

# 芥川龍之介・英訳作品研究

——「奉教人の死」——

平岡敏夫

Remarks on Akutagawa's Works  
—“The Martyr” (Death of A Christian)—

**Toshio Hiraoka**

## [Introduction]

Recently I had a chance to give lectures on Akutagawa's stories at Dickinson College, PA, in the United States. Akutagawa Ryunosuke (1892-1927) is one of the most remarkable writers in modern Japan. His many stories have been translated in English. My students (undergraduate) could not understand Japanese, and so, I used the textbook translated in English. I tried to remark on the translation, referring to Japanese original. The purpose of my lecture was not pointing mis-translation but on how I read Akutagawa's stories. English translation, of course, shows how the translator reads the original. As a scholar of Akutagawa's works, I read his stories with American students. I made many remarks on the text of the translation. According to these remarks, readers of this paper will be able to understand how I read Akutagawa's stories.

In my class, I could know the students' interesting opinions through their questions and written assignments, which were very valuable for Japanese readers. I will quote some of their opinions in this paper.

I wish to express my great thanks to Professor Roselee Bundy for

her kindly correcting my poor English and Secretary Elaine Mellen for her kindly typing my lecture note.

The text I use here is "Rashmon and other stories" (Translated by Takashi Kojima. Introduction by Howard Hibbet. Published in Japan by the Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1952, 18th printing, 1986). The text is not quoted in full but digested for some paragraphs on which I do not remark. I also have a lot of thanks for the translator and publisher of the text.

### [Christianity in Japan and Akutagwa]

Christianity was first introduced to Japan by a Portuguese missionary Francisco Xavier who arrived at Kagoshima in Kyushu in Japan in 1549. And in 1639, Christianity was forbidden by the national isolation policy of the Tokugawa's government. But Christianity influenced many Japanese people greatly, not only in the approximately one hundred year it was permitted, but also in the year it was forbidden, in spite of cruel punishment for illegal Christians.

Akutagawa liked Christian legends of medieval Japan very much, and wrote many stories based on them. They are called "Kirishitan-mono" (Christian Works of Akutagawa). "The Martyr" (the original title is "Death of A Christian") is the best of this kind of his historical novels.

### THE MARTYR (1918)

#### [Text 1]

Even if one liveth to be three hundred years of age in excess of pleasure, it is but as a dream compared with everlasting pleasure.

—*Guide do Pecador.*

He who walketh the path of goodness shall enjoy the mysterious sweetness which pervadeth the doctrine.

—*Imitaitone Christi.*

One Christman night some years ago a young Japanese boy was

found exhausted and starving at the entrance to the Church of Santa Lucia in Nagasaki. He was taken in and cared for by the Jesuit brothers who were coming into the church. He was given the name Lorenzo, and was thereafter brought up in the church under the wing of the Jesuit missionaries.

When the brothers asked him about his birth and parents, he never revealed his history, but gave such evasive answers as, "My home is paradise", and "My father is the Father of all". His disarming smile dispelled further questioning as to his past.

It was, however, evident from the blue rosary on his wrist that his family had not been heathens. Perhaps that was the reason why the kindly fathers and brothers took Lorenzo to their heart.

The elders were so struck by this young boy's piety that they came to think of him in time as the incarnation of a cherub, and to love him dearly, though they knew nothing of his past. Moreover, the perfection and purity of his face and form, and his sweet feminine voice made him the darling of everyone.

Of all the brothers, Simeon in particular loved him as if he were his own brother, and in entering and leaving the church they were seen hand in hand. Simeon, born in a military family, once served a certain feudal lord. He was a towering giant with Herculean strength and had more than once defended the Fathers against being stoned by heathens. His harmonious friendship with Lorenzo might have been compared to a fierce eagle taking loving care of a dove or a blooming vine twining around a cedar on Mt. Lebanon.

**(Remark 1)**

"The Prologue"—Here are two extracts from two old books on Christianity. One is "Guide do Pecador" (Spanish. Guide of Sinners in English) which was written by a Spanish theologian. The other is "Imitatione Christi" (Latin. Imitation of Christ in English), written by a German theologian. These two books were translated into Japanese at the end of sixteenth century and prevailed among many Christians when Christianity was not forbidden.

The prologue of two books has two functions.

(1) To indicate the importance of Christian faith and to suggest the theme of this story.

(2) To give reality to "The Martyr" so that it will be seen not fiction but a true record of events which occurred in the medieval age in Japan.

**(Remark 2)**

"Nagasaki"—This old famous port in Kyushu was only one which had been open to foreigners even after Japan took the national isolation policy in 1639. However, only Dutch and Chinese had been accepted by the Japanese government until commander M. C. Perry from America came to Uraga (near Edo) in 1853 (cf. William L. Neuman "America Encounters Japan" in 1963 by Johns Hopkins Press).

And so, people of Nagasaki in those days were much influenced by foreign culture, especially Christianity. Choosing by Nagasaki as the setting of this story, Akutagawa lets us think that the Church, Santa Lucia, really existed in Nagasaki.

**(Remark 3)**

"The boy named Lorenzo"—Why didn't Lorenzo reveal his story? That's a very interesting problem. The reason he didn't do so will be understood by readers later. Such a narrative as to say nothing about the history of the hero in the beginning is, of course, called a subsequent development of the plot. The following must be also the same narrative as above. Moreover, the perfection and purity of his face and form, and his sweet feminine voice made him the darling of everyone.

Lorenzo is contrasted with Simeon who had been a strong Samurai and had once served a feudal Lord. The one looked like a dove and the other an eagle or again a blooming vine and a cedar.

Who was this boy named Lorenzo? In brief, his history will be veiled even after his death.

## [Text 2]

Meanwhile three years flew by, and the time came for Lorenzo to celebrate his coming to manhood. About this time the rumor spread that Lorenzo and the daughter of an umbrella-maker who lived not far from the Church of Santa Lucia were becoming intimate. Since the umbrella-maker was also a believer in the teachings of the Lord, it was customary for him to come to church with his daughter. Even during the time of prayers this girl never took her eyes from Lorenzo. Still more, in entering and leaving the church she was sure to turn her beautiful and loving eyes toward him. This naturally attracted the notice of the congregation, and some said that she had intentionally stepped on his foot, while others said that they had been seen exchanging love letters.

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(Digest: The Father Superior of the church asked Lorenzo whether the gossip was true or not. He denied. The Father was convinced of his innocence because of his age and constant piety.)

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Yes, the Father's suspicion was dispelled. But the rumors persisted among the people of Santa Lucica. This scandal particularly worried Lorenzo's dear friend Simeon. At first he was too ashamed to make a searching inquiry into such a licentious affairs, and he was unable not only to ask Lorenzo but even to look him in the eye.

However, once he happened to pick up in the back garden of Santa Lucia, a love letter from the girl addressed to Lorenzo. Thrusting it into Lorenzo's face, and threatening and coaxing, Simeon questioned him in many ways. But Lorenzo, his handsome face blushing, merely said, "I hear the girl has given her heart to me, but I only received letters from her, and I have never even talked with her". Simeon, who felt the weight of the town's opinion, pressed further questions on his brother. Lorenzo, gazing at the other with his sad, reproachful look, said, "Do I look like a liar even to you?" and left the room like a swallow leaving his nest. At these words, Simeon felt a great shame

come over him for having been suspicious of his brother and was leaving, with his head bowed, when suddenly the boy Lorenzo rushed in, threw his arms around Simeon's neck, and panted out in a whisper, "I was wrong. Forgive me." Before Simeon could answer a word, he rushed out the way he had come, hurrying as if to conceal his tear-stained face. Simeon did not know whether Lorenzo felt guilty for his intimacy with the girl or for his rude behavior.

**(Remark 1)**

"The daughter of the umbrella-maker"—The daughter of the umbrella-maker fell in love with Lorenzo. Of course, this umbrella is a Japanese one, made of paper and bamboo. This umbrella symbolizes Japan. In "The Golden Legend" on which the story, "Death of a Christian" is based, the girl's father was a fisherman.

**(Remark 2)**

"The scene Lorenzo embraced Simeon"—The scene is very interesting and charming. We notice these three points.

(1) Lorenzo's feeling when he asked Simeon, 'Do I look like a liar even to you? It might have been sad for the tender boy Lorenzo to say such words since he regarded Simeon like a brother. But soon he realized that he was wrong and suddenly came back to Simeon.

(2) Akutagawa writes, "When suddenly *the boy* Lorenzo rushed in, . . .". Why does he add, "the boy" about Lorenzo, when from the beginning Lorenzo has been decided as a boy? He doesn't need to add "the boy" to Lorenzo. However, I think the reason why he adds "the boy" about Lorenzo is because the writer was afraid that readers might think of Lorenzo as a girl in a scene like this.

(3) After Lorenzo threw his arms around Simeon's neck and panted out in a whisper, "I was wrong. Forgive me", he rushed out the way he had come, hurrying as if to conceal his tearstained face. Was he truly hurrying to conceal his tearful face? It might not be so. Akutagawa writes, "as if." The reason why Lorenzo rushed out of the room after his sudden embrace of Simeon is because of his shyness. Truly speaking, this scene is a love scene. Even those

readers who don't know the truth about Lorenzo must have found that this scene is very charming because of this suggestive description. I think that this is one of the most beautiful scenes in this story.

Here, we must consider the circumstances and Lorenzo's personality. Even now, in Japan, it is not common for a girl to embrace a boy's neck. In those days, of course, love affairs were forbidden in a church or a monastery (in the source) and for Lorenzo, who had a mild and tender disposition, would need to feel very strong affection for her to embrace Simeon. We can see the secret love of Lorenzo for Simeon here. As soon as Lorenzo embraced Simeon's neck, he(she) couldn't help being conscious of his(her) action, and so, he(she) rushed out quickly. This scene is impressive and beautiful because we can see his(her) personality and secret love through his(her) action.

### [Text 3]

Sometime later the people of the town were shocked at the news that the umbrella-maker's daughter was soon to become a mother. She told her father that the child in her womb was that of Lorenzo. The old umbrella-maker in great rage immediately carried the accusation to the priests of Santa Lucia. Lorenzo, who was summoned before them, said "It's not so," but could make no excuse to justify himself against such evidence. The same day the fathers and all the brothers sat in conference and sentenced Lorenzo to excommunication. His excommunication, that is, his banishment from the church, would immediately deprive him of the means of livelihood. But it would invite disgrace on the glory of the Lord and the congregation to keep the sinner in Santa Lucia. Therefore, the brothers who held him dear are said to have driven him away with tears in their eyes.

The most pitiable of all was Simeon, who had been Lorenzo's dearest friend. More vexed by being deceived than grieved at his being driven away, Simeon struck Lorenzo full in his handsome face as he went sadly out of the doorway into the cold winter blast. Knocked off balance by the blow, Lorenzo fell down. But he got up slowly,

and looking up to the sky with tearful eyes, he prayed in a quivering voice: "Lord forgive Simeon, for he knows not what he does". Disheartened by these words, Simeon only went on slashing and flailing his arms for a time at the doorway. Finally restrained by the other brothers, he folded his arms, and with his face as fierce as the threatening sky, he glared resentfully at the back of Lorezo who was sorrowfully leaving the gate of Santa Lucia. According to the story from the brothers who happened to be there, at that very moment Phoebus, quivering in the wintry blast, was driving his crimson orb of day below the western sky of Nagasaki, and the angel of a crestfallen Lorenzo prodding his weary way straight into the light of the heavenly disk seemed to have a nimbus of celestial flame.

**(Remark 1)**

"Lorenzo's answer when he was summoned."—The old umbrella-maker carried the accusation to the priest because his daughter told him she was pregnant with Lorenzo's child. The scene is translated: "He said, 'It's not so' but could make no excuse to justify himself against such evidence". But this answer, "It's not so" is not found in the original.

It is very important that Lorenzo was silent. Lorenzo neither denied the charge of having made the girl pregnant nor did excuse himself. We will realize later that Lorenzo wanted to carry the daughter's sin without making any excuse, just as Jesus Christ did for all the sinners of the world.

In the material of this story, "The Golden Legend", Marine who was under the same suspicion as Lorenzo said "Holy Father, I ask of our Lord mercy, for I have sinned". Marine showed a more active attitude in carrying the other's sin than Lorenzo who said nothing.

**(Remark 2)**

"The scene where Lorenzo is expelled from the church".—We notice two points.

(1) He said, "Lord forgive Simeon, for he knows not what he does". Then he was struck by Simeon and fell down. Simeon couldn't



understand that he had struck an innocent person this time. This is also a suggestive expression for the readers who believe that Lorenzo has sinned.

(2) "The last scene where Lorenzo was going out of the gate".— Because the translation makes reference to mythological figures, (the original is written in the old style of the Middle Age), the scene might not be clear for readers and so, I will try to translate this part according to the original.

"The sun looking as though it were quivering in the wintry blast, was about to sink below the western horizon of Nagasaki, beyond Lorenzo's head as he walked dejectedly. And then, the figure of the tender boy looked as if it couldn't have moved in the midst of the celestial flame".

This beautiful and impressive scene foreshadows the last scene of the fire in Nagasaki. Both scenes symbolize the martyr with a nimbus.

#### [Text 4]

After that, Lorenzo was a being changed from the time when he used to offer incense in the chancel of Santa Lucia. He was reduced to wretched beggary and lived in an outcasts' hovel on the edge of the town. Since he was formerly a believer in the Lord's doctrine, he was despised and abused by the heathen rabble, and he could never walk on the streets without being mocked by heartless boys. Time and again he was caned, stoned, or cut at with a sword. Once he lay in the grip of a dreadful fever that raged in the town of Nagasaki; in pain and agony, he writhed by the roadside for seven nights and days. And the God of infinite love and boundless mercy not only rescued him from death, but gave him mountain berries, fish, and shellfish when he was given no alms of money or rice. Thus, morning and evening he prayed as he had in the days at Santa Lucia, and he never took the beads of jasper off his wrist. Moreover, in the dead of night he used to steal out of his outcasts, hovel and in the moonlight make his way as near to Santa Lucia as he dared, to pray for the blessings of Jesus Christ.

The Christians who worshipped at the church paid no heed to the boy, and finally no one, not even the Fathers, felt pity for the boy. Since they were convinced of the truth of the scandalous rumors which prevailed at the time of his excommunication, nothing was farther from their thoughts than that he should ever be a boy of such piety as to make a nightly visit to Santa Lucia alone. This was a great pity for Lorenzo; inevitable as it was, being one of the unfathomable mysteries of God.

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(Digest: In the meantime, the daughter gave birth to a baby girl. And the old umbrella-maker took care of his grandchild.)

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But Simeon, the brother, was remarkable for his singular conduct. After the girl gave birth to the baby, this young man who looked like a giant strong enough to overpower the devil, called upon the umbrella-maker's family whenever he had spare time, and taking up the infant in his rough arms with tears on his bitter face, he would recall the quiet, ashy and handsome Lorenzo whom he had loved as had younger brother. However, the girl appeared to be grieved and chagrined that Lorenzo, since his excommunication, had not come to see her or her child, and she did not seem pleased that Simeon should call.

**(Remark 1)**

"God to Lorenzo"—I would like to notice about this at two levels.

(1) About "God of infinite love and boundless mercy". Does this mean that God gives love and mercy to everybody, even to such Lorenzo? It might be true here. But, how about the following?

(2) About "One of the unfathomable Mysteries of God". This "mystery" should be "consideration" in the original. It was one of the unfathomable considerations of God that no one, not even the Fathers, felt pity for the boy.

Why did God give him such misery? We can see that God would choose Lorenzo as a special believer. If so, God surely would give him love and mercy in keeping with (1). Lorenzo's misery comes from

God's testing of him

**(Remark 2)**

"Lorenzo's faith"—Morning and evening he prayed as he had in the days he spent at Santa Lucia and in the dead of night he used to go there to pray for the blessing of Jesus Christ. If this is so, the readers might come to have doubt about Lorenzo's guilt. Such a narrative leads the reader to expect further developments in the plot.

**(Remark 3)**

"The feelings of Simeon and the girl after the birth of baby".—*I have two comments.*

(1) Simeon's feelings were ambivalent. Because he hated and loved Lorenzo. He took up the infant in his rough arms with tears on his bitter face.

(2) The girl appeared to be grieved and chagrined that Lorenzo, since his excommunication, had not come to see her or her child, and she did not seem pleased that Simeon should call.

The narration depends upon the narrator's guess. And so, the readers might imagine that the girl had harbored a secret in her mind. She was in self-torment when Simeon came to see the baby, because of telling a serious lie.

**[Text 5]**

Time and tide wait for no man. A year passed like a snowflake that falls into the river, a moment white and then gone forever. Then unexpectedly, a disastrous fire broke out and threatened to ravage all of Nagasaki in one night. Such was the fury of the fire that it appeared as if the trumpet of the last judgment had sounded, rending the flames of the holocaust.

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(Digest: The umbrella-makers's house was enveloped in flames. When the family ran away, they forgot the baby in the house. The girl wanted to save her baby if she was not prevented by others.)

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At that moment there came Simeon, the brother, pushing his way as easily as if walking through tall grass, since he was a sturdy hero who had felt the sting of bullets and arrows in battles for feudal lords. Quickly grasping the situation, he rushed boldly into the flames but only to flinch before the terrible force of the fire. He had hardly crept into a few clouds of smoke when he beat a hasty retreat. Reappearing before the old man and his daughter, he gasped, "This is the will of God, you must resign yourselves to the inevitable". At that moment "Lord save us!" someone cried by the side of the old man. Since the voice sounded familiar to him, Simeon looked round to see where it came from. It was Lorenzo beyond all doubt. A glance showed the old samurai his angelic face and figure, dressed in rage as he was, his pure, thin face shining in firelight, with his black hair which, ruffled by the wind, reached down below his shoulders. Poor Lorenzo in the form of a beggar was staring into the blazing house. But that was only for the twinkling of an eye. Scarcely had a terrible wind swept past to fan up the raging flames when he plunged headlong into the pillars of fire, the beams of fire, and the walls of fire. "Lord save us!" cried Simeon, breaking into a cold sweat all over his body, and crossed himself. Somehow at that moment in his mind's eye, he saw the graceful and sorrowful figure of Lorenzo going out of Santa Lucia straight into the light of the heavenly disk quivering in the wintry blast.

**(Remark 1)**

"The description about time".—"Time and tide wait for no man" is a very common proverb throughout the world. But, the narrator of this story says, "There is no barrier guard for time, as the proverb of this country says". It is very important to know that proverbs that express the same notion differ from country to country. And the expression of "A year passed like a snowflake that falls into the river" has the same problem. In the original, it is "A year passed in the twinkling of an eye" (cf. The other Japanese proverb says, "Time flies like an arrow. This might be a universal expression).

**(Remark 2)**

"Simeon's fail to rescue the baby".—In spite of being a sturdy hero who had felt the sting of bullets and arrows in the battle for feudal lords, Simeon flinched before the terrible fire and beat a hasty retreat. It is clear that Simeon's retreat is described in order to stress how Lorenzo's action is difficult, wonderful, and heroic.

**(Remark 3)**

"Lorenzo when he was staring into the blazing house".—"His pure, thin face shining in firelight, with his black hair, which, ruffled by the wind, reached down below his shoulders". In relation to this description of Lorenzo, we notice that long black hair is the symbol of the beauty of women in Japan. The most distinguished woman tanka-poet, Yosano Akiko writes the following :

The girl, twenty, when she combs,  
How beautiful her long black hair looks !  
Like spring at its height.—"Midare-gami"

("The Disheveled Hair" 1901)

Akutagawa's description of Lorenzo's black hair might have been influenced by Yosano Akiko's tanka (cf. Text 4, 'when Lorenzo with disheveled hair appeared enshrouded in a tower of flames'). This may be different from the beauty of the western women, whose hair are brown or blond (Girls in my class, who have black hair are 5 in 8. I hear black hair look also beautiful for Americans).

At last, Lorenzo surely looks so beautiful that readers will suspect that he might be a girl.

**[Text 6]**

(Digest: The brothers were amazed at Lorenzo's heroic action. They whispered "Indeed a father is a father. And so he just rushed into the fire to save his own child". The girl was down on her knees and lost in her prayers, forgetting herself and the world around her.)

After a time there was a sudden stir among the people crowding before the blazing fire, when Lorenzo with disheveled hair appeared enshrouded in a tower of flames, holding the infant aloft in both arms, as if descending from heaven. One of the beams must have broken then, for with a terrific crash, a volume of smoky flame rose high up into the sky, and the figure of Lorenzo disappeared. And nothing was to be seen but a pillar of blazing fire shooting high up like coral.

Struck by the great misfortune, Simeon, the old man and all the other brothers were stunned and dazed. The girl gave a shriek, and jumped up with her legs exposed, but again prostrated herself on the ground, as if struck by lightning. Be that as it may, before they knew it, the baby girl was found tightly wrapped in the hands of the girl who had thrown herself to the ground. Oh, the boundless and infinite wisdom of God! Words are inadequate to sing the praise of his power. The infant whom Lorenzo had thrown with his last desperate strength as he was struck by the fall of the burning beam, fortunately dropped unhurt at the feet of the mother.

Then there arose from the mouth of the old man a solemn voice in praise of the love of God, together with the voice of the girl who was on the ground weeping tears of joy. In the meantime, Simeon, in his whole-hearted desire to save Lorenzo, had dashed straight into the storm of the raging fire, and the old man's voice rose up into the night sky in an anxious and pathetic prayer. Not only the baby's grandfather but all the Christians standing around the mother and child offered tearful prayers. The son of the Virgin Mary, our Lord Jesus Christ, who regards the sufferings of all men as his own, granted their prayers at last. Behold, Lorenzo, horribly burned, rescued and in Simeon's arms away from the flames and smoke.

**(Remark 1)**

"Indeed a father is a father. And so he has just rushed into the fire to save his own child".—Of course, they thought that Lorenzo's heroic action was because of the love of a father for his own child.

Such a common explanation will be overturned later.

**(Remark 2)**

"The daughter who was lost in her prayers, forgetting herself and the world around her".—What was she praying for? Of course, she was praying for her baby. But was there anything else in her heart? Her strong feeling and pious attitude in prayer suggests that she has something of great consequence on her mind.

Her pose looked like that of confession. She must have been praying and confessing about Lorenzo.

**(Remark 3)**

"The appearance of Lorenzo holding the infant aloft in both arms".—Akutagawa writes, "as if descending from heaven". He looked just like an angel who was the messenger of God. Here, we can see in the first time the holiness of Lorenzo. And he threw the baby down to the feet of the mother with his desperate strength as he was struck by the fall of the burning beam. Then Simeon, by the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, the son of the Virgin Mary, was able to dash into the fire and rescue Lorenzo who was horribly burned.

**[Text 7]**

Those were not all the misadventures of that night. Lorenzo, gasping for breath, was immediately carried in the arms of the brothers up the hill to Santa Lucia, and was laid at its gate.

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(Digest: The umbrella-maker's daughter confessed that this baby was not a child by Lorenzo but by the son of the heathen family next-door. Because Lorenzo treated her coldly, she got revenge on him by lying to her father. But he was too noble-minded to hate her for her sin and at the risk of his own life, he rescued her baby from the fiery inferno. His love and deeds make her adore him as Jesus Christ reborn.)

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She had scarcely finished the confession of her love affair before she threw herself to the ground in tears.

At that time the outcries, "Martyr", "Martyr!" surged up from among the Christians who crowded around two and three deep. "Out of his love for the sinner", the voices cried, "he degraded himself to beggary, following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. But no man, not even the Father Superior whom he looked up to as his father and Simeon whom he relied on as his brother, knew his heart. What is this but a martyr?"

While listening to the daughter's confession of her love affair, Lorenzo could only nod slightly. His hair was burned, his skin was scorched. He could move neither his hands nor his feet, and now he had no strength left to speak. The old umbrella-maker and Simeon, whose hearts were torn by the girl's confession, ministered to him as best they could on their knees at his side, and bathed his burns in tears. But Lorenzo's breathing became shorter and fainter every minute, and the end was not far off. All that remained unchanged in him now was the color of his star-like eyes looking far up into the sky.

**(Remark 1)**

"The confession of the umbrella-maker's daughter".—First, we should recognize that she was a girl who could confess the truth. Afterward, this fact will be important when we must think about Japanese girls in those days.

**(Remark 2)**

"Martyr and climax".—By her confession, the Lorenzo's innocence had become clear and he was immediately called "Martyr". And his last is depicted in this beautiful manner: "All that remained unchanged in him now was the color of his star-like eyes looking far up into the sky". But this is not the climax of this story. That comes in the next scene. His action as Martyr is only one, and its meaning might be the same in the next scenes. The climax, however, comes in the next scene.

**[Text 8]**

The Father Superior, who had been listening to the girl's confession,



with his gray hair waving in the night's windstorm, and with his back turned toward the gate of Santa Lucia, declared to her solemnly, "Blessed are they that repent. How could the human hand ever punish those so blessed? From now on you must observe God's commandments all the better and await the judgment day". And then, "Lorenzo", he said, "your aspiration to emulate our Lord Jesus Christ in your conduct is a virtue unrivaled among the Christians in this country. Especially as you are so young, . . ." What could the matter be? The Father, who had gone thus far, suddenly closed his mouth, and watched Lorenzo as intently as if he had seen the light of heaven. How reverent he looked! The shaking of his hands was so extraordinary. The tears would not stop flowing from the Father's shriveled cheeks. Suddenly the umbrella-maker and Simeon stared. The eyes of all followed theirs to two soft, pure breasts, which stood out among the rags on the chest of the angel, now lying silently at the gate of Santa Lucia, bathed in the light of the fire red as the blood of Jesus Christ at his crucifixion. Now on Lorenzo's sorely burned face, its natural gentleness and beauty could no longer be concealed. It may have been only a moment—it seemed like an eternity—before the entire assembly realized that Lorenzo was not a boy but a girl. Yes, Lorenzo was a girl! Lorenzo was a girl! Behold! With the flames raging at their back, the brethren circled around Lorenzo, stood in awe and wonder with their eyes fastened on the martyr. Lorenzo, driven out of Santa Lucia on the false charge of adultery, was a fair girl of this country like the umbrella-maker's daughter herself.

That moment is said to have inspired them with as much holy awe as if God's voice had been heard from far beyond the starry vault of heaven. The Christians who had been standing before Santa Lucia, each and all hung their heads like the heads of wheat blown by the wind, and knelt around Lorenzo. All that was heard was the roar of the flames blazing up into the star-lit sky and the sobbing of people nearby. The sobbing may have come from the umbrella-maker's daughter or from Simeon who had been as good a friend to him as it he

were his real brother. Soon the silence was broken by the sad, solemn chanting of the scriptures by the reverend Father, his hand raised aloft. When his chanting ceased, "Lorenzo", he called, and the fair-eyed girl quietly breathed her last, with a faint, peaceful smile on her lips, looking up into the glory of Heaven far beyond the dark night.

**(Remark 1)**

"The scene in which it is discovered that Lorenzo was a girl".— "Suddenly the umbrella-maker and Simeon stared. The eyes of all followed theirs to two soft pure breasts which stood out among the rags on the chest of the angel, . . ." This part is written as the following in the original (my translation).

"Behold! Simeon! Behold! The old umbrella-maker! You can see that two pure breasts like gems stand out among the rags on the chest of the very beautiful boy!" In the original, the narrative is emphatic method, because this part is a very surprising and important scene.

**(Remark 2)**

"About this discovery that Lorenzo was a girl".—What is the meaning of this discovery? "Lorenzo is a girl" is repeated twice and Akutagawa writes that Lorenzo, driven out of Santa Lucia on the false charge of adultery, was *the same fair-eyed girl (in the original)* of this country as the umbrella-maker's daughter herself.

I think that there are three points in the meaning of this discovery.

(1) Lorenzo is absolutely innocent on the charge of adultery since she is a girl.

(2) The same fair-eyed girl of this country as the umbrella-maker's daughter became a martyr. "This country", of course, means Japan. It is very important that a common Japanese girl is a martyr. Although the translator omitted "this country", we can find "this country" again as the following.

"The young woman of this country, who is called 'Lorenzo', quietly breathed her last, . . ." (my translation). Akutagawa stresses that it is a young woman of "this country" He wanted to depict an ideal Japanese

woman.

(3) Akutagawa also writes that, "Nothing else is known of the life of this girl". Such an ordinary, mild and gentle girl devoted herself to the people like Jesus Christ did. She is nameless and people never call her a saint. Akutagawa suggests that there was such a noble and beautiful girl in Japan, where Christianity hardly rooted.

Because of being nameless, this young woman of medieval Japan could be representative of the many Japanese women who might have led pious lives.

[Text 9]

Nothing else is known of the life of this girl. Yet what does it matter? For the sublimity of life culminates in the most precious moment of inspiration. Man will make his life worth living, if he tosses a wave aloft high up into the starry sky, o'er life's dark main of worldly cares, to mirror in its crystal foam the light of the moon yet to rise. Therefore, are not those who know the last of Lorenzo those who know the whole of her life?

(Remark 1)

"The moment of the impression".—Continuing to "Nothing else is known of the life of this girl", Akutagawa writes, "Yet what does it matter? For the sublimity of life culminates in the most precious moment of inspiration".

Here, we can find Akutagawa's thought that the moment is more important than a whole of life. "In the most precious moment of inspiration" is "in the moment of the impression that nothing can replace", according to the literal translation.

Akutagawa often writes about such moments of impression in his works. We can call it "the beauty of the moment". Here is the beauty of literature, which is distinct from the endless tiresome days in the world.

(Remark 2)

"Man will make his life worth living, ..."—This part is written

symbolically. The light of the moon yet to rise means something noble and to be caught in a moment. This is "the beauty of the moment" in Akutagawa's works. "If he tosses a wave aloft high up into the starry sky, o'er life's dark main of worldly cares" might be a little difficult. It means "tossing a wave aloft high up in the sky of desires like the sea of the dark night".

Tossing a wave aloft high up and catching the light of the moon means the moment of from this world into the sublime world. Lorenzo's conduct is exactly like this. Her life is condensed into this moment.

[Text 10]

POSTSCRIPT

I have in my collection a book entitled 'Legenda Aurea' which was published by the Nagasaki Church. It does not, however, contain only golden legends of Western Europe. It includes not only the words and deeds of European saints but also the religious devotions of Japanese Christians, presumably to serve evangelical purposes.

This book consists of two volumes, Parts I and II printed on '*mino*' paper (a kind of tough Japanese paper) in '*hiragana*' (the cursive form of the Japanese syllabary) mixed with Chinese characters in cursive style. The lettering is so indistinct that it makes us wonder whether it was printed or not. On the title-page of Volume I, the Latin title is written *crosswise*, and *under the title* are written two vertical Chinese lines, "Printed at the beginning of March, the year of Grace 1596". At either side of the date is a picture of an angel blowing a trumpet. It is technically very crude but has a charm of its own. The title-page of Volume II is identical with that of Volume I except for the words, "Printed in the middle of March".

Both volumes contain about sixty pages. Volume I carries its golden legends in eight chapters, and Volume II in ten chapters. Each volume opens with a preface by an unknown writer and a table of contents intermixed with Latin words.

To the Japanese scholar the writing of the preface leaves something

to be desired. Here and there we find such intermixtures of literal translation of European writing which makes us wonder if it was not written by a Jesuit priest.

'*The Martyr*', here introduced, was taken from Volume II of '*the Legenda Aurea*'. This story is presumably a truthful record of a happening which took place in a Christian church at Nagasaki in those days. However, the actuality of the great fire as recorded in this story is impossible to ascertain even by referring to '*the Nagasaki Minatogusa*' (Miscellanies of the Port of Nagasaki) and other books. Much less is it possible to ascertain the exact date of the occurrence.

For publication, I ventured to add some literary embellishment to '*The Martyr*'. I hope that the simple and refined style of the original has not been impaired.

**(Remark 1)**

"Postscript itself".—This postscript is also a fiction and part of the story. "*Legenda Aurea*" does not exist. Akutagawa created such a book in order to support the reality of this story.

When "*The Martyr*" was published, many collectors were looking for old books of Christianity. A collector who had read the postscript of "*The Martyr*", believed that Akutagawa owed the books "*Legenda Aurea*", and wanted to buy it no matter how expensive it was. Akutagawa answered, "Nothing. That's fiction!" with a laugh.

**(Remark 2)**

"Comparison with the source".—But, lately scholars who were looking for the source of this story discovered that Akutagawa had another "*Golden Legend*" (*Legend Aurea*) which was translated in Japanese entitled, "*The Biographies of Saints*" (1894). In this book, we can find a story "*Saint Marine*", which is very similar to Akutagawa's.

However, there are very important differences between "*The Martyr*" and "*Saint Marine*".

(1) The girl who fell in love with Marine is the daughter of a fisherman, not an umbrella-maker. And she is so indecent that she brought her baby to Marine after her delivery, in spite of the baby

belonging to her and another man.

(2) Marine was also expelled, but she was forgiven by the efforts of brothers in the monastery. When she came back to the monastery, she looked very old and her cheeks were sunken. Her black eyebrows, white beautiful skin, red lips and plenty of hair were all changed. She looked like another woman because of the long bitter days during *her expulsion*. She died two months after returning to the monastery because of mental and physical illnesses.

(3) The girl who fell in love with Lorenzo is not so indecent that she could not confess the truth. She is also a *faireyed girl of Japan* like Lorenzo.

(4) Unlike Marine, Lorenzo is very beautiful until the end. And she died to save a baby dramatically, in the great fire.

#### [Conclusion]

(1) In "The Martyr", there is the beauty and sublimity of the moment, that is to say, the beauty and sublimity condensed into the moment. There is sublimity but no beauty in "Saint Marine" (as the comparison (2) shows). This biography of "Saint Marine" does not have such a moment, and it belongs to religion. "The Martyr" belongs to beauty and literature because Akutagawa depicts through "the beauty of the moment".

(2) Being attracted by "the beauty of unchastity...", Akutagawa confessed his distrust for women in "In a Grove". But the deeper his distrust for woman, the more he had to look for his ideal figure of woman. That is Lorenzo.

(3) Marine has been called a saint and even now, many Christians know her. On the contrary, Lorenzo did not become a saint. Nobody knows her by her real name. She is an unknown Japanese girl. Akutagawa created in her his ideal Japanese woman. Lorenzo is not a special woman. She is the same fair-eyed girl as the daughter of the umbrella-maker. Because of being nameless, Lorenzo can become the symbol of the young women of Japan. Akutagawa was able to find

such a figure as Lorenzo not in the modern age but in Japan's medieval period. This may be read as Akutagawa's criticism of modern Japanese women, who were too selfish even in the early twentieth century, on the contrary of Lorenzo.

[Students' opinions and My comments]

(1) 'Lorenzo as a Christ Figure'

**Daniela Stephanz:** (Quoted in full)

The figure of Lorenzo in *The Martyr* can be paralleled with that of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The rejection of Christ, his death and the moment of impression can be found in the character of Lorenzo.

Like Christ, Lorenzo was loved by all in the beginning. He referred to his home as "paradise" and to his father as "father of all". He was extremely pious and good, and everyone came to love Lorenzo dearly. This is a comparison to the early life of Christ.

Lorenzo's excommunication and rejection from the people can also be compared with the betrayal of Christ and his Crucifixion. In Lorenzo's case, not only do the good priests turn him away, but Simeon, his closest dearest brother, strikes him as well. This is a betrayal of high degree. Likewise, Jesus Christ was betrayed by all, and his dearest apostle *Simon Peter*, betrayed Christ also by denying him three times before the cock crowed. Therefore, both Lorenzo and Christ were unjustly condemned and betrayed by their closest friends.

Thirdly, Lorenzo's action of saving the infant from the burning house and his consequent death can be compared to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross to save others. In the *Martyr*, all the Christians cried out, "Out of his love for the sinner, he degraded himself to beggary and to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ". This quotation is a direct implication is the story that Lorenzo is to be viewed as an emulation of Christ. Even though people made him an outcast, Lorenzo saved the baby. Christ too, died on the cross to save us from our sins even though we betrayed him and refused to hear his

word. Therefore, Christ and Lorenzo can be compared in this situation also.

It can be concluded that Lorenzo and Christ can be paralleled to a degree in the story of *The Martyr* through the above mentioned examples. Although there are others, these three stand out in a particular way

**(My comment on Daniela's)**

I am very happy to read such an interesting paper as this and a little excited. Especially I'm so interested in your opinion that Simeon is equivalent to Simon Peter, besides Lorenzo as a Christ Figure (Other student also pointed). I think this is a new discovery. Although it looks easy to find resemblances between Simeon and Simon because of names and physique, no one pointed them in Japan.

But, Lorenzo's last was very beautiful and she was admired by all people and Jesus Christ crucified among the accusation. What do you think about this difference?

**(2) 'Simon as Judas and Lorenzo as both a man and a woman'**

**Tamara L. Baker:** (Quoted in full)

This short story by Akutagawa was a work of fiction that was based on a story about St. Marine as found in *The Biographies of Saints*. In this story, the main character Lorenzo was, in a sense, both a male and a female. One of the major points of the story was that Lorenzo lived his life as a male, but biologically was a female. There was also a strong emphasis on religion and "saintliness" throughout the work. Thus, in order to tie these factors together, I will first focus on the male side of Lorenzo and show how Akutagawa paralleled him to Jesus. To bring out the female part of Lorenzo I will compare the character to St. Marine.

First, Lorenzo repeatedly said that his father was God, the Father of all. He also was ever pious and had a pure soul, as Jesus did. When something went awry, the brothers turned against Lorenzo as the Jews had turned on Jesus and cast Him from their midst. Even



so, Lorenzo said nothing in his defense as Jesus had done before Pontius Pilate. Akutagawa even developed the character of Simeon who showed similarities to Judas, both being the betrayers of their best friend. But even when Simeon hurt Lorenzo the most, Lorenzo only asked God to forgive Simeon by using the words Jesus had used on the cross. Akutagawa blatantly stated the similarities of Lorenzo to Jesus, but it was not necessary because they were obvious enough to us.

The other religious figure that Lorenzo paralleled was St. Marine, whose life story was the basis for "The Martyr". The two peoples' stories begin similarly with the monastery, but St. Marine was accused of intimacy with a fisherman's daughter who was more indecent than the umbrella-maker's daughter of our story, especially since the fisherman's daughter never confessed her sin. Marine also stayed away from the monastery until she was old and sick. The brothers then forgave her and she died of poor health without the melodrama and romance that Lorenzo's story had. Lorenzo, on the other hand, was young and beautiful up to the end of the story. The beauty of Lorenzo was like the beauty of the "moon yet to rise". Both were things to be appreciated "in a moment" or "at a glance", as Akutagawa usually writes. Aside from the changes and embellishments of Lorenzo's character as compared to St. Marine, "The Martyr" was obviously similar to the story about the Christian saint, Marine.

Thus, in my opinion, the religion and the male/female sides of Lorenzo were the strong themes throughout the story. By looking at the descriptions Akutagawa used and demonstrating how he paralleled Lorenzo to both Jesus and St. Marine, the story's concepts were tied together and summarized.

**(My comment on Tamara's)**

Your paper, comparing Lorenzo with St. Marine is very excellent. I'm much interested in your opinion that Simeon is equivalent to Judas. Other students pointed Peter instead of Judas. How about this? (Your opinion was minority in the class, wasn't it?). And how about the relation between Religion and Beauty?

## (3) 'Lorenzo is a "post-Christ".'

**Kimberly A. Harrison :**

The scene of the burning house is filled with Christian inferences. Not only does Lorenzo act according to God's word but it seems as if Akutagawa has taken care to portray Lorenzo as "Christ-like". For example, in the crowd surrounding the blaze, the reader's attention is focused on Lorenzo when "he" screams, "Lord save us!". Because Lorenzo has been so mistreated, as readers we hardly expect "him" to be in the crowd, at the source of "his" abuse. Moreover, Akutagawa's description of Lorenzo as a beggar is very significant. In a figurative sense, Lorenzo in this scene seems very similar to that of Jesus in the Bible. Like Jesus, Lorenzo has been mistreated and reduced to the level of a beggar but though mistreated, does not fail to aid "his" fellow man; Lorenzo rescues the infant from the house risking "his" own life at the same time. Not only does Lorenzo resemble Jesus in this instance but the scene alludes to one of God's Commandments: "Do unto others as you would have done unto you". Thus, the scene of the burning house is another instance where Lorenzo teaches a Christian ideal.

Furthermore, Akutagawa acknowledges outright the fact that Lorenzo is a "post-Christ" or martyr. After the truth is learned about Lorenzo's innocence in the adultery charge, Akutagawa writes,

Out of his love for the sinner, he degraded himself to beggary,  
following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, the description of Lorenzo's motivation is very similar to that of Jesus Christ in the Bible. That is, just as Jesus lived and died out of his love for man, Lorenzo sacrifices "his" life to pay for the sins of others in the story.

In conclusion, "The Martyr" can be seen as a story which is not only enjoyable as fiction, but as a source of education in the Christian tradition. Through the character of Lorenzo, Akutagawa, in a figurative sense, reenacts the life of Jesus Christ in the Bible. Like Jesus in his lifetime, Lorenzo in the story teaches and spreads God's word,

and it is by Lorenzo that the reader learns the values and ideals of Christianity.

**(My comment on Kimberly's)**

Your paper teaches me the deeper relation between Lorenzo and Jesus Christ in the Bible. Akutagawa portrayed Jesus Christ in his last work entitled "A Man in the West". I'd like to reconsider the relation between "The Martyr" and "A Man in the West" according to your opinion. Your paper is always excellent, but this inclines a little toward religion. What do you think about 'Religion and Beauty'? I want to know of your opinion about 'The moment of beauty', too.

**(4) 'Displacement of words do a great injustice'.**

**Nick Bates:**

The character development of Lorenzo is very important. Her (Lorenzo) words and actions are particularly interesting because of its peculiarity when juxtaposed with those of the student readers. Since the words and actions are so delicate in of themselves, that is, small as they are individually, together they combine to shape the exact character as the author wills it, the role of an editor becomes increasingly important. Displacement of words or actions of a character by the editor do a great injustice to the story. Such an error occurs in this translation of the short story. When summoned before the priests of Santa Lucia to answer the umbrella-maker's accusation that Lorenzo has fathered his daughter's child, Lorenzo answers "It's not so". However, in the original story Lorenzo does not answer the accusations but remain silent. The fact that Lorenzo remained silent is very important to his characterization. There is a different feeling the reader has about Lorenzo when it's been read that he did not answer the accusations than if it was read that Lorenzo answered "It's not so". By not answering the accusations I would get the impression, based on Lorenzo's faith that has been previously shown, that Lorenzo was innocent and that he felt no need to answer his accusers because as far as he was concerned the Lord knew his heart, and that is all that matters.

Whereas when I read this translation of the story I got the impression that Lorenzo may in fact be guilty, and afraid to accept the consequences of his sin. Whether one agrees with my impressions is not the issue. What needs to be understood in that the reader obtains different feelings about Lorenzo depending on whether he answers his accusers or not. Moreover, by not answering, Lorenzo is further depicted as a Christ figure which is a theme carried throughout the story. This can be understood by reading one of the Gospels, for instance the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, where in chapter 26, verse 62, Christ Jesus refused to answer to the accusations brought against him by the wicked Jews who wrongfully sought to destroy him. It can be clearly said, therefore, that the editor made a grave mistake.

(5) 'Simeon's ambivalent feeling for the baby'

Nick bates: (Continued)

One of the things Akutagawa likes to write of and develop is the idea of ambivalent feelings. Such feelings not only help in characterization and in understanding the story, but also draws the reader into the particular situation in order that he/she can feel what the character is going thru. Reading, consequently, becomes an active process instead of a passive one, and indeed, becomes more interesting. In this story the author lets the reader watch Simeon's reaction to the umbrella-makers granddaughter. "Taking up the infant in his rough arms with tears on his bitter face, he would recall the quiet, ashy and handsome Lorenzo whom he had loved as his younger brother". Here Simeon struggles with the feelings of hatred he has directed towards Lorenzo for his sin, and the love he has towards Lorenzo as a brother, which is shown by his loving gentleness to the infant. These are very difficult ambivalent feelings that Simeon is wrestling with. It is difficult for the reader as well, an indication that Akutagawa has proved himself again as a writer. As I read this excerpt I too struggle with Simeon, because I personally know the wonderful sensation of holding an infant, while at the the same time aware that sexual relations

outside of marriage, as decreed from my God, is sinful. When reading this I realise how thankful I am that I did not have to go thru what Simeon is going thru. The ambivalent feelings that the author writes of drew me into the story deeper, helped me understand what Simeon is going thru, and gave a greater meaning to the story.

**(My Comment on Nick's)**

I'm deeply impressed by your paper. Your former remark (4) is of course important and right because it concerns the character and faith of Lorenzo. Latter is also very excellent. As you write, such an ambivalent feeling as Simeon's is difficult to understand for some students even in my class. But you could exactly catch his feeling.

As I have heard of your baby from you, I can undersand it more deeply. I'm so happy to read your paper that I'd like to introduce this to Japanese students.

**(6) 'Birds as symbols'**

**Mickael Piker :**

Birds are a very prevalent symbol in "The Martyr". I can think of two distinct examples where this is so. On page 61, L. 10 from top, we can see the first example. "His harmonious friendship with Lorenzo might have been compared to a fierce eagle taking loving care of a dove. . . "Eagle's have always represented authority and guidance in a chaotic world. Simeon's role is just that, demonstrated by his military background. Dove's on the othr hand are representative of peace, innocence, and gentleness. Lorenzo's appearance and deep piety reflect this analogy. The second example can be found on P. 63, L. 2 from top. "Do I look like a liar even to you? and left the room like a swallow leaving his nest". Swallow's are noted for their swift, graceful flight. We can see, even in Lorenzo's exit, a tenderness in the way he reacts to the confrontation. Akutagawa uses foreshadowing here as well, to indicate to the reader that perhaps Lorenzo's character is not what it seems to be. That in fact, this example is used as a 'stepping-stone' to the revelation of Lorenzo's femininity.

**(My comment on Mike's)**

This is a very interesting and excellent paper. The symbols of the birds, an eagle, dove and swallow, are clear. It is very good that you always remark on the expression of stories. Your other remark is on the mask of Lorenzo, but I omit to comment on it.

**(7) 'Akutagawa's unique technique'****Cathrine Bankert:**

The scene which best displays Akutagawa's technique of both placing doubt in the mind of the reader as to whether or not Lorenzo is a boy or a girl and also subtly reinforcing the fact that he's a boy is when Simeon confronts Lorenzo about the umbrella-maker's daughter. Simeon questions Lorenzo about being intimate with her and doesn't believe him when he denies it. Lorenzo leaves, only to rush back and throw his arms around Simeon's neck and say he's sorry. This is typically a female action and gesture. Akutagawa realizes this and therefore writes "...the boy Lorenzo rushed in..." By saying "the boy", Akutagawa once again emphasizes the maleness of Lorenzo in order to suspend the climax.

The climax of the story comes after the fire when Lorenzo lays before the gates of Santa Lucia dying. It is not until this time that anyone realizes Lorenzo is actually a girl. The people only recognize this because of the torn and burnt shirt revealing her breasts. Only then do they look at her face and see the natural and soft beauty attesting to her femininity.

Akutagawa wrote this story in such a way as to hint at the climax and at the same time suspend it by disregarding his former hints. By planting a seed of doubt in the reader's mind as to Lorenzo's gender and then reinforcing the fact that he's a boy, Akutagawa kept the reader's interest and made the climax not exactly unexpected, but indeed a nice surprise.

**(My comment on Cathy's)**

I'm very interested in your excellent paper. You write this as a

problem of Fiction. Especially, you paid attention to the technique and expression of this stories.

**(8) 'A powerful climax'**

**Rodney Huff:**

There are two main reasons why Akutagawa's climax is so powerful. These both have to do with early descriptions by Akutagawa that allude towards the climax of the story. The first of these is during the scene where Lorenzo is banished from the town. In this scene Lorenzo walks off towards the sun which, as Akutagawa describes, "looked like quivering in the wintry blast. . . beyond the head of Lorenzo, who walked dropily" (p. 64). This scene is quite similar to the end of the story in which Lorenzo is seen with the background of the fire behind him. By alluding to this early in the story, Akutagawa is able to hint at the gruesome yet magnificent scene that follows the climax. This allows for the reader to build up a feeling of expectation towards the end of the story.

The second example of how Akutagawa builds a feeling of expectation in the reader, is when the faith of Lorenzo is described. Here Akutagawa describes how Lorenzo would visit the Church of santa Lucia at night to pray. No one knew of these nightly visits but by telling the reader of them, the reader begins to doubt the guilt of Lorenzo. This style of narrative method provides a feeling of expectation for the reader towards the next development in the story. Here the reader begins to realize that Lorenzo could not possibly be guilty and thus begins to expect a powerful end to the story.

"The Martyr" is yet another example of Akutagawa's masterful writing. Through a powerful climax, it conveys his own personal criticism towards the woman of his day. Much of its strength is a direct result of the feeling of expectation that is created early on in the story by Akutagawa's powerful descriptions.

**(My comment on Rodney's)**

Your paper is very excellent. You paid much attention to the method of this story, mainly to the powerful climax. Your first paper

of "Rashomon" inclined toward the moral of life (a little, I remember). But, in this paper, you appreciate the story as fiction itself.

(9) **'Ideas of Author in "The Martyr"—Ideal Japanese women'**

**David Silverberg:** (Quoted in full)

When Ryunosuke Akutagawa wrote "The Martyr", his intention was to communicate to the reader his picture of the ideal Japanese woman. Akutagawa has shown his distrust of women in some of his other works, such as "In a Grove", and in this story he wanted to give the women of Japan someone they could respect and try to emulate.

There are two points in the story that suggest this is what Akutagawa had in mind. The first is when he calls her (in the original) a "young girl of this country". He wants to show that she is truly Japanese, even though she is Christian. In this way, he wants to form a bond between the Japanese readers of the story and Lorenzo.

The second point is that Lorenzo's true name is never revealed. She remains nameless in this sense throughout the story, and I interpret this generality to mean that she should not be the exception. In the last paragraph of the "story" section, Akutagawa writes "What does it matter?" He is saying that we, the readers, do not need to know any more than that she was a beautiful, spiritual, person. He goes on to say that she is someone to emulate. When the paragraph talks of "tossing a wave aloft into the starry sky", he's saying "This is what you must strive for! This purity, this beauty, this love for others, this willingness to sacrifice is what you (meaning other Japanese women) should try to attain.

**(My comment on David's)**

You have understood this story more completely. You can pay much attention to 'Japanese' and 'nameless', which are very important in this story. Rodney also writes: "Lorenzo gives up her life to save the baby before the townsmen see that Lorenzo is not a boy but is a girl. It is in this powerful climatic scene that Akutagawa is able to make a powerful statement which praises the lives of common people while at the same time criticizes the typical Japanese women of his era".—The end.