



Scuola Italiana di Studi
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2019 KYOTO LECTURES

Tuesday, May 29th, 18:00h

Mark Teeuwen SPEAKER

Christian Sorcerers Crucified

Reconsidering
the Keihan Kirishitan
Incident of 1827-29

In 1827, the Osaka eastern magistracy rolled up a network of what the investigators identified as a Christian conspiracy. Caught in the net were a small group of female healers and soothsayers who combined Inari practices with a Christian spell, and a few men who had heard lectures on Matteo Ricci's works; all were connected to an already deceased mystery man called Mizuno Gunki. In the end, six suspects were crucified in Osaka, while 65 others received lesser sentences.

This talk will focus on two aspects of this case. First, the incident will be used as a lens to examine issues of gender. Three of the condemned were women, and three men; the differences between the ways they acted, how they were talked about, and how they were treated are striking. Secondly, the analysis will zoom in on the apparent confusion on the part of the authorities to understand what the "pernicious creed" banned by Ieyasu actually referred to, and how a "Christian" might be recognized. Was Christianity a dangerous threat, or merely an administrative nuisance? Was Christian sorcery real? How far did one have to go to ensure that the realm was safe from its presumed powers?

Mark Teeuwen is professor of Japanese studies at the University of Oslo, Norway. His publications include books and articles on the history of Shinto, shrines, and Japanese religious history more broadly. This talk is based on a joint project on the Keihan Kirishitan incident, with Miyazaki Fumiko and Kate Wildman Nakai. The members of the project sought out and transcribed extant manuscripts related to this case and translated the main sources into English, aiming to publish a complete transcription in Japanese and a monograph in English in the near future.

Please note that this lecture will be held at the Kyoto centre of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient

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