japanese penitents correctly during confession.<sup>39</sup> Recognizing this issue, Valignano made repeated requests for brothers of Japanese descent to be ordained as priests. However, it was only in 1601, nearly 60 years after the Japan mission was established, that Rome gave permission for this.<sup>40</sup>

During his second of three stays in Japan, Valignano began to systematize language teaching in Japan, where Japanese was taught to foreigners, and Latin and Portuguese to the Japanese.<sup>41</sup> Language teaching entailed conveying religious and cultural knowledge, both about Europe and Japan. Valignano and his team organized the publication and printing of ‘purely’ linguistic works and sought out useful texts for language acquisition and for learning the different writing

<sup>38</sup> Valignano (1954 [1583]), translation adapted from Doi (1939), p. 443; *Sumario*, Cap. 2. *Jesuitas na Asia*. 49-IV-56. f. 64<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Schütte (1958), pp. 320–321.

<sup>40</sup> For more on the problem of racial and ethnic discrimination in the early Japanese mission, see Cohen (2008).

<sup>41</sup> For language teaching and acquisition in the Japanese Jesuit mission, see Doi (1939).

systems involved in the mission project. For this purpose, ‘secular’ texts such as Aesop’s fables were translated into Japanese, the printing of which was allowed by the Japanese censors long after the official end of Christianity in Japan, because they classified the fables as non-Christian. The Jesuits’ aim was to convey not only linguistic but also cultural knowledge about Europe. Reading and learning about Aesop’s fables was meant to provide Japanese with a European “classical” education in order to facilitate a cultural exchange but also prepare their acceptance of the Catholic creed.

For the foreign Jesuits, the mission produced a dictionary and a Japanese grammar. To convey linguistic and cultural knowledge to them, the mission printed a Japanese heroic epic—the *Heike monogatari*, ‘The Tale of the Heike’—in Japanese colloquial language in the easily comprehensible form of a dialogue. The printed anthology of moral Sino-Japanese aphorisms in Japanese, the *Kinku-shū*, also served this end. Jesuits of Japanese descent could particularly benefit from a Latin-Portuguese dictionary and a Latin grammar. With the notable exception of Aesop’s fables, these linguistic materials shared the same fate as the ‘religious’ books such as prayer books and other everyday Christian literature including devotional literature for both the ordained and laypersons, and were systematically destroyed, especially after 1614. Catechisms were particularly targeted because they included arguments in favour of the refutation of the Buddhist religion, something that the then ruling Tokugawa shogun (military ruler) did not tolerate.

#### 9.4.2 *Editing Work and Publication Policies*

In the catechism *Christianae Fidei*, for example, compiled by Valignano and already printed in 1586 in Lisbon for the Japanese mission, there are a number of refutations of Buddhist teachings. This can be regarded as a considerable achievement in cultural translation, because a bridge between the religion of the target society and one’s own religion had to be created in order to communicate the message.<sup>42</sup> An important source for exploring cultural filters in the process of passing on cultural and religious knowledge are the written communication and reports of the Jesuits. The letters tell of the hardships of everyday life and later also of the civil wars in Japan, the persecution, torture and executions of Christians, but also of hopes and successes. The letters were supposed to be edifying to the missionaries themselves, so selected letters were read aloud during daily meetings.

The transfer of knowledge about the Japan mission within the Catholic world in Europe is also revealing, because the letters and reports were examined by

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<sup>42</sup>For a comparative study of early modern catechisms in translation including translation into Japanese, see Flüchter und Wirbser (2017); for studies on early catechisms in Japan, see Wirbser (2017) and Abé (2017).

censors, often very heavily edited, and prepared for a European audience for its edification. According to Paula Hoyos Hattori, who explores the construction of otherness and identity in the Jesuit letters of the Japanese mission, the translations and writings of the Jesuits were quite obviously touched by the political and social tensions of their time.<sup>43</sup> They were an important part of what would be called foreign policy today. Hoyos Hattori emphasizes that it was important to the head of the first mission in Japan, Francis de Xavier, to develop a regular exchange of letters with the other missions around the world. In this context, it was essential to establish a systematic revision process through which it was possible to determine what exactly could or could not be published. According to Hoyos Hattori, this process was justified by the fact that the missions, their legitimacy and the necessary financial and moral support for future missions were dependent on communicating positive and promising progress in consolidating religion which was tantamount to consolidating a more or less delineated worldview.

If one compares the original letters of the Jesuit Balthazar Gago (1520–1583) to those published after censorship in Evora, Portugal, it is evident that the omissions in the latter hide the similarities that Gago had observed between Buddhism and Christianity.<sup>44</sup> Balthazar Gago worked in Japan and is particularly known for his language reform concerning the use of religious terms and words in the Japanese mission. In his original letters, Gago explains the bridges between Buddhism and Christianity. While he was inclined to suggest that Buddhism was a kind of erroneous Christianity, the censors in Evora effectively stopped the Japan mission from building on this idea.<sup>45</sup> Balthazar Gago's observations regarding the parallelism between Christianity and Buddhism could have been interpreted as putting Buddhism on the same level as Christianity. The censors could not tolerate this notion as the Christian religion would then appear as merely one of many religions. Gago himself was aware of this 'danger' as his reasoning for a language reform and his advocacy for using Latin and Portuguese for Christian terms instead of similar but in his eyes false Buddhist terms in the Japanese mission attest to.<sup>46</sup>

Tensions between Catholic scholars also had an influence on censorship and decisions regarding which works were ultimately printed and distributed. At the Jesuits' conference at their College in Kazusa in August 1590, shortly after the

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<sup>43</sup> Hoyos Hattori (2016).

<sup>44</sup> See Hoyos Hattori (2016), pp. 82–83.

<sup>45</sup> The China mission, however, built on the idea of Chinese religion (Confucianism) being a kind of erroneous Christianity. For the China and Japan missions in comparison, see Pina (2001); general outlines of the early China mission are provided by Hsia (2007) and Brockey (2007).

<sup>46</sup> Schurhammer (1928), pp. 61–65. By 1555, the use of Buddhist terms in Christian sermons, etc. had already been discontinued and instead changed to expressions in Latin or Portuguese. Gago reasoned that the Christians could now explain why the Buddhist words were dangerous and false, and offer explanations of the meaning of the (correct and true) Christian words in Latin or Portuguese. Schurhammer (1928), p. 62, quoting Gago.

printing press arrived, it was determined, under the direction of Valignano, that a number of works that had already been translated should be printed.<sup>47</sup> Further printed literature was added to this corpus of literature and images over the following 25 years or so. A key problem for the foreign missions was obtaining permission from Rome to print the translations. This was not, or not only, because nobody in Rome could check the quality of the translations, but also because the correspondence took so long, normally up to two years. The Jesuits also printed books in Latin. In some cases, Jesuits in Japan received permission for and printed books that had, in the meantime, been indexed by the Catholic Inquisition. A documented example of this is the reprint of a theological treatise, the *Aphorismi confessoriorum* (1595) by the Portuguese Jesuit Manuel de Sá (1530–1596). Behind the movement to put the book on the index was apparently the Dominican Diego Collado (d. 1638/41), who was also active in the missionary work in Japan. Even though the selection of books and pamphlets for printing was presumably made at regular intervals, the process of translation and printing remained irregular not only due to such inner-Catholic conflicts but also because of the fundamental differences in language and cultural knowledge and, not least, the high mortality rate among those involved.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the letters and reports, the translated texts themselves reveal cultural filters that were decisive in terms of the content and style of the translations. The printed editions of two different Japanese translations of the *Contemptus mundi* provide rich material to assess the emergence of a Japanese Catholic literature and will be analysed in the following and final section.

## 9.5 Mediation of Religious Ideas and Practices: Imitation of Christ

As briefly related above, some of the books imported into Japan were translations of the medieval author Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* / *Contemptus mundi*, prepared by Luis de Granada, although the book was firmly believed at the time to have been originally penned by Jean Gerson. Luis de Granada was not only the translator of a book that had a profound influence on Ignatius and the Society of Jesus. Three of his own works appeared in Japanese translation: (1) *Quinta parte de la Introducción del símbolo de la fe* ('Introduction to the symbol of the faith'), a summary of the apostles' creed with the title *Fides no doxi to xite P. F. Luis de Granada*; (2) *The Sinner's Guide* with the title *Giya do pekadoru* ぎやどへかどる (*Guia de pecadores*) and (3) a Christian doctrine with the title *Fides no kyō*. In addition, hagiographies of saints and martyrs from the second book of his

<sup>47</sup> The "Gerson" is expressly mentioned. Schilling (1940), p. 367.

<sup>48</sup> For more on Collado's initiative, see Humbertclaude (1937), reprint in Marquet (2011).

*Introducción del símbolo de la fe* were published in the *Sanctos no gosagueo no uchi nuqigagi* ('Extracts from the acts of the saints'), printed in 1591.<sup>49</sup>

### 9.5.1 Contempt for the World in Japanese translation

Luis de Granada, with whom the Jesuits in Europe had an intimate connection, never travelled to Japan but the monk did meet four young Japanese men from the Tenshō embassy in Lisbon in 1585, when he was of an advanced age. Although the Japanese translation of the *Contemptus mundi* printed in 1596 claims that it has been done from the Latin original, it is held to be very likely that Luis de Granada's popular Spanish rendition may have guided the translators of the book as well (Orii 2010, pp. 44–45).<sup>50</sup> The book in Spanish was, as mentioned above, available in Japan as early as 1556. In a letter dated 20 February 1588, Luís Fróis mentions that Hosokawa Gracia 細川ガラシャ (1563–1600) requested a catechism and the *Contemptus mundi*.<sup>51</sup> We can assume that Gracia, a convert born into the Akechi family who married the head of the powerful, but ultimately defeated Hosokawa family, was provided with a translated manuscript version of the devotional book after her baptism in 1587. She was called Tama before her conversion to Christianity. Tama Garcia was also known to have eventually taught the content to women at her residence.<sup>52</sup> She perished during a conflict between warring factions at the Hosokawa residence in Osaka, and there is no trace of the manuscript today.

*Contemptus mundi jenbu* ('Contempt for the world, complete') finally appeared in Japanese in Latin script in 1596 and was probably printed in Japanese characters in 1603 or even earlier. While three books of the work in Latin script have survived,<sup>53</sup> there is no evidence of the 1603 print. Moreover, Laures points to a Latin version that he thinks must have also been printed in 1596, along with the Japanese translation, but the evidence he provides is not clear proof of such

<sup>49</sup> Jolliffe und Bianchi (2022). For an in-depth discussion on relations between Japan and Europe centering on the role of Luis de Granada, see Orii (2010).

<sup>50</sup> See also Suzuki (1994).

<sup>51</sup> See Humbertclaude (1937), p. 197, reprint in Marquet (2011), pp. 238–239.

<sup>52</sup> For a study of Tama Garcia's life in the context of the Catholic mission, see Ward (2009), pp. 292–433; Ward's study is based on the *History of Japan* compiled by Luís Fróis (1532–1597) who used Jesuit letters and reports for his compilation; see Fróis ([1583–1587] 1983), vol. 4, pp. 484–496. Ebisawa assumes that a Japanese translation existed by 1581. Ebisawa (1984), p. 691.

<sup>53</sup> The three libraries are Bodleian Library in Oxford, Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milano and Bibliotheca Augusta in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. In my first assessment of the Augusta print I stated that it must be a copy of the earlier edition held at the Bodleian Library, Triplett (2018), p. 127. However, all three books differ very slightly from each other, so they are in fact three different editions printed in the same year (1596).

a print<sup>54</sup>, and a printed version in Latin from the Japanese Jesuit mission press has not been established so far. It is, however, probable that a Latin version was available to the Jesuits as a basis for translation in the form of an imported book (Fig. 9.4).

In 1610, the Japanese convert Hara Martinho (Martinão, c. 1569–1629), who had spent his youth in Europe as part of the Tenshō embassy and was a devout Jesuit and skilled translator, revised and shortened the existing translation of the *Contemptus mundi*. He is credited with the revisions regarding a (no longer existent) print of 1613. A slightly earlier version was printed in Kyoto in 1610 by Harada Antonio, a layman and a convert. Whether Hara Martinho was indeed involved in the production of the printed text is not altogether clear. It is not a Jesuit mission print in the stricter sense, and it is the only book that may not have been printed with movable metal type but with woodblocks carved to look like the work had been printed with movable type.<sup>55</sup> Only a single copy of the *こんてむつずむんぢ* (*Kontemutsusu munji*) has survived (Figs. 9.5, 9.6 und 9.7).<sup>56</sup>

### 9.5.2 Brief Comparison of the Two Japanese Translations

It is instructive for our topic to compare both texts of the *Contemptus Mundi* (1596, 1610). The earlier, complete translation of the well-known devotional book was, according to the preface, intended to promote language acquisition among the European Jesuits in Japan. And people from Japan were supposed to use it in the Jesuit schools.<sup>57</sup> The later, abridged translation, written in Japanese literary style (*wabun* 和文) was probably intended to serve lay people of Japanese origin for their personal devotion.

As William Farge, S. J. points out, the “contempt for the world”, a world full of vanities and trivialities, was identified with or found to be functionally equivalent to the Japanese Buddhist understanding of *ukiyo* 浮世, the “floating, transitory world”. Farge shows the special way in which the Japanese mission created a literature of linguistically high quality that at the same time dealt with

<sup>54</sup>Laures refers to the 1596 annual letter by Luís Fróis: ‘This year the catechism of the Tridentine council was printed in Latin that is being read in the seminary, and *Contemptus Mundi* was also printed in Latin letters and the Japanese language, and the *Exercises* of our Father Ignácio in Latin, and the *Contemptus Mundi* will later be printed for the Japanese to read in their letters.’, “Este año se imprimio el cathecismo del conçilio Tridentino em latim que se va lendo en el seminario, y tambien se imprimio Contemptus Mundi en letra latina y lengua Japonica, y los Exercicios del nuestro Padre Ignacio en latim, y el Contemptus Mundi luego se a de imprimir para ler Japones en su letra.”, Laures (2004), I-I-2-72.

<sup>55</sup>See Tominaga (1973). For a more recent study, see Shira’i (2015).

<sup>56</sup>It is kept in the Tenri Central Library. A facsimile edition was published in 1921.

<sup>57</sup>See Farge (2009), p. 86.





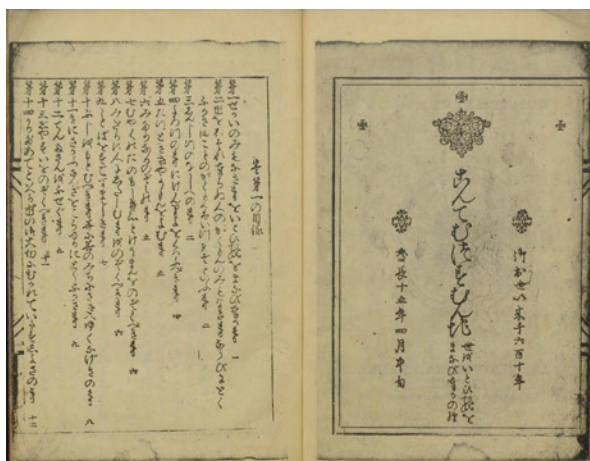
Fig. 9.4 Title page of *Contemptus mundi jenbu* (1596). Herzog-August Bibliothek, Eth. 57.13

Japanese sensibilities.<sup>58</sup> In both translations, loanwords from Latin or Portuguese are explained directly in the text and combined with well-known Japanese terms from the spiritual world. This method is elucidating but avoids any unpleasant didactical effect. Both texts avoid references to Christ's suffering, crucifixion and death as well as suffering and tribulation in general, which naturally appear very often in the original text. Apparently, these 'negative' images were not seen as

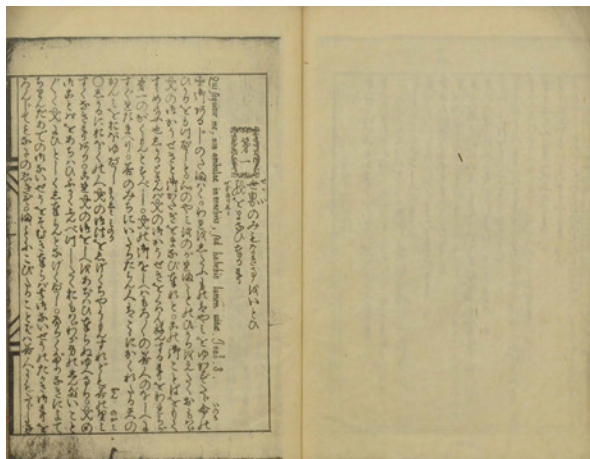
<sup>58</sup> See Farge (2009), p. 88; Farge (2003), pp. 11–12.



**Fig. 9.5** Outer title page, *Kontemutsusu munji*, 1610, Tenri University Library. Source: Kisho fukusei-kai (1921), National Diet Library: <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1185351>



**Fig. 9.6** Inner title page, *Kontemutsusu munji*, 1610, Tenri University Library. Source: Kisho fukusei-kai (1921), National Diet Library: <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1185351>. The inner title page uses the date of publication in both the Christian (1610) and the Japanese calendars 15



**Fig. 9.7** The translators of the *Kontemutsusu munji* made use of biblical quotations in Latin in Latin script and of monograms in the otherwise Japanese text in Japanese script using *hiragana*, one of the two syllabaries, and some *kanji* (Chinese characters). *Kontemutsusu munji*, 1610, Tenri University Library. Source: Kisho fukusei-kai (1921), National Diet Library: <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1185351>

helpful in conveying Christian teachings in Japan.<sup>59</sup> The translators also choose to omit passages in which Thomas à Kempis teaches that prayer is a purely personal matter.

The differences between the two translations are that the *Contemptus mundi jenbu* speaks more to the intellect while the *Kontemutsusu munji* has a greater emphasis on feelings. For example, we see a frequent use of the word *kokoro* 心 in the *Kontemutsusu munji*. The term *kokoro* means not only the seat of thinking ('mind') but also of feeling ('heart'). The latter work also no longer contains the Buddhist technical terms that frequently appeared in the earlier work, or it replaces them with more poetic Buddhist terms. It is also interesting to see which passages were completely left out in the later work. They are those that address potentially difficult theological issues, such as transubstantiation, according to William Farge. Hara Martinho also changed linguistic images that must have seemed abhorrent to the Japanese mind, such as references to blood, sacrifice and the body, especially in reference to the Eucharist.<sup>60</sup> For example, while the earlier work always translates the word 'corpus' as *kotsuniku* 骨肉, literally 'bones and flesh', Hara Martinho employs this word, which is unpleasant to Japanese ears, only in passages referring to human carnal desire. Hara Martinho prefers *go-sontai* 御尊体, a honorific term for the body of a Buddha or a deity. He also used the

<sup>59</sup> See Farge (2003), pp. 27–28; p. 48.

<sup>60</sup> See Farge (2003), pp. 64–70.

method of imitation by including literary customs from Japan—such as a seasonal poetry typical of Japan—in the Christian translation texts.<sup>61</sup> In addition, passages relating to religious scandals and laxity of monastics no longer appear in the 1610 edition.<sup>62</sup>

William Farge emphasizes Hara Martinho's artistry,<sup>63</sup> but, in my view, Hara Martinho's approach could also be interpreted to mean that references to blood and the body were changed because the Japanese Christians had already had relevant experiences with instances of cruel persecution by 1610. One of the reproaches of the Japanese authorities was that the Christians 'revered' those fellow Christians who were punished by execution. For the authorities, the executed Christians were mere criminals and, therefore, not worthy of any reverence or even notice. For the surviving Christians, however, they were martyrs who died for their faith and served as examples to follow. The authorities held the 'reverence of criminals' to be untenable and harmful for the peace of the state.<sup>64</sup> Against this background, Hara Martinho wanted to provide positive and encouraging images of the Christian faith in his *Kontemutsusu munji* in a climate of fear and danger.

In fact, readers of the *Kontemutsusu munji* could not enjoy studying and spending time "in a nook with a book" for very long, for only four years later in 1614, another edict was issued by the military government<sup>65</sup>, and this time the eradication of Christian culture was organized more systematically and strictly enforced, although one copy of the book escaped the attention of the law enforcers and gives testimony to the development of Japanese Catholic literature in the early modern period.

## 9.6 Conclusions

Some of the cultural filters discussed in this chapter were considered to be more permeable than others. We can clearly discern movements of both domestication and foreignization in the formation of early Japanese Jesuit translation culture. After establishing printshops and setting up a European letterpress, Catholic books and other materials in Japanese, written in both Latin and Japanese scripts, began

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<sup>61</sup> See Farge (2009), p. 104.

<sup>62</sup> See Farge (2003), pp. 51–53.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Schwemmer on a manuscript translation of the *Dialogues on the Instruments of the Passion* and the possible role of Hara Martinho in translating it: Schwemmer (2014), esp. p. 477.

<sup>64</sup> The policy later was to move Christians by torture and intimidation to apostate so as to not "produce" more martyrs.

<sup>65</sup> The 1614 edict was written by the Zen monk Konchi'in Sūden 金地院崇伝 (also Ishin Sūden 以心崇伝) (1569–1633) on the behest of the Tokugawa shogun. For the earlier edits, see Boscaro (1973).

to impact the local society. The fruits of the translation efforts of the Jesuits and their teams in Japan were translations of both religious and non-religious texts into Japanese. The Japan mission also printed Latin texts and some pictures. Thirty titles, which originally had print runs of several thousand copies,<sup>66</sup> have been preserved from the Jesuit mission's 25 years of activity in the printshop. The printed books and images served the missionaries and between approximately 300,000 to 750,000 Japanese Christians during the 'Christian century'. The materials conveyed cultural and religious knowledge in both directions—between Japan and Europe. They also testify to the uncertainties as to how far the adaptation of Catholic doctrine and forms of piety should go to accommodate Japanese customs. To what extent should one—following the Jesuit method of accommodation—change the language in order to make Christian teaching understandable to the people of Japan? Should one bring the text to the reader, or the reader to the text? There was also pressure from the Japanese authorities, who were increasingly critical of Christians against the background of colonization by European powers in Asia and, as some argue, because of deeply felt religious sensibilities.<sup>67</sup> Translators like Hara Martinho and his team not only wanted to create works of high literary quality, but also wanted to refute allegations against Christianity as much as possible in a hostile environment.

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<sup>66</sup>Diogo de Mesquita (1551–1614), the mentor who accompanied the Tenshō embassy, mentions in a 1613 letter that the *Contemptus mundi* in Japanese letters was printed with a run of 1,300 copies, and that the letterpress would print 1,300 pages a day. Farge (2003), p. 10; see also Pacheco (1971).

<sup>67</sup>E. g. Voss et al. (1940), p. 37.



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