

The Emergence of a New Woman: The History of the Transformation of Gracia¹

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The year, 2013, is the 450th anniversary of the birth of Hosokawa Tama Gracia (1563–1600).² Gracia was one of four daughters of General Akechi Mitsuhide (1528–82) and his only wife Fushiya (1530–76). The late sixteenth century in Japan was the era filled with distinctive individuals such as Oda Nobunaga (1534–82), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), all prominent warrior governors, as well as Sen-no-Rikyu (1521–91), a renowned tea master.

Gracia's tumultuous life left her many "footprints" throughout Japan. Among them are her three tombs and the Grand Cathedral of Virgin Mary of Osaka, a Catholic cathedral which was built on the place where she died.³ Her tombs were constructed by her husband and her son, recognizing their dedicated love towards her. In the Catholic cathedral, there is a large picture by Domoto Insho in which Gracia prays by the side of the Virgin Mary. Recently, many people have visited two exhibitions there featuring Gracia.⁴ Gracia's way of life will continue to attract us in the future because her sense of dauntless self seems akin to the feelings of contemporary Japanese women.

Gracia's life has also been appreciated outside of Japan. It was even introduced to the people of Vienna in 1698 in the form of an opera performed in the Jesuits' Theatre under the title of "Mulier fortis (···) Gracia Regni Tango Regina, Exantlatis pro Christo aerumnis clara" (Strong woman (···) Gracia,

Queen of Tango, famous for the hardships she suffered for Christ) (Gössmann 19–20; Yoneda). In addition, Francisco Hernando’s *Grace, Christian Lady in Japan* was published in Barcelona in 1906.⁵

This essay will report, from the viewpoint of gender, how dramatic representations of Lady Hosokawa Tama Gracia, an early modern Japanese Catholic princess, have been transformed since the beginning of the twentieth century. Hitherto, no study of her dramatic representations has yet been conducted, as far as the present author is aware. The essay discusses four plays and one television drama which include portrayals of Gracia created from the beginning of the twentieth century to the commencement of the twenty-first century.⁶ The four plays were written by Kawatake Mokuami, Fujisawa Kosetsu, Herman Heuvers and Tanaka Sumie. The TV drama was written by Tabuchi Kumiko. The first part of the essay will explore the main episodes of Gracia’s life covered in these “performance” works. The second part will discuss how she has been represented in the works.

I. Gracia’s Life

This figure shows the main episodes of Gracia’s life which each work employs. Major scenes of her life will be explained focusing on important aspects of her life that are featured in the dramas.

Episodes	Kawatake (1903)	Fujisawa (1906)	Heuvers (1940)	Tanaka (1959)	Tabuchi (2011)
1. Marriage				★	
2. Confinement			★	★	★
3. Summoned by Hideyoshi				★	
4. Conversion		★	★	★	★
5. Death	★	★	★	★	★

1. Marriage

In 1578 Gracia married Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563–1646), a young warrior with a taste for tea culture as a disciple of Sen-no-Rikyu. The marriage between Gracia and Tadaoki was arranged by Oda Nobunaga. Gracia and Tadaoki were both 15 years old.

2. Confinement

Then, in 1582, Gracia's father, Mitsuhide, assassinated his lord, Nobunaga. Soon after the assassination, Mitsuhide was defeated by Hideyoshi, who was to become a unifier succeeding Nobunaga. Gracia, as a daughter of the betrayer, was confined to the countryside for several years until 1584, sacrificing herself to secure the political position of her husband, Tadaoki.

3. Hideyoshi's summoning

In one version of this legendary episode, Gracia was released from confinement by the order of Hideyoshi, and Gracia moved into a castle which her husband had built for her in Osaka, practically the capital at that time. One day, Hideyoshi is said to have summoned Gracia, whose beauty was well known, to his presence apparently to enforce a sexual liaison between them, which she refused dauntlessly and valiantly.

4. Conversion

According to Luis Fróis (1532–97), a Jesuit priest, it was her husband who first introduced Gracia to Christianity. Her husband Tadaoki was “a good tea fellow” of a Christian General, Takayama Ukon Justo (1552–1615) (Fróis *História* 3: 224; Carta 2: 261–62; Ward 200). According to historian Tabata Yasuko (Tabata 126, 131), Kiyohara Ito, Gracia's kinswoman, whose father became a Catholic around 1563, played an important role in Gracia's conversion. Ito stayed with Gracia as her chief lady-in-waiting. Tabata assumes that Ito, who eventually was baptized in 1587, instructed Gracia in a Christian way of living (Tabata 128, 132). In March of 1587, when Gracia's hus-

band went to a battlefield in Kyushu as a General of Hideyoshi's side, according to *Carta Annua de Iapão*, an annual report of the Jesuits, Gracia secretly visited a Catholic Church to understand Christianity more deeply (*Carta* 2: 262; Tabata 144–45). In June, Hideyoshi announced a deportation order for Catholic missionaries. Soon after the order, Gracia was baptized by Ito under the empowerment of the Jesuit priest. In her letter to the Jesuit priest, Gregorio de Cespedes (1551–1611), quoted in *Carta Annua de Iapão*, Gracia wrote that she was ready to be “a martyr” (*Carta* 2: 266). It is said that Gracia kept her faith until her death in 1600.⁷

5. Death

After the death of Hideyoshi in 1598, the country came to be divided into the camps of Tokugawa Ieyasu and Ishida Mitsunari (1560–1600). According to Oota Gyuichi (1527–1613), Gracia's contemporary General who wrote about Gracia in his book *Sekigahara Onkassen Soushi*, when Gracia's husband went to the battlefield in Tohoku to join Ieyasu's side, his enemy Mitsunari attempted to capture Gracia as the first victim of his hostage-taking scheme; her refusal to surrender led her to her death (qtd. in Kaneko: 73–74). Her case revealed a critical flaw in the scheme, which eventually made the schemer Mitsunari abandon it.

It is not certain whether she killed herself or whether she was killed by her vassal in the burning residence. Gyuichi as well as *Tadaoki-Koufu*, an official record of the Hosokawa, states that she killed herself (qtd. in Kaneko: 74, 98), while *Carta Annua de Iapão* records that she was killed by her vassal (qtd. in Heuvers: 156).

II. Dramatic Representations of Gracia

This section will discuss how Gracia has been portrayed in drama after 1900. Each work, discussed in this section, reflects the social and cultural cli-

mate of contemporary Japanese society.

1. Kawatake (1903)

The famous playwright, Kawatake Mokuami (1816–93), wrote a Kabuki play, *The Wife of Hosokawa Tadaoki* (*Hosokawa Tadaoki no Tsuma*), which was first performed in 1903.⁸ This play begins with a scene where the messenger from Mitsunari comes to the Hosokawa residence to take Gracia, who is renamed Shikinami, as a hostage. In the play, which focuses on the events concerning her death, Shikinami is represented as a dedicated wife. Knowing the intention of Mitsunari, Shikinami decides to kill herself as well as her little ones, asking her lady-in-waiting to set the residence on fire after her suicide. She discloses her “painful” decision to the lady-in-waiting, telling her that she wishes to free her husband from family cares on the battlefield (Kawatake).⁹ Her son and daughter wonder whether their death will delight their father, but Shikinami persuades them into accepting their deaths, saying he will praise them for doing so. At the end of the play, in front of the picture of her husband, Shikinami murders her two children and kills herself with the assistance of her vassal as a second on stage. The way she dies does not depict her as a Christian.

2. Fujisawa (1906)

Unlike in Kawatake’s play, in Fujisawa Kosetsu’s *Gracia* (*Garasha*), written in 1906, Gracia’s Christian faith is clearly portrayed. In the sixth scene, she chooses death hoping to gain eternal life in heaven, saying to her vassals, “If I die, I can receive the eternal life in heaven” (Fujisawa; Translation Mine).¹⁰ In the same scene, she prohibits her vassals from immolating themselves upon her death because of the doctrine of “Tenshu [the God]” (Fujisawa). In the play, however, after making the sign of the cross and saying a prayer, she kills herself offstage in spite of her Christian belief. On stage, what the audience witnesses is only that one of her vassals thrust his long sword through the par-

tition doors to assist her “suicide.” Although the anti-Christian edict, which was strictly kept in the Edo period, became defunct in 1873 under “intense foreign pressure” (Lee 125), it seems that Christianity, at that time, was not widely acknowledged enough in Japanese society to arouse questions about this incongruity between her faith and her suicide in Fujisawa’s interpretation of Gracia’s beliefs. Furthermore, it may be argued that Fujisawa sets Gracia’s death scene offstage in order to blur the precise manner of her demise.

In Fujisawa’s play, Gracia is described as an obedient wife. Like Kawatake, Fujisawa starts his play with the scene where the messenger from Mitsunari visits her residence. Gracia’s vassal confides her that her husband has ordered the vassal to murder her in the event that Mitsunari demands that the family surrender her as a hostage. Gracia herself wants her husband to fight without worrying about her life, while she also thinks it shameful to live as a hostage. In her total acceptance of her husband’s orders, Gracia kills herself offstage at the end of the play. In this play, unlike in Kawatake’s play, she orders her children to be removed from the residence.

Thus, both Kawatake and Fujisawa represent Gracia as an obedient and dedicated wife, so her subjectivity is not fully developed in their representations.

However, the publication in 1900 of Nitobe Inazo’s book about Bushido indicates that a domestic and obedient woman was an ideal female figure in Japan at the time when Kawatake and Fujisawa created their Gracia plays. Nitobe Inazo (1862–1933), an educator and agriculturist, published *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* in the United States, and its Japanese translation appeared in Japan eight years later. In his book, Nitobe insists that Bushido, which means the way of samurai, was the social basis of Japan and the morality which Japanese people continued to follow at the beginning of the twentieth century, even though the age of samurai had already ended. Nitobe mentions

that the most important role of women in the new millennium was to manage domesticity. He wrote of female education that “Domesticity guided women’s education” (Nitobe 233).

3. Heuvers (1940)

In the middle of the twentieth century, two Gracia plays were performed on stage, highlighting her serious attitude towards Christianity.

The third play to be analyzed is *Lady Gracia Hosokawa* (*Hosokawa Gracia Fujin*), written by Hermann Heuvers (1890–1977), a German Catholic priest and a scholar who researched the life of Gracia in Sophia University, Japan. This play was first performed in 1940 and later revived in 1965 at Kabuki-Za, a principal theatre for Kabuki in Tokyo. The play shows her later life from her confinement up until her death.

Using multiple chapters from Gracia’s life as theatrical subjects, Heuvers dramatizes the process of Gracia’s conversion, representing her subjectivity as far as her religious choice is concerned. In Act 2 Scene 1, Gracia knows of Christianity from Tadaoki, who is a friend of Takayama Ukon, a Christian General (Heuvers 42–43). When Tadaoki goes to the battlefield in Kyushu, Gracia, in disguise, visits a Christian church to understand Christianity more deeply. Vincent, a monk in the church, answers her questions about Christianity, and she gets absorbed in its doctrine. As it coincides with the time where Hideyoshi begins to persecute Christians including Ukon, Gracia’s vassals urge her not to be baptized (71–72). In spite of the seriousness of her decision, Gracia commits to becoming a Christian, asking Kyobara, her already Christian lady-in-waiting, to baptize her (73). Gracia is also depicted as a pious Christian woman who chooses not to commit suicide, and in making the choice to represent her in this way, Heuvers portrays Gracia as a person who has a sense of self. This is further restated in Act 3 Scene 2, when Tadaoki and Ogasawara Shosai, the chief vassal, “assume” that Gracia will refuse to

kill herself due to her Christian faith (86–87).

Nevertheless, even in this play, Gracia is described as an obedient wife. In the opening scene of the play, in which she is confined in Midono, a countryside of Tango, she is recommended by Ogasawara Shosai to kill herself. She refuses this recommendation, saying “my body and my life are my husband’s. The first duty of wives is to obey their husbands” (Heuvers 27; Translation Mine). In her death scene, Gracia honors her husband by following his orders for her to kill herself. The audience is already aware that Tadaoki gave this order to his vassals (Act 3 Scene 2). Hearing about her husband’s command to kill her if Mitsunari comes to capture her, Gracia says, “I won’t refuse” (96; Translation Mine). At the end of the play, she is killed by Shosai after whispering “Jesus, Maria” (101; Translation Mine).

4. Tanaka (1959)

Gracia: Lady Hosokawa (Garasha: Hosokawa Fujin), written by a female Christian writer Tanaka Sumie (1903–2000), was first performed in 1959 by Bungaku-za company. It was first published in 1972.

Within a framework wrought by an induction in which Gracia’s first anniversary is celebrated, the play portrays further chapters from her life, thus enabling the dramatist to characterize her heroine as an unconventional woman. For example, in Act 1 Scene 1 she meets Takayama Ukon alone, thus violating the social norm that forbids a girl to speak to men before she is married. Her mother Fushiya reproves her, saying to her, “A girl before her marriage should not speak to a man. You will not be setting a good example to our servants” (Tanaka “Garasha” 16; Translation Mine). In Act 2 Scene 2, after their marriage, Tadaoki and Gracia exchange conversation on equal terms. She even blames her husband when she feels oppressed by him. Pointing out the swagger of her husband, Tanaka’s Gracia says to him, “We are both humans equally, so it is funny that you behave as if you own the place”

(Tanaka “Garasha” 57; Translation Mine). In Act 2 Scene 4, she does not hesitate to challenge authority, saying with dignity to Hideyoshi, the man who holds the reins of government, “I am a believer of Christianity which your law has forbidden” (Tanaka “Garasha” 63; Translation Mine). Interestingly, in the leaflet of the performance, Tanaka wrote that she wanted to show Gracia as “Akujo” (Tanaka “Kansou” 7), literally a bad woman, meaning an unconventional woman who deviates from the ideal female figure in Japan at the time that Tanaka wrote this play.

Tanaka’s Gracia is acquainted with Christianity through her lady-in-waiting Maria and Takayama Ukon. She is baptized by Maria off-stage, although she has known that Hideyoshi proclaimed that priests should be banished from Japan. As a Christian, she refused to kill herself and the play ends in the scene where the principal retainer of the Hosokawa with a sword in his hand stands steadily behind her to signify that her death was not suicide. As Samuel Lee mentions, the Christian congregation in Japan, both Catholic and Protestant, continued to grow after the Pacific War through the 1950s (Lee 146). The representation of the non-suicidal death of Tanaka’s Gracia reflects that Christianity was gradually spreading in the Japanese society albeit at a slow rate.

However, even in this play, especially in the last scene, Gracia’s obedience to her husband as well as her dedication to motherhood is emphasized. Recognizing that her husband has ordered his vassal to kill her in the event that Mitsunari demands her as a hostage, Gracia immediately decides to follow her husband’s orders (Tanaka “Garasha” 79–80). Uttering her pitiful wish to see her children again, she is killed in the Hosokawa residence (82).

5. Tabuchi (2011)

Recently, Gracia’s subjectivity has been much more clearly represented. In 2011, a female scenario writer Tabuchi Kumiko wrote *Taiga drama*, the annual yearlong historical NHK television series, *Gou: The Life of Ladies in the*

Warring States Period (Hime-tachi no Sengoku). In this television drama, Gracia, one of the sub-characters, is given a scene in which she expresses her feeling of dismay toward her husband Tadaoki, upon witnessing him in the company of his concubine. With depictions of the close relationship within a female circle including Gracia, her subjectivity is more fully developed as a main theme in this drama. For example, in the twenty-seventh episode of the television series, Gracia implies, to the main character Gou and her sister Hatsu, that she is mentally independent from Tadaoki, saying “I have no husband” (Translation Mine). As in the preceding episodes, when Gracia was confined as a daughter of a betrayer in the countryside, she had led a solitary life. Yet, even her own spouse Tadaoki, who feared to be criticized, did not come to see her, and subsequently took up with a concubine, so Gracia decides to rely on God, not her husband. She confidently recommends Gou to live as each person themselves believes.

In the thirty-fourth episode, Tabuchi creates a scene in which Gracia and Tadaoki reconcile. Just before he goes to the battlefield of Tohoku, Tadaoki apologizes to Gracia for what he did to her, saying, for the first time, “I have made you feel lonely. I am sorry for not supporting your father in the Honnōji Incident. You had to rely on your God because I am an unreliable husband” (Translation Mine). With these words, Gracia feels that her sense of self is accepted by Tadaoki, and she replies, with tears of joy, “I shall wait for your safe return” (Translation Mine). In that moment, she decides to fight with him. Tabuchi’s Gracia, like Heuvers’s and Tanaka’s, chooses to be killed by her own will to protest against Mitsunari, who tried to capture the wives of his enemies. She asks her vassal to kill her because she is not allowed to commit suicide due to her Christian faith. The female narrator of this drama says, “Gracia died a warrior who fought against Mitsunari” (Translation Mine). Today, she is thus not only as a simple “warrior” but also an independent, new

woman. Such a transformation of Gracia seems to reflect our contemporary Japanese society where feminism has begun to spread. It seems that Tabuchi utilized the recent fruits of gender studies regarding Gracia written by scholars such as Elizabeth Gössmann and Haruko Nawata Ward.

III. Conclusion

Lady Hosokawa Tama Gracia has been an object of concern for a long time in the Japanese society especially in the last hundred years, providing a subject for “literature” including TV drama series. In this essay, we have found that her representation has been gradually transformed in the course of the time.

This essay has analyzed how the portrayal of Gracia has changed across the years, and how these changes have reflected the way in which Japanese women have attained their subjectivity. The discussion has also examined how Christianity has been gradually understood in Japan over the past century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in Kawatake Mokuami's *The Wife of Hosokawa Tadaoki* (1903), Gracia, who is renamed as Shikinami, is portrayed as a dedicated wife. She is not described as a Christian, and her death is by suicide. In Fujisawa Kosetsu's *Gracia* (1906), as in Kawatake's play, Gracia is represented as a dedicated and obedient wife. However, unlike in Kawatake's play, in Fujisawa's piece, Gracia's Christian faith is described clearly, despite the fact that she commits suicide. In the middle of the twentieth century, in his *Lady Gracia Hosokawa* (1940), Hermann Heuvers represents the Christian Gracia's subjectivity as far as her religious choice is concerned, though, even in his play, she is portrayed as an obedient wife. At the end of his play, she is killed by her vassal. In Tanaka Sumie's *Gracia: Lady Hosokawa* (1959), Gracia is depicted as an unconventional woman, while the playwright also emphasizes her obedience to her husband. Tanaka, like Heuvers, portrays her as a Christian. In 2011, Gracia's subjectivity, as a woman as well as a Chris-

tian, is much more clearly represented by Tabuchi Kumiko in the annual year-long historical NHK television series. In this drama, Gracia is described as an independent, new woman who does not rely on her husband. Thus, the transformation of Gracia has mirrored and reflected the changing representations of females and the reception of Christianity in the modern and post-modern Japanese society.

Notes

1. This is the revised and enlarged version of the paper presented in Twentieth Annual Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Interdisciplinary Symposium, held on February 21–23, 2013, in University of Miami, Coral Gables.
2. In this essay, Japanese names will take the form of family name followed by given name. After the first mention of Hosokawa Tama Gracia, thereafter she shall be referred to by her Christian name “Gracia.”
3. Gracia’s three tombs are located respectively at the ancient site of Taisyo-ji in Kumamoto, at Koutou-in in Kyoto and at Souzen-in in Osaka.
4. “Hosokawa Gracia — The Princesses of Daimyo.” Discovery Museum, 25 January–14 April, 2013; “Marie Antoinette and the Noble Ladies of Asia — East West Exchanges through the Culture of Christianity.” Toyo Bunko Museum, 20 March–28 July 2013.

Gracia offered resistance to the authority, so only a few items concerning her remains. Yet, most of these items such as her letter to her friend, a raincoat of her husband which she made, and a strip of paper on which she wrote the tanka poem of Kiritsubotei in *The Tale of Genji*, were displayed in the exhibition at the Discovery Museum. In her letter, Gracia expresses her thanks for cucumbers she was given upon revealing the health condition of her third boy Mistuchiyo, who is said to have had a weak constitution. We can see her intelligence as well as her affection as a mother. The raincoat of her husband is thought to be worn over armor; it suggests her consideration for her husband. It is said that when she was confined in the countryside as a daughter of a betrayer, she wrote the tanka composed on the theme of her love for her beloved husband. The tanka seems to indicate both her love for her husband and her intelligence.

On the other hand, the reception of Gracia in foreign countries was featured in an exhibition at Toyo Bunko Museum. A copy of Francisco Hernando’s *Grace, Christian Lady in Japan* and the score of Johann Bernhardt Standt’s *A Brave Lady*, an opera featuring Gracia’s life, were displayed in the exhibition.

5. A copy of Hernando’s *Grace, Christian Lady in Japan* is owned by Toyo Bunko Museum.
6. The texts of the other works which portray Gracia are not available.
7. Since the early seventeenth century, after Gracia’s death, the persecution of

Christians seems to have gradually become more severe. The policy to prohibit the propagation of Christianity was continued until the late nineteenth century when the Japanese government opened its country after a two-century closure.

8. The manuscript of the play, owned by The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum in Waseda University, is used in this essay.
9. There is no pagination in the manuscript.
10. There is no pagination in the script of the play.

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