

Kirishitan Garden Lantern

In December last year when I sent my Christmas card with a picture and the legend of a Maria Kwannon, a young lady who received it replied to me that in the garden of her house was an old stone-made garden lantern, (*j.*) *ishidōrō*, on which, although it was obscure for weathering, an image of a figure which looked like the Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus in her arms was carved. Being curious to see it, I begged permission and visited her family's mansion in Sayama Hill in the west suburb in Tokyo Prefecture in a balmy autumn day. The *ishidōrō* was located not far from the veranda of the main house in the gorgeous garden beautifully coloured by autumn leaves and flowers. According to the lady's grandmother and mother who kindly received myself, it was brought there by the previous head of the family some decades ago as a souvenir from Matsue in San-in District (the north side of West Honshu) when he visited the town and found it in an antique shop, and he himself was certainly interested in the unusual relief but he was too busy for his own profession as a doctor to study on it.



Contours of the relief of *ishidōrō* in the mansion's garden.

The type of garden lanterns with a rather tall stem, called Oribe-style, was presumably originated by Furuta Oribe-no-sho Shigenari(1544-1615), a warrior who served for the three dictators, Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, and artist who also created the Oribe Pottery and who succeeded the position of the tea master for Hideyoshi after the death of Sen Rikyu (1591), and a theory that Oribe-style *ishidōrō* might have some relation to the Christianity was raised in the 1920s. In fact, as often called "Kirishitan garden lanterns", many old *ishidōrō* bear some symbols of Christianity, typically a standing figure of a Western man who looks like Jesus and a strange undecipherable sign, carved on the stem, and the design of the stem itself with lumps on both sides of its upper part is speculated to represent the Cross by some researchers, but such pieces with the figure of the Holy Mother seem to be extremely rare. In the book of Mr. Shigeo Matsuda who had surveyed over two hundred Kirishitan garden lanterns all around Japan, one *ishidōrō* existing in Myokenji Temple in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture is listed as the only example of this kind. Judging from the figure which appeared more like a Bodhisattva and was locally worshiped as a saint of medicine, the author classified that particular *ishidōrō* into the category of "camouflaged types", according to his definition, which were created as idols by Kakure Kirishitans (Hiding Christians) after the middle of the 17th century when the Tokugawa Shogunate Government had closed the country but for the Netherlands and Ming-Qing in China (1639) and was hunting the remaining Kirishitans in accordance with their anti-Christianity policy.

Furuta Oribe, born and brought up in Mino (the present Gifu Prefecture), was appointed a local magistrate in Yamashina in the present Kyoto Prefecture by Hideyoshi in 1576 and after then stayed around the capital. He was perhaps not baptised but he would have a good understanding for the Western religion, being acquainted with his fellow warrior, Dom Justo Ukon Takayama, who was later deported to Luzon (1614), and other Christian friends. Is it too romantic to assume that the *ishidōrō* in the mansion's garden with the figure of the Mother and the Infant, as it looks like, was a piece of work in early days after the arrival of Christianity in 1549 and before Hideyoshi first prohibited the religion in 1587 and remained undestroyed? Neither the strange sign nor any letter is found on the stem or elsewhere. The design of the fire box with crescent- and sun-shaped windows on its sides seems to have some parallels among old *ishidōrō*. A key to the answer might be found in the shape of the orb with a lotus-flower support, placed on the top of *ishidōrō*, which looked quite unique.

Amen!

Literature

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3. Shigeru Takada, *Studies on stone Maria Kwannons and Kirishitan-Buddhas*, Sophia Univ Press, Tokyo 1970
4. Kiichi Matsuda, *Christianity and the so-called Oribe-style ishidōrō*, Shukyo Kenkyu (Religious Studies) 1970, **202**, 431
5. <http://www.geocities.jp/myokenzi/>

切支丹燈籠（カード裏面和譯）

昨年臘月、私の季節の挨拶に或るマリア観音の寫眞と傳承を添へて送ったところ、それを受取られた一人の若いお嬢様が、彼女のお宅の庭に、風化によって不明瞭になってはいるが、聖母マリアが腕に幼いイエスを抱いてゐるやうな姿を彫った古い石燈籠があるとお返事を下さいました。是非とも拜見したいと欲した私は彼女にお願ひし、小春日和の或る日、東京都下西郊外狹山丘陵にある御家族の御屋敷を訪ねました。件の石燈籠は紅葉と秋の花々に美しく彩られた立派な御庭の、母屋の縁側から遠からぬ處に置かれてゐました。親切にお迎へ下さった祖母君と母君に依ると、その燈籠は御先代が何十年か前に山陰の松江に行かれた折に骨董屋で見付けて御土産に持歸られたもので、彼自身も無論興味をお持ちであつたが、御本業の醫業に御多忙で御自分でお調べになるお暇はなかつたとの由でありました。



御屋敷の庭の石燈籠の
レリーフの輪郭

長目の竿を持ち所謂織部型と呼ばれる斯の型の石燈籠は、信長、秀吉及び家康に仕へた武士で、藝術家として織部焼を始め、利休のあとを襲つて秀吉の筆頭茶人ともなつた古田織部正重然の創作になるとされ、基督教と何らかの関係があるのではないかと言ふ説が1920年代に唱へられました。事實、しばしば切支丹燈籠と呼ばれるやうに、織部型の古い石燈籠の多くには何らかの基督教の徴、典型的にはイエスらしい西洋人男性の立像と奇妙な解讀不能の記号、が竿に彫られてをり、上部の両側に膨らみを持つ竿のデザイン自體が十字架を現すと憶測する向きもあるほどですが、聖母の姿のあるものは極めて稀のやうです。日本中の二百基以上もの切支丹燈籠を調査された松田重雄氏の書には、福井縣敦賀の妙顯寺に現存するものが、この種の唯一の例として載つてゐるばかりですが、その像は寧ろ菩薩のやうに見へ、地元では藥王として崇められてゐるので、著者はこの燈籠を彼の定義した「擬装時代型」に分類し、17世紀半ばに徳川幕府が阿蘭陀と明國清國以外に國を閉ざし(1639)、切支丹禁教政策に則して切支丹狩を行つてゐた時代に隠れ切支丹が偶像として拵えたとされてゐます。

美濃で生れ育つた古田織部は1576年に秀吉から山科の一地方代官に任ぜられ、以降、都の邊りに留まつてゐました。彼自身は多分洗禮を受けてゐませんでした。彼は仲間の武將であつて後(1614)にルソンに流されたドム・ジュスト・高山右近らの基督教徒と親交あり、この西洋の宗教を良く理解してゐたと思はれます。御屋敷の庭の聖母子と覺しき像のある石燈籠が1549年に基督教が傳來してから、秀吉が最初にそれを禁じた1587年頃までの初期に作られ、破壊されずに殘存したものであると想像してみるのにはロマンチックに過ぎませうか。上述の奇妙な記号や文字の類は竿にも他の部分にも見られません。側面に三日月型と日輪型の窓のある日袋のデザインは古い石燈籠に類例があるやうです。回答の爲のヒントは、燈籠の頂に置かれた請花のある特異な形の寶珠に見出されるかも知れません。

アーメン！

文獻

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