THE SCREENS OF THE SHIMABARA REBELLION:
PEASANT UPRISINGS, MARTYRED CHRISTIANS, DISPUTED HEROES, AND
DISSENTION IN THE ARCHIVE

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Abstract

The Screens of the Shimabara Rebellion: Peasant Uprisings, Martyred Christians, Disputed Heroes, and Dissention in the Archive

Joseph Loh

In the Akizuki Kyodo Kan in Fukuoka Prefecture stands a pair of Japanese screens, produced in 1838 to commemorate the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion (1637-8). The rebellion is significant because it essentially marks the end of the "Christian Century" (1549-1650) or Namban (Southern Barbarian) era and the beginning of two hundred years of Tokugawa domination and Japanese isolation. In looking at the screens and proceeding through their narrative, we find ourselves impressed with their representation of military force and effort that was needed to suppress the rebellion. Yet anyone familiar with the story of the Shimabara Rebellion soon realizes that the depiction on the screens is much different from the renditions of the same event with which many Japanese today are accustomed. Pictorial choices made during the screens' production in the nineteenth-century result in a visual presentation that is completely in favour of the government forces, rather than the Christian defenders led by now folk-legend Amakusa Shiro. What is passed down to us then is a visual product, in the guise of victorious commemoration, that reflects the social conditions of the 1830s when the screens were made, one which expresses the concerns of the ruling elite in the wake of serious political and social discontent.

However it is not my aim only to exercise a form of social art history to place the screens in their contemporary context. In working through various Japanese and Western documents from different times regarding the rebellion, my research has shown significant disparities amongst these representations. Yet it is through these very archival disparities - distortions, contradictions, and omissions - that the process of how history is formulated and constructed is revealed. By expanding beyond sources traditionally associated with the screens (for example Japanese literature, diaries,
official records, and Western historical interpretations) to consider a wider range of sources including tombstones and memorial monuments and anti-Christian propaganda, my thesis will work to show how information is crafted to fit specific social, political, or ideological positions. Such crafting of history, in this case manifested in the various constructs of the Shimabara Rebellion, is achieved by the drawing together of a number of discourses: traditional Japanese war and peasant narratives, Christian martyrdom stories, and folklore constructed around notions of heroism and sacrifice.

In the end, I hope to show that the historically incongruous, which is often shunted aside with academic disdain, can be valuable in understanding history. Though stripping away ambiguities or contradictions may reveal a common linear thread, such an endeavour also detracts from the richness and complexity of the narrative, perhaps even shrouding the more sinister mechanisms of the historical process. In approaching an amended archive with this concern in mind provides us with the means to measure Japanese and Western attitudes regarding Christian and foreign influence in the country, the legacy that persists into the present, and the process by which this legacy is affected and shaped over time. In recognizing the forces that affect the documenting of history, and how they are articulated pictorially in the Akizuki screens, we can more clearly appreciate the subtle and ingenious relationship between power and knowledge.
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Introduction

One day a group of iruman* concocted a plot together with some of their most trusted parishioners. News of their criminal activity leaked out. And now the wrath of the Taiko Hideyoshi exceeded all bounds. Hearing of their secret plans to spread their pernicious doctrines and to delude the populace, he decided that it was high time to slash at their very roots. How fortunate for Japan! - for he determined to purge the land of them.

"How the Kirishitans Were Dragged Through the Land in Carts During the Reign of the Taiko Hideyoshi" -
Kirishitan Monogatari (A Tale of Christians) c.1640.

TOKYO - The doomsday cult linked to Tokyo's subway gas attack was reported Friday to have planned a strike on the prime minister's residence and parliament, and a top security official said Japan's survival had been at stake.

"If the massive police raids that began on March 22 were delayed until October, the existence of the Japanese nation would have been in the balance," Home Affairs Minister Hiromu Nonaka said in an interview with Mainichi Shimbun.

"It appears as if the Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth) sect planned to create a pseudo state and place Japan under its control," Nonaka told the paper.

"The seriousness of the crimes that they conceived went as far as war between states," he said. "It makes me shiver." . . .


In the summer of 1995, when this thesis was being completed, Japan was reeling from a number of terrible events which had occurred earlier in the year. On January 5th, Hyogo Prefecture was hit by an earthquake of devastating proportions. With its epi-centre just outside the city of Kobe, the earthquake killed over 5,000 people and left countless others hurt or homeless. Though the physical and emotional damage inflicted by the earthquake was immense, the Japanese people could be consoled by the fact that the earthquake was a product of the unpredictable forces of nature - forces that the inhabitants on the archipelago had learnt long ago to respect. Three months later, another catastrophe would strike the country, one, however, much more sinister. Though the number killed or

* An iruman was one who was an active member of the Jesuit order working in Japan during this time.
hurt on the subway trains during the sarin gas attack of March 20th in Tokyo would pale in comparison to the casualties in Kobe months before*, the psychological terror and panic that it inflicted would cut deep into the heart of the national psyche, leaving the Japanese in a quandary regarding the nature of modernity and long held notions regarding Japanese society and its values.

Under a media limelight, police and military authorities focused their efforts and immediately attributed the attack to Aum Shinri Kyo, a religious cult led by Asahara Shoko. In subsequent raids of cult facilities throughout the country, the authorities discovered chemical production plants and stockpiles of materials necessary to produce the poisonous gas. At the time of the writing of this paper, the police investigation was still underway, Shoko Asahara was only recently apprehended, and the details of the activities by members of the Aum Shinri Kyo was gradually being revealed. To the dismay of distraught Tokyoites however, bombings, assassinations, high-jackings, gas attacks, and other incidents of varying intensity and success have continued throughout the spring and early summer in and around the Tokyo metropolitan area.

While the victims, villains, and heroes involved in the gas attack and its aftermath seem clearly defined today, we can question how the forces of time will affect the way in which these events are documented in the future. Will the sarin gas attack be relegated to merely a footnote in the annals of history, or will it be viewed as marking a historical moment when a critical shift in Japanese social consciousness occurred? Though technological and scientific devices, advancements in detective science, and media scrutiny have made the gas attack and its fallout widely and carefully documented, there will still be some room for varied interpretations in the future. Naturally, any reinterpretation will depend on how the events are ultimately perceived, especially in the context of the changing nature of Japanese society, and of Japan in the international arena in the closing decades of the twentieth century. Similarly the treatment of Aum Shinri Kyo, and its leader Asahara Shoko, will

* As of the summer of 1995, the toll was set at twelve deaths and over 5,500 injured.
depend greatly on institutional or epistemological influences and constraints that affect future historians. Only time will tell whether members of Aum Shinri Kyo will be labelled as dangerous radical malcontents led by a madman, or adherents of a persecuted religion targeted by a government with a vendetta. Future histories will be ultimately determined by any number of factors - the sorts of documents which are still extant, the nature of the information available, the social context in which those documents are interpreted and employed, the outlook and prejudices of the historian, as well as of the particular audience for which such histories are intended. The possible renditions are as numerous as the factors which affect them.

*     *     *     *

In the Akizuki Kyodo Kan in Fukuoka Prefecture a pair of byobu (folding screens) tells a story in which its cast of characters, plot, and contextual circumstances have an eerie resemblance to the events and concerns that dominate Japanese headlines in 1995. On one screen, the authorities are shown moving to confront members of a religious sect that have been deemed to threaten the virtue and stability of their country. On the other, the same authorities are attacking - swiftly, heroically, and mercilessly - to crush this sect with draconian severity. For us in the West, the reading and interpretation of the Akizuki screens may be affected by a range of factors. These may include our degree of familiarity with Japanese customs, art traditions, or history, or the context of the historical moment in which we live. In short, our perception of Japan becomes a filter through which we interpret the story that the screens tell. Our interest in the screens may be further aroused when we discover the nature of the subject matter and the background of the characters that the screens represent. Perhaps we may find the viewpoint that the screens adopt paradoxical, even shocking, for the heroes in this story represent not some international contingent on some peace-keeping mission.
overseas, but rather participants in a totalitarian regime which propounded a social order based on careful control of its citizens. In addition, the villains being eradicated in this story turn out to be not radical fanatics drawn from the fringe of society, but starving peasants, a majority of whom were members of the Christian religion that has been central to Western civilization and culture for almost two thousand years.

In fact, these screens were produced in 1838 to celebrate the suppression of a peasant uprising which occurred two hundred years earlier in 1637-8 on the Shimabara peninsula on the island of Kyushu in south-western Japan. The screens are extraordinary when we consider the effort necessary to paint the thousands of figures, the minute attention to action and detail, and the fact that the screens took eight years to research and complete. Even before unravelling the complex narrative before us, we are immediately struck with the monumental display of military organization and prowess, and of the honour and courage which must have bound the warriors, propelling them to resolute action. Yet surprisingly, the depiction on the Akizuki Screens differs greatly from many historical accounts of the same event, and from the common folkloric accounts with which many Japanese today are familiar.

This thesis will try to situate aspects of the Akizuki screens within a number of analytic fields. The first chapter places the Akizuki screens within a specific paradigm of Japanese painting. This chapter concerns mainly a formalistic analysis of style in relation to screen painting and the depiction of battle scenes in Japanese art as a whole. The second chapter places the Shimabara Rebellion in the context of the namban (southern barbarian) period of Japanese history. In order to understand the significance of the rebellion, a brief survey of the events and circumstances of this fascinating period in Japanese history is necessary. The remaining two chapters concern the treatment of the subject matter. This is achieved mainly by attempting to reconcile differences among various sources that describe the Shimabara Rebellion. Archeological objects and literary accounts are placed in relation both to the namban era, and the particular historical moments in which they were produced. The final
chapter places the screens within the social and political context of the 1830s. It will address what the screens might have signified in late Tokugawa society, especially in terms of the state of the peasantry, the nature of political system, and the shift of the social order in early 19th century Japan. This is accomplished by contrasting the Akizuki screens with earlier representations of the Shimabara Rebellion. By focusing on what is absent or inconsistent in relation to previous depictions of this same event, new emphasis is placed on aspects of the archive that are usually ignored or avoided. Such a treatment of the archive serves to address fundamental historiographic issues: how events are documented, fashioned, and ultimately re-presented.
Chapter 1: The Screens of the Shimabara Rebellion

In the late 1820s Lord Kuroda Nagamoto of the Akizuki fief in the province of Chikuzen on north-western Kyushu commissioned a pair of *byobu* (folding screens) to depict the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637-38. (figs.1-2) A tenth generation lord of the fief, Kuroda's distant ancestor Kuroda Kai-no-kami-Nagoki (1610-1665) had led his army to assist in suppressing the peasant uprising. To commemorate the government victory, and his family's participation, Lord Kuroda commissioned Kitsuki Yojin and Saito Shuho to create a pair of six-part folding screens. As the ground work for the screen's production was being laid, military historians Toyama Koreatsu and Doi Masanari were hired to research thoroughly the historical and literary works available at the time to assist in reproducing as accurately as possible an account of the event.¹

The pair of *byobu* in the Akizuki Kyodo Kan is the only set to depict the Shimabara Rebellion, although pictorial renditions of the rebellion in the form of monochrome wood block prints do exist from as early as the late 17th Century.² (figs.3-4) In this chapter, it will be argued that in painting the screens, the artists emulated a particular compositional style and narrative strategy that became popular with the samurai class who had acceded to power in the late 11th and early 12th centuries.³ In addition, the pair of screens seems to be the only work depicting the Shimabara Rebellion executed in colour or in paint and which was, and still is by Japanese standards, monumental in scale. As a result, the Akizuki screens will be shown to have clearly appropriated two important developments in the history of Japanese painting: the rise of new subject matter in response to the influence of the samurai taste, and the emergence of the large scale mural painting of *byobu* (folding screens) and *fusuma* (sliding doors).
The Akizuki screens embody a pictorial style and format which became prominent during the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). A set of pictorial devices developed when it became necessary to commemorate warrior achievements, especially after the samurai warriors replaced the Fujiwara aristocrats in the twelfth century as the central political authority in Japan. As the political centre of the nation shifted from Kyoto to Kamakura, it was only natural that the social and cultural mainstream would follow as well, marking a change in what was regarded as "acceptable" in terms of artistic tastes and subjects.4

With the establishment of the Kamakura bakufu (military government) in 1185 the spirit of bushido, or the samurai code of ethics, was solidified, giving rise to new subjects in cultural production that gave form to the spirit and interests of the new ruling class.5 Consequently, themes of battle and of warrior heroics became common in literature and art.6 Attempting to recapture this spirit of bushido, the artists of the Akizuki screens six centuries later appropriated the pictorial devices and narrative strategies which were prevalent in paintings of military themes produced during this time.7 The stylistic source for the screens of the Shimabara Rebellion is Yamato-e (the indigenous Japanese painting style) which had developed around the late ninth century during the Heian Period (794-1184).8 This style of painting has been accepted as most evident in emaki-mono (painting executed in a horizontal scroll format), which also became popular around this time. These long horizontal paintings some 25cm to 40cm high and occasionally up to 9m in length have the interesting quality of enabling their images to be viewed in sequence, since they are unrolled from right to left.9 Like a film, the emakimono reveal one frame at a time.10 Therefore depending on how the artist rendered the subject, each scroll had its own tempo, fast or slow, reflective or action-oriented in nature, affecting how each
individual viewer was to encounter each scene.\textsuperscript{11}

As interest in the science of war increased, detailed depictions of battle became a crucial characteristic of many *emakimonos* works, adding a new level of dramatic realism to scroll paintings which featured such tales.\textsuperscript{12} One of the most famous works to exemplify this spirit in subject matter and pictorial format is the *Heiji monogatari emaki* (The picture scrolls of the Tales of Heiji), especially the first scroll known widely as "The Burning of Sanjo Palace" dated to the middle of the 13th century, which is today in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. (figs.5-8) Its value as a historical artifact and sign of an earlier age is immense since few scrolls of this nature are still extant from the Kamakura Period. In any case, the *Heiji monogatari emaki* has for centuries been regarded as exemplifying the warrior spirit - a spirit which many later works commemorating other wars or military exploits, such as the Shimabara Rebellions, would aspire to recapture.\textsuperscript{13} In order to grasp the importance of these scrolls, and fully appreciate what they embodied and signified pictorially to the artists of the Akizuki screens centuries later, an abbreviated pictorial analysis of "The Burning of Sanjo Palace" becomes necessary.

The *Heiji* painting scrolls are known foremost for the use of delicate line and the technique known as *tsukuri-e* (paintings with the thick application of colour). In "The Burning of Sanjo Palace," costume and careful detail dominate the scenes, bringing in turn a new appreciation for figure composition.\textsuperscript{14} We are drawn to the thick pigments and generous application of colour. The apparently indiscriminate flow and chaos of battle, the seemingly haphazard massing of figures, combined with images of the human suffering and the arbitrary randomness of the fortunes of war, confront the viewer with the unpredictability of human nature itself. The only constant in this unceasing confusion seems to be the resolve of the samurai. Sure-footed and deliberate, he is depicted as operating without the abandon and the pandemonium that the scene seems to induce.

Though perhaps lacking in a "simplicity of conception" that was shown by earlier "masters",
the anonymous artists of the Heiji scrolls, like many artists of this era, concentrated their efforts on the arts of draughtsmanship. Detailing is immaculate, from the harnesses of horses and the spinning of the wheels of ox carts, to details of armour and facial expression, and the actions of particular figures. The scroll is packed with multiple scenes and episodes which were intended to be read sequentially. Realism is emphasized by various techniques, but most notably in the depiction of physical space. The peculiarly disjointed perspective of the earlier scrolls such as 12th century *Genji monogatari emaki* (Painting scroll of the Tales of Genji) which give form to the contemplative Heian literary works they were supposed to represent - with jagged diagonal lines that create a surreal conceptual space - is now replaced with a more pragmatic vantage point. (figs.9-10) In the *Heiji monogatari emaki* a supposedly "real" world is evoked, one with a certain consequential linearity, reflective of the new world order. The painting claims to deal with "real" moments and "real" individuals, with no allusions to other times and themes, which were common, often even required, of earlier more esoteric themes based on literature or religious subjects.

**The Rise of Castle Decoration and Byobu**

Besides employing a pictorial style connoting the military traditions of the Kamakura Period, the screen format chosen by the Lord Kuroda drew on another artistic legacy in Japanese history. The significance of *byobu* painting emerged around 1573, when Japan entered a new golden age of peace. This age began when Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) had finally succeeded in unifying the country after a century of continual civil strife, decentralization, and incessant struggles for political supremacy that had arisen with the decline in power of the Ashikaga shoguns beginning roughly around the mid-1500s. In the brief Momoyama Period (1573-1614) that followed, a massive castle building program was initiated. The new type of castle architecture was determined and controlled in large part by the
introduction of guns and cannons following the arrival of the Portuguese in 1542, but also by the
desire of the feudal lords to create physical surroundings that symbolically reinforced their wealth and
political authority. This in turn gave rise to a new painting style and format necessary to adorn the
interiors of such fortresses, which, by Japanese standards, were monumental in size. As traditional
buildings had few permanent interior walls, large spaces and areas had to be temporarily divided and
defined, and this was accomplished by the use of screens, curtains, and semi-transparent sliding doors,
made of silk or paper and usually decorated with paintings.

It comes as no surprise that screens with battle or war subjects were popular with the feudal
lords. In general, motifs of this age were based primarily on secular themes rather than on literature
or religious subjects. Forms were large, clearly defined, and of simple composition. These included
colossal trees, flora and fauna of the four seasons, expanded landscapes based on Yamato-e themes,
animals such as dragons, hawks, peacocks, "paragons of virtue and loyalty from Chinese history or
literature" and other samurai activities such as hunting or horse racing. (figs.11-13) On the other
hand, genre scenes known as Rakushu-Rakugai (Inside and Outside the Capital City) also became
popular. (fig.14) These screens provided views of Kyoto and later scenes of festivals set close to
important or famous architectural sites. In southern Japan particularly, foreign subjects on screens,
known as namban byobu, became popular when relations with foreign missionaries and traders were
established in Japan.

There are many paintings of famous battles executed on byobu which are today extant in
museums and collections around the world. Originally, they had been most frequently commissioned
by victorious feudal lords and their descendants to memorialize triumphs in warfare and human
conflict. The screens, like the massive castle fortresses they were made to adorn, had a public aura of
imposing permanence, grandeur, and opulence, especially if gold leaf was applied. Extrovert and
flamboyant in character, byobu painting seems to be a far cry from the intimate nature of the emaki hand scrolls.

The expansive surface which the screen format afforded naturally had much more pictorial potential than the emaki-mono or fans on which battles had previously been documented. Though the screen surface increased both the scale and the visual impact of Japanese painting, the style for executing battle scenes on screens did not change greatly from that found in scroll paintings centuries earlier - strategies of multiple narratives were still employed, as well as many principles of composition and aspects of spatial relationships that were prevalent in early battle scenes in emaki mono and other similar works of the Kamakura Period.

The Akizuki Screens

The screens of the Shimabara Rebellion, painted some six centuries after the Heiji monogatari emaki, attempted to recapture the same spirit and tone found in the earlier scrolls by employing a similar pictorial and narrative strategy. At the same time, the Akizuki screens through the conventions of the screen format aimed to monumentalize the rebellion as well as the prestige of the military forces which participated in suppressing the peasant rebels. Given a completion date of 1838, the Akizuki Screens can be regarded as among the last battle screens to be painted in the pre-modern era. Indeed, by considering the narrative and stylistic aspects of the painting, we will be able to grasp more clearly the connotations which both artists and patron sought to impress upon the viewer since each of these narrative, stylistic, or formalistic characteristics were grounded in specific historical circumstances.

The right screen, painted by Kitsuki Yojin, depicts the grand procession of the Kuroda Army leaving for Shimabara on January 19th 1638. Kuroda, having been in Edo when the rebellion broke
out, had been ordered back on November 15th, 1637 to his fief on Kyushu to muster and move his army to Hara Castle, where the other armies of the bakufu forces were already laying seige to the rebel forces. (fig.1) Although the bakufu only requested a contribution of a thousand soldiers, Lord Kuroda raised over two thousand men as a means to impress the central government. In the screen of the procession, the battle order is clearly articulated with the Lord Kuroda front and centre, dressed in black and riding a black stallion. (fig.15) The generous application of gold leaf heightens the sense of opulence and magnificence. Cartouches are used to identify the important participants and different divisions of the forces under this leader’s command. (fig.16) On this screen, 1,520 figures are depicted, and evoking the original procession which is said to have extended in actuality up to 3.9 kilometres in length.26 The procession, in all its worldly magnificence, snakes back to Azuki Castle, which is rendered in the distance. Palace courtiers and attendants line the ramparts of the castle to wish their departing lord and the soldiers farewell. (fig.17) Careful attention is placed on military detail, from the platoons of musketeers, warrior monks, doctors, and musicians, to Lord Kuroda and his personal entourage. (fig.18) Kitsuki seems to have been careful to put special emphasis on the details of warrior armour, insignia, and family and household crests. (fig.19) In addition, the procession is rendered working its way forward with self-assured confidence and not with any implication of impending doom.

The left screen, by Saito Shuho, depicts the final attack of February 27th 1638, when the walls of Hara Castle were finally breached. (fig.2) The event depicted took place after a number of repeated failures and humiliating mishaps by the government forces, which in most historical documents read like a comedy of errors. The moment that the artist Saito represents, when the defenses of the vastly outnumbered rebel force begin to crumble, is significant. Of the many incidents which the artist could have chosen, Saito chooses that which seems to flaunt the samurai spirit most, conjuring up the intensity and glory of battle and combat. Pictorially, this screen is more complicated
than that of the procession from Azuki Castle, and most reminiscent of the *Heiji* scrolls.

The setting is the western side of Hara Castle, with fighting occurring at three main castle portals - Amakusa maru, Oe maru, and Hon maru. On the top left side of the screen there is a depiction of the Kuroda headquarters on the other side of Shio iri no kawa (the Salty River). (fig.20) There, soldiers are seen practicing their sword play and preparing to enter battle. The composition of this screen adopts that strategy of multiple narratives often associated with works such as the *Heiji monogatari emaki*, thereby heightening the intensity and complexity of the image. (fig.21) As each narrative string is pursued, we are led into the various episodes which together result in the ultimate defeat of the rebels. Soldiers of both the Kuroda and Hosokawa clans are depicted storming the gates, clambering up the walls of the castle, only to be repelled by stones and boulders hurled from above. (fig.22) Others are engaged in desperate hand-to-hand battle with the peasant rebels. Decapitated torsos lie scattered, littering the battlefield, while in other areas fire swirl and smoke billows into the sky. (fig.23) The complexity and frantic confusion of the action is modulated by separate incidents which serve to heighten the drama of the event: a group of resting soldiers squat near a pit, mocking the stench of decaying bodies, another group feed themselves at meal stations, while others ponder the possible merits and rewards for captured enemy heads. (figs.24-25) As further narratives strings are followed, we gradually realize the extent of the desperation that the rebels face. In one scene, soldiers burst through Oe Guchi, capturing and eating the last food supplies meant for the peasant rebel defenders, other peasants are being hurled into pits, while in another location a peasant, with arms extended, futilely attempts to ward off a soldier's sword blow. (fig.26) Saito pays careful attention to include particular incidents which were documented in literary sources. One widely documented example is the plight of the artist Yamada Emousaku, who attempted to strike a deal with the government forces for his escape. He is shown imprisoned in a haphazardly constructed rebel stockade after his scheme was discovered. (fig.27)
In recreating the Shimabara Rebellion for the Kuroda family, the artists, Kuroda and Saito, with the aid of hired researchers, turned to semi-historical literary accounts which were in circulation at the time. To enhance the work’s commemorative aspect, and elevate the Kuroda family and their past achievements, they used a pictorial formula that was by then well recognized and commonly used for such purposes. By appropriating a particular pictorial language connoting a specific historical legacy and military heritage, and employing a monumental format which aimed to make a lasting statement, the artists of the Akizuki screens seemed to assert two important ideas. First, the screens aimed to reconfirm the Shimabara Rebellion as a crucial historical event and to aggrandize those who participated in the rebellion's suppression, elevating them to stand along side other famous military heroes in Japanese history. Secondly, by incorporating these characteristics, there was an attempt to connect the screens to moments in the distant past when the military clearly dominated the social and political landscape of Japan.

The adherence to pictorial convention in the Akizuki screens raises an interesting set of issues pertaining to the documenting of the rebellion as history. These revolve around aspects of the historical archive and way in which knowledge is produced. They concern, in particular, the existence of narrative forms that affect historical discourses, and the influence of the historical context in which particular documents, texts, or oral accounts were created. Before an examination of the issues surrounding the subject matter can be explored in greater depth, the context of the namban period and the recoverability of the rebellion as a historical event must first be addressed.
Chapter 1 Notes:

1. The screens are said to have been derivative of a work entitled *Shimabara Ikki Danwa* (A Talk about the Shimabara Rebellion) written in 1748. See *Shimabara no ran: Sengoku Kassen Zu* in the Sengoku Kassen-e Series. (Tokyo, 1981) Byobu Shusei Vol.5, "Introduction".

2. Photographic reproduction of the screens are from *Shimabara no ran: Sengoku Kassen Zu* in the Sengoku Kassen-e Series. (Tokyo, 1981) Byobu Shusei Vol.5. Many of the iconographic details of the screens are taken from this volume.


4. This abrupt shift has been attributed by historians to three main factors. First, with the political restructuring, a rural, ostensibly illiterate social group came to dominate society. Secondly, the temperament of this social group was in many ways affected by changes in Buddhism and the flowering of Buddhist sects during the Kamakura Period. It seems that whenever medieval warrior culture is mentioned, an association is usually made with Zen Buddhism, especially those of the *Rinzai*, *Soto*, and then the *Nichiren* sects. Martin Collcutt in "Daimyo and Daimyo culture" in *Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture* (New York, 1991), pp.13-14, emphasizes that:

   Zen was part of a wider religious transformation gathering force in the thirteenth century in which popular preachers and reformers were taking old and newer versions of Buddhism to the provinces and to the common people.

   Zen was so important because Zen monks were not only instructors in meditation, but were also bearers of culture and knowledge from China, a knowledge which could enhance the powers of the warriors.

5. According to George Sansom in *A History of Japan* (Stanford, 1963), the strong tradition of military virtue had its genesis in the clan histories of the Taira and the Minamoto, especially the Minamoto who would eventually defeat the Taira in the Gempei Wars. These two families had their beginnings stemming from the imperial family in the ninth century (the Taiho code, foreseeing the problems in the proliferation of imperial offspring, decreed that branches of the imperial family would be deprived of their "princely" rank and given family names and ordinary titles of nobility after six generations). As Samson notes, it was the long hard fighting in the harsh terrains of northern Honshu in the province of Mutsu of the "Early Nine Years War" (against the Abe family between 1050 and 1062) and the "Later Three Years War" (against the Kiyowara family from 1083 to 1087) that these struggles taught the fighting men the hard lessons of obedience and discipline. During those long-drawn-out campaigns, when a man’s life depended upon the alertness of his comrades and all shared equally in hardships and dangers, there naturally developed a strong bond of mutual trust between leaders and followers. It was here that the warrior’s code of behaviour was formed and tested. . . The Minamoto paid dear for their knowledge of the arts of war, since it was from their reverses that they gained
6. Known as *gunki monogatari* or *senki monogatari*, the war tale was probably the most significant literary development of the 13th century. (See E. Reischauer, and J. Yamagiwa. *Translations from Early Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, 1972), pp.271-351). Reischauer describes this development in Japanese literature as one changing sharply from the calm, hazy atmosphere of the sentimentally melancholy novels and diaries of the Heian age (794-1185) into the dazzling light and bustle of the military novel of the Kamakura period. (Reischauer and Yamagiwa, p.271)

Themes consistently revolved around the rise and fall of the mighty, of duty and compassion, of the sublime and the earthy, all "cast in an essentially Buddhist view that the affairs of this world are transient and volatile." Told and retold, with and without musical accompaniment, epic war tales became perennial favourites among the samurai warriors and shogun leaders.

For an excellent survey of this warrior spirit and art see *Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185-1868* (New York, 1991) edited by Y. Shimizu. A lengthy introduction by Martin Collcutt precedes a varied and comprehensive presentation of major areas of cultural production from the establishment of the Kamakura Bakufu to the Meiji Restoration. This exhibition catalogue provides a view of the wide spectrum of work produced during the period. Another broad survey of the art and culture of the samurai is *Bushido: The Way of the Warrior* by John Newman (London, 1989). For other examples of cultural production during the Tokugawa Period see *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns* (Montreal, 1989).

7. The introduction of new literary subjects was complimentary in many ways to changes undergoing in the pictorial arts as well. T. Hamada ("Problems of the Ancient to Medieval Transitional Period in Japanese Art History" in *International Symposium of the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property: Periods of Transition in East Asian Art* (Tokyo, 1988) p.11) believes that the end of the twelfth century was particularly important because there was a movement from the conceptional to the realistic, from the emotional to the intellectual, from the lyrical to the descriptive in the visual arts, these trends are manifested as the shift from two-dimensional and decorative to the three-dimensional and naturalistic, and thereby from an aesthetic of tranquillity to one of movement, from a passive to an active expression of volume, from interest in surfaces to interest in lines, from emphasis on colour to emphasis on brushwork.

8. K. Toda, *Japanese Scroll Painting* (New York, 1969) pp.80-81. Toda proceeds from here to define the term *Yamato-e*. He discusses the development, or perhaps the devolution, from a Chinese tradition and Chinese subject matter. He raises the issue of whether *tsukuri-e*, the technique of using thick layering of colour, was standard form of *Yamato-e* and questioned whether plain ink line works should be included as well. He gives a good overall discussion of the main artists, trends, and works of the 13th century. The next chapter "Japanese Scroll Painting of the Thirteenth Century", provides an outline of general trends, attitudes, and styles of the state of scroll painting during this time.

9. Originally, this format of painting originated from China where it was used mostly in retelling religious subjects or stories, but also to illustrate philosophical texts, inventories, and records. In Japan however, this pictorial method became fashionable to illustrate the romances and stories which
were so popular during the middle ages. See S. Lee, *Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art* (Cleveland, 1983), p.49.

10. R. Paine and A. Soper, *The Art and Architecture of Japan* (London, 1990 reprinted), pp.133-158. Other notable works on *Yamato-e* and *emaki* painting in particular, see *Japanese Scroll Painting* (New York, 1962) by Hideo Okudaira. He gives a concise account of the evolution of scroll painting in the Kamakura period, outlining the diversification of subject matter, the widening spectrum of characters portrayed - from aristocrats to farmers, fishermen, and beggars, and the wider range of human experience portrayed - love, battle, tragedy, comic, and the elegant (pp. 76-101).

11. A hand scroll was meant to offer a linear process rather than a total image grasped as a *gestalt*, or configuration. (S. Lee, p.49.)


15. Paine and Soper, p. 153. Other scrolls depicting samurai activity dating around the *Heiji monogatari emaki* include *Moko shurai ekotoba* (The Pictorial Record of the Mongol Invasions - c. late 13th century), and the *Tenguzoshi* scrolls (c.1296) which documented the activities of warrior monks of the seven great temples in Japan.

16. There has been limited stylistic analysis of the *Heiji monogatari emaki*. Kenji Toda devotes half a chapter to the scroll in his explication of Japanese painting, and other historians such as D. Seckel, H. Okudai, and T. Akiyama discuss it in passing in their analysis of *Yamato-e* or *emakimono*. Although these art historians acknowledge the historical importance and the contributing attributes to the general evolution and development of Japanese painting, they tend not to go beyond a general outline and a vague or sketchy discussion of presentation and its implications. In-depth academic study tends to group the *Heiji monogatari emaki* with the *Hogen monogatari emaki* (no longer extant). Two notable works on iconography are studies by M. Murase, who discusses the *Hogen* and *Heiji* screens in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (See M. Murase, "Japanese Screen Paintings of the Hogen and Heiji Insurrections" in *Artibus Asiae*. Vol.29 No.2-3 1967:193-228). Penelope Mason Scull, in her doctoral dissertation, reconstructs the *Hogen monogatari*, and *Hogen monogatari emaki*, which is no longer extant, and provides a general historiography of the *Heiji monogatari* and *monogatari emaki*. (See P. Mason Scull, *A Reconstruction of the Hogen Heiji Monogatari Emaki* (Dissertation from New York University, 1971).

17. Besides a general trend towards diversification, stylistic changes to space, time, and distance occurred as well, more specifically, a movement away from the reflective, contemplative world of the Heian Period. A study of technique, composition, narrative method, and space-time continuity is done by Dietrich Seckel in *Makimono: The Art of the Japanese Painted Hand-Scroll* (New York, 1959). In *Japanese Painting* (New York, 1961), by T. Akiyama, there is useful information on the origins of *Yamato-e* and the development of the "national style" and a comprehensive overview of *emaki* scrolls between the 12th and 14th centuries. He classifies the scrolls into categories of subject matter,
technique, and the purpose they served.


19. Paintings which were in most demand were those for castle decoration and on hanging scrolls which could be displayed in rooms in which guests were received and where tea ceremonies could be held. See Guth, p.41.

20. Murase, Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting, p.7. Murase also outlines how screen painting can be divided into three basic types: the tsuitate - small screens of a single panel, sliding screen or sliding door panel often known as fusuma, and byobu - the form most readily associated with Japanese screens in the West. These are free-standing screens that consist of two to eight panels, usually executed in pairs. Their size was determined by specific function, taste of the owner, and size of the building in which they were to be used.

With many new castles rising to loom over the landscape within such a short period of time, demands on artisans and craftsmen resulted in "a rapid and vigorous style of painting." (Paine and Soper, p.185) Competition over large commissions developed among painters who operated large studios or schools. The Kano school was winners of most important commissions and enjoyed a virtual monopoly of military patronage. (Murase, p.13)

Artists like Kano Eitoku (1543-1590), Kaiho Yusho (1533-1615), and Hasegawa Tohaku (1539-1610), and later Kano Sanraku (1559-1635), Sotatsu (died c. early 17th Century) and Ogata Korin (1658-1716), found patronage to do large murals on folding screens and sliding doors in vivid colours, and in vigorous style, often against a ground of gilded gold leaf. See C. Guth, "Tokugawa as Patrons and Collectors of Painting" in The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns for discussion on aspects of patronage and the Daimyo in relation to the arts. See also Murase, Masterpieces, p.12 for issues revolving around the nature of screen painting and their patrons.

21. The new daimyos (feudal lords) were men who had risen from humble backgrounds, with little learning. They have been characterized as having little time for the more contemplative, tranquil, and transcendental standards of art of the previous age. (See S. Lee, Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art. Cleveland, 1983, pp.49-82 ;R. Paine and A. Soper. The Art and Architecture of Japan. London, 1955 Reprinted 1991, pp.133-158. Broadly speaking, the preceding Muromachi Period (1333-1573) has been described as a time when there was a revival of Chinese traditions. In terms of painting, most surveys agree that with influences from the Chinese mainland during the Sung and Yuan Dynasties, ink monochrome once again became prominent. While some collected works or patronised celebrated painters because of their interests, others "merely did so because there social position demanded it." (Guth, p.41) It comes as no surprise that those with some form of commitment to the arts had tastes that reflected their perception of their station in life and their role in the world of which they were a part. (S. Lee, p.153) While Chinese and Zen inspired ink monochrome was initially popular among artists of Momoyama Period, most art historians agree that there was a shift towards using more colour and thicker pigments, reminiscent of Yamato-e, in mural works, which eventually became the fashion of the day. See the relevant chapters in Paine and Soper, The Art and Architecture of Japan and T. Akiyama, Japanese Painting (New York, 1990) for a general description or formalistic developments of screen painting in English. For a recent work on the history of screen painting see the introduction to Masterpieces of Japanese Screen Painting (New York, 1990) by M. Murase. This book also has excellent colour reproductions of screens in American collections and an extensive bibliography for further investigation. For more specific aspects of the use of screen
paintings in pre-modern Japan see Y. Tokugawa, "A Daimyo's Possessions" and C. Guth, "The Tokugawa as Patrons and Collectors of Painting" in *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns*. There is much scholarship on the relationship between the daimyo lords and cultural production during this period in Japanese history. See the introductory essays in *Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185-1868* (New York, 1989).


25. However, it seems by every indication that historical accuracy was not always the primary objective, and exaggeration and idealization turned out to be common practice. As a result, depictions of battle scenes in Japanese art in practice in both *emakimono* and *byobu* were not intended to be rigidly accurate representations of historical fact. See T. Koike, "The Battle of Nagashino" in *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns*, p.120.


Chapter Two: The World of the Christian Century and the Shimabara Rebellion as Historical Artifact

As the last chapter has shown, the pictorial conventions and strategies employed by the artists of the Akizuki screens do not deviate significantly from many examples of Japanese visual works which featured battles or wars as their subject matter. In fact, it appears that both Saito and Kitsuki worked to ensure that their screens would be recognized as aspiring to being accepted as part of an artistic legacy that glorified and commemorated war and great battles in Japanese history. As a result, many art historians may see the screens as being merely conventional, and perhaps even devoid of aesthetic interest when placed in this formalistic art lineage. Yet what sets these screens apart from other works is not exceptional aesthetic attributes, but rather the screens' particular treatment of subject matter. By identifying the significance of the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637-8, and exploring why the rebellion was so contested, and why so many differing accounts of the event exist, the singularity of the screens emerges.

The Period of Contact with Southern Barbarity

The Shimabara Rebellion is considered by many historians as marking the close of the namban (southern barbarian) age, which lasted from about 1549 to 1650. 

* The "Christian Century" is a term used by many historians, predominantly in the West, to mark the years in which Christianity played an active role in Japan's pre-modern political economy. This period often super-imposed over the more widely accepted chronological divisions; those being: late Muromachi (1467-1572), Momoyama (1573-1614), and Edo or Tokugawa Period (1615-1868).
Not so long before the 1638 rebellion, Jesuit missionaries held prestigious posts in the courts of the castle citadels, advising their patron lords on international policy or matters of state. In the seminaries established throughout eastern Japan, other Jesuits instructed and trained Japanese converts in scripture and doctrine, as well as European languages, customs, and arts. (fig.29) But the Jesuits were not the only Christians working in Japan, for Franciscan monks had free passage through countryside villages, preaching while tending the sick and helping the poor. Oda Nobunaga, Japan's most powerful lord at the time of the first encounter with the Europeans, allowed the dissemination of Christianity in southern Japan. The reasons for this have been extensively debated among historians, with opinions ranging from the desirability of Western military technology to the idea that Christianity seemed the perfect vehicle to check the power of certain militant Buddhist sects which were interfering with Oda Nobunaga's ambitions for Japanese unification.

The influence which the Europeans exerted and enjoyed concerned not only politics and religion. In the cities in and around southern Kyushu, Europeans set up shop with Japanese merchants. After a governmental decree in 1579, Nagasaki, the main city of Kyushu, was transformed virtually overnight into an international trading centre where European traders bartered and struck deals on their great nao ships, amidst an atmosphere surely closer to a carnival or world exposition than a financial trading port. (fig.30) The Europeans were eager to capitalize on the wares and merchandise which the exotic orient could offer - teas, ceramics, silks, and silver - the Japanese were equally enthralled with those who had travelled afar from "mystical kingdoms" beyond the land of the rising sun, bringing with them strange and incredible things. These foreigners were referred to by the Japanese as nambanjin, or "southern barbarians," since they always seemed to arrive from the south when landing in Japan. Yet there is no doubt that the Japanese became enamoured with these outsiders and the many objects they brought - such things as tobacco, spectacles, clocks, bread, card games, and even a cooking method of deep frying known as tempura, which is now thought of as
quintessentially Japanese. European customs also intrigued the Japanese and though European bathing habits, or lack of them, were a constant point of criticism, *namban* dress - pantaloons and high ruffled collars - became the vogue of the time.⁴ (fig.31)

The Europeans and their religion have been viewed as arriving in Japan at a moment that benefited both cultures, resulting in a comfortable "symbiosis" of Japanese feudal lords, Western missionaries, and merchants.⁵ The Portuguese, and later the Spanish, Dutch and English, could secure imperialistic, mercantile and religious footholds in the country; in turn it has been argued that the Japanese looked at foreign intercourse as a form of relief, even a distraction, from the seventy years of civil conflict, political dissolution, and anarchy that had plagued the nation since the Onin Wars of 1467-77. The Japanese warlords, always opportunistic and contriving, seemed eager for anything that might give them an advantage over their rivals. Many of these lords therefore perceived conversion to Christianity as a relatively painless way to achieve profitable commerce with the Portuguese trading port at Macao on the South China coast.⁶ Clearly the prospect of attaining foreign military aid or prospering economically outweighed the disadvantages of having uncouth "barbarians", with all their boorish ways and strange religious customs, on their shores.

Yet within a short period of time this amicable relationship deteriorated, and the Tokugawa shogunate, now having consolidated control over the entire country, came to view the foreign presence with growing mistrust and contempt. This wariness was exacerbated by the rivalries that had existed within the foreign contingent - those between Catholics and Protestants, and Jesuits and Franciscan orders, as well as between the Portuguese, Spanish and the Dutch. Relations with foreign powers gradually came to be regarded more as a threat than a blessing, and that foreign religion, which was initially viewed with bemusement, and considered a passing fancy at best or a propitious political manoeuvre, was now viewed as having made too significant a headway in converting large masses of the Japanese population, especially amongst the rice producing labouring peasants. At Christianity's
height, there were believed to be about 300,000 Christians throughout Japan - with some estimates running as high as 700,000. In winning so many converts, however, the foreigners had also made many enemies. Richard Tames explains that the whole-hearted dismissal of Buddhism as idolatry had naturally antagonized its priesthood. But it did not stop there, for

... [Christian] criticisms of divorce, concubinage and sodomy had outraged many samurai as insolent meddling. Their condemnation of usury had irritated the merchants, the more so as the entire missionary effort was financed by profits siphoned off from trade conducted in Spanish and Portuguese ships - trade which the Japanese merchants wanted for themselves. The aliens were also tainted by the shortcomings of their secular countrymen. Did they not kill and eat useful animals, like horses and oxen? Did they not deal in slaves?

Restrictions were followed by decrees, and finally drastic measures were instigated against Christianity, and against the traders and merchants who were seen as being directly associated with it. The escalation of persecutions against Christians, both Japanese and foreign, began around 1590, when Hideyoshi, Nobunaga's successor, became alarmed when he realized the extent to which the Jesuits exercised "concentrated influence" in the newly subjugated island of Kyushu. Hideyoshi's conjuring up of a "nightmare scenario", in which Christianised warlords would call in for foreign aid to contest his supremacy, came about when offers of support made by Jesuit officials made him realize that the missionaries might have "temporal power as well as spiritual objectives." All Christian missionaries were subsequently ordered to leave Japan. By 1614, with Tokugawa Ieyasu having ascended to power, Christianity was officially banned. The Tokugawa government, now alarmed by the growing political and foreign presence that the spread of Christianity seemed to bring, began in earnest to enforce the edicts that had essentially been left unheeded. For the next thirty years, the authorities, "as if to make up for lost time," launched a reign of terror aimed at eradicating the religion from Japan. Virtually all of the remaining Japanese Christians were forced to flee to the outlying districts of southern Japan where Christian settlements had already existed.

A main destination was the Shimabara peninsula and on the surrounding Amakusa Islands in
northwestern Kyushu. Perennially the poorest part of the country, the farmers here lived close to subsistence levels and were always highly susceptible to any drought or increase in taxes. Under such trying socio-economic conditions, it is not surprising that Christianity had flourished and proliferated as a religious practice. Christian missionaries had had great success in finding converts in the southern regions a century earlier. In fact, in 1577, the Lord of Amakusa, having been converted, declared the lands under his control to be Christian and ordered all to accept the faith or leave the islands. By the turn of the 17th century, with the conversion of numerous feudal lords, Christianity was absorbed into virtually all the farming communities of Shimabara and on the islands of Amakusa. In fact, one figure claims that by 1592, there were over 23,000 thousand Christians on the islands themselves. The religion was so deeply entrenched by the outbreak of the rebellion in 1637 that any previous attempts to expel Christians would have essentially depopulated the area of all farming peasants.

Throughout the 1590s to the late 1630s inquisitions and crucifixions were common spectacles in the Shimabara region, as well as other areas throughout the country. During the decades surrounding the turn of the 17th century, some ninety percent of the 300,000 Christians throughout the country were arrested and forced, on pain of death, to apostatize, often by publicly recanting their faith while stepping on holy images (fumi-e) and then signing apostate oaths. Many devoted Christians, however, chose death over apostasy, and the Roman Catholic Church today recognizes 3,125 martyrdoms in Japan in the years 1597-1660. The tortures that are documented are as numerous as they are fiendishly ingenious in their vindictiveness and cruelty. These included dips into sulphurous baths of the Unzen Hot Springs, the branding of the face and body, being roasted alive, and "one of the few imports from the West that the authorities accepted with undiluted enthusiasm" - crucifixion. Such heinous creativity was heightened when Lord Matsukura succeeded to the domain of Shimabara in 1615. He would later acquire the dubious reputation as one of the most successful persecutors in all of Japan, and it was here in the Shimabara area that Lord Matsukura
and his son Shigeharu are credited with inventing the *Mino-Dori*, or Mino Dance. In this form of torture, the persecuted were dressed in straw raincoats, often then doused with oil, and that set on fire after having their hands tied behind them.\(^{18}\)

It comes to no surprise that with a high proportions of Christians in the population, the Shimabara and Amakusa areas in Kyushu received particular attention during the cycles of persecution. With poor agricultural lands, a severe taxation policy, and a ruthless program of penalties for not being able to pay often exorbitant levies, the social climate in and around the Shimabara peninsula up to the mid 1630s exacerbated by the persecutions grew ever more tense and explosive. Many historians in fact have expressed astonishment that an armed uprising, whether inspired by Christianity or not, did not in fact occur prior to 1637.\(^{19}\) C.R. Boxer in *The Christian Century in Japan* attributes this docility to a number of reasons. These range from the peasants possessing an "ingrained habit of obedience to feudal superiors", to the missionaries having "expressly taught" that passive resistance was the only acceptable means to deal with the authorities. Another reason that Boxer provides is that many of the higher samurai and *daimyo* had recanted Christianity at key moments or had died, leaving the majority of Christians without representatives in the upper echelons of Japanese society. But most importantly, Boxer states that few of the peasants were in possession of any weapons to arm a serious uprising.\(^{20}\)

*The Shimabara Rebellion as a Historical Event*

The origins and the details of the Shimabara Rebellion cannot be verified because of a lack of contemporary documents from this time. Few contemporaneous accounts of the rebellion, or records of Christianity of Japanese origin for that matter are extant because all native documentary material - documents, pictures, and letters - were "systematically destroyed" during the persecutions and
immediately following the rebellion. Accounts emanating from Western sources are equally problematic since they were transcribed from word of mouth, appearing later in church annual reports written years afterwards when the cycles of Christian persecutions had finished or were in their final stages. As a result, any historical analysis that has been conducted is based on Japanese and Western sources produced years, occasionally even decades, after the fact.

Yet historians as a whole have done an impressive job in reconstructing the events of the rebellion. They have accomplished this by finding similarities among the various accounts, which are often very contradictory and biased in tone and intent. From the diverse source material, they have deduced a basic chronological narrative of events and as well have posited some ideas as to their causes.

In most histories of the rebellion, the initiating spark is taken to be an incident of a village headman killing a government official in response to reprisals for not being able to achieve tax quotas. With the aid of fellow villagers, the peasant leader is said to have killed the bailiff responsible for the torture of his daughter. From there the uprising "like a flame among dry kindling, rapidly fanned out to the rest of the peninsula and then across the straits to the Amakusa Islands." Entire village populations arose en masse and towns were abandoned. Farmers, peasants, fishermen, having been repressed and harassed for decades, united and rampaged through the countryside, attacking headquarters of local feudal authorities (ryoshu), and taking weapons and ammunition. James Murdoch in *History of Japan* stresses the importance of the ronin, or masterless samurai, who were stripped of their rank and incomes because of their adherence to the Christian faith. Many of these ronin were drawn to Nagasaki and were among those chased into the surrounding countryside when the persecutions were under way. As a result, a large number of the rebels were drawn from such battle-hardened soldiers who had participated in campaigns on the Korean peninsula.

It is important to emphasize that modern historians have generally attributed the immediate
causes of the Shimabara Rebellion more to economic or social factors more than religious ones. One historian insists that the rebellion was not a Christian uprising "but a furious protest by peasants in a poor, backward region of Japan against extortionate taxation by their feudal overlords." Yet it seems that the leaders of the rebellion and the government forces had more to gain if they attributed the revolt to religious reasons once the uprising was underway. For the rebel leaders, a spiritual or theological cause provided a more idealistic psychological impetus for Christians to join or rally in the rebellion; in turn for the shogunal authorities such an interpretation provided concrete justification for their anti-Christian policy; and for the local officials it was obviously preferable to represent Shimabara as a result of religious fanaticism rather than as a desperate revolt of starving people against their oppressors.

One source extrapolated that 23,000 out of a population of 45,000 joined the rebellion from the Shimabara peninsula, and another 14,000 of 21,000 from the surrounding Amakusa Islands. During the course of the uprising, it is believed that the insurgents used banners with Portuguese inscriptions such as Louvado seia Santissimo Sacramento (Praised be the most Holy Sacrament), shouted in the name of Jesus or the Virgin Mary during their attacks, sang hymns, and proclaimed their adherence to Christianity. (fig.34)

Soon the insurgents succeeded in controlling virtually all of the Shimabara peninsula, but failed to capture Shimabara and Tomioka castles. To solidify their position, and to prepare for the inevitable showdown with the government forces, the rebels sequestered themselves in the abandoned Hara Castle on the tip of the peninsula on January 15th, 1638 - two months after the whole uprising began. (fig.35) After initial bungled attempts and a number of embarrassing miscalculations that resulted in great casualties and in a humiliating change in command by the Bakufu (military government) forces attempting to suppress the rebellion and capture Hara Castle, the final assault occurred on April 15th. This came after the rebels were in an advanced state of malnutrition and when their stocks of ammunition were completely exhausted. While the subsequent massacre of nearly
40,000 besieged rebels, regardless of sex or age, was complete in its thoroughness, it did not succeed without loss of life on the part of the besieging government army. Conservative estimates over the three month siege put the casualty rate at 13,000 of a number of 100,000 deployed.32

_The Legacy of the Rebellion_

In the ensuing years after the fall of Hara Castle, during intense purges of the country-side, remaining Christians who were not involved with the rebellion were summarily rounded up and executed. The _bakufu_ now enforced the anti-Christian edicts more rigidly than before, and the results were overwhelming. The largest wave of arrests took place twenty years after the rebellion in a rural district near Nagasaki.33 Christianity was all but wiped out by 1660, with the rate of arrests falling rapidly between 1639 and 1658 as the number of survivors dwindled.34

An unintended effect of the rebellion was the reinforcement of the shogunate's anti-foreign policy. The Christian uprising had made the government more nervous than ever about foreign relations, and xenophobic feelings were intense among many members of the ruling class. Conservative elements in the government found the rebellion an ideal pretext to strengthen _sakoku_, the policy of foreign exclusion, which now assumed its most extreme form.35 In 1639 trade with the Portuguese was terminated and by 1641 the death penalty was proclaimed for any foreigner who came onto Japan's shores. This obsession with purging the country of remnants of Western presence or sites of influence even extended to expelling the Japanese wives of foreign traders and their mixed-blood children, and refusing entry to Japanese nationals who were living abroad in other port cities in Asia.36

Contact with the outside world was confined to the little artificial island of Deshima in the harbour of Nagasaki, and international relations and trade were reduced to only thirty Chinese with
only two Dutch trading vessels allowed to call annually.

Yet despite the government’s efforts, Christianity was still practiced in isolated areas, driven underground to be practiced by diehard adherents in scattered locales throughout the country, often in the guise of some bizarre aberrant sect of Buddhism. Many French and American missionaries, arriving in Japan in the late 1860s following the proclamation of religious freedom after the Meiji Restoration, would be surprised to discover Christianity still practiced after two centuries, despite being much changed.

Generally however, with the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion in 1638 and the subsequent persecutions which followed it, Christianity disappeared as an overtly practiced religion within a generation after the uprising, and was no longer viewed as a viable threat by future generations of Tokugawa leaders. Regarding the religion’s fate by the end of the “Christian Century”, George Elison writes:

The Christian mission, which had established itself in a disjointed realm and had managed to survive the topsy-turvydom of Sengoku [warring country] daimyo politics, lost its opportunity to thrive with the establishment of a strong central regime. The daimyo who once had sought profit by favouring the foreigners were henceforth bound by different rules of self-interest, needing to safeguard themselves in a world of constraints imposed on them by the Tokugawa shogunate.

While the rebellion does signify Christianity’s dying gasp in a land where its ruling elite worked obdurately to procure the religion’s demise, the suppression of the rebellion can be regarded in fact as a precursor to a series of major transformations - transformations which would unravel and reweave the fabric of Japanese society. According to Tokugawa analysts, while the "Christian peril" was concerned in many ways with the question of paving the way for "conquistadors from abroad", it seemed that the paramount danger was not in external conquest but rather internal subversion - as the Shimabara Rebellion had so strongly attested. With the expulsion of foreign presence from Japan, the Tokugawa house in Edo seized the opportunity to consolidate its control and finally finish a program that had begun in the opening decades of the 17th century. By placing severe limitations on foreign
influences it fostered a process of "cultural involution" that made Japan more intensely Japanese at a
time when countries like Britain, Holland, or Spain were becoming more cosmopolitan. The ensuing
institutional changes instigated by Pax Tokugawa appeared comprehensive and absolute, ranging from
everything from land, tax, and educational reform to a reorganization of the social order itself. Such
changes were instigated by Tokugawa Ieyasu who wanted to maintain peace and stability after the
century of chaos. He believed this could be accomplished by freezing Japanese society for its own
good and by denying the outside world, especially the barbarians from the West, any opportunity to
contaminate what had been created. Idealistic in conception, these two measures would have
devastating and traumatic consequences later in the middle of the 19th century when the Shogunate
would find American naval ships anchored in Edo Bay. Ironically, the painting of the Akizuki screens
in the 1830s came at a moment when the Tokugawa Regime began its downward spiral towards
demise.

Whatever its reasons, whether real, exaggerated, or imaginary, historians have openly
admitted that they are unable to confirm the details of the Shimabara Rebellion. In primary accounts,
fact and fiction have become so conflated that separating them is virtually impossible. Yet the
importance of the Shimabara Rebellion cannot be understated. The issues surrounding the rebellion -
that of foreign influence in Japan, national integrity, and most importantly, organized resistance
against government authority - were so important that later generations felt the need to capture and use
the memory of the rebellion for their own political and ideological ends. The next chapter will attempt
to explain the process of how the representation of the Shimabara Rebellion was taken and shaped by
people or forces that required the event to be depicted in specific ways at particular times. Analyzing
the various accounts of the rebellion proves in the end to reveal more about the world in which such.accounts were produced than the events they were supposed to be documenting.
Chapter Two Notes:


6. Hane, p.123.

7. Hane, p.126.

8. Tames, p.80. According to Hane, Hideyoshi was so appalled by slave-trading and meat eating, that he issued specific decrees that prohibited them (p.124).

9. Tames, p.78. Hane also makes the interesting assertion regarding the recognition of moral authority. Hane writes, "A devout Christian might make an obedient vassal, but ultimately he was expected to serve and obey a higher authority, God. . . . When some samurai abandoned their masters for God and some children left their parents for their new faith a sense of uneasiness began to beset some members of the ruling class" (p.124).


14. Many of these *fumi-e* are still extant and serve as a reminder of the extent to which authorities were willing to go to identify and suppress Christianity in Japan.

15. Tames, p.80.


22. As a matter of fact, there only seems to be one contemporary Western account in any detail of the rebellion. This was written by Durate Correa (died c.1639), a Portuguese trader, who was awaiting to be burned at the stake. Interestingly, since Correa was in jail at the time of the uprising, his version is said to have derived from Japanese informants. See Boxer, *Christian Century*, p.377 and p.493 n10.


25. Murdoch, pp.642-3


27. Morris, p.150.
31. Itakura Shigemasa was appointed special commissioner by the shogun to deal with the rebels. However when little progress was made to alleviate the problem, he was replaced by Matsudaira Idu-no-kami Nobutsuna. When news of his supersession reached Itakura, he decided to launch an attack on New Year's Day before his successor arrived from Edo. As a gesture he composed some lines of poetry before leaving for battle:

   On New Year's Day, last year, in Yedo,
   I tied on a court-dress hat;
   Today I tie on a helmet, and go out to battle.
   Thus the world and all things in it change.
   When the name only remains of the flower which bloomed at the advent of the New Year,
   Remember it as leader of the van.

The attack was a complete failure and among the attacking force were killed, including Itakura. In "The Shimabara Rebellion" by an anonymous author in Japanese Traditions of Christianity (Kobe, n.d.), edited by M. Paske-Smith, this assault is documented as follows:

   The time having arrived, the other leaders also advanced, and began the attack on the front gate. . . The loopholes were then opened, and a heavy fire kept up. The assailants replied as vigorously, and the balls flew thick between the contending parties. Those who approached still nearer were driven back with spears and long swords. Multitudes of the assailants were slain and the rest retreated in dismay. Here Itakura Naizennosho (Shigemasa) advanced with one company, waving a white banner before his troops, and gnashing his teeth, uttered his commands and reproaches, saying, "Is it for you to come so near and then retreat? Vile fellows, think what kind of an enemy is before you. It is becoming soldiers to retreat from a small castle defended by a set of farmers, though the place is strong and strongly defended? Return and storm the place." He cried repeatedly, at the top of his voice. But there was a great number, in full retreat, and they did not even hear him, as they went on, tumbling down the hill. . . He was soon struck by a ball, which passed from his left to right side, when he fell instantly and died.

The inscription on Itakura's tomb will be discussed later in the paper. Lord Matsudaira, "a notoriously foxy character, whether as a statesman or a tactician" preferred to let hunger do "its inevitable work" rather than risk life and limb. See Boxer, Christian Century, pp.380-81.


34. Morris, p.401n7.86.

35. Morris, p.176.
36. Hane writes that the majority of Japanese who had emigrated to such places such as the Philippines, Cambodia, Java, and Siam were mostly merchants, *ronin* samurai, and of course Christians. Hane cites that in 1621 there were three thousand Japanese living near Manila and in Siam the Japanese population was about fourteen or fifteen thousand. See Hane, p.123.


39. But instances of persecutions continued. There are many instances of Christians being rooted out. For instance, Christians were still being hunted up to the very end of the Tokugawa period. One example is the uncovering of hidden Christians in Osaka by Oshio Heihachiro, "after a painstaking investigation" in 1827 sends "these luckless individuals to their doom." (Morris, p. 189) Ironically Oshio Heihachiro is compared to Amakusa Shiro, who, as we shall see later, plays a major role in the story of the Shimabara Rebellion. Both are regarded by Morris as personifying Japan's great heroic tradition. Another noted case of Christian suppression occurred in 1865 when about 100 *kakure* (hidden) Christians were discovered in the Nagasaki region. They were arrested and tortured; as a result, most of them apostatized (Akamatsu, p.214).


42. Elison, *Deus Destroyed*, p.217.
Chapter 3: The Nature of the Archive
Documenting the Rebellion

The 1838 pair of screens in the Akizuki Kyodo Kan records one of the crucial events which initiated a transformation that shifted Japan from an epoch of social tumult and political disarray to one of unbridled domination by one central power. Though the screens of the Shimabara Rebellion seem to be explicit in their historical specificity, the details of the event are anything but straightforward and clear. This opaqueness in the archive is caused by the nature of the primary sources, in which documents often openly contest one another. This chapter will attempt to explain why such contradiction arose. In understanding the ramifications of conflicting accounts, we can then place into better perspective the influences that were exerted on the screens during production as well as on viewership in the 1830s.

Objects of Cultural Production and Archeological Findings

An archeological or anthropological approach to objects produced around the time of the Shimabara Rebellion should provide us with clearer insight into the events of the rebellion, and subsequently allow us to appraise or evaluate the depiction in the Akizuki screens. For this, examples of cultural production from the namban period, as well as archeological objects which have been recovered or excavated in and around the Shimabara peninsula, will be considered.

In terms of cultural production in the southern regions of Japan, the "Christian Century" is distinguished by a fascinating interplay of hybridity. With the influx of Western subjects and ideas that the European traders and missionaries had brought with them in the mid-16th century, a radically different aesthetic lexicon was introduced into the Japanese pictorial vocabulary. Recognized to be in
the namban style, many examples of secular and religious works of this time are a curious mixture of Western and Japanese subjects and stylistic attributes. Secular artifacts which were produced included such things as byobu of world maps or port scenes in and outside Japan, Western style furniture or clothing, and even backgammon sets and Western style clothing. (fig.36) Religious artifacts ranged from icon paintings and statuettes to everyday religious accoutrements such as rosaries, candlesticks or miniature crosses. (fig.37) Occasionally, the traditions of Japan and the European world would merge gracefully, producing stunning new interpretations of conventional subjects or motifs. At other times, however, the two clashed awkwardly with results that today seem humorous, odd, and perhaps even grotesque. Since many of these works are still extant and accessible in many museums in Japan and in various collections around the world, scholars have a wide array of documents and artifacts to aid in reconstructing this intriguing and colourful period of Japanese history. However, since the Shimabara Rebellion came virtually at the end of this period of encounter, when the social temperament concerning Christianity and Westerns had dramatically changed for the worse, many objects which have survived must be characterized as signifying a world far removed from decades of Christian persecution and suppression.

Those artifacts and visual objects which do provide a glimpse into the violent world of Japan during the Christian persecutions are often connected with torture or apostasy, such as fumi-e (treading pictures), which were used to test the faith of suspected Christians. There are also many extant lithograph and wood block prints which depict scenes of martyrdom or torture. In the Church of the Gesu in Rome hang two paintings, The Martyrdom at Nagasaki in 1622 and The Martyrdom of a Member of the Jesuit Order in Japan. (fig.38) Such prints and paintings may give us an indication of the spirit of the times, but like the other objects from these decades, no information on the rebellion itself can be extracted.

The single largest collection of artifacts regarding the persecutions of Christians in the
Shimabara area and the rebellion itself is in the Amakusa Kirishitan Museum in Hondo, a small city on the Shimabara Peninsula, in what is today part of Kumomoto Prefecture. Various artifacts such as notice boards, roofing tiles, broken tombstones, and personal items are there on display. These objects may assist the anthropologist in recreating life on the Shimabara Peninsula during the 1630s and 1640s, yet they themselves again are of little use in reconstructing the events leading up to the outbreak of the rebellion, the months of the siege, and the ultimate defeat of the peasants. One item which may be of importance is one of the museum's most prized relics - a square of painted satin known in Japan as "Amakusa Shiro's Battle Flag." Attributed to Yamada Emousaku (died c. mid-17th century), this flag is thought to have been the rallying symbol of the besieged peasants and believed to have been painted in the camp compound where the peasant rebels first gathered. However, as a historical artifact it does not provide information into the rebellion itself. (fig.34)

Visual works regarding the Shimabara Rebellion do exist, however. Woodblock prints were produced later in the 17th century to illustrate chapbooks which retold the story of Christianity in Japan. These prints were executed in a highly stylized form, mostly likely in an attempt to appeal to the popular audience for whom they were intended. Pictorially, they are distantly reminiscent of earlier emakimono paintings, yet at the same time seem to be a precursor to later ukiyo-e prints, which became fashionable by the late 18th century. (figs.3-4) While names of particular participants and locations of fighting are labelled in these chapbook prints, the illustrations seem intended more to flaunt the spectacle of battle than accurately to depict history. Though unprofitable as a source of information on the rebellion, the illustrations, and the chapbooks as a whole, are very valuable when viewed as primary source material for later historical works.

Though the wide variety of extant physical and visual artifacts from the period surrounding the Shimabara Rebellion can help us recreate the political, social, and cultural milieu, there is little physical evidence to verify the depiction of the rebellion in the Akizuki Screens, or even confirm the
details of the actual event itself. This problem is compounded by the numerous contradictions found among the literary accounts of the rebellion. The range and variations within the primary literary texts relating to the Shimabara Rebellion turn out to be as diverse as they are intriguing. However, consideration of these accounts proves be a useful endeavour, since it was upon such documents that the pictorial narrative of the Akizuki Screens produced later in 1838 was to be based and formulated. Generally speaking, these primary accounts can be separated into two categories - those from Japanese archives, and those from Western sources.

**Christianity Belligerent**

Memorial inscriptions and literary accounts produced in Japan after the rebellion constitute the first category of primary sources which concern the Shimabara Rebellion. These documents, and those others which concern Christianity in Japan during the *namban* period, worked to promote a nationalistic and xenophobic agenda. Their use was generally part of a larger propaganda campaign carefully orchestrated by the Tokugawa government to consolidate and redefine the nation beginning in the middle decades of the 1600s. In considering Japanese intellectual production at this time, such as the historical accounts of the Shimabara Rebellion, a close connection to the Japanese institutional realm becomes immediately apparent.

This connection between the literary works and the institutional realm was accomplished and maintained by means of a narrative formula that dictated how the rebellion was to be interpreted and recorded in the immediate generations following the event. The formula which seems to have manipulated the Japanese representations of the rebellion can be seen as having its origins in epic heroic war tales, which later were transposed onto tales of peasant strife and uprisings. While it may be difficult to determine whether those officials, scribes, or story-tellers of the 17th and early 18th
Century who wrote about the Shimabara Rebellion were entirely conscious of the discourse they were
manipulating and reinforcing, the presence of the narrative formula nevertheless becomes highly
significant in the context of the 1838 screens. Its significance lies in the fact that while the artists of
the screens in the 1830s would rely on these sources for historical information, in doing so they also,
so it would seem, incorporated the narrative structure which was inherent in these literary works.
Though some of the implications of the screens' pictorial format were touched upon in the first
chapter, at this point further explication concerning this narrative formula is necessary, in particular
its significance in relation to the literary war tale and the values and qualities the war tale embodied,
extolled, and subsequently reproduced.

In *Translations from Early Japanese Literature*, Edwin Reischauer discusses the origin and
nature of *gunki* or *senki monogatari* (war tale genre) in the introduction to his translation of the *Heiji
monogatari* (The Tales of Heiji). Reischauer interprets *gunki monogatari* as romanticized and
idealized accounts of the actual deeds of real historical figures, making them at best only "semi-
historical" works. In such tales, human relations are stressed, as well as how a particular battle was
waged and how warriors under extreme circumstances should act or react. A premium is placed on
idealized ethical concepts and military knowledge and strategy, admired personal attributes, as well as
the telling of a good story. Historical events were changed with artistic license, and over time the
story could undergo repeated additions and modifications. This propensity for such a re-presentation
of history has been attributed to the oral nature in which the war stories were first told.

Nevertheless, despite variation among details, there still remains an overall adherence to a particular
form or structure in which all *gunki monogatari* are formulated. This structure includes factors such as
common length, similar chapter divisions, shared character qualities, as well as the presentation of
general ideas or story-lines.

Anne Walthall, in her work on traditional accounts of Japanese peasant uprisings, argues that
recurrent histories of uprisings in Japan share many similar literary elements and attributes with these war tales. She believes that peasant stories of strife and uprising consistently evoked epic war tales like the *Heike monogatari* (The Tales of Heike) which she describes as "the literary ancestor in the Japanese tradition which informs all subsequent stories of strife." Like Reischauer, Walthall argues that the genre of folk and war tales aimed to teach "something of the nature of actual people" by emphasizing the consequences involving human action and relationships. Such a narrative discourse therefore compelled writers of such peasant tales, like the writers of war tales, to incorporate a particular structure and to appropriate motifs or characters "wrenched out of context from the classical tradition" to create compelling new heroes. Though the authors of such histories of uprisings rewrote scenes from the war tales in terms of current circumstances and concerns, histories of peasant uprisings were nevertheless indelibly linked "intertextually" to traditional war tales.

What is of interest here is that virtually all the literary aspects, rhetorical strategies, and qualitative elements which Reischauer and Walthall identify and discuss appear throughout the Japanese representations of the Shimabara Rebellion. Like traditional tales of wars or peasant uprisings before them, the accounts of the rebellion all share enough similarities to qualify them as literary constructs cut from the same cloth, although variations of detail among the different accounts do exist. An example of where this formula derivative of war and peasant tales seems to be present in a description of the Shimabara Rebellion is in an inscription on a memorial erected to Itakura Shigemasa, a Japanese feudal lord who was initially sent by the shogun to be the supreme commander of government forces in suppressing the uprising. From this inscription we learn that he was killed in the first assault on Hara Castle on New Year’s day of 1637, an ill-fated attack spurred on by the attempt to save face before being replaced by a new commander the next day. The inscription on the memorial emphasizes the qualities of the feudal lord’s character, his role in the battle, and the heroic nature of his death in conformance with the romantic notion of the war tale. (See Appendix A.1)
Another monument with a similar inscription is on the Tomioka Monument, some twenty miles away from the "Old Castle" of Hara. (A.2) (fig.39) It was here where those Christians who had escaped the siege during the battle were brought together, decapitated, and buried. In reading these two inscriptions for narrative construct, rhetorical devices, and usage of language, we are able to understand some of the strategies involved in presenting an official interpretation of the rebellion in a way that would be both convincing and memorable.

There are other sources for the Shimabara Rebellion besides tomb and memorial inscriptions. These exist in the form of literary accounts, and they too seem to share the qualities that Reischauer and Walthall identify and analyze in their respective studies. Joseph Jennes, in his study of the Catholic Church in Japan, notes the great number of such literary accounts concerning the Shimabara Rebellion produced in the decades following the event. One translation of such an account, "The Shimabara Rebellion", is in Japanese Traditions of Christianity edited by M. Paske-Smith, who served in the British Consulate General in Osaka around the turn of the twentieth century. While Paske-Smith claims that "neither the original text nor the name of the translator is known", he assures us that many of the passages in this account of the rebellion coincide and agree with other Japanese histories and literary texts of the event extant at the time. Interestingly, while recognizing what he calls the "traditional" quality prevalent in these accounts, Paske-Smith overlooks the importance of the narrative form to concentrate instead on the validity of the works as historical records or as sources for historical detail.

One notable narrative characteristic that the Japanese representations share is that they almost always tie the cause of the rebellion to Christianity, with the religion often divinely embodied in a single individual known as Amakusa Shiro. (A.3) In "The Shimabara Rebellion," for example, the uprising was founded "on the expected appearance of a saviour whose arrival had been prophesied [sic]." Amakusa Shiro will be discussed further in the following chapter. As I will show, he stands
for many things: he serves as a signifier of fear of foreign influence, peasant revolts, and the power of national myth. He is often portrayed as being endowed with magical powers, underscoring the way in which the texts which describe his presence serve to transform history by developing the dramatic and story-telling aspects of the tale. By placing the heroes and villains at such extremes, historical representation thus elevates the epic traditional war or peasant tale format.

The remainder of "The Shimabara Rebellion", written probably in the first or second decade after the fall of Hara Castle, reflects many other aspects of traditional peasant or war tales. These include a lengthy preamble concerning the uprising, the descriptions of battle preparations, an exhaustively long and detailed roll call of names of generals and major participants on both sides of the battle lines, and an account of the efforts to muster and manoeuvre troops into position. Once the battle begins there is a colourful and careful description of combat, a precise delineation of the strategy and tactics employed during battle, and an exhaustive count of the casualties and deaths.

Throughout the Japanese accounts of the Shimabara Rebellion, there always remains a definitive moral tone. It is never in doubt in "The Shimabara Rebellion" that Christianity is a truly evil force, a religion which promises imminent anarchy if it is not eradicated effectively and immediately. It is not surprising, then, that in describing the action of the "conspirators" before the siege at Hara Castle, the Christian rebels are not depicted in a nostalgic light, as is often the case with characters in other epic stories. (For example see A.4) However, the government forces are portrayed heroically, and cannot do anything except epitomize every ideal of samurai conduct. (A.5) Opposing actions and characters are then presented as archetypal extremes, where "traitors and cowards are often particularly despicable, and the heroes are incredibly, even insanely, brave and devoted." One dimensionality dominates these tales, making readily identifiable the good and the bad, worthy and unworthy, and moral and immoral.

Another interesting literary source for the Shimabara Rebellion comes from a chapter in the
Kirishitan Monogatari (A Tale of Christianity), which has been dated to about 1640. This chapbook itself comprises thirteen chapters, each of which has one or two monochrome prints as illustration. Each of the chapters in turn recounts important moments in the history of Christianity in Japan, all the while providing less than complimentary commentary on the doctrine of the religion. A reproduction of the chapbook is in Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan by George Elison. Elison believes that the Kirishitan monogatari signifies a literary rejection of Christianity, where the portrayal of the religion and its adherents in a "degenerate form" was a common strategy after the religion was banned from the country. This tone is aptly demonstrated in the description of the first contact with the Kirishitan Bateren, or padre. (A.6) Christianity throughout the Kirishitan monogatari is constructed as the literary antithesis of Buddhism, the religion officially propagated by the Tokugawa regime. Throughout the entire work, Buddhism is the mark by which Christianity is measured or compared. Perhaps the most illustrative case of this strategy comes from the epilogue where Buddhism is placed in direct comparison with Christianity. In this example, Christianity is portrayed as a "cursed doctrine" which was unceremoniously rejected once it was realized that its aim was to make "Japan a domain of devils." (See A.7)

The purpose of the Kirishitan Monogatari becomes obvious once it is placed in its historical context. Elison notes that this genre of anti-Christian propaganda was rampant by the later half of the 17th century once the "Closed Country consciousness" was tapped. As a result, anti-Christian literary works like Kirishitan monogatari and Ha Kirishitan (Christianity Countered) were popular types of narrative literature which articulated this ideology for the benefit of the lower classes. Characteristically, such works were mostly passed down in manuscript, were copied and recopied, and evidently consumed with great fascination. The pages are well-thumbed, begrimed with much handling, and dotted with ink stains. The effort to reach the semi-literate is apparent: some texts go to great lengths to spell out their meaning, providing not only the kana reading for the simplest compounds but also an even simpler equivalent word.
In combining an exotic element - "pleasure-giving shocks with the bizarre" - an exaggerated vulgarity was stressed, and the "outlandish wickedness" of the Christians became even more fascinating and exaggerated because such a view was proscribed and encouraged by the central government. Given the effort to consolidate loyalty and obligation to the Tokugawa regime, such anti-Christian propaganda worked to integrate allegiances and promote homogeneity. Christianity therefore helped define this era by being classified as the antithesis of Buddhism. The memory of the Shimabara Rebellion turned out to be a potent fuel for the shogunate's anti-foreign policy, which resulted in a stimulation of xenophobic feelings among the members of the ruling samurai aristocracy. As a result, the government had found the rebellion "an ideal pretext" to strengthen the sakoku, the policy of foreign exclusion.

Despite the fact that the Kirishitan monogatari is an obvious morality play devised to openly support the Tokugawa regime, the chapter recounting the Shimabara Rebellion still manipulates the traditional narrative format prevalent in peasant or war tales. The chapter entitled, "How the Kirishitans Raised a Revolt in Amakusa and Shimabara of Hizen in Tsukushi", appears to retain the same narrative formula as other literary accounts of the rebellion in circulation. For example, the chapter devoted to the rebellion (excerpts found in A.8) does not dwell on vulgarities of the Christian faith and the threat of those from "Southern Barbarity" as construed in other chapters. Rather much in the same vein as "The Shimabara Rebellion" considered earlier, the chapter in the Kirishitan monogatari concentrates on justifying the rebel cause, on the preparation for battle, and on the roll call of names of generals and leaders on both sides of the battle lines. The celebration of battle and the warrior ethic is reflected upon at the end of the chapter where the anonymous author places the suppression of the rebellion in relation to great epic battles of the past. (A.9) One could argue that depicting the uprising by means of such a narrative was natural since the form and structure would be familiar to people of all classes, making its message more readily accessible. But there is reason to
believe that there was no other way for envisioning or recounting the uprising as a historical event, except through the traditional narrative prism.

The narrative formula that controlled and shaped traditional Japanese folk and war tales, then, can be seen to have been appropriated and incorporated in Japanese accounts of the Shimabara Rebellion. With characteristics such as a conventionalized plot structure, a didactic tone, and a focus on warrior virtues, historical accounts of the rebellion had much in common with traditional epic stories of wars and peasant heroes and uprisings. Even in a document as venomously contrived as the *Kirishitan monogatari*, the narrative formula had a powerful impact. In this case, the writer(s) were unwilling, perhaps even unable, to shake off the traditional narrative structure that had up till then shaped and controlled other literary accounts of similar subjects, and thereby produced an account of the rebellion that was similar in nature and tone to the others in circulation. As a result, the Japanese representations of the Shimabara Rebellion reinforced specific value systems that were not necessarily inherent to the actual event itself, but which were prevalent in the genre of writing through which the rebellion, now transformed into a literary artifact, was articulated and documented.

The narrative structure of Japanese primary documents would have intriguing consequences later in the 19th century when the artists of the Akizuki screens turned to these sources for historical "facts" concerning the event of the rebellion. By relying on such documents, the artists created a space in which their historical rendition of the rebellion could be affected by the implicit values that the narrative formula carried with it. However, as will be shown in the final chapter, this appropriation and the subsequent reappearance of the narrative formula did not function entirely to promote an anachronistic ideological program or a belief system that was centuries old; rather, the narrative formula was modulated and reworked to articulate the concerns and the attitudes of the ruling elite within that particular 19th century historical context.
The arrival of Commodore Perry in Japan in 1853, and the establishment of treaty ports along the Japanese coast, encouraged a great interest in Japan by many in the West, especially in Great Britain and the United States. From the middle of the 19th century onwards, books and articles were published on a wide variety of topics, including histories of Japanese culture, religion, and government. The numerous historical surveys published invariably mention the Shimabara Rebellion in one form or another, yet in a tone and character far removed from the accounts in Japanese archives.

One example of a 19th century Western account of the Shimabara Rebellion is by the American Richard Hildreth, who in 1855 set about to write the first encompassing history of Japan in English. Hildreth’s account is interesting because he places the cause of the rebellion squarely on Western factors - Christian faith, missionary activities, and the bakufu (Japanese military government) which attempted to keep foreign influences in check. Hildreth argued that the revolt occurred as a direct result of the suppression of the Catholic faith, and "seeing no other hope," the peasants were forced to rebel openly. This sentiment is articulated repeatedly in other early general histories produced in America. In both Japan, written in 1898 by Walter Dickson, and Japan As I Saw It, by A.H. Exner in 1913, a particularly woeful portrayal of treatment of Christians under the tyranny of the Tokugawa government is painted. In Britain, the most authoritative account of the mid-19th century on Japan and things Japanese was written by Rutherford Alcock, England’s first Consul to Japan. In The Capital of the Tycoon: A Narrative of Three Year’s Residence in Japan, published in 1863, descriptions of the rebellion share many characteristics with the American examples. The root of both English and American interpretations of the Shimabara Rebellion can be explained by two factors. One is the nature of the primary documents to which Western scholars had access. The second is the nature of the society in which these historical works were written.
Since Japanese archival material was written in Japanese, a language that few, if any, in the West understood at the time of Japan's re-establishment of contact with the West, many historians or writers had to turn to sources which were available in languages which they could understand. The most important of these were "histories" of Japan produced before the 19th century. Besides The History of the Church of Japan by Jean Crasset, which was published in 1707, perhaps the most important, and widely cited, of such sources was History of Japan by Engelbert Kaempfer, published in 1727. For 19th Century historians, Kaempfer's three-volume work was considered the seminal study on Japanese history.34 Both Exner and Alcock acknowledged Kaempfer as a reliable source of information, and parallels can be found in their descriptions of the rebellion. (B5) Exner describes Kaempfer as "the well-informed and thoroughly reliable German doctor"35 and Alcock, speaking about contemporary works on Japan, argued that it would be "a great injustice to pass over [Kaempfer] without mention."36 To Alcock, Kaempfer was "the most painstaking, intelligent, and honest of students in the field of Japanese history," whose work had "long formed the quarry, from which all compilations relating to Japan" had been "taken, with or without acknowledgement."37

Like many authors of pre-modern historical works, Kaempfer does not list his bibliographic sources. Yet in the works of these authors a consistent character gradually emerges in regard to the depiction of the Shimabara Rebellion when placed in the context of their writings on the history of Christianity in Japan as a whole, especially in relation to 16th and 17th century literature regarding Christian martyrdoms in Japan.38 It seems that such 19th century writers as Hildreth, Exner, Dickson, or Alcock were very aware of the existence of contemporary writings and letters documenting martyrdoms and the persecutions during the late stages of the period.39 For example, Exner states that the reports of the Jesuits are full of details of... atrocities, and also of the heroism shown by most of the Christian victims.40

Similarly, W. Giffis in The Mikado's Empire of 1876 writes,

If any one doubts the sincerity and fervour of the Christian converts of today, or the
ability of the Japanese to accept a higher form of faith, or their willingness to suffer for what they believe, they have but to read the accounts preserved in English, Dutch, French, Latin and Japanese, of various witnesses to the fortitude of the Japanese Christians of the seventeenth century. The annals of the primitive Church furnish no instances of sacrifice or heroic constancy, in the Coliseum or the Roman arenas, that were not paralleled on the dry river-beds and execution grounds of Japan.41

It becomes obvious then that many 19th century scholars relied heavily on older works, such as those by Crasset and Kaempfer, supplemented by the accounts of foreign merchants and missionaries, for their own writings and explications of the history of Christianity in Japan. Yet the nature of these initial 16th and 17th century accounts themselves must be called into question.

In an article entitled "Writings on Martyrdom in Kirishitan Literature," Anesaki Masaharu, one of the earliest Japanese historians to teach in the West, provides an analysis of an interesting range of letters describing the persecutions of Christians in Japan written between 1591 to 1626.42 Though the dates of the writings analyzed by Anesaki fall short of the rebellion of 1637, they nevertheless provide a clear indication of how the suppression of Christianity in Japan was documented by fleeing missionaries and church officials overseas. In other articles by Anesaki, such as "Psychological Observations on the Persecution of the Catholics in Japan in the Seventeenth Century" and "Persecution of Kirishitans after the Shimabara Insurrection," further insights into the persecution literature are provided.43 Anesaki's analysis of such works is important because he identifies notable shifts in tone and direction. He shows that correspondence and documentation dramatically changed when the suppression of Christianity came into full swing around the turn of the 17th century, noting that there was a "fairly sharp demarcation" of emphasis between letters written before 1600, and those after, when anti-Christian edicts were enforced in earnest. Where the letters produced before 1600 talk of "ideal glorification of martyrs, partly doctrinal interpretation of martyrdom and partly exaltation of the martyrs of the past"44 the later group represent something much different. This group, according to Anesaki:
. . . represents the voices of those who were fighting under persecution facing the dangers of actual martyrdom. Some of the writings in this latter group are confessions of faith in preparing for a martyr's death, some are encouragement of strength in faith, exhortations to and instructions on imminent martyrdom. 45

A prevailing sense of religious fervour, pious devotion, and a zeal for martyrdom emerges in these later writings, transforming such letters from a documentary medium to one articulating religious rhetoric and expounding Christian doctrine. While there should be absolutely no reason to doubt the fact that many European missionaries and Japanese converts did die horrifically during the cycles of persecutions, in many cases with just such a zeal and passion, fuelled by religious conviction, as is described in these letters and belief as transcribed in such letters and reports, the issue here is that centuries later, when European writers began writing histories of Japan in the mid-1800s, their works absorbed and rearticulated such rhetoric. The documents available to Hildreth, Exner, Dickson, Griffis, Alcock, and others, were therefore significantly shaped by these accounts, because like the early historical works of Crasset or Kaempfer, the available archive was formed from works written by missionaries or merchants or else available in church records of the 17th and early 18th century.

Besides the nature of the archive which was accessible in the West, there were other reasons why such a reading of the persecutions and the rebellion was dominant in Europe and North America. One only needs to turn to descriptions of the Christian based nature of American and British society and the activities of missionary activity overseas during the latter half of the 19th Century to gain a clearer insight into why Christianity and missionary activities two centuries earlier were so valued at this time. 46

In the case of Victorian England, the nature of its society and the state of the British Empire in the mid-1800s strongly influenced how the history of Christianity in Japan was to be perceived and documented. The context in which the majority these histories books were written and circulated has been one that is analyzed in numerous historical studies. The social climate, at least in the minds of the British political and social elite, can best be summed up by Toshio Yokoyama in Japan in the
Victorian Mind: A Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation 1850-1880, who states:

Britain, detached from the revolutionary Continent, boasted of its civilising mission, and many people naively extolled the benefits which vigorous manufacture, free trade, individualism and self-help would bring to other nations. At the same time, increasing numbers of newly literate people as well as the middle class became obsessed by morality, which proved to be one of the stabilising forces of society and the backbone of an immense sense of national superiority.\(^{47}\)

Generally the upper and middle classes considered themselves to be living in an age of great optimism characterized by free trade, individual enterprise, laissez-faire, and an increasingly democratic government. Fortified in 1859 by Darwin’s theory of human evolution, the British looked forward to unlimited progress - not only for England itself but, through the spread of England’s institutions, for the rest of the world. Yet this conception of the rest of the world was derived from a sense of superiority to others, especially in relation to non-Western peoples. Regarding this attitude historian Jean-Pierre Lehmann, in *The Image of Japan* writes,

Certainly in the Victorian period it was believed that there was a clear distinction between West and non-West, White and non-white, Christian and heathen. It was firmly held - though obviously there were numerous exceptions - that Western civilisation, race and religion were possessed of certain properties denied to members of non-Western civilisation, races and religions. These properties were presumed to emanate either from the grace of God or from the very nature of the evolution of man. Such "scientific" theories comfortably embedded themselves in a loose set of doctrines known as Social Darwinism. This was certainly racialism, but it was not necessarily always expressed as such, the theories were often expressed in an eminently humane way.\(^{48}\)

As was widely believed at that time, Western civilization, the white race and the Christian religion "stood paramount in the world," and, with transformations occurring in its industry, politics, and virtually every aspect of society in general, the dominant classes of the British population perceived themselves at the pinnacle of that civilization. It was then with this mentality that they conceptualized the rest of the world and dealt with peoples of different races or cultural backgrounds as they encountered them.

Western historians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in their pro-Christian and highly
moralistic accounts of the Shimabara Rebellion, were reflecting the social climate in which they lived and worked. As Japan was seen as re-entering the "civilized world," by those in the West, scholars and intellectuals found justification in deeming the persecution of Christianity and expulsion of missionaries in the early 17th century as key factors affecting the intervening centuries of perceived Japanese political, industrial, and moral stagnation. While Japan in this view had remained closed, isolated, and despotically ruled, the Christian West was seen to have surged ahead morally, industrially, and intellectually under the auspices of Christianity, classical liberalism and ideals of the Enlightenment. This concept was further magnified when Japan in the late 1860s and early 1870s initiated political reforms and programs of industrialization based on Western models. With Japan through the latter half of the 19th century on a rigorous Western inspired and assisted economic and industrial program, missionaries from Europe and America began to work again throughout the country, ostensibly helping the Japanese people regain their "paradise lost."

In reading though the primary accounts in Western languages of the Shimabara Rebellion, as well as many other Christian writings from this era, one immediately notices a pervasive tone that is charged with Christian piety. In fact, upon closer examination, the primary accounts all share narrative qualities and rhetorical strategies that can be attributed to a discourse of martyrdom that emerged in the literature after the cycles of persecutions increased in severity in the early 17th century. Because such accounts were written in European languages and kept in European archives, and used widely because of their accessibility by historians through to the early 20th century, the discourse which shaped and controlled Christian accounts in the 17th century reappears in early modern histories of Japan, in turn permeating depictions of the Shimabara Rebellion. Such a glorified historical view of Christian persecution and suppression in Japan was supported and conditioned by the social and moral climate prevalent in 19th century America and Victorian England, when Western missionaries were returning once again to Japan, and the Japanese themselves were turning to the
West for technical expertise in their programs of industrialization.

Since physical artifacts or visual works provide little reliable evidence of the events of the Shimabara Rebellion, it is necessary to extend the archive associated with the rebellion to include more unconventional sources such as commemorative monuments, literary accounts derivative of anti-Christian propaganda, and accounts found in Western sources and archives. Yet a fascinating problem emerges: the bulk of the primary literary sources regarding the Shimabara Rebellion can be roughly broken into two strongly contesting groups, each products of very different social and historical circumstances. One group included inscriptions on tombstones in the Shimabara-Amakusa region, and literary records which circulated in early Tokugawa Japan. These represented Christianity and Westerners in negative terms, while adhering explicitly to a particular narrative format. Such a treatment can be attributed to the way in which Western influence was regarded during a time when the nation was being redefined, and to the needs of a central government which was in the midst of consolidating power and control. Seemingly irrelevant material such as Western representations of the rebellion constitute the second group. But these in the end serve to further demonstrate how history can be affected by the social and institutional context in which such representations are produced and received. This group comprises 16th and 17th century accounts by European missionaries and merchants which extolled the virtues of Christianity in Japan. Essentially Christian-inspired literary constructions, they have been shown to be based predominantly on a martyrdom discourse. After the reopening of Japan by the Western powers in the middle of the 19th Century, the spirit and tone of these works resurfaced in surveys of Japanese history, which were then in great demand. While both Japanese and Western documents each claimed in their own right to be accurate, authentic, and legitimate, they often only concur with one another in common names, places, dates, and a basic chronological ordering of events.
Recognizing the contradictory nature of the archive allows us to look at the Akizuki screens under a new light, especially in respect to the large role that Japanese literary works played during the screens' production. In filtering out the differences and contradictions among the various artifacts, documents, or fields of "traditional" knowledge, we may be left with a sense that the Akizuki screens in 1838 portray the rebellion with accuracy and "truth." But by inverting this argument, the seeming distortions and omissions within the screens' images provide an important means to access various ideological, political or social agendas current when the screens were made. Therefore, understanding the historical context and the social environment in which the screens were created and in which they functioned is important to this analysis. In pursuing the disparities in the screens, or questioning why what was once spoken had become unspoken, history is turned back on itself, cajoled to reveal what has influenced and manipulated it.

Through contradiction and omission, then, we can understand more clearly what the Shimabara Rebellion meant in the 1830s, and the significance of its legacy to the viewing public of that time. How the social environment shaped the screens' representation is thus the main issue which the final chapter will attempt to explicate.
Chapter Three Notes:


4. As was stated on p.17 n1 the screens are believed to have been derivative of a work entitled *Shimabara Ikki Danwa* (A Talk about the Shimabara Rebellion) written in 1748. See *Shimabara noran: Sengoku Kassen Zu* in the Sengoku Kassen-e Series. (Tokyo, 1981) Byobu Shusei Vol.5, "Introduction".


7. Reischauer, p.274.

8. To this Reischauer continues:

   The characters are undoubtedly distorted from reality to form stereotypes, but these stereotypes, though failing to show us the true nature of any specific historical person, indicate clearly the early feudal concept of such typical figures as the young warrior hero, the timid and ineffective older leader, the brave and devoted retainer, the loyal and incorruptible minister, or the arrogant but cowardly court noble. Reischauer, p.274.


17. Paske-Smith, *Japanese Traditions of Christianity*, p.49. He writes that the account of the rebellion is taken from a copy of the *Far East*, a magazine once published in Yokohama. These texts he mentions include the *Shimabara Kassen-ki* (A Record of the Battle of Shimabara), *Amakusa Monogatari* (The Tale of Amakusa) - both of which were derived from the *Shimabara-ki* (The Record of Shimabara) written in Edo in 1640, *Amakusa Sodo* (The Amakusa Disturbances), *Nanto Henran-ki* (The Record of Riot of the Southern Island), *Shimabara-Amakusa Nikki* (The Diary of Shimabara and Amakusa), and the *Shimabara Ikki Matsukura-ki* (The Matsukura's Record of the Shimabara Riot).

18. Paske-Smith writes that "although none can be accepted as the true original, all are sufficiently alike to allow the identification of names and places." (p.46)


21. The translation that is used here is that of George Elison in *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*. Elison's translation is based on a number of extant editions, mainly from three copies of the early Edo period woodblock imprint. According to Elison, neither the place nor the date of publication of this copy of the *Kirishitan Monogatari* is dated, but the text itself has been dated to around Kan’ei 16 (1639). There is some confusion among scholars to the dating. While this text is dated 1639, Paske-Smith, writing in the early twentieth century, is under the assumption that there are no Japanese accounts until one hundred years after the eradication of Christianity. But he is nevertheless correct in respect to the traditional literary aspects of his account of the Shimabara Rebellion.

22. Elison characterises the *Kirishitan Monogatari* as having a mixed tone, where

   literary crudities accompany serious Buddhist homilies, and fantastic stories of Christian practices that reek of evil are followed by a moderate account of the Shimabara Uprising. The strident inconsistencies of style support the assumption that the anonymous author was actually an anonymous collective. In any case the cliché is cast from a collective cultural mould. (Elison, p.7.)


24. According to Elison, a bibliography lists 113 items in this category, and in Kyoto alone several variants to the same monogatari can be seen. See p.213.

25. Elison, p.213.


28. Elison, p.i.

29. I. Morris, p.176.

30. Elison explains that Buddhism was encouraged throughout Japan, noting that in 1642 the advocate of "ferocious Zen," Suzuki Shosan, appeared in the Shimabara and Amakusa area to found temples and preach anti-Christian sermons. In each temple he left a pamphlet of *Ha Kirishitan* (Christians Countered) which outlined how "Buddhist philosophical pattern which the Christians had sought to construe as void and bereft of reliability." Elison, p.7

31. Thelle, in *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan*, p.9, writes that the *Kirishitan monogatari* was composed by a Buddhist monk, while Elison contends it as being written anonymously.


33. R. Hildreth, *Japan: As It Was and Is* (Boston, 1855) The impetus for such undertaking was the opening of Japan in 1850s. In his introduction, Hildreth writes:

   On collecting materials for a biography of the first explorers and planters of New England and Virginia, I was carried to Japan, where I happened to arrive (in the spirit) almost simultaneously with Commodore Perry’s expedition.

34. See T. Yokoyama, *Japan in the Victorian Mind*. Yokoyama provides insight into how Japan was constructed in the British periodical in the mid-19th century. He identifies particular trends in the production of knowledge about Japan in the British press by focusing on the archive of the Edinburgh publishers William Blackwood & Sons, which had serialized the earliest accounts of English travellers in 19th century Japan. Yokoyama shows trends in how information is affected at the editorial level, and how this was reflected back to the realm of authorship. Besides identifying how raw information about Japan never appeared in its original complexity and that the editorial process often smoothed out rough edges to the point where the piece was changed entirely in tone and emphasis, Yokoyama argues that gaps and spaces were supplemented with anachronistic historical accounts such as those by Kaempfer. These writers were shown to be also strongly influenced by earlier historical and traveller’s accounts. The most interesting point which Yokoyama makes revolves around the role of people who
had never been to Japan in producing popular images of the country. The lack of personal experience made editors and proof-readers more ready to resort to old clichés and made all accounts susceptible to editorial influence. Yokoyama devotes an entire chapter of his study to the effect that editors had on early accounts of Britons to Japan. In it he writes:

... it is clear that a magazine article on Japan or its reprint edition could well have been a product of much group effort in the sense that it is difficult to attribute the contents of such publications in the main to the pen of the author who actually experienced the country. The notion about "the public" was fairly important to all who were concerned with the work; the direction of the reading public's interest was often discussed and certainly Japan was regarded as a risky topic in the publishing business.

According to Yokoyama, the result was that censorship and editorial proof-reading/tailoring was left to individuals who had little or no experience with Japan at all. Yokoyama stresses that the reading public of magazines and other periodicals, in the eyes of these authors and editors, often seemed to insist on certain clichés about Japan, or respond vividly to familiar metaphors and similes regarding things Japanese. As press time came nearer, or pressure for stories on Japan became greater, or profit margins became narrower, editors and writers were forced to resort to highly edited accounts or to rework old stereotyped perceptions to satisfy demand.


36. Yokoyama, p.156.


38. For an excellent collection of these letters and documents, see *They Came to Japan: An Anthology of European Reports on Japan, 1543-1640*, edited by M. Cooper (Berkeley, 1965).

39. M. Paske-Smith, in *Japanese Traditions of Christianity* (Kobe, nd) stated around the turn of the twentieth century:

Owing to the rigour with which all native documents, pictures and letters [in Japan] were systemically destroyed at the time of the persecutions, there are hardly any contemporary records of Christianity from the Japanese side. Historians have had to depend largely on the annual letters and reports which it was customary for the Jesuits and other missionaries to send home to their principals in Europe and India. (p.2)

40. Exner, p.44.


45. Anesaki, "Writings on Martyrdom in Kirishitan Literature," p.23. Anesaki continues by saying that the majority if the works were written by missionaries in their own language, but there were some told to them by fellow Kirishitans who were Japanese. The original Japanese letters are not extant but rather exist as translations in missionary accounts.


47. Yokoyama, p.xxi.

Chapter 4: The Shimabara Rebellion
and the Japan of the 1830s

This final chapter focuses upon the implications of four particular pictorial choices made during production of the Akizuki screens in the 1830s and attempts to explicate what such choices may have signified. At first, the chapter will address the significance of choosing an established pictorial form of depicting battles for the Shimabara screens. How the narrative forms that structured the primary sources might have been adapted and reapplied to suit the contemporary context will be an issue that will be considered. The remaining two areas of analysis revolve around explicit anomalies in the screens' representation. These anomalies involve instances where the artists changed, and even omitted, important details of the rebellion described in those Japanese literary accounts to which the commissioned historians and artists turned. In pursuing these disparities, we discover significant aspects concerning the Japanese socio-political world in the 1830s.

Although the artists of the Akizuki screens set forth a clear political and ideological message by employing a pictorial and narrative formula that carried with it certain moral connotations, there is a need to understand why such a statement was necessary at this particular time. By assessing the screens in terms of the social and cultural politics of the 1830s in respect to evidence in the screens' delineation of the Shimabara Rebellion, central issues and concerns of the ruling aristocracy come to the fore.

To Recover a Lost Age

In both screens of the Shimabara Rebellion, the exploits of the samurai are glorified and glamorized. For example, the screen of the procession by Kitsuki Yojin shows the Kuroda army
marching to battle with their battle standards flying proudly in the morning air. (figs.1&16) The soldiers appear indistinguishable from each other, except for those with cartouches which identify them as important participants or belonging to a particular detachment of the army. (fig.18) Together, they are presented as a colourful unified collective, with each warrior bound to a common purpose by traditional moral codes and by an ingrained sense of loyalty to each other and their feudal masters. Ominous and seemingly filled with resolve, the soldiers are depicted marching in their armour and accoutrements through a golden mist that not only emphasizes their military might, but also reaffirms and highlights the nature of bushido or the way of the warrior.1 (fig.19) The screen representing the assault by Saito Shuho continues this glorification of the samurai way. (fig.2) Now removed from the civility and intellectual nobility of court life, the samurai finds himself in the midst of the disorientation, bedlam, and grim reality that is the battlefield. (fig.21) But the samurai is portrayed as rising admirably to the task at hand, fearlessly risking death and injury for the higher good. In the individual episodes which fill the screens, the action is intense and furious. (fig.25) As we move from one scene to another within the painting - from warriors clambering up the walls of Hara Castle like spiders, to scenes of swordplay and bitter hand-to-hand fighting - there is an impression that once the samurai are allowed to complete the task assigned to them, normality can again return to the world. (fig.22-25) Yet the imagined reality that the screens depict was, by the 19th century, far removed from the current circumstances of the samurai class.

Despite enjoying two and a half centuries of reunification, Japan had emerged in the early 19th century as a country with 260 individual domains (bakuhans), each with its own capital, bureaucracy, army, and taxation system. Though the nation was indeed a single entity, it could not have been by any means socially or economically coherent despite efforts by the military government in Edo to control the various bakuhans and the daimyo (feudal lords) through such arrangements as the sankin kotai (the system of residence where feudal lords and their vassals had to spend alternating
years between the capital and their own domains). Over time many in the political and social elite, as well as writers and social critics of the time, realized that Japan was not the stable or virtuous place that the Tokugawa progenitors had originally intended.

The root of the problems for the Tokugawa Regime lay in the central government’s inability to improve or adjust the political controls over the two and a half centuries of its rule. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that Japan’s mainly agrarian economy, though it had grown considerably since the early 1600s, was not sufficiently broad or diverse enough to meet changes in society. These changes emerged for the most part after the rise of castle towns, which attracted merchants and artisans, and which featured temples and shrines to cater to the warrior’s needs. Prior to 1550, nearly everyone had lived in farming or fishing villages and Japan had only two centres with over 50,000 people - Kyoto, the ancient capital, and the nearby port of Sakai. But after 1550 with increasing stability at local levels, a period of extraordinary growth ensued. New cities began springing up across the landscape around the castle towns of each domain. With changes in Japanese demographics, adjustments were necessary to meet the increasing needs of the ruling class, whose size and standard of living did not remain static, and to respond to the rising expectations of the common classes. From the end of the 17th century, as commerce began to grow independent of bakufu control, the newly-evolving consumer-based urban based economy was proving to be increasingly incompatible with the established Tokugawa style of agrarianism.

The withdrawal of the samurai from the countryside to castle towns and cities had resulted in a fundamental change in the nature of the ruling class. Previously, the samurai were spread throughout the country, living in villages on fiefs granted by their daimyo. There they had responsibilities for levying taxes, administering justice, keeping the peace, and preparing for possible war. With the growth of urban centres however, the warrior’s tie to the land had been severed. Now often instead of being paid with a parcel of land, the samurai was paid with a cash or rice stipend. With peace
throughout the country and their ties to the land gone, the samurai had become feudal bureaucrats. This transformation of the feudal ruling class into a landless bureaucratic elite therefore gave the samurai title without private economic or political power.

With feudal lords and their retainers required to come and go to Edo through the sankin kotai, thereby necessitating the maintainence of two residences, costs for living were high. The amount needed to support this arrangement often exceeded over half of a domain’s tax revenue. The central bakufu also added to the financial burdens by requiring the daimyo to participate in funding public works and expensive tasks. In addition to these expenses, the financial difficulties of the daimyo were often aggravated by such calamitous events as floods, droughts, famines, and fires, and recurrent periods of inflation that seemed to be prevalent in the closing decades of the 17th century and through to the next. Debt-ridden daimyo were forced to reduce the stipends of their vassals, making financial matters a constant concern for all samurai. In the face of fluctuations in the exchange rate for rice and rising standards of living and inflationary pressures, samurai of all ranks, in order to sustain their financial obligations, were often forced to sell armour, sword, and other valuables at the usurious rates of pawn brokers, and borrow heavily from merchants, in order to survive. According to historian Harry Harootunian,

At the end of the eighteenth century scores of critics were commenting that most samurai had lost their military skills and knowledge of weapons through infrequent practice but had acquired vast expertise in securing cash and loans."

Significantly, the financial plight of the samurai class was in direct contrast to the rise of a consumer-oriented society based in the new large urban centres. Besides running many samurai and their feudal lords to financial ruin, such a money-based society also raised the level of expectation of all segments of the society. Individuals, once bound to fixed social positions, had new-found freedom and mobility in these urban centres. It was this fluidity of social boundaries that prompted writers and social critics to denounce a culture devoted to expenditure, extravagance, luxury and surplus
consumption. To social critics, there was nothing more threatening to fixed class positions than the endless erosions inflicted by samurai and peasants who sought to imitate the cultural styles of townsfolk, or townsfolk who used their wealth to flout both social and political convention. However, even more alarming than the blurring of social boundaries was a shift in moral outlook that seemed to be rampant among the ruling class.

It became obvious that what emerged was a gradual subservience of the samurai to the wealthy merchant class. The samurai, who had once stood as role models, were now gradually being replaced by merchants, businessmen, brokers and moneylenders. In the scramble for profit or just mere survival, many daimyo were forced to appropriate the stipends of their vassals, who were themselves often already in debt to financiers of lower classes. This created, in effect, a cycle of debt, expropriation, and repayment that affected the lower orders, inverting the relationship of influence and control. With the rise of such an economy, money became the main determinant in social existence and the central focus and driving force of all classes, replacing earlier notions of moral obligation and a "traditional" value system. In addition, the spread of an aristocratic style downwards and the apparent democratization of taste among those who could afford leisure and luxury meant that the daimyo and the esteemed classes no longer possessed those emblems that attested to the intangibility of superior character. As a result, contemporary custom and the emergence of a money economy undermined the system of fixed relationships and the patterns of conduct expected of people of each rank.

Viewed in the context of contemporary social and political economy, the Akizuki Screens reveal another narrative. Here the Shimabara Rebellion becomes indelibly linked to the current context by acting as a benchmark. It served to remind those living in the 1830s of the accomplishments and moral fortitude of their ancestors, and of the duty to uphold and preserve a traditional way of life, one where everyone had an established and fixed place in society and was bound by unquestioning honour.
and obligation. In commemorating an event that figured prominently in ensuring Tokugawa hegemony, and using a pictorial language that connoted heroism and military tradition, the screens in fact functioned to articulate the social reality of the upper classes by stressing the contrary. By showcasing military conquest and themes of tradition, obligation, and moral order, in a time when such concepts were quickly losing their validity, the screens in fact revealed the inability of the Japanese aristocracy to maintain their traditional positions of wealth and prestige in a society which they realized was spinning out of control and slipping ever away from their grasp.

The Noble Peasant

In placing the screens in the context of the 1830s, there is a danger of being presumptuous and overly-deterministic in applying sweeping historical generalizations concerning a pair of screens produced in Japan's outlying domains. While the scope of this paper prevents me from pursuing more intensive research into the relationship of the domains of Kyushu to that of the bakufu in Edo, or measuring more precisely the effects of the ukiyo mentality and transformations in social convention on the population of these outer domains, other pictorial evidence strongly supports the premise that the screens articulated concerns of the samurai class in the early 19th century. In further exploring aspects of the social and political reality of the 1830s channelled through these specific details of the screens' representation of the Shimabara Rebellion, this chapter will argue that the screens do reflect the growing apprehensions of the ruling elite in a period of social change.

In reading a detailed literary account of the Shimabara Rebellion, such as that in Paske-Smith's Japanese Traditions of Christianity, published around the turn of the 20th century20, an important point concerning the condition of the peasant rebels is stressed. Usually the peasant rebels are acknowledged to have been close to starvation when the Tokugawa forces initialized their final
assault. Lord Matsudaira Nobutsuna, who was sent by the Edo government to replace General Itakura as the leader of the Tokugawa forces, is believed to have chosen to starve the peasants rather than fight them and run the risk of further defeat and humiliation. As described in The Nobility of Failure by Ivan Morris, the peasants initially had great success warding off the Tokugawa forces. Interestingly, as Morris argues, this success did not come from their own military prowess, but ostensibly from the incompetence and disorganization of besieging army. As Morris writes:

... the attackers suffered from many weaknesses that prevented them from achieving an easy victory. In the beginning they were incompetently led and their morale was poor, so that they displayed far less skill and courage than the insurgents. Above all, the attackers were not a united force but comprised seven main units form different fiefs. As the impatience and tension mounted, there was growing antagonism, notably between the Hosokawa and the Kuroda forces, which erupted in internecine quarrels and even killings. The Shogun himself was obliged to issue a reprimand insisting that they concentrate on fighting the common enemy.

Contrary to Morris however, the screens do not hint at any dissention among the Kuroda forces. In fact, as identified by the cartouches painted by the artists, participants from both the Hosokawa and Kuroda clans are shown fighting with great camaraderie against that "common enemy."

In Japanese accounts, such as those in the Kirishitan monogatari (c.1640) or the "Shimabara Rebellion" (c.1640-50) the peasants were either described as demonic or possessed by the evil religion of Christianity. Yet in the representation in the Akizuki Screens, the peasants are shown to be healthy, connoting physical strength and the potential of a strong defense. While the rebels do appear to be scruffy and ill-prepared in comparison to their samurai counterparts, food is in abundant supply and the insurgents look robust despite having been under seige for nearly four months. Even at this last stage of the battle they are portrayed as putting up a tough fight and exerting a noble effort, taking many government casualties. (fig.22&26) This portrayal was necessary to convey the idea that the victory was a hard-earned one, and that the defending forces were not merely a hodge-podge of peasants and farmers armed with wooden sticks and hurling excrement, but rather a formidable organized fighting force.
Such a depiction of the peasant becomes much more understandable when considered in context of the politics of the peasantry in the late 18th and early 19th century. Since the peasantry supported the national economy, and was vital in generating revenue for daimyo expenditures, keeping this sector of the population in check was crucial for Tokugawa agrarianism to function properly. The new money economy had, however, affected the peasantry as well, increasing their standard of living and heightening their levels of expectation. Despite the attempts of the military government to control migration to the cities and to keep villages insulated from the "extravagant" ways of the cities, with changes in the economic reality many peasants had the power by the 1830s to purchase items that the authorities regarded as luxury goods. Though taxation was burdensome, there has been scholarship to show that the ruling class was not uniformly ruthless in its financial demands. But there are instances where some daimyo forced the tax rate to exceed 50 percent, and in a few extreme instances, the peasants were forced to pay 70 percent of their harvest. But it appears that despite the financial pressures facing them the bakufu and many daimyo did not tax the peasants as severely as they might have.

But this is not to imply that the Japanese peasantry as a whole led an easy existence. Throughout the 18th century the population did not increase significantly, and occasionally even decreased. This indicates that the vast majority of the peasantry was leading at best a marginal existence. The population was held down by periodic famines and epidemics, and by abortion and infanticide. One of the worst famines occurred in 1732, when locusts descended upon western Japan, consuming the entire rice crop of the region. Known as the Kyoho famine, contemporary estimates had 969,900 people dying from starvation.

The peasant class did not remain passive when confronted with exploitation by the ruling class and growing economic hardships. Studies show that between 1590 and 1867 there were nearly 3,000 peasant disturbances of varying size and intensity. Since the Shimabara Rebellion, incidents of
peasant uprisings had in fact continued, with the number of uprisings rising significantly in the latter half of the period. During the early years of the Tokugawa Period, these uprisings had tended to occur in poorer areas, but later gradually spread to more affluent ones as well. Interestingly, in the years between 1830 to 1840, the years in which the Akizuki screens were being produced, the greatest number of peasant uprisings occurred throughout the country since the Tokugawa government ascension to power in the early years of the 17th century.

These uprisings in the latter half of the period had grown in scope from those in previous years. For example, Mikiso Hane in *Premodern Japan* writes that in the year 1738 eighty-four thousand peasants in Waki Province participated in a revolt against over-taxation. In 1754, one hundred and sixty-eight thousand peasants were involved in a similar uprising and in 1764, two hundred thousand peasants participated in another uprising against the authorities. One of the largest revolts of the 19th century occurred in 1831 (when the Akizuki screens were in their planning stage) when one hundred thousand peasants rioted, demanding a reduction in taxes and a repeal of monopolistic policy in marketing industrial crops. Many scholars have speculated why there was more peasant unrest in the latter half of the Tokugawa Period when more food and commodities were general available, than in the first. Hane believes that peasant dissention during this time was based on a number of factors. First he believes a partial answer can be found in the three major famines which occurred in the Tokugawa Period: the Kyoho famine of 1732-1733, the Temmi famine of 1783-1887, and the Tempo famine of 1833-1836. In the years in and immediately after these famines, the number of peasant disturbances increased dramatically. A second reason can be attributed to the growing difficulties associated with the government and the feudal domains, which led to widespread inter-domain migration and movement to the cities. In addition, Hane notes that greater productivity and an improved standard of living enjoyed by the village leaders and towns people must have raised the expectations of the peasants while making them more militant. A final reason that Hane provides is
that the peasants were becoming bolder in challenging the ruling class because the latter had lost many of their militaristic qualities. According to Hane, "The samurai were no longer hardy warriors; they were more like gentleman-scholars who had been softened by urban living."  

It is important to stress, however, in considering these uprisings that the peasants appear not to have been motivated by any large scale effort to radically change the social or political order. The government's success in keeping the peasants isolated and politically ignorant was an important factor here. While in some instances of revolt the peasants succeeded in gaining specific concessions, in all cases of violent or illegal action, the leaders were punished because any sort of conspiracy or group action was strictly prohibited. Torture was often the chosen means to gaining information concerning possible subversives or leaders who might instigate peasant revolts.

The importance of the peasant in Tokugawa society cannot be understated. The peasantry played a crucial role in the economic well-being of the country. Any imbalance or significant change within the peasant population would naturally result in serious disruption of Japanese society. In relation to the Akizuki screens, this concern with contemporary changes in the modern peasant population emerges in the screens' focus, or lack of it, on Christianity. With Japanese primary documents continually emphasizing the pernicious qualities and underhanded nature of the foreign religion, the dispassionate treatment of Christianity in the screens might seem to come as a surprise. Rather than a pictorial representation of Tokugawa authorities protecting Japan from Christianity and influence from abroad, the Akizuki screens focus on the procession to the battle and a commemoration of heroic action and virtuous behaviour. As the unpredictability and desperation of battle engulfs the combatants on both sides, and the torsos of those decapacitated are shown to lie together indistinguishable from the next, Christianity's presence, both visibly and symbolically, seems minimal, if measurable at all. In the Akizuki screens, Christian symbols, if they are to be interpreted as such, are depicted are in terms of Buddhist iconography. At the centre of the ramparts, presiding over the
confusion that rages below and around, a *bosatsu*-like figure intended probably to represent the Virgin Mary sits stoically. (fig.28) Banners with calligraphic characters *Ten tei* (Sky God), which in this case is perhaps meant to be interpreted as "Christ", line the castle walls, their depiction conjuring up not open defiance, but rather aesthetic decoration. The religious figure and the banners are then not the central fulcrum on which the balance of the conflict rests, as is often portrayed in the literary sources, but only as a means to delineate or distinguish the opposing sides, much in the same manner that the cartouches on the screens serve to identify the important or distinguished participants in the painting.

The omission or misrepresentation of Christian symbols can perhaps be attributed to the fact that such images had been destroyed and banned for over nearly two hundred years and were unavailable, at least in terms of the making of this screen, for reference. However, another possible reason for such a seemingly muted and limited reference to Christianity exists. Though Christians were still occasionally being discovered and persecuted right through to the 1860s, the religion was no longer regarded as an imminent threat, nor viewed as symbolic of the chaos and dangers which threatened from overseas. Fear of contact with the outside world was no longer a relevant concern for ensuring Tokugawa hegemony in the 19th century. Any possible differences or points of contention were now being based on social or political concerns, rather than religious beliefs or the fear of outside influence and control.

Domestic concerns and worries concerning the existing class structure overshadowed fears of foreign incursion, even though in the late decades of the 18th century foreign vessels were encroaching on Japanese inland waters with greater frequency. As a result, the pugnacious opponent to Tokugawa authority in the Akizuki screens was not the peasant inspired by a sinister foreign religion set on conquering Japan, but rather, and significantly, the socially disruptive commoner who had abandoned their position in the social hierarchy to pursue the freedoms, pleasures, and profits of a better life.
The visual emphasis in Saito's depiction of the peasantry gives form to concerns about changes occurring in early 19th century Japanese society. The ambiguous, almost indifferent, treatment of Christianity on the screens illustrates how changing social norms and concerns affected the rebellion as a symbolic representation. This transformation is readily apparent when the screens are compared to earlier accounts such as the *Kirishitan monogatari* or those accounts in 19th century Western histories of Japan. Although the representation on the screens shares narrative features with earlier Japanese literary accounts, there is a marked difference in some aspects of the story which were emphasized or down played by the artists in 1838.

The most significant and interesting of these is the omission of Amakusa Shiro, the teenaged boy who, in popular lore, is the messianic figure who commanded the forty-thousand peasant dissenters against the authorities of Tokugawa Japan. In some instances he is regarded as the ideal Christian, an angelic boy wonder, endowed with miraculous celestial powers. In others he is viewed as the *axis mundi* of the Christian menace on Earth. Whether Amakusa Shiro truly existed, and the extent of his role in the whole rebellion, is not certain. Japanese historian Ivan Morris, in *The Nobility of Failure*, makes a study of Japanese heroes throughout history whose fame was based on failure rather than success. In a chapter entitled "The Japanese Messiah," Morris draws together writings and legends that have emerged around Amakusa Shiro. His work is useful because he taps into in the currents of folklore, fiction, and popular culture in an attempt to capture a purely Japanese notion of heroism, nobility, and sacrifice. From his study, a rich and colourful picture emerges of the persona of Amakusa Shiro, a "youthful hero... shrouded in factual obscurity." According to Morris, Amakusa Shiro is recognized as a hero in the eyes of many Japanese because, armed with the courage of sincerity, he and his followers struck out against the overwhelming might of the feudal levies and, after an initial periods of brilliant
success and months of brave but hopeless resistance, went down in tragic defeat. The totality of their collapse emphasized the purity of their motives, and earned them the "boganbiiki" sympathy that is traditionally accorded to the loser. In one of the great massacres of premodern history the insurgents were all slaughtered; the ancient castle by the sea where they had entrenched themselves and fought with such zeal was razed to the ground, and soon nothing was left but the wind blowing through the ruins to remind passersby of the transience, poignancy, and aware (pathos) of human effort.

In Morris' treatment, all attention is centred and focused upon the cult of Amakusa Shiro and his followers, rather than the contemporary politics or social issues involved. Individuality arises to overshadow the religious, political, or economic, with emphasis on a metaphoric construction of good versus evil and the hapless underdog against overwhelming odds.

What is particularly applicable here is that Morris does not dwell on the religious or political causes and implications of Amakusa Shiro's existence, but rather makes an attempt to create a history derived from the narrative discourse which structures Japanese folklore and legend. Morris does not hide the fact that much of what is known of Amakusa Shiro is contrived and maintained through songs, poems, or tales, that have, over the centuries, transformed and elevated the mythical young Christian into a cultural folk hero. Morris's aim is not to discover and dispute Amakusa Shiro's existence or his role in the Shimabara Rebellion, but rather to draw together sources, and produce as literary a depiction of Amakusa Shiro as possible. This presentation of Amakusa Shiro, when placed especially in relation to other accounts, provides a means of elucidating Japanese social values and of understanding desired personal attributes, and forms of heroic behaviour to be emulated. Morris concludes his study by stating:

Amakusa Shiro's career, bizarre and nebulous though it was, fits at almost every point into the pattern of Japanese failed heroism. He fought bravely for a doomed cause and after the usual period of early success led his followers to unconditional disaster. . . Amakusa Shiro appears in the legend as a pure, idealistic youth, endowed with the preternatural gifts and romantic charm. . . who led the downtrodden peasants of Kyushu in an absurd act of defiance against the forces of authority. . . The conquering general, Lord Matsudaira, survived to enjoy the rewards of his success, but never came to be adulated as a hero and has been almost
totally forgotten except by students of Tokugawa history; for the great man of Shimabara was, inevitably, the loser.

The connection of Amakusa Shiro to the contemporary context of the early 1830s lies in the ideological problems that grew out of the conflict between the theory and practice of the Tokugawa system.

Richard Slotkin, in his work on the importance of myth and national identity in the United States during the 19th century, argues that ideology is articulated most completely and effectively through myth. He states that

Myth does not argue its ideology, it exemplifies it. It projects models of good or heroic behaviour that reinforce the values of ideology, and affirm as good the distribution of authority and power that ideology rationalizes.\textsuperscript{40}

To this he adds,

The language of myth is indirect, metaphorical, and narrative in structure. It renders ideology in the form of symbol, exemplum, and fable, and poetically evokes fantasy, memory, and sentiment.\textsuperscript{41}

Taken in this context, Amakusa Shiro represented a paradox for the Japanese elite at this time, and this paradox is played out in the screens' representation. While Amakusa personified many qualities of the ultimate Japanese hero, he was also simultaneously recognized as standing up to Tokugawa oppression. The myth that Amakusa Shiro represented countered directly the ideology that the Tokugawa wanted to propound. By understanding the state of cultural politics and the ideological dilemma faced by the Japanese aristocracy and samurai class in the 1830s, the reason for the absence of Amakusa Shiro from the screens' representation becomes all the more clear.

In late 18th century and early 19th century Japan, writers and social critics seemed to be concerned more with the disintegrating sense of morality that came with the urbanization of Japanese society than with the loss of prestige and political clout, and lack of economic prosperity, suffered by the samurai class.\textsuperscript{42} Confusion combined with resignation lay at the heart of the dilemma - the yearning for bygone days and at the same time the realization that the past was unrecoverable. As
early as the turn of the 18th century, the hierarchical relationship between the ruler and the ruled was beginning to break down, and the overall social system seemed unable to adjust to the complexity of the emerging urban environment. A new consumer culture blurred status lines and dissolved fixed relationships by fostering play and plural identities. Though there were calls for the reinstatement of a traditional moral order twice during the course of the 18th century and once in the 1840s, such efforts were of little consequence.43

To understand the impact that the growth of cities and consumer culture had on the national psyche and social boundaries, it is important to grasp the fundamental concepts of Tokugawa ideology and the philosophies of neo-Confucianism asserted during the years of unification in the early 17th century.44 Writers and thinkers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, "fearful of the spectre of disorder and fragmentation" that seemed to be creeping back into Japanese society were looking back to the early Tokugawa period, when virtuous leaders had ended a century of civil strife and had established conditions of protracted peace and prosperity.45 Tokugawa ideology was initially founded by neo-Confucian philosophers on a concept of national unity through moral legitimacy and the concept of the heavenly way (tendo) that "sought to reshape the human order into a microcosm of nature." 46 Confucianism was not new, but its concepts were reworked and refined to suit the new society.

Neo-Confucianism focused on familial relations as the proper model of government, with relations between parent and child being analogous to those between ruler and subject.47 The ruling elite wanted to move Japan away from fragmentation, endless competition, selfishness and disharmony by emphasizing the good of society as a whole. This was expressed through terms like "heaven" (ten), "realm" or "universe" (tenka) "public interest" and the "public world" (kugai) which were fused and incorporated to form a metaphysical system which "promised to provide a cosmic paradigm to perfect order."48 As historian Harry Harootunian has also noted,
By establishing nature or the cosmos as the model for society, the Tokugawa believed they had found a way to totalize the dispersed parts of the political realm - autonomous and semi-independent feudal domains - according to a principle of hierarchical organization. To this he adds,

... society was now made to appear as a natural unity, in which the various parts were organized hierarchically, as in nature, to constitute a seamless whole. The differences that naturally existed signified only that some people were morally superior to others and were thus empowered to rule, just as some species were higher in nature than others, some stars nearer and so forth. But regardless of where a person stood in the social hierarchy, each had to perform morally; their conduct had to exemplify ethics, which meant that they had to recognize their role in the pecking order and prosecute their duties accordingly.

As a result, the ability to ensure harmony was preserved. The strict social divisions - with each group fulfilling its obligations within the hierarchical society - were not only needed, but crucial to the functioning of this benevolent paternalistic form of government. With the passing of time, however, the political reality of the feudal system could not measure up to this concept of the universe, and as society and the economy changed and shifted, this conception of the political nation proved inapplicable and soon even anachronistic.

In this context, the issue of Amakusa Shiro was probably very problematic for the artists of the Akizuki screens in 1838. At once he stood for all that was good and desirable in a warrior, yet at the same time he was probably recognized as giving up his life while standing up to the Tokugawa regime that was bent on eradicating him and his supporters. By the 1830s the philosophy, ideology, and mythical constructs which had rallied the warriors against the peasant rebels two hundred years earlier and which later had served as a fulcrum on which Tokugawa society had balanced, seemed to be failing both its ruling elite, and the lower orders by proving inadequate in guiding the Japanese population through times of change. By excluding Amakusa Shiro, the screens' artists seemed to avoid having to deal with all the worthy heroic characteristics which were embodied in the hero. As such they denied the mythical qualities which he exemplified, and more importantly avoided the risk of
reawakening the spectre of anti-Tokugawa sentiment which Amakusa Shiro was seen to represent and symbolize. In the screens as a result, any notions of heroism or divine myth are deflected onto the position of Lord Kuroda and his army.

The dissemination of popular culture that began as early as the 17th century, the much celebrated and maligned quality of life known as the "floating world" (ukiyo), seemed by the turn of the 19th Century to loom over the Tokugawa house and imperil the traditional moral fabric. With the ever increasing blurring of the fixed relationships and social categories, the rise of a consumer economy controlled not by the established aristocracy but by the lowly merchant class, the proliferation of social groups and occupations that focused on self-gratification and play which only decades earlier would have existed on the margins of society or not at all, contemporary social critics were prophesying impending doom for a way of life that had existed for over two hundred years. In attempting to curb such excess and undesirable behaviour, the Tokugawa regime "responded to innovation with increased rigidity and thereby fossilized a tradition that it professed to defend." What emerged was, as Hartoonian describes, "the inability of the Tokugawa to control discourse and maintain the power of their own social imaginary over the experience of a lived existence that increasingly demanded accountability in representation." The Akizuki Screens, then, rather than commemorating the establishment of the new Japan which had occurred two hundred years earlier, served to mark the beginning of the end of the current regime.
Chapter Four Notes:


   Bushido, the Way of the Warrior, was supposed to be primarily concerned with the inner spirit of the samurai. The term itself is not particularly ancient: originally it was the Way of the Bow and Horse, having much in common with the Western idea of chivalry. Bushido was an attempt to inculcate the men of power with a sense of responsibility and kindness, as well as physical and moral courage. (Newman, p.6)

2. For an in-depth description of the early institutional measures instigated by the Tokugawa regime to reorganize and reform the political system see G. Samson, A History of Japan 1615-1867 (Stanford, 1963), pp.29-34. Briefly, there were several strategies for maintaining hegemony over the country employed by the Tokugawa regime. One was a rearrangement of the feudal domains, where the tozama (outer) daimyo who had lost in battle of Sekigahara of 1600 could be placed in more remote areas or among the shimpan (related) and fudai (hereditary) daimyo who had supported and fought for the Tokugawa. Another was the sankin kotai system. And finally the policy of seclusion was implemented to prevent the military and economic aid from possibly entering the country from abroad. Such punitive measures and arrangements were necessary to prevent the feudal lords and their samurai from forming coalitions which might have challenged Tokugawa supremacy. Principles of Neo-Confucianism were employed ideologically to substantiate such social reforms and programs, functioning to dissolve the effects of temporal division that had "scarred the political terrain of the 16th century." See H. Harootunian, "Cultural Politics in Tokugawa Japan" in Undercurrents in the Floating World: Censorship and Japanese Prints (New York, 1991), p.12.


5. Pyle, pp.4-5.


7. Pyle, p.26. In addition, many samurai became ronin (masterless samurai) since many had that symbolic tie to the land broken. Samson believes that up to 500,000 samurai were deprived of their masters and a livelihood (See Samson, pp.32-34).

8. Hane, p.191.


11. Hane, p.190.

13. Cities, Edo in particular, had grown large because of the political requirements that the bakufu had instituted for the sankin kotai rotation of the daimyo. Accompanied by vassals, servants, and hangers-on, this circulating elite had stimulated the enormous growth of service and trade organizations to supply their estates and needs, and commoners in search of the city's higher wages headed for the urban metropolis. (Jansen, p.63).

14. Traditional Japanese society was a hierarchy of classes: samurai, peasantry, artisan, and merchant (See Sansom, p.29-30). In regards to the new social order, Harootunian writes,

People were to occupy these categories involuntary and perform specific duties invested with the necessity of moral imperative throughout their lives. (Harootunian p.7).

15. Harootunian, p.17.


17. Pyle, p.36.

18. Pyle, p.30-33 and Hane, p.196.


20. M. Paske-Smith, Japanese Traditions of Christianity (Kobe, n.d.).


23. Hane, p.194.


25. Hane, p.196.


28. Not only did the number of uprisings rise in number; they also gradually evolved in nature, paralleling shifts and changes in the peasant class. See W.D.Burton, "Peasant Struggle in Japan 1590-1760" in The Journal of Peasant Studies (Vol. 5 No.2 Jan 1978), pp.135-171.

29. See H. Borton, Peasant Uprisings in Japan of the Tokugawa Period (New York, 1968), Appendix Chart II, p. 211.

30. Hane, p.198.

31. Hane, pp.198-99.

32. Hane, p.199.


34. Hane, p.199.


36. In James Murdoch's History of Japan, one description is as follows:

The rebel generalissimo - a samurai youth of 17, Masuda Shiro by name - was a Christian who preached and celebrated mass twice a week; all round the parapet (of the castle of Hara) were a multitude of small flags with red crosses, and many small and some large crosses, while war-cries were "Jesus," "Maria," and "St. Iago," - the latter the battle-cry of Spain. (p.652).

Morris writes that Amakusa Shiro remains "a mysterious figure" with "heroic credentials. . . buttressed by reports of miraculous powers" such as the ability to call flying birds and make them lay eggs on his palm, the ability to levitate, or run over waves. See Morris, pp.143-45.

37. In researching for this chapter, Morris relies almost exclusively on two sources for information on Amakusa Shiro, neither of which can be considered as being primary sources. These are Amakusa Shiro (Tokyo, 1967) by A. Ebisawa, and Amakusa Tokisada (Tokyo, 1960) by A. Okada. Morris also relies heavily from the chapter on the Shimabara Rebellion by James Murdoch in History of Japan Vol.2.

38. Morris, p.143. This obscurity is due to the annihilation of his headquarters in Hara Castle, the slaughtering of his supporters and family, and the destruction of all rebel archives. What we know of him is pieced together through brief and imprecise official accounts. As Morris puts it, "In
consequence, while Amakusa Shiro belongs to a well-documented period, and while there is no question about his historical existence, he remains a mysterious figure, poised... on the borderline between fact and legend." (Morris, p.143)


41. Slotkin, p.22.

42. Harootunian, pp.8-10.

43. Harootunian, p.19.

44. Samson in History of Japan: 1615-1867 provides a succinct introduction of the trends of philosophy during the 17th century and their effect upon the political and social history of Japan. For a more specific study into the transformation of doctrine into ideology, such as that of Neo-Confucianism" see Herman Ooms, Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680 (Princeton, 1985).

45. Harootunian, p.10.

46. Harootunian, p.11.

47. Pyle, p.18.

48. Harootunian, p.11.

49. Harootunian, p.11.


51. Social critics like Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758-1829) who wrote in the late 18th century not only sought to reinforce the strict moral economies but also aimed to check what increasingly was being called "heterodox studies". But as Harootunian argues, such critics and writers seemed less concerned with getting to the root of the problem and the causes for the emergence of the new cultural space, than reaffirming the older representational scheme based upon the paradigm of nature. (p.19)

52. Jansen, p.51.

Conclusion

At first, the screens of the Shimabara Rebellion in the Akizuki Kyodo Kan seem straightforward in production and intent. By employing seemingly reliable historical documents, the artists of the screens, Kitsuki Yojin and Saito Shuho, commemorated the defeat of peasant rebels on the Shimabara Peninsula in 1638 by transforming those literary documents into a visual representation. Though the subject matter was over two hundred years old at the time of the production of the screens, a closer investigation of the painting reveals much more about early 19th century society than can be initially imagined.

By adhering to particular pictorial modes and conventions, the artists attempted to elevate their painting of the Shimabara Rebellion to the status of other similar paintings which depicted great battles of the past, and at the same time to place the Kuroda family, who had participated in the suppression of the rebellion, alongside other notable families in Japanese history. However, in the process of adapting a pictorial formula associated with the samurai class, and the narrative formula of traditional epic war or peasant tales, a set of intrinsic values and ideological formations was introduced and incorporated into the screens’ representation.

This pictorial formula and traditional narrative, however, was carefully - consciously or unconsciously - manipulated and reworked to accommodate anachronistic values and social relationships at a time when such concepts were quickly losing relevancy. In the artists’ attempt to recapture a lost past through the careful manipulation of form and detail - ranging from the organization of the painting, to the emphasis or exclusion of particular characters - what emerges is a visual object, in the guise of victorious commemoration, that is in fact reflective of the social conditions of the 1830s when the screens were made.

The discrepancies prevalent in the archive regarding the Shimabara Rebellion illustrate how
history is crafted and shaped, whether consciously enslaved to serve specific interests or shaped by various discourses or narrative forms. The pair of Akizuki screens show how this process is manifested in visual culture. Ironically, while the screens ostensibly celebrate the immense undertaking that was required to bring about a new order, the context of the 1830s in which the screens were produced reveals a more ironic significance and reading. Within twenty years, foreign ships of sail would anchor once again in Japan’s harbours, much as the great nao ships had done three hundred years earlier, with those on board expecting trade concessions and treaty ports. It would be this crisis in foreign relations, exacerbated by a failing ideological apparatus and system, and the problems already endemic to a social system so dependent on sacrosanct relationships and principles, that would ultimately reveal Japan’s position of weakness to its leadership, and to the rest of the world. Regarded in this context, the Akizuki screens actually serve to explicate the deteriorating state of centralized control by calling attention to those elements in society with which the ruling elite were in direct conflict by symbolically denying or misrepresenting them. Thus one last hidden narrative is revealed: though the peasants in Hara Castle are shown mustering for one last futile defense that would ultimately result in their demise, it was in fact the Tokugawa regime that was being primed for extinction.
Figures
Ink and colour on paper, 41.86cm x 6.83m. Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

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15. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion (The Procession)* by Kitsuki Yojin (died c. mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
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19. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion (The Procession)* by Kitsuki Yojin (died c.mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
20. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c. mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
22. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c.mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
23. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c. mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
24. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c. mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
25. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c.mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
26. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c. mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
27. Detail from the *Screen of the Shimabara Rebellion* (The Assault on Hara Castle) by Saito Shuho (died c.mid 19th century). 1838. Six-part folding screen. Ink and colour on gilded paper, 162.3 x 368.6cm. Akizuki Kyodo Kan.
35. Map of Hara Castle. Date unknown. From *Japanese Traditions of Christianity* by M. Paske-Smith (Kobe: nd.)
39. The Tomioka Monument (c. mid 17th century). Photograph c. 1900.
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Appendix A
Excerpts from Japanese Inscriptions and Literary Sources


... He had a brave heart, was upright and gentle, but decided... [in] the fourteenth year of Kanyei, the rebels who had been led astray by Jesus made their headquarters at 'The old Castle,' of Haro, in the village of Arima, in the district of Korai, in the province of Hizen. The gatherings of these multitudes, like bees and ants, was known in Yedo. Taikenko, in order to destroy them by the aid of the Daimios and samurai of all Kiushiu, gave special orders to Shigemasa that he should take command of the army and superintend the whole affair. Shigemasa took his eldest son and heir, Shigenori, and set out immediately. When he arrived he went about to view the towers and ramparts, the village and country, and from time to time carried out his deep-laid plans. On the first day of the first month of the next year, Shigemasa, in his zeal and courage, rushed impetuously into the midst of the enemy, where his helmet being crushed, and his lance broken, he in the end perished, being fifty-one years old. How deplorable! How sad! Shigenori had followed him, and harassing his soul, valiantly put forth his strength, but alas! victory and defeat are according to fate... 


The principles of Christianity are mainly established in false doctrine, and have no object than the seizure of the country. In China, not otherwise than in Japan, this sect has been interdicted. It appears that Ieyasu formerly used severe measures in order to reform the sect, but with dissimulation they cherished evil inwardly, and neither reverenced Buddhism, nor obeyed the laws of the Emperor. In the end they showed their perverse hearts as is related below. Therefore, the Shogun sent orders to the daimios of Kiushiu, and at that time the whole of the sect was destroyed, and the world (Japan) became tranquil. The many ten thousands of their heads were collected, and being divided into three lots, were buried in Nagasaki, Shimabara, and Amakusa. From that time the peace of the whole of Japan was sung, just as "In the day of the Shun, the fanned the breezes of Oio," Joy! Joy!

Nirada Shiro, of the district of Amakusa in Higo, of Japan, was a young rebel. He established the Christian sect and made known the false doctrines everywhere. Those men and women only who were disaffected formed the party. In the winter of 1636 they destroyed Buddhist and Shinto temples, burned villages and farm houses, and passed over to the district of Shimabara in Hizen, where they prepared for siege. There were more than 31,000 of them. Their immediate object was to subvert the country. Therefore all the daimios of the land hastened to the battlefield, and night and day, by sea and land, the fighting did not cease. Finally, at the end of next spring, they made a breach upon the castle, and slew and captured the evil company, great multitudes. But there was a remnant of the sect not
destroyed. In this village of this district, there were three thousand three hundred and thirty-three heads collected and buried, making a grave. . .


"Some years ago when the sect of Jesus was prohibited, there was a priest in Kamitsura in Amakusa, who, when he was driven to foreign lands, left a book of one volume call Hankan (Mirror of the Future). When we open this book we read as follows: 'Hereafter when five in five years have passed, a remarkable youth will appear in Japan. He, without study, will acquire all knowledge. This will certainly come to pass. Then the clouds will be bright along East and West. A wisteria flower will bloom from a dead tree. All men will wear the sign of the cross upon their heads, and white flags will flutter on the sea, on rivers, mountains and plains. Then the time of honouring Jesus will arrive, &c.,' We now learn, they said, from this book that the time referred to is this present year. Many clouds are now bright in the East and West. Also a red wisteria has blossomed on a cherry tree in the garden of Oye Genemon (one of the five conspirators). He who, without study, understands all sciences is a youth called Shiro, eldest son of Jimbei of Amakusa - one who, though young, is without an equal in understanding and learning. The time has then already come. Let every one, disregarding the prohibition of the Government, espouse the cause of Jesus. If we incur the displeasure of the Shogun, is it not still our chief desire, having sacrificed our lives for our religion, to obtain the reward of Heaven after death?"


In the meantime the evil conspirators roamed at large and killed without reason those who did not belong to their party; they plundered houses and usurped power over the surrounding country. As many had no love for the Christian sect, in order to escape death they joined it reluctantly. . .


About six o'clock on the morning of the 28th of the 2nd month, Kuroda Emonotsuke, Kuroda Kai-no-kami (Nagaoki) and Kuroda Ichi-no-sho, attacked the central wall, Kuroda Mimasaku in the first place. This castle was very strong, the stone wall high and steep; but as Kuroda's troops had been resolved to lose their lives in the attempt, they began the ascent with shouts. The inmates of the castle, knowing that day's fight would be the last, resisted, hurling down great stones and timbers. Multitudes were crushed and killed, but Kuroda's troops would not retreat; they continued to scale the wall, and at last entered. Thus Kuroda Emonotsuke was the first to enter within the central wall. Thereupon the assailants from all quarters advanced, with shouts, to the attack. . .

... a Southern Barbarian trading vessel came to our shores. From this ship for the first time emerged an unnamable creature, somewhat similar in shape to a human being, but looking rather more like a long-nosed goblin or the giant demon Mikoshi Nyudo. Upon close interrogation it was discovered that this was a being called Bateren.

The length of his nose was the first thing which attracted attention: it was like a conch shell (though without its surface warts) attached by suction to his face. His eyes were as large as spectacles, and the insides were yellow. His head was small. On his hands and feet he had long claws. His height exceeded seven feet, and he was black all over; only his nose was red. His teeth were longer than the teeth of a horse. His hair was mouse-grey in colour, and over his brow was a shaved spot in the outline of a wine bowl turned over. What he said could not be understood at all: his voice was like the screech of an owl.


During this reign the Kirishitan religion has been cut down at its root and cast out of our land. Such must indeed have been the judgement of the Buddhas, Gods, and Bodhisattvas - and it is a blessing deserving universal gratitude. . . But why was the outcome so fortunate? Japan is called the Land of the Gods. But it is also terrain where Buddha's Law is widely spread. . . Barbarians from foreign lands came here, to spread their cursed doctrine and, despising the Buddhas and the Gods, to destroy them and do away with them, determined thereby to make of Japan a domain of devils. How wretched it was, how lamentable!


... Year by year the peasants grew more exhausted, and were not able to have either children or the cattle and horses due normally. How could they sustain life itself under those circumstances! Rather than starve to death, they preferred at least to be remembered in the records of future generations, and thus they rose in rebellion, making Amano Shiro their general.

They had Kirishitan sermons preached, and these incited the religionists into a state of blind fanaticism, so that they cut down any dissenter on the spot...

Detecting their chance when Lord Nagato was away in Edo, the peasants burned down not only his castle town but also everything within two or three leagues of it...

A general description of [the defense of Hara Castle] might be given as follows. . . Among them were four or five hundred bowmen able to hit even the eye of a needle, and some eight hundred musketeers that would not miss a boar or a hare on the run, nor even a bird in flight. . . Even the women had their tasks apportioned to them: they were to prepare glowing-hot sand and with great ladles cast it upon the attackers, and also to boil water seething hot and pour it upon them. There were also those assigned to fling football-sized rocks at the invaders. Thus they
designated someone for each defensive duty.

Itakura Naizen no kami and Ishigae Juzo no Suke were appointed government envoys to subjugate the revolt. In addition, Matsudaira Lord Izu was sent as special magistrate. The Tsukushi daimyo present at the fighting were Hosokawa Lord Etchu, Kuroda Uemon no Suke, Nabeshima Lord Shinano, Arima Genba no Jo, Tachibana Lord Hida.

There were two roads leading up to the castle, one to the front and one to the rear; but they were both merely narrow paths running from cliff to cliff. Single encounters might take place there, but their continuation down to the flat ground below was quite unthinkable.

Finally they were all pressed back into the innermost castle. Fire-arrows flew in on them from eight directions, like a deluge of rain; and as they sallied forth again, desperate for lack of cover, they were slashed and skewered, cut through the body, pursued and beaten down. Thus the castle fell in two hours, with corpses piled as high as mountains.

A.9. "The Shimabara Rebellion"

The heads taken by the attacking troops were fifteen or sixteen thousand in number; the total count of those who died by fire or sword, including women and children, was in excess of forty thousand. The attackers also suffered terrible damage, which was a very sad thing. It is difficult to divide up the praise among the great Lords, and also those of lesser rank, who contributed their own hand in this campaign, or who marshalled their troops in so wonderful a fashion. Even in the romances of old there is heard no other example of so many killed in battle.
Appendix B
Examples of Descriptions of the Shimabara Rebellion in 19th Century American and British Historical Surveys


As a further security against the surreptitious introduction of missionaries, the policy was adopted, in 1635, of confining the Portuguese sailors and merchants to the little artificial island of Desima, in the harbour of Nagasaki, a spot but just large enough to hold the necessary residences and warehouses. Shortly after the issue of this edict, the people of the kingdom of Arima, all of them Catholic except the king and the nobility, seeing no other hope, broke out into open revolt. They were headed by a descendant of their ancient kings, and mustering, it is said, to the number of thirty-seven thousand, took possession of the fortress of Shimabara, situated due east from Nagasaki, on the gulf of the same name. Here they were besieged; and the place being taken in 1637, those who held it were cut off to a man.


Edict after edict emanated, or at least were said to emanate, from the Shiogoon, ordering more and more severe action to be taken against the Christians. There remained no power of verifying these edicts, no one to speak a word at court for the unfortunate creatures; while they were surrounded by hungry wolves, who might invent edicts in order to profit by the confiscation of property, whose interest it was that the infant heir should be destroyed with his father, and who were further incited by the priests, or bozangs, who gnashed their teeth in the hour of victory over enemies who had lorded it so proudly over them in the short days of their prosperity. By such ferocity, combined with a strict watch kept up on foreign vessels, the Christian religion was nearly extirpated; but in the district of Arima, nearly the whole of the inhabitants, having all their lives professed Christianity, at last in desperation resolved rather to fight than submit to such a system of persecution.


New persecutions of the native Christians followed, even more horrible than before. Any Japanese, suspected of being a Christian, was asked to tread publicly the cross under foot. Thousands fled to Formosa, China, and the Philippines, while other thousands were crucified, beheaded, drowned, or buried alive. All tortures which barbarianism and hatred were able to devise were put into practice... When these nefarious deeds had been going on for about two decades without any substantial resistance being shown on the part of the Christians, open rebellion broke out at last amongst the people of the kingdom of Arima, where Roman Catholicism had the greatest number of adherents. The rebels succeeded in taking the fortress of Arima on Shimabara, eastward of Nagasaki, but there they were besieged for three months by the Shogun, who finally took the fortress by storm and slaughtered all survivors. The massacre which followed the capture of Shimabara defies every description.

*The long and doubtful struggle and devastating wars which preceded the casting forth of the foreigner, and the extermination of all converts to his religion, in the 17th century, and which ended, as we know, with the fall of Simabara, beneath the ruins of which lay buried 37,000 of its defenders and Christian converts, - has left an indelible impression on the [Japanese] national mind, identifying us with trouble, dissension, and calamity.*


*In the year 1638. . . about 40,000 Christians, reduced to most desperate counsels by the many unparallel'd cruelties and torments, which many thousands of the brethren had already suffer'd, and which they themselves had till then very narrowly escap'd, rose up and retir'd into an old fortify'd place in the neighbourhood of Simabara, with a firm resolution to defend their lives to the utmost of their power. The Dutch upon this, as friends and allies of the [Japanese] Emperor, were requested to assist the Japanese in the seige of the place, and the impending total destruction of the besieged Christians.*