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# The Meaning of Christianity in the Film and Novel “*The Flowers of War*”

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**Abstract:** When thinking of the Christian spirit of Martin Luther’s practice of love for one’s neighbor as we face the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther’s Reformation, the author sought to reveal the theological ideas of Luther in Chinese literature. We demonstrated that the film and novel, *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, written by the Chinese writer Yan Geling, effectively reflected the concept of sacrifice and love emphasized by Luther. “Jinling” is an old name for the city of Nanjing, ravaged by the Nanjing Massacre in 1937 during the Sino-Japanese war. The film *The Flowers of War* takes place in this very city and at that time, telling the tragic story of the school girls of Winchester Cathedral. Japanese soldiers demand that he turn the girls over to them. The story ends with the prostitutes sacrificing themselves for the girls, disguised as them. The novel has a similar plot, with the difference being the absence of the mortician. Luther’s ethic, that a Christian must be a Christ to his neighbor, is reflected in the sacrifice of the prostitutes. Depicted as disguised schoolgirls with gilt-edged bibles in their hands, the actions of the prostitutes can be interpreted as the practice of the Christian ideology of salvation. Their actions depict the image of the scapegoat, symbolizing the sacrifice of the Christ for our sins. Based on documents of a real event, Yan Geling intentionally changed the background from a college to a cathedral to add a religious scheme. “The Heroes of Nanking” effectively portrays the theology of Luther, revolving around the idea of salvation. This paper aims to prove that the writer of the novel, Yan Geling, successfully illustrates the idea of Christianity, and furthermore that the director, Zhang Yimou, intentionally diminished religious schemes to appeal to the Chinese majority, most of whom are non-Christians.

**Key Words:** The Flowers of War; Yan Geling; Zhang Yimou; the Nanjing Massacre; Martin Luther

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## I . Introduction

As we face the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther, there is a need to examine how Christianity is reflected in Chinese culture. Oh Sunbang<sup>[1]</sup> states that Christianity actively began to be spread in China from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in his thesis the works of Christian authors are analyzed to examine the thought of the Chinese people on Christian religious

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[1] Oh Sunbang, *The Changes in 20th Century Chinese Novels and Christianity*, (Seoul; Soongsil University Press, 2005), 5.

life, Christianity, and Western civilization. This thesis also attempted to examine the meaning of Christianity that appears in Chinese novels and films. Roland H Bainton<sup>[2]</sup> asserted that the core of the Christian principles of Martin Luther is that a Christian must be a Christ to his neighbor.

Therefore, the author aims to compare the novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* 金陵十三钗 (*The Flowers of War* by Yan Geling 严歌苓<sup>[3]</sup>), a Chinese work that effectively encapsulates this idea of Luther and is a work that has not been examined much in Korea, with director Zhang Yimou's 张艺谋 film 金陵十三钗 *The Flowers of War*<sup>[4]</sup> which was based on the novel, to determine the differences in the meaning of Christianity in the novel and when made into a film. That is, the author aims to examine how Christian ethics were expressed through the novel of Yan Geling and the film of Zhang Yimou, and to discover its meaning. The author will examine this in more detail in the next chapter, but here let us note that these works are based on the events that occurred at Jinling Women's College 金陵女子大学 during the Nanjing Massacre. Despite an abundance of research on Yan Geling in China due to the excellence of her literary works, not much research has been conducted in Korea. At an international seminar, the author, Hwang Youngmee<sup>[5]</sup> presented a comparative study of the original novel *The Criminal Lu Yanshi* 陆犯焉识 by Yan Geling with the film remake *Coming Home* 归来 (2014) by Zhang Yimou. The original novel that *Coming Home* is based on takes the form of the life story of the main character, the intellectual Lu Yanshi, from 1921 to 1990 from a peripheral first-person point of view of his granddaughter. It depicts the tragedy of an individual and a family caused by the Cultural Revolution. The narration method used, a peripheral first-person narrator, is the same as that used in *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* (*The Flowers of War*), which depicts the tragedy of the Nanjing Massacre.

Yan Geling's *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* (*The Flowers of War*) was created based on the records of people who experienced the Nanjing Massacre first hand. She based her novel on four records, John Rabe's *John Rabe, Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*<sup>[6]</sup>, in which he wrote of his experience protecting 250 thousand Chinese as the chair of the International Council of the Nanjing Safety Zone during the Nanjing Massacre; *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing*<sup>[7]</sup> by Minnie Vautrin, the Dean of Academic Affairs at Jinling Women's College who also worked in the Safety Zone; the Diary of Zheng Ruifang 程瑞芳<sup>[8]</sup>, an employee at the dormitory of Jinling Women's College; and *The Rape of Nanking* by Iris Chang<sup>[9]</sup>, which was based on these records.

Adapted from documents of a real event, Yan Geling intentionally changed the background from a college to a cathedral to add a religious scheme. Before writing this novel, Yan Geling wrote the screenplay for the film *Sanctuary* 避难 (directors Han Sanping & Zhou Li, 1988), which changed the

[2] Bainton, Roland H. , *Here I Stand*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1978), 230.

[3] Yan Geling, *Jin Ling Shi San Chai, The Flowers of War*, China People's Press, 2007, Shanxi Normal University Press 2011). Translated by Kim Yikyung, Korean edition of *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, Seoul: Woongjin Think Big, 2012. (严歌苓, 《金陵十三钗》, 中国工人出版社, 2007, 陕西师范大学出版社 2011.)

[4] Zhang Yimou 张艺谋, *The Flowers of War*, film, 2011.

[5] Hwang, Youngmee, *A Comparative Study of Yan Geling's The Criminal Lu Yanshi and Zhang Yimou's Coming Home*, (International Conference of Chinese Language and Literature Research & Chinese Language Education 2016(Macao), 2016), 142-145.

[6] Rabe, John. *John Rabe Der gute Deutsche von Nanking*, (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, in der Verlagsgruppe Random House GmbH, 1997).

[7] Vautrin, Minnie, *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

[8] Zheng Ruifang 程瑞芳, *Zheng Rui fang's Diary*, Chinese National Archives, No. 4, 2004 (1937? 1938, Chinese National Archives, 2004).

[9] Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997).

background for the events from Jinling Women’s College to a cathedral, adding a Christian meaning. The novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* (*The Flowers of War*) was written based on this screenplay with some changes in characters and events. The cathedral in the novel is the Wilson Gospel Cathedral 威尔逊教堂. This study aims to analyze the Christian meaning of this novel and film through the Christian ideals of Martin Luther. Yan Geling first published *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* as a medium-length novel in 2007, and expanded it to a full-length novel when director Zhang Yimou wanted to make the story into a film.

However, in the film, director Zhang Yimou changed the name of the cathedral from is the Wilson Gospel Cathedral 威尔逊教堂 in the novel to Winchester, portrayed the priest Engelmann as dead, and changed the main character to a mortician who had come for the priest’s funeral. That is, Zhang Yimou intentionally diminished the religious scheme to appeal to the Chinese majority, most of whom are non-Christians.

The plot of the film is as follows. “Jinling” an old name for the city of Nanjing, is ravaged by the Nanjing Massacre in 1937 during the Sino-Japanese war. The film *The Flowers of War* takes place in Nanjing at this time, telling the tragic story of the school girls of the Winchester Cathedral. The film involves John, a mortician for the priest, Father Engelmann, who becomes the guardian of the school girls. He faces an obstacle when the prostitutes of a nearby brothel take refuge in the cathedral, which was designated as a neutral ground by the Geneva Convention. To make matters worse, Japanese soldiers demand that he turn the girls over to them. The story ends with the prostitutes sacrificing themselves for the girls, disguised as them. The novel has a similar plot, though lacking the character of the mortician.

This study aims to approach the differences in the novel and film through the Christian perspective of Martin Luther. Not only has there been almost no research conducted on *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* in Korea, there is no in-depth research on this novel, which is based on various historic records. Academics in China have researched the basic historic material for this novel and film from various perspectives, which the author referred to in the process of this analysis. The original text of the Chinese references is included as an endnote. In this study, in order to prevent confusion between the novel and film, which have the same name, 金陵十三钗, the author will refer to the novel as *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* (2007, 2011) and the film as *The Flowers of War* (2011). In addition, for Chinese names or Chinese references, the author will refer to them in English but will also include the original Chinese where necessary for the convenience of the reader.

In Korea, there is no research on the novel and only two studies of the film *The Flowers of War* have been published. Yu Kang Ha<sup>[10]</sup> argued that the film, rather than emphasizing the Nanjing Massacre as a history of tragedy, concluded in the creation of a hero and the protection of pure China. Moon Hyoung Sun<sup>[11]</sup> focused on how Winchester Cathedral, as a new home that represents Western modernization as seen through the eyes of Shujuan, changes from a vertical space to a horizontal space. To elaborate, the cathedral was at first divided vertically by class, with the prostitutes staying at the basement and the school girls living

[10] Yu Kang Ha, “Tragic history left as incomplete healing; Zhang Yimou (张艺谋)’s *The Flowers of War* 2011,” *Literary Criticism* 36, 2014; 21-42.

[11] Moon Hyoung Sun, “The landscape of war in personal memories of Nanking; An analysis of the ‘House’ images from *The Flowers of War*, the Chinese film directed by Zhang Yimou.” *Visual Culture* 20, (The Korean Association for Visual Culture, 2012); 39-68.

above. However, this concept is destroyed with the self-sacrifice of the prostitutes, bringing equality and thus making the cathedral horizontal in the sense of class division. She concluded that in the end, only the “nostalgic perspective” of a girl recollecting a scene of history as a memory was left. Other than these studies, the research of Kim Heongyueal<sup>[12]</sup> focuses on neither the novel nor film, but on the records of the events of the Nanjing Massacre. Research with in-depth analysis of the novel or a comparison of the novel to the film are nonexistent in Korea. In contrast, research papers by Chinese academics of the film and novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* are too numerous to list, about 100 recorded. The topics of research are quite varied and include the transformation process from literature to film, analysis of the actual records of the event, and its Christian meaning, but mostly focused on the film than on a comparison of the novel and records.

Regarding the characteristics of the author Yan Geling, the master's thesis by Wang Longbo 王隆博<sup>[13]</sup> emphasizes that Yan expresses emotions well and at the same time includes a strong female character, through an analysis of the effects the author's personal life had on her works and the characteristics of her literary world. Tian Shanshan's 田姗姗 master's thesis<sup>[14]</sup> states that the unique life experiences of Yan Geling are reflected in her works, and analyzes her perspective on women. Yang Qing 杨青<sup>[15]</sup> emphasized the visual shock with which the women in different positions; students and prostitutes, viewed each other, and the process by which despite having contradictory ideologies in life they come to be joined together amidst the cruelties of war.

Regarding the material of the novel, Wu Weihua 吴卫华<sup>[16]</sup> claimed on grounds of the author's interviews that it was based on the events that appear in the Vautrin diaries, but emphasized the similarities with the screenplay of *Sanctuary* more than the Vautrin diaries. It is argued that while it is not likely that Yan Geling read the Vautrin diaries, she stated in interviews that the novel was based on the Vautrin diaries to emphasize the fact that it was based on actual events. The author of this paper refutes this claim based on the Korean translator's note that while Yan Geling may not have read the actual Vautrin diaries, she would have known about the diaries from having met Iris Chang at the Nanjing Massacre memorial rally. Shi Chang 施畅<sup>[17]</sup> does not mention *Sanctuary*, but rather, based on various records of actual events, examines the change in background to a cathedral and the changes that were made when director Zhang Yimou remade Yan Geling's novel; it seems that the relationship with *Sanctuary* was omitted. However, Shi Chang's 施畅 study states that *Jin*

[12] Kim, Heongyueal, “Special Project: The devices of memory and storytelling, the Nanking Massacre, and the policy of memory, focusing on the passing down of the memories of massacre and management,” DAEGU SAHAK 106, 2012; 57-89.

[13] Wang Longbo, “Study into the characters created by Yan Geling,” Shaanxi Normal University, Chinese Modern and Contemporary Literature, master degree dissertation, 2010. (王隆博. 探究严歌苓创作的人性世界, 陕西师范大学, 中国现当代文学, 硕士论文 2010).

[14] Tian Shanshan, The women's world in the works of Yan Geling, Shaanxi Normal University, Chinese Modern and Contemporary Literature, master degree dissertation, 2015 (田姗姗, 严歌苓笔下的女性世界, 陕西师范大学, 中国现当代文学, 硕士论文 2015).

[15] Yang Qing, “Film Criticism: The formation of women's image in *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*,” Movie culture: Work Insight 24, 2013 (杨青, 论电影《金陵十三钗》中女性形象的塑造, 《电影文学》, 作品透视, 2013 年第 24 期)

[16] Wu Weihua, “*Jin Ling Shi San Chai*: Based on truth and ugliness in values,” Contemporary Literary Criticism, Sichuan Writers Association, Vol. 6, 2013; 76-79 (吴卫华, 《金陵十三钗》: 史实依据与价值观当议, 影视画外音·当代文坛, 2013. 6).

[17] Shi Chang, “The salvation legend of the prostitutes in *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*,” *Journal of School of Chinese Language and Culture Nanjing Normal University* 6(2), 2012; 144. (施畅, 《金陵十三钗》中风尘女子的救世神话, 南京师范大学文学院学报 June 2012 No. 2).

*Ling Shi San Chai* is meaningful in that it depicts a story similar to the event described not only in Vautrin and Rabe’s diaries, but also in the diary of Zheng Ruifang 程瑞芳. Yang Ran 杨兰<sup>[18]</sup> argued that while the prostitutes led the way for ordinary women in the Safety Zone historically, the changes in the novel and film whereby the prostitutes are sacrificed instead of school girls was an acknowledgment of differences in class and was male-centric. However, as this setting was already included in the screenplay based on actual events, which in turn was inspired by a novel by a female author, Yan Geling, the author believes that it is difficult to assert that it is male-centric.

Regarding the Christian analysis, Wang Yingli 王英丽<sup>[19]</sup> interpreted the conflict between the prostitutes and the students as the conflict between what is sacred and profane, and made the Christian interpretation that the sacrifice by the prostitutes changed their profane status into one that is holy. Zhao Ming 赵明<sup>[20]</sup> analyzed the sacrifice by the prostitutes as not a nationalist sacrifice, that is, not that of a hero saving a country, but as an act of Christianity. In addition, the author saw the actions of priest Engelmann protecting wounded Chinese soldiers despite imposed dangers as a way of practicing salvation. An interesting note is that Zhang Yiwu 张颐武<sup>[21]</sup> made a Christian interpretation of the number 13, the number of girls that the Japanese soldiers demanded. Gui Ren 桂人<sup>[22]</sup> interpreted the sacrifice of the prostitutes in a religious perspective.

This study approached *The Flowers of War* from a Christian perspective based on the interpretations of specific texts by these Chinese scholars and the studies of Martin Luther by William Gilbert<sup>[23]</sup> and Roland H. Bainton.

## II. Comparison of the Novel and Film of *The Flowers of War*

### 1. The literary world of Yan Geling

There is extensive research on Yan Geling in China. Wang Longbo 王隆博 asserted as follows:

In the works of Yan Geling, in addition to memories of the Cultural Revolution, there are also a lot of works on women themselves. As a female writer, she is able to more easily and more sensitively observe women themselves directly. When she describes women, she peers deep into women’s minds. She easily grasps the most important emotional qualities of women. She easily grasps the greatest maternal qualities that women have. As this maternal quality is flexible yet strong, it is able to move people. Yan Geling also

[18] Yang Lan, “The suffering of equality and the inequality of means to Observe The Flowers of War from the Female Perspective”, *Film Literature* (theoretical edition) 4, 2012: 195-196. (杨兰, 平等的受难和受难的不平等——从女性视角看《金陵十三钗》, 影视文学, [文学界(理论版)] 4, 2012).

[19] Wang Yingli, “Jin Ling Shi San Chai: Spiritual Shock and Depuration” *Movie Literature: Popular Movie Cultural Criticism* 2, 2013: 79-80. (王英丽, 《金陵十三钗》: 荡涤心灵的震撼, “电影文学”, 热片劲评, 2013 年第 2 期).

[20] Zhao Ming, “Jin Ling Shi San Chai: Animal nature (兽性), human nature (人性) and holy nature (神性)”, *Journal of North China University of Water Resources and Electric Power: Social Science Edition*. 28(3), 2012: 6. (赵明, 《金陵十三钗》: 兽性、人性与神性, 华北水利水电学院学报(社科版), 第 28 卷第 3 期, 2012).

[21] Zhang Yiwu, “General analysis of *The Flowers of War*,” *Film Art* 2, China Film Association, 2012: 29-30. (张颐武, “略解《金陵十三钗》”《电影批评》2, 中国电影协会, 2012).

[22] Gui Ren, “Jin Ling Shi San Chai: Memories of a type of salvation,” *Bishops Conference of the Catholic Church in China, Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, Catholic Church in China* 1, 2012: 50-52. (桂人, 《金陵十三钗》: 一种救赎的记忆 Catholic Church In China 2012).

[23] Gilbert, William, *Renaissance and Reformation: The Counter Reformation*, (Lawrence, KS: Carrie, 1998. ).

focuses on the fateful tragedy of women. She not only focuses her most truthful and deep emotions on this subject, but also has complex and solemn emotions from the tragedy of women themselves. When she describes a woman, she aims whenever possible to express that woman's true desires. The characteristic of the women characters she creates is that they have a certain amount of independent will and ideology, as well as emotional desires. This changes the passive position of women in traditional patterns and expresses the independent and active form of women. And so, she turns the men's role in traditional patterns of always playing the role of the savior on its head<sup>[24]</sup>.

As such, Wang emphasizes that Yan Geling's literary world has significant emotional depth, which also appears in detail in her expressions. *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* (2007, 2011) also clearly expresses the subtle mind games between women. There are not many authors who can express jealousy or psychological distance between women as well as Yan Geling, and as mentioned in the assertion of Wang above, Yan Geling's female characters seem quiet on the outside but show strength and initiative. Wang asserted again as follows:

When Yan Geling writes a novel on any subject, when she describes any character, it is characteristic of her to describe in detail the personality of the character. When she narrates each story she uses, she always understands the happiness and sadness deep within the personality of the character<sup>[25]</sup>.

As shown in the passage above, Yan Geling is skilled in expressing emotion. In addition, she has a special talent for shaping her experiences into novels. Yan Geling has had varied experiences, such as her unique experiences in China, studying abroad in America, having divorced, and her current marriage to a diplomat and life in Africa, and on this Tian Shanshan 田姗姗 asserted as follows:

Yan Geling from early on has stated she is a person who has written her "experiences" into novels. Yan Geling's unique course of life has given her unique life experiences and deep emotion, as well as providing a lot of material and inspiration for her work. Her life experiences were very rich. They are grand like her novels. From an early age, she was a woman warrior, dancing actress, cable repairperson, military writer, and poor exchange student. Later on, she became a famous new immigrant woman writer. Her life is very bumpy. She was born in the 60s of the last century. Her father was a playwright and her mother was a stage actress. When she was young she experienced the domestic misfortune of her parents divorcing. When she was 12, she became an Entertainment Soldier (文艺兵) and visited Tibet six times and Yunnan Province twice. At 20, she became a wartime journalist and saw the cruelty and bloodthirstiness of war with her own eyes when she followed the army to the front lines of the Vietnam War<sup>[26]</sup>.

As shown in the passage above, the unique experiences of Yan Geling are reflected in her

[24] Wang Longbo, op. cit, abstract.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] Tian Shanshan, op. cit, 1.

novels, so that they simultaneously contain Chinese characteristics while expressing aspects of a global world. Tian follows by categorizing the literary world of Yan Geling into three stages that are analyzed as follows. Tian (2015:2) asserted as follows:

Stage 1, works that have the subject of military life or intellectual youths written before her departure from China in 1989.

Stage 2, works that have the subject of her immigrant life from 1989 (when she was an exchange student) to 2004 (when she went to Africa) and memories of the Cultural Revolution.

Stage 3, works after 2004. In this stage, many of Yan Geling’s novels have been written with the background of modern and Chinese history of the time<sup>[27]</sup>.

Of the three stages above, when considered from the perspective of when *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* was written, it falls under Stage 3; however, as it was based on the screenplay of 1988’s *Sanctuary*, it can be seen as having begun in Stage 2. As shown, Yan Geling is skilled in expressing the tragedies of modern Chinese history through private histories, and by her depiction of meaningful themes through detailed psychological description and expression of emotion, the author can say her work has outstanding literary value.

## 2. Relationship between Event Records and the Novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* 金陵十三钗 (2007, 2011)

As stated in the introduction, Yan Geling’s *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* (*The Flowers of War*) references *John Rabe, Der gute Deutsche von Nanking* (1997), *Terror in Minnie Vautrin’s Nanjing* (2007), *Zheng Rui fang’s Diary*, and Iris Chang’s *The Rape of Nanking* (1997), which is based on these records. As mentioned in the introduction, when Yan Geling wrote the screenplay for *Sanctuary* in 1988, she took the actual events that occurred during the Nanjing Massacre at the Jinling Women’s College and placed it in the background of a cathedral. She further changed the story into that of three prostitutes turning themselves over to the Japanese army in place of school girls of the cathedral in order to save them. This change in background adds a Christian meaning and will be examined in the next chapter. The story of *Sanctuary* is a little different. During the time of the Nanjing Massacre, the old priest Holden 霍尔登 and the young priest Peter Liu 刘彼得 protect the choir school girls in the cathedral. However, three prostitutes escape into the cathedral by climbing over a broken wall, and a few Chinese soldiers evacuate into the cathedral. Japanese soldiers who see the women enter the cathedral also find out that Chinese soldiers are there. At first, they find the Chinese soldiers and viciously kill them, then harass the priest to hand over the women, stating that they know the women are there. In the end, the three prostitutes are dragged away by the Japanese soldiers in the place of the choir school girls. Although the number of prostitutes and the name of the priest are different from in the novel, the overall plot is similar.

The relationship of the screenplay story of *Sanctuary* and the film *The Flowers of War*, as analyzed by Chinese scholar Wu Weihua 吴卫华 can be summarized by the following table<sup>[28]</sup>.

[27] Ibid, 2.

[28] Wu Weihua, op. cit, 77.

Comparison	<i>Sanctuary</i> (1988)	Film <i>The Flowers of War</i>	Similarities and Differences
Spatial Background	Cathedral (basement and attic)	Cathedral (basement and attic)	Same
Characters	American priest, 3 prostitutes (Yang Liufeng 杨柳风, Hu Zuihua 胡醉华, and Xiao Caiyue 小彩月), soldiers, schoolgirl leader Tingting 婷婷	American priest, prostitutes (12 to 16 prostitutes, including the prostitute leaders Yumo 玉墨, Hong Ling 红菱, and Dou Kou 豆蔻), soldiers (the lead soldier in the novel is Major Dai 戴, in the film Major Li), schoolgirl leader Shujuan 书娟	The members and character qualities are similar but the number of characters is different
Theme	Prostitutes save the school girls and sacrifice themselves	Prostitutes save the school girls and sacrifice themselves	It is similar
The <i>qipao</i> 旗袍 of the prostitutes	Colorful <i>qipao</i> of three colors	Fancy and beautiful <i>qipao</i> of prostitutes	It is similar
Relationships Small events	Hu Zuihua 胡醉华 was inhospitable and mocked the injured soldier who was in the underground storage room.	When Major Li 李教官 carried the fallen Pusheng 浦生 and first entered the underground storage room of the cathedral he was faced with inhospitality and mockery by the prostitutes, including Yumo 玉墨.	It is similar
	The scene where Tingting 婷婷 fights with the prostitutes	The prostitutes and the school girls fight	It is similar
	Yang Liufeng 杨柳风 hid a grenade in his bag.	The prostitutes hid broken glass in their clothes.	It is similar
Ending	It is revealed that the Japanese soldiers died in a car accident	It ends with the prostitutes and the school girls each following the paths of their own destinies	It is similar

Table 1 Similarities between *Sanctuary* and *The Flowers of War* (Summary of analysis by Wu Weihua 吴卫华)

Wu Weihua 吴卫华 followed by quoting Yan Geling in an interview, saying that the source of the novel was *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing* (2007). Vautrin appears at the end of the novel as a character who aids the school girls in escaping.

The original novel and film screenplay writer Yan Geling had special interviews with various media before and after the film was screened. She repeatedly stated that the idea for the work came from the diary of the American Minnie Vautrin. “…… I found a paragraph of record in the diary of Vautrin who was the Dean of Academic Affairs at Jinling Women’s College . After Nanjing was occupied, all the women were evacuated from Jinling Women’s College. The Japanese told them to send 100 women. If they did not, they would station the army at the school. At that time, 20 prostitutes led the way. Therefore, the school girls did not suffer misfortune. This is the seed of the story<sup>[29]</sup>.”

She stated in interviews that the events that occurred at Jinling Women’s College were the basis of the novel’s story. To this Wu added the following.

[29] Ibid, 76.

Of course, the story of *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* is based on the old film *Sanctuary*. When the story moved from the film *Sanctuary* to the novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, to be expanded and recreated as *The Flowers of War*, there were no large changes to the story structure or core. Even if there were records in the Vautrin’s diary of prostitutes saving students during the time Yan Geling wrote *Sanctuary*, this diary could not have been read. The emigrant Chinese writer Iris Chang 张纯如 found this diary in the Yale University Library in 1995. Before then, there had not been a person who had read the diary in 50 years<sup>[30]</sup>.

According to the quoted passage above, it is not likely that Yan Geling wrote the screenplay of evacuation in 1998 after reading the Vautrin’s diary. Wu (2013:78) asserted as follows:

Even when there is no historical basis for *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, why would Yan Geling emphasize repeatedly that the novel and film have a historical basis, and that it is related to the Vautrin’s diary? To be honest, to say that it has a historical basis not only can help avoid the suspicion of remaking old works; it makes a fictional story unable to be criticized. Therefore, in culture markets such as books and films, it is used to draw more attention and make greater profit. This is because the depiction of a historical time and expression follows the psychological expectation of the audience for authenticity<sup>[31]</sup>.

According to Wu, the Vautrin’s diary was known in China after the screenplay of *Sanctuary* (1998). He argues that Yan Geling, who rewrote the medium-length novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* into a full-length novel when she received the offer to make the film *The Flowers of War*, could avoid criticism that she merely rewrote *Sanctuary*, and utilize the authenticity of true events by stating that it was related to the Vautrin’s diary. However, the guess made by the translator of the Korean version of *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, Kim Yikyung (2012:324), is more reasonable in claiming that the reason Yan Geling stated that it was related to the Vautrin diary is because Yan met Iris Chang at a Nanjing Massacre memorial rally and discussed the book. This was before the publication of *The Rape of Nanking* (1997). The author of this paper also thinks that Yan Geling, who heard about the Vautrin’s diary at her meeting with Iris Chang before starting work on the screenplay for *Sanctuary* (1998), can rightly say that it is related to the Vautrin’s diary, with Wu’s argument slightly lacking support.

Related to this, the Chinese scholar Shi Chang 施畅 did not see that the novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* came into existence through the screenplay of *Sanctuary*, but viewed the novel as direct work from records of various events during the time and asserted the following.

The novel of Yan included large-scale insertions and revisions throughout the story. The complex Safety Zone was changed to a Catholic cathedral that was like an isolated island. Ordinary women were changed to Catholic school girls. The most important point of note is that the

[30] Ibid,78.

[31] Ibid.

prostitutes of Qin Huaihe 秦淮河 truly sacrificed themselves instead of the school girls who were in trouble. The women who had not already suffered misfortune or who had not yet been raped were changed into pure Catholic school girls. In such a way, the meaning of the self-sacrifice of the prostitutes was emphasized<sup>[32]</sup>.

In addition to this, Shi also revealed that “looking back on the historical site, both the Dean of Academic Affairs at the Jinling Women’s College, Vautrin, and the head of the Nanjing Safety Zone, Rabe, all record ‘an event where prostitutes led the procession’ in December 1937.”<sup>[33]</sup>

It was the day before Christmas. I was called to the office about 10. I met with the head military advisor for a Japanese division. Luckily, he brought one translator along. This was the Chinese translator for the Japanese consulate. He demanded that we pick and deliver 100 prostitutes from the 10 thousand refugees. He said that if a legal location was made for Japanese soldiers, that he believed the soldiers would no longer harass innocent honest women. When they promised not to arrest honest women, we allowed them to go select for themselves. During this time, the advisor was in my office with me. After a long time had passed, they had found 21 women. The Japanese thought that when the women heard this news that they would hide. Other women asked me, “Is there a possibility that the Japanese would pick another 79 women among them?” I answered, “If I can stop this, no such thing will happen.” (December 24<sup>th</sup>, quoted from *Vautrin’s diary*, Minnie Vautrin, translated by Son Youngchun et al., Beijing: Oriental Press, 1998: 209)<sup>[34]</sup>

In addition to this, Shi emphasized that the event on which Yan’s story was based was included as follows in Rabe’s diary, and demonstrates the relationship between this record and the novel by Yan Geling.

In addition, many young women were chosen and taken away. This is because they are making one large-scale soldier brothel. (December 25<sup>th</sup>, Rabe)

Right now, the Japanese have one strange idea. They wanted to make one soldier brothel. Minnie (Vautrin) was surprised and clenching both hands and watching when entering the lobby filled with women. Minnie will never let a woman go. She would rather die. However, when one admirable official that we know well from the Red Swastika Society (we had no idea that he was such as man) unexpectedly shouted a few times at the lobby, not a small number of young women refugees (well-known prostitutes) came out. They were not at all sad that they had to go to a new brothel. Minnie had nothing to say to this!!!

(December 26<sup>th</sup>, in John Rabe, *The Diary of Rabe* [M], translated by Yoo Haenyung et al., Nanjing: Jiangso People’s Press, 2006: 231)<sup>[35]</sup>

[32] Shi Chang, *Op. cit.*, 145.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*, 144-145.

Besides this record, Shi Chang 施畅 revealed the following similar record in *Zheng Ruifang's Diary* (1937 – 1938, Chinese National Archives, 2004) by Zheng Ruifang 程瑞芳, who was an employee of the dormitory at Jinling Women's College .

Today some government advisor brought some Chinese to find prostitutes here. They said that if these prostitutes receive customers outside, soldiers would not come often to internment camps. Therefore, they said that decent girls would not be harmed. Those words seemed to be correct too. There are not a small number of prostitutes here. So we told them to find them for themselves. Of those some Chinese people could identify prostitutes. (December 24<sup>th</sup>, in *Zheng Ruifang's Diary*, Jang Hunmun, *Collection of historical materials on the Nanjing Massacre* [M], translated by Jang Wonwon, Nanjing: Jiangso People's Press, 2005; 22)<sup>[36]</sup>

The research of Shi Chang 施畅 omitted the relationship with *Sanctuary*, but is meaningful as it proved the relationship with *Zheng Ruifang's Diary*.

Yang Lan 杨兰 asserted that:

The last conflict of the tragedy was that when “honest women” were met with disaster, “women with no shame” decided to face disaster in their stead, and to protect “honest women” a great sacrifice took place. Perhaps the director does not realize how unfair a choice it is to make the prostitutes be raped and killed instead of the school girls. The director expresses this dilemma through the words of the “priest”: “Are not people originally equal? What is the difference between these women and the school girls? Why must they choose?” But once again the film director borrows the words of “a woman who knows no shame” to inform us of the following reason for this sacrifice. Because Yumo says that they are originally in this profession and so why cannot they meet any man? If the school girls are sent, how will they live afterwards? While these words were spoken by a prostitute, the prostitute is merely the messenger and the real narrator is the male perspective of the director<sup>[37]</sup>.

From the quoted passage above, the analysis is that this text is significantly male-centric. However, as analyzed in the previous chapter, it is a scene that appears in the novel of Yan Geling, who has a significant amount of women's awareness. Following is a quote by father Engelmann from the translation by the Korean translator Kim Yikyung.

The words and deeds that he wants to do are too cruel. In order to save some lives, some other lives must be sacrificed. The reason that those lives are sacrificed is because they are not pure and because their lives are not more important than children, they do not have the value to be protected by his cathedral and God. They are forced to make this choice. By selecting and placing the second-most-important lives of those who are not so pure on the sacrificial altar, they are attempting to preserve the purer life with more value to protect. Is this how it goes? Will he have this decision

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[36] Ibid, 145.

[37] Yang Ran, Op. cit, 196.

over life and death in front of God and make a choice based on superiority instead of God?<sup>[38]</sup>

As if hinted at these thoughts by the priest Engelmann, Yumo speaks of the sacrifice first. When looking at this content, the author believes that Yang Lan's 杨兰 analysis of this plot as male-centric is not reasonable.

### 3. Comparison between the novel and film

YanGeling's 严歌苓 novel *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* 金陵十三钗 (*The Flowers of War*, 2006, 2011) and director Zhang Yimou's 张艺谋 film remake 金陵十三钗 *The Flowers of War* (2011) have some differences. There are many studies by Chinese academics on this subject.

Yang Qing 杨青 asserted as follows:

The biggest impression that this film makes on people is the visual shock with which the women in the different positions of students and prostitutes viewed each other and the process by which, despite having contradictory ideologies in life, they came to be joined together during the war. On one side are school girls who are as pure as angels and on the other side are prostitutes who have faced suffering in the real world. We must think about the conflict and merging of the image of women on both sides when watching this film<sup>[39]</sup>.

When looking at the passage quoted above, the author can understand why the conflicting images of the school girls and prostitutes were used in the novel and film. Although there are differences between the film and the novel, the themes presented above are common to them.

The Chinese academic Shi Chang 施畅 interprets the transformation process from records of the events during the Nanjing Massacre to the film by the director Zhang Yimou 张艺谋 as the following. “[It is] because elements like the experience and records of foreigners such as Vautrin and Rabe, the writing of the novel as an emigrant Chinese by Yan Geling, delivering an international film by the Chinese director Zhang Yimou, etc., all come together to make a richer, more complex story<sup>[40]</sup>,” and argued for a process of popularization and localization led by the writer.

Zhang Yimou attempts to overcome “the consensual grudge amongst nations” and narrates a slice of Chinese history for foreign viewers from an international perspective. This is a type of culture export which sends outward from within. When examining the position of the testifier, “foreigner-emigrant Chinese-mainland Chinese,” the position becomes more and more “localized.” As a method of propagation, through the transformation process from “diary-novel-film” the propagation effect becomes more and more “popularized.” There is another thing to note. How was the salvation legend of the prostitutes formed within the development from “historical record-literary imagination-move expression<sup>[41]</sup>”?

In this study, Shi (2012: 146) mentions the transformation process from each character and

[38] Yan Geling, Op. cit., Kim Yikyung, Korean edition of *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, (Seoul: WoongjinThinkBig, 2012), 303.

[39] Yang Qing, Op. cit., 83.

[40] Shi Chang, Op. cit., 144.

[41] *Ibid.*

event during the process of remaking it into a film and makes the following analysis:

Unlike in the novel, in the film a scene was added where the unit led by Major Li 李教官 fights with the invaders. (……) The Major Li 李教官 that appears in the novel dropped his weapon and surrendered, and after that escaped from danger and ran away and later secretly entered the cathedral during the confusion. In the film, he sends his wounded and barely conscious fellow soldier Wang Pusheng 王浦生 to the cathedral, while he comes out of the cathedral to fight the Japanese …… This can be said to be the noble imagination of the director. (….) In the film, the scene where Zhao Yumo 赵玉墨 dances a charming dance to lure the soldiers was deleted. Instead, it shows a scene where the prostitutes in clean clothes sing in a well-conducted manner<sup>[42]</sup>.

As shown in the above-quoted passage, Shi Chang 施畅 explains in detail the differences between the novel and the film; in this study, the author aims to focus on the appearance of the mortician John Miller, who does not appear in the original novel. When John first comes to the cathedral for the funeral of the deceased priest Engelmann, he is a pathetic person only interested in women and money, but he changes dramatically in the film. This transformation process in the film begins when John wears the priest's clothes for fun. The author considers the reason for introducing the mortician, who does not appear in the novel, as being that director Zhang Yimou was worried that if a priest was the main character, it would lose popularity in China, where there are not many Christians. The fact that the great Hollywood star Christian Bale was set to appear, reflects the willingness to change the original novel to aim major popularity. On this point, Hou Keming 侯克明 asserted as follows:

In the novel, there are two priests in the cathedral. There is one old priest and one young priest …… In the film, instead of two priests, the mortician John played by Bale appears—that is, one fake priest.

As a film that constitutes a large investment, this film was not able to violate things that everyone believes to be wrong, and especially in the language environment of anti-colonial invasion they can escape trouble when narrating history by using a fake priest, so it can be called a shrewd method for narrative. In addition, by using a fake priest to replace a real priest, this had important meaning as the birth of a hero image that appeared in the mundane world that is John.<sup>[43]</sup>

In the passage quoted above, Hou emphasizes that the replacement of the priest by John Miller changed this story into one of a Hollywood hero. The author analyzes the differences that occurred when the novel was made into a film as follows.

[42] Ibid, 146.

[43] Hou Keming, *Op. cit.*, 15.

Comparison	novel <i>Jin Ling Shi San Chai</i>	film <i>The Flowers of War</i>	Similarities and Differences
Spatial Background	Cathedral (basement and attic)	Cathedral (basement and attic)	Same
Characters	American priest, prostitutes ( 12 to 16 prostitutes, including the prostitute leaders Yumo 玉墨, Hong Ling 红菱, and Dou Kou 豆蔻), soldiers (the lead soldier in the novel is major Dai 戴), schoolgirl leader Shujuan 书娟	American priest, prostitutes ( 12 to 16 prostitutes, including the prostitute leaders Yumo 玉墨, Hong Ling 红菱, and Dou Kou 豆蔻), soldiers (the lead soldier in the film is Major Li), schoolgirl leader Shujuan 书娟	Similar
Theme	Prostitutes save the school girls and sacrifice themselves	Prostitutes save the school girls and sacrifice themselves	It is the same
<i>Qipao</i> 旗袍 of the prostitutes	Fancy and beautiful <i>qipao</i> of prostitutes	Fancy and beautiful <i>qipao</i> of prostitutes	It is similar
Relationships Small events	There is a romance between Major Dai 戴 and Yumo 玉墨, Major Dai hides in the cathedral but is discovered and shot	There are many action scenes, Major Li 李教官 goes out to fight outside the cathedral and dies valiantly	It is a little different
	Yi's father takes Yi and two others out	Yi's father only gives a pass permit to John; after he dies, the girls successfully escape using the pass	It is a little different
	The prostitutes hid scissors in their clothes.	The prostitutes hid broken glass in their clothes.	It is similar
	The prostitutes wear the choir schoolgirl clothes	With the skill that John Miller gained by cutting the hair of dead bodies, he changes the hair of the prostitutes and George into that of school girls	It is a little different
Ending	The prostitutes disguised as school girls are taken by the Japanese army, and the girls are dressed as boys and disguised by Vautrin as plague patients and escape.	The prostitutes and George dressed as a woman are taken in Japanese military cars, the school girls leave by hiding under the wine box in the luggage compartment of John Miller's truck.	It is a little different

Table 2 Analysis of the differences between the novel and film

### III. The Meaning of Christianity in *The Flowers of War*

In this chapter, the author reaches the core of this study, which is to find the elements of Luther's neighborly love and salvation in the film and novel of *The Flowers of War*. Before Martin Luther, only the church was allowed to expound the Bible and salvation was only possible through edification, but after his influence, individuals could encounter the Bible, and salvation could be achieved through the Bible and righteous acts. William Gilbert asserted that:

It was also affirmed that the Catholic church alone had the right to expound the Bible officially. The decree on justification asserted the necessity for both faith and good works in the process of salvation. The Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, the bondage of the will, man's utter

depravity and helplessness, and the doctrine of predestination were rejected<sup>[44]</sup>.

As stated by Gilbert in the passage quoted above, the Protestant doctrine allowed salvation through justification by faith after the Reformation of Luther.

Roland Bainton (1978:230) wrote, "This is the word which ought to be placarded as the epitome of Luther's ethic, that a Christian must be a Christ to his neighbor." He (1978:383) emphasized the following.

His sermons were read to the congregations, his liturgy was sung, his catechism was rehearsed by the father with the household, his Bible cheered the fainthearted and consoled the dying.

As can be drawn from this quote, Luther served as a role model for Christianity through his praises and poems filled with faith. This paper attempts to adapt the very ideals of Luther in *The Flowers of War*. Chinese scholars have already argued that *The Flowers of War* shows the Christian ideology of equality, and are continuing their research on the Christian factors in the novel and film.

The Chinese scholar Wu Weihua 吴卫华 quoted as follows:

This method of "secondary replacement (replacing bad or less good things with good things)" to realize self-salvation shows the typical Confucian tradition of class and an aristocrat/plebian concept. In fact, the disregard for the class of prostitutes does not change once. However, one of the pillars of Christian teachings and ethical ideology is that "all people are equal before God." Therefore, *The Flowers of War* has lost the path to human nature and values, is dislocated from the humanity that life is all equal, and has rather moved to the opposite of humanity and the duty of humankind. The more the audience acknowledges the logic of the film's story, the more they are touched by the sacrifice of the prostitutes, the greater the chance of them falling into a fallacy of values. As there is a difference in the conflict of values with Western culture, Western audience members could not accept at all the sacrifice of the prostitutes in place of the students<sup>[45]</sup>.

When looking at the quoted passage above, Wu Weihua 吴卫华 asserts that this text already has the premise of disregarding the prostitutes compared to the school girls, and therefore it is fundamentally dislocated from Christian ethical ideology. There is some validity to this criticism. However, in the Bible (John 8:7), Jesus said to the people throwing stones at a woman who committed adultery, "Whoever is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her," and emphasized that all people are equal. This author believes that Wu's argument of dividing prostitutes and school girls so that prostitutes are sacrificed in place of the girls is class thinking that ignores human equality. While a scene of the school girls sacrificing themselves for the prostitutes was also possible, there is the historical fact of prostitutes sacrificing themselves, and the author

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[44] Gilbert, William, *Renaissance and Reformation: The Counter Reformation*, (Lawrence, KS: Carrie, 1998).

[45] Wu Weihua, Op. cit., 76.

infers that the prostitutes were sacrificed to turn the stereotype that prostitutes are profane on its head to further emphasize equality.

In addition, the 13 characters in the novel, the age of the main character Meng Shujuan 孟书娟 (Shu in the film) being 13, the 13 school girls left in the cathedral at the end, and the 13 prostitutes all correspond to the title *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* 金陵十三钗 (The 13 Beautiful Women). However, the film, unlike the novel, changes the 13 women into 12 women and 1 man. To this Zhang Yiwu 张颐武 added a Christian interpretation, which is asserted as follows:

Miller, who is played by Christian Bale, together with the 12 school girls become the 13 that gain a chance at survival. “13 钗” *Shi San Chai* is similar to the “12 Chai” who appear in *红楼梦 A Dream of Red Mansions, Jin Ling 12 Chai*. However, the difference between “*Shi Er Chai*” and “*Shi San Chai*” is the hidden secret in this film. Clearly the 12 women in the end are divided into those to go to die and those who come to live anew. The 13<sup>th</sup> member is composed of George and Miller. The man who faces death is George and the man who actually lives is Miller, so that of 12 women and 1 man, one of each party shares the same fate<sup>[46]</sup>.

Looking at the quoted passage above, Zhang is adding Christian interpretation to numbers. The 12 women and 1 man adding up to a number of 13 people can refer to the mortician John Miller (Christian Bale), who took the role of the priest, succeeding in escaping with the 12 school girls. It can also refer to George Chen (Huang Tianyuan), who looked after the cathedral, disguising himself as a woman and being taken away with the 12 prostitutes by the Japanese army. The terms death and new life mean that when the prostitutes were taken away by the Japanese army instead of the school girls, the demand of the Japanese army was for exactly 13 women. In a situation with only 12 prostitutes there needed to be one more person to be sacrificed, and instead of one of the school girls George is disguised as a girl and taken. Zhang Yiwu viewed John and George as the Apostle Paul, and from this the author can understand that when interpreting this film, Zhang started from the idea that death and life are one. That is, it can be interpreted to mean resurrection, which is the new life after death. This is the Christian interpretation of the film.

Zhang also claimed that:

However, the most moving aspect of this film is the meaning of sublimation. There are many things that are sublimated here. This sublimation is the basis of salvation and new life. For example, the sublimation from mortician to priest by Miller happened because he witnessed the violence of the Japanese army. The sublimation of George appears in his brave death. The sublimation of Meng is when he gives the pass permit, which he received when only attempting to rescue his own daughter, to Miller, and it is reflected when after his death this pass permit saved the school girls. At first Miller harasses Yumo 玉墨 but comes to truly like her, which appears as a form of emotional sublimation. The most holy and majestic sublimation in this film is the sublimation of the prostitutes. They selected to self-sacrifice themselves instead of the school girls. Through a very

[46] Zhang Yiwu, Op. cit. , 29-30.

solemn and holy disguise they gain a new identity. The disguise here is similar to baptism as a conversion to Christianity<sup>[47]</sup>.

What Zhang describes as a holy disguise at the end of the passage quoted above refers to the prostitutes’ disguising themselves in the form of school girls to sacrifice themselves in the place of the school girls. In the actual records of the event, the prostitutes in the Safety Zone surrendered themselves before any of the other women. In the opinion of this author, contrasting the school girls and the prostitutes in the original novel and in the film, gives the sublimation of the prostitutes a greater impact than the sublimation of the school girls and further emphasizes the Christian spirit. Gui Ren 桂人 wrote that:

The 12 women escaped from hardship, and finally realized holiness and eternal life.

.....

The New Testament’s Second Letter to the Corinthians, written by the Apostle Paul, states, “Therefore from now on we will not judge someone by their looks. Although we recognized Jesus through looks, from now on we will not identify people that way. If someone is with Jesus, that is a newly made man. As old events have already passed, all things are new<sup>[48]</sup>.”

Gui, as shown in the passage quoted above, is of the view that prejudices should be thrown away and people should be seen anew. Gui also argued, in relation to George, who became an additional 1 to the 12 women, that:

Although the Japanese army demanded thirteen school girls to go to the celebration performance, later on there were only twelve prostitutes who went in the place of the school girls. In the end, George Chen, who cleaned and managed the cathedral, disguised himself as a woman and went with them. From this people can be reminded of the thirteen disciples recorded in the Gospels. Jesus selected thirteen disciples, but there was one traitor among them. After Jesus left the human world and entered into Heaven, another disciple was selected<sup>[49]</sup>.

In the above quoted passage Gui does not specify directly that George is a metaphor for Paul, but analyzed him to correspond to the disciple that was selected after Jesus entered into Heaven. Gui Ren 桂人 stated again as follows:

Of course, the main character in the film was a prostitute like Yumo. These women “gave up their body” to the passions of men from early on for this or that reason. These people, due to their lives of poverty and emptiness, would want “salvation” and “redemption” more than anyone. They are like the prostitutes and the people living at the bottom of society that appear in the Bible. They

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[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Gui Ren, *Op. cit.*, 51.

[49] *Ibid.*

truly make the decision to sacrifice themselves instead of the school girls, and when faced with a frightful and unknown future they may have realized their “salvation” and “redemption” through the “salvation” and “redemption” of the school girls<sup>[50]</sup>.

Gui analyzed the prostitutes who became scapegoats as achieving redemption through salvation. Gui Ren 桂人 also asserted as follows:

Is Jesus Christ not the master of Heaven who sacrificed himself for mankind? Jesus Christ, who was born as a man, has left His main body and changed into a weak being that can experience pain, have pity for man, know sacrifice, and experience sadness like any man. Through His death on the cross He understood to helplessness and pain of man in death, willfully took on the injustice of the world, and showed the truth of “salvation” through self-sacrifice. Within sacrificing love is the power of death. Taking pain for others, and even their places of death clearly is “salvation.” According to the records of the Bible, before Jesus willfully went to His death, His disciple Peter said “it cannot be,” but Jesus stoutly refused, “What you understand is not of the master of Heaven but that of man.” (Refer to the Book of Matthew 15:21-23)<sup>[51]</sup>.

Just as Jesus resolutely accepted his death, so Gui saw the self-sacrifice of the prostitutes to be holy. Gui is comparing the prostitutes with Jesus in that they sacrifice themselves to save others. Zhao Ming 赵明 wrote in “The Flowers of War: Bestiality, Humanity, and Divinity” that:

Christianity actually occurred from the lifestyle of Christian events and on the road to salvation. The essence of Christianity is the road to salvation that opens through Christian events. Father Engelmann (英格曼) protecting these people is an expression of the spirit of the Bible. The Bible speaks of love and salvation. Christianity is a religion of love. The salvation of God had spontaneity and limitlessness (无机性). It is natural like the sun brightening the four directions by itself without external force. The salvation of humanity is reflected in the priest Engelmann protecting the wounded Chinese soldiers... Father Engelmann saving the flesh of the person while at the same time he saves humanity is at a high level of mind<sup>[52]</sup>.

Zhao believed that the priest Engelmann protecting the wounded soldier in difficult times shows that he had achieved a high level of mind. Zhao also claimed that:

When the thirteen prostitutes disguised themselves in the form of school girls and appeared like angels, they had already transformed from lowly “prostitutes” to bright angels. At this point the author had already raised them to God who saves people from suffering<sup>[53]</sup>.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.*, 52.

[52] Zhao Ming, *Op. cit.*, 98.

[53] *Ibid.*

Zhao compared the schoolgirl disguise of the prostitutes to angels and God. Zhao further asserted that:

While the reasons for the prostitutes to come out in the end to be sacrificed has nationalist reasons, it is more accurate to say that it is more due to religious influence and religious spirit. It is the function of religion to achieve order between one’s internal life and the environment one is faced with...The prostitutes coming into the cathedral to criticize already implies a choice between survival and salvation. When they heard the bells for the POWs that had been shot, they became quiet and did not quarrel or speak loudly...They may not have known it but they had received a mental calling. This influence and calling grew more and more in their unconscious<sup>[54]</sup>.

Zhao believed that it was more accurate to see the sacrifice of the prostitutes as a religious metaphor as opposed to many studies that saw them as heroes of the nation. Zhao also writes:

When they were disguised in the form of students and holding gilt-edged choir books, these thirteen women already became the Christian image of self-sacrifice and saving others...The number 13 has a special meaning within Western religion. The author solved a major issue with the sacrifice of the thirteen people and raised them to the height of God<sup>[55]</sup>.

As such, the sacrifice by the prostitutes for the school girls falls neatly in the Christian spirit of Luther that emphasizes sacrifice for one’s neighbor. Zhao goes so far as to elevate them to the level of God. Meanwhile, Wang Yingli 王英丽 asserted as follows:

The film shows a strong contrast between holiness and dirtiness. The most holy things and the most unclean and dirty things are mixed together. On one hand are the “dirty” prostitutes who come from a brothel, and on the other hand are the holy cathedral and pure school girls. One is a representative of debauchery and corruption, and the other is a representative of holiness and purity<sup>[56]</sup>.

Wang Yingli 王英丽 analyzes the characteristics of the two groups of women into the Christian codes of holiness and corruption and claims:

The solemn and holy makeup transformed them totally in body and mind. The makeup symbolized baptism and conversion. Not only was their appearance changed but the valuable heart of a girl that they had not touched in a long time emerged. When the permed hair style was changed to the naive student hair style, the modesty of a girl returned to the face of the prostitute Yumo. The prostitutes hid their “body” with the “student uniform” of the choir school girls<sup>[57]</sup>.

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[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Wang Yingli, *Op. cit.*, 79.

[57] *Ibid.*, 80.

Wang continued:

The choice of the “lowly” women when faced with survival and death gives us the courage to think again about “human nature.” The vast power of salvation is hidden within my lowliest body... The prostitutes that were ignored and not saved by the people of the world faced the various hurts and rejections that the human world inflicted on them in that cathedral and ultimately saved others and saved themselves. Therefore, it showed the broad mind and strong will of women.

The theme rising in this film moved people. The themes of salvation and rebirth became the basis for this rising<sup>[58]</sup>.

Wang analyzed the fact that the prostitutes were forced towards a place of death while the school girls survived to be the basis by which the theme was emphasized. They viewed the theme to be the Christian code of salvation.

Kim, Joo-Han asserted that “To Luther, faith is not justified unless it is formed from love. The core of Luther’s preaching is that the act of goodness is the fruit of righteousness, not a cause of or a means of developing righteousness<sup>[59]</sup>.” The prostitutes had sacrificed their bodies and lives to save the school girls for one cause; love and sympathy. Consequently, the act of goodness of the prostitutes can be seen as a fruit of righteousness in the perspective of Luther’s theology.

According to Lenker Luther, emphasized the following in his sermons:

We now come to consider good works. We receive Christ not only as a gift by faith, but also as an example of love toward our neighbor, whom we are to serve as Christ serves us. Faith brings and gives Christ to you with all his possessions. Love gives you to your neighbor with all your possessions. These two things constitute a true and complete Christian life; then follow suffering and persecution for such faith and love, and out of these grows hope in patience<sup>[60]</sup>.

As seen from his quotes, Luther highlighted the exercise of love towards one’s neighbors before all else. According to Lenker, “If you find a work in you by which you benefit God or his saints or yourself and not your neighbor, know that such a work is not good<sup>[61]</sup>.” It seems that from his viewpoint, the love and act of goodness towards neighbors were higher of a priority than acts of faith.

Furthermore, Luther drew no lines between act of goodness and salvation. Lenker wrote that “This he can understand who considers what it means that Christ bears our sin, and conquers death and hell and does everything for us, that is necessary to our salvation. He does not expect us to do

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] Kim, Joo-han, “A Study of Martin Luther’s Theology of Preaching—Focusing on His Earlier Sermons (1513–1522)”, University and Mission 17, (The Korean Association of University and mission), 54.

[60] Lenker, John Nicholas, Ed., & trans. Sermons of Martin Luther; (The Church Postils vol. 1 and 2. Baker Books; Grand Rapids, MI, 1995), 37.

[61] *Ibid.*, 40.

anything for it, but to exercise it towards our neighbor, to know thereby whether we have such faith in Christ or not<sup>[62]</sup>." Through the theological viewpoint of Luther presented above, the sacrifice of the prostitutes in *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* would be evaluated at an even greater value. The courage and faith to act out such sacrifice lies in the Christian doctrine. Yumo, the leader among the group of prostitutes, had studied in a convent school for 6 years as a little girl. Having this teachings of Christianity engraved in her enabled her to sacrifice herself for the schoolgirls and persuades others to help her protect them.

In the opinion of this author, contrasting the school girls and the prostitutes in the original novel and in the film, gives the sublimation of the prostitutes a greater impact than the sublimation of the school girls and further emphasizes the Christian spirit. In the Bible (John chapter 8; verse 7), Jesus said to the people throwing stones at a woman who committed adultery, "Whoever is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her," and emphasized that all people are equal. This author believes that dividing prostitutes and schoolgirls so that prostitutes are sacrificed in place of the girls is class thinking that ignores human equality. Instead, this is an act of goodwill that arose from love. This sacrifice was compared by many Chinese scholars to Christian salvation rather than a simple sacrifice or the result of a nationalistic spirit to save their country. Some even go so far as to compare the sacrifice of the prostitutes to God or Jesus.

## IV. Conclusion

When thinking of the Christian spirit of Martin Luther's practice of love for one's neighbor as we face the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martin Luther's Reformation, we sought to reveal the theological ideas of Luther in Chinese literature. We demonstrated that the film and novel, *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*, written by the Chinese writer Yan Geling, effectively reflected the concept of sacrifice and love emphasized by Luther. Above all, the sacrifice of the prostitutes who became scapegoats in *The Flowers of War* once again reminds us that salvation is not far off but is present in the sacrifice made for others. Luther (Lenker, 1995:37) asserted that there is no name for the good works that we are to do for our neighbors. Just as the good works Christ does for us has none. He stressed that our act of love towards neighbors should equate that of Christ for us. In this sense, *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* is a remarkable example of Luther's ideology. Historical artifacts indeed reveal that the prostitutes of the period sacrificed themselves to save other women from Japanese forces.

The records of various events that are used in this thesis are reflected in Yan Geling's screenplay *Sanctuary* and the novel based on it, *Jin Ling Shi San Chai*. The author examined the transformation process of the novel into the film *The Flowers of War*, as well as its Christian meaning. The author Yan Geling expertly describes detailed psychological states and the unique modern historical pain of the Chinese people. Yan Geling restructured the material recorded in the Vautrin's diary and other sources from a Christian perspective. The records show events that occurred in the Safety Zone or Jinling Women's College, but from the time she started writing the screenplay for *Sanctuary*, the background was changed to a cathedral. In addition, the events were

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[62] Ibid, 47.

changed from the statement in the records where prostitutes stepped up before others when women were taken by Japanese soldiers, to prostitutes willingly going to their deaths in the spirit of sacrifice to save the school girls of the Catholic school. This was compared by many Chinese scholars to Christian salvation rather than a simple sacrifice or the result of a nationalistic spirit to save their country. Some even go so far as to compare the sacrifice of the prostitutes to God or Jesus.

This paper compares and organizes various Chinese works that view Yan Geling's novel and film, which depicts various historical characters and materials of the Nanjing Massacre in a Christian background. A distinction from existing papers is the application of Luther's theological perspective, which emphasizes sacrifice for one's neighbors, in interpreting the self-sacrifice of the prostitutes as a fruit of righteousness arising from love. What still lies to be studied is the comparison in the reflection of Christianity in other Yan Geling's novels and Zhang Yimou's films.

中文题目：

## 电影及小说《金陵十三钗》的基督教意义

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**提要:** 在马丁·路德改革 500 周年之际, 当想起他对爱我们的邻居之基督教义的实践, 作者试图揭示中国文学里的基督教理论思想, 向大家证明中国作家严歌苓创作的电影和小说《金陵十三钗》实际上反映了路德强调的牺牲和爱的观念。

‘金陵’是‘南京’的旧称。作品围绕血雨腥风的 1937 年‘南京大屠杀’当时, 金陵地区的温彻斯特大教堂修女院学校的少女们的悲剧事件展开了叙述。电影讲述了来收敛教堂神父遗体却不得已成为了少女们的保护者的入殓师约翰(克里斯蒂安·贝尔)与来依照日内瓦公约宣布中立的教堂避难的妓女们和少女们不期而遇。为了不让女学生们遭到残忍的日本军的迫害, 妓女们装扮成少女的模样替她们牺牲的故事。而在小说里没有出现入殓师。小说讲述的是在神父和女学生和妓女们经历这场灾难中, 妓女们通过戏剧性的牺牲挽救了女学生们的性命。

路德的道德原理是一个基督徒必须对自己周围的人履行基督教徒的义务, 这通过妓女们的牺牲反映出来了。照这个原理, 妓女们为救女学生性命, 扮成学生模样、手拿烫金皮面经书的模样可以被看作 13 位女人对牺牲自我来救赎他人的基督教精神的实现。她们是替罪羊, 是救赎形象的象征, 也可以被看作是替我们受罪牺牲的耶稣形象的象征。原本的事件中的大学被替换成了教堂, 增加了基督教色彩。被小说化的严歌苓作品《金陵十三钗》正是如此反映路德神学观的救赎核心的一部作品。这篇论文对西方环境中成长的原小说作者严歌苓的基督教意识在这部作品中的反映进行了发现和研究, 本研究认为张艺谋导演让英格曼神父死去, 把原作中的英格曼神父换成了入殓师是张艺谋导演根据基督教义的接受在中国难以大众化的情况作出判断的结果。

**关键词:** 金陵十三钗; 严歌苓; 张艺谋; 南京大屠杀; 马丁·路德

