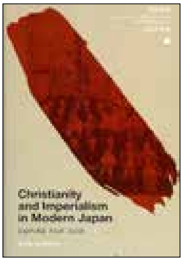
REVIEW



Emily Anderson, ***Christianity and Imperialism in Modern Japan: Empire for God***

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In the area of the historical studies of Christianity in Japan, much research has been done on the Japanese churches' relation to the emperor system and colonialism, but Emily Anderson's *Christianity and Imperialism in Modern Japan* stands out for its comprehensive outline of the issues and problems posed by Japanese imperialism and the responses of Japanese Christian leaders. As Anderson mentions in the introduction, in the English-language literature, Christians were "largely hidden from historical view in the recent explosion of works on Japanese imperialism" (12). Yet in unravelling the manifold process of modern nation-building in Japan, Christians' voices in discussions regarding the problem of "religion and the state" should not be overlooked. Anderson's work has filled this conspicuous gap in the map of historical studies of modern Japan. As far as I know, this is the first historical overview in English of the relationship between Japanese colonial policies and some prominent Japanese Christian leaders' statements and actions.

The book tells a carefully woven story of a socially distinguished group of Japanese Protestants striving to be recognized as useful in the growing Japanese empire. Benefiting from recent studies on modern Japanese history, historical anthropology, colonialism, and immigration, the author retraces the path of Japanese Christians through major historical events and incidents: the distribution of the Imperial Rescript on Education to schools (chapter 1), the Russo-Japanese War (chapter 2), the colonization of Korea (chapter 4), the March First Independent Movement in Korea (chapter 5), the Great Kanto Earthquake and the massacre of Koreans living in Japan (chapter 5), and the Manchurian incident and establishment of the Manchukuo (chapter 7). This historical narrative is not limited to the national border or the metropolitan center; it takes the reader to the communities of Japanese immigrants on the west coast of the United States (chapter 3) and the countryside of Gunma prefecture (chapter 6). As the reader follows the story, the borders and terrain of the "Christian Empire" emerge as imagined by those Japanese ministers, in many parts overlapping with that of Imperial Japan, from the west coast, Korea, and Manchuria to the home islands. The author successfully outlines how some Christian leaders, such as Ebina Danjō and Watase Tsuneyoshi, had drawn and redrawn the border according to their own images of the Christian Empire, concomitantly with Japan's imperial expansion.

Chapter 1 begins with the implications of the Imperial Rescript on Education for religious belief and practice. Most previous accounts have tended to focus on Uchimura's famous lèse-majesté incident, in which Uchimura hesitated to bow during the ceremony for the promulgation of the Rescript. Anderson places this incident among other similar incidents mentioned in Inoue Tetsujirō's *Kyōiku to shukyō no shōtotsu* 教育と宗教の衝突 (1893) and related writings. In particular, Ōkuma Teijirō's statement about the purpose of the Kumamoto *eigakkō*, where he taught, narrated in the opening of the chapter, is a reminder that "international humanitarianism" was arising from the influence of Christianity before the enactment of the Meiji Constitution and promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education. As Anderson rightly points out, Inoue promoted the secular formation of a state drawing on Western thought instead of embodying a religious and hence superstitious world view. The conflict, then, was not between what is national and what is foreign, but between the secular values and the religious ones. The author thus interprets the nature of the debate as questioning whether "religious" adherence in general was suitable for a new, modern nation-state. Her introduction of arguments by modern Buddhist intellectuals on this issue of "The Collision between Education and Religion" is also helpful in illustrating the nature of the argument on the issue of religion and the state in the Meiji period. The public debate on this issue was a determining point that forced Christian respondents to "commit to specific understandings of how they should relate to the state and emperor, leading to dramatic fissures among them along both political and theological lines" (21). This debate paved the way for the formation of the argument and practices and thereby for the Christian intellectuals' attitudes toward the evolving Japanese imperialism.

The original contribution of this study is the variety of sources used, mostly from the periodicals and journals self-published by the ministers and churches of Nihon Kumiai Kirisuto Kyōkai (The Congregational Church in Japan), but also newspaper articles, diaries of individuals, and official documents of the colonial government-general are skilfully mined for details and fuller pictures of the incidents considered. Chapter 2 is a thorough compilation and analysis of Christian responses to the Russo-Japanese War. The discourse on the Russo-Japanese War by Christian leaders, such as Ebina, Uchimura, and Uemura Masahisa is well known, but here the author also scrutinizes the soldiers' reports from the battlefront published in *Kirisutokyō sekai*, the journal of the Kumiai Kyōkai.

> These reports, presented as letters from the front by or about Japanese Christian soldiers who risked death for God and country, followed similar themes: their fealty to the nation, their upright and ethical conduct in battle as becoming faithful Christian soldiers, and the honorable last moments of Christian soldiers who praised God and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to give their lives for their nation as they anticipated entering heaven (76).

Unlike the theologically liberal tendency of the Kumiai Kyōkai ministers, these stories "emphasized basic conversion narratives and Christian qualities" (76). In their stories, the soldiers' deaths were "offerings to God" in the war against what they perceived as the "despotic barbarism of the Russian empire" (64). These simple stories promoted support for the soldiers and accentuated the urgency of evangelism at home in the face of "the beautiful death of a Japanese Christian soldier" on the battlefield (77). In other words, the Christian soldiers were made martyrs for the vision of Japan and the vision of Japanese Christians, and became an instrument for uniting the churches under one nation. As most of the sources drawn on throughout the book represent the voice of Christian leaders, this chapter presents the rarely-heard voices of lay people, though effectively framed within an ideology of the empire.

Kashiwagi Gien's self-published journal, *Jōmō kyōkai geppō*, is also an excellent source, not simply to reconstruct Kashiwagi's thought, but to grasp the situation of local churches in the countryside. One of the most memorable episodes Anderson relates is the funeral of a Christian soldier named Nakajima. As reported in *Jōmō kyōkai geppō*, Nakajima's funeral was sponsored by the administrators of his village, along with those of three other soldiers. A problem arose when Nakajima's family requested a Christian funeral for their son. "While it had initially been agreed that the village would sponsor a joint Buddhist-Christian service, when the Buddhist ceremony for the other three was completed, not only the Buddhist priests, but also all of the village and county officials promptly left before Nakajima's Christian funeral began" (88). Kashiwagi, the local minister, later learned that it happened because of the disagreement between Christian ministers and the Buddhist priests over when the local officials should read the formal condolence. Kashiwagi's ultimate question, according to Anderson, was: "Were Christian soldiers not considered the equal of their Buddhist comrades?" The fact is that a person was killed by the nation, and his funeral, which was the final occasion for him to be mourned as an individual, was marred as different communities with their own agenda tried to lay claim to his soul. The episode is well chosen to illustrate how the death of an individual became an arena for a political power struggle.

In the following three chapters, the author considers the history of Japanese Christians beyond the national borders by following the speaking tours or mission journeys of Ebina Danjō, Watase Tsuneyoshi, and other missionaries from Japan. In these chapters, the English sources on Christian missionary activities in Korea and recent studies on colonial Korea are integrated to draw a clearer picture of Christianity in the shadow of the Japanese empire. Although the work is not intended to be a denominational history, the Kumiai Kyōkai and the ministers who belong to the church were chosen as the subject for particular reasons (8). In this regard, Kozaki Hiromichi, who is also a prominent figure in Kumiai Kyōkai, and the project he directed to send missionaries to former German territories in the South Pacific could have been discussed in depth rather than mentioned in passing (179).

Chapter 3 reveals that Ebina Danjō's American west coast speaking tour from 1908 to 1909 was prompted by a much greater vision than simply to visit and encourage migrant Japanese Christian communities. His motives were not just evangelistic; Ebina and other Protestant leaders, who as elites and intellectuals were concerned that, as representatives of Japan, the settlers' and immigrants' morality and behavior might seem too uncouth in the eyes of the white Americans. This attitude is very similar to that of Christian intellectuals toward the colonized people. Their view of the people on the fringes of the empire was patronizing and hierarchical: the Japanese immigrants and colonial population needed to be educated by the proper Japanese in the metropolitan center if they were to be "civilized." In particular, the Japanese immigrants, who were "lower class compatriots" in the eyes of the Christian elites, were considered as "proxies for how Japan itself was perceived" and "even the government adjusted its policies regarding issuing visas based on a similar understanding that individual immigrants represented their nation" (97).

In the case of the mission to the Korean people, which is treated in chapters 4 and 5, similar language was used but the aim was to make the Korean people "Japanese" by converting them to a kind of Christianity with a specifically Japanese interpretation promoted by the Kumiai Kyōkai. Either way, Christian representations and messages were used as rhetoric to promote the empire, both Japanese and Christian, at the same time. Ebina is reported to have asked the Japanese settlers, "Isn't any land under our heavenly father's dominion your homeland?" (104). The mission in Korea was based on the idea that "Christianity was something that transcended ethnicity, culture, and language. In other words, all people under Christ were compatriots, and this union of different peoples would bring about world peace and happiness" (145). According to this rhetoric of "peace and happiness," Korean people are to follow the model of the selfless love of Christ for humanity and to accept Japanese rule. As Anderson notes in the introduction, throughout history, there are many cases in which the Christian belief system and its representations provided supportive language for the oppressor, and this is one more example. What is astonishing is that they used the very same ideas that Inoue Tetsujirō had accused them of holding decades ago—ideas like internationalism, universal love, and individualism—to the advantage of Japanese colonial policies. Furthermore, these efforts to serve the purpose of the state were spontaneous on the part of the Christians. As is often the case for colonial powers, the government used the religious organizations. The colonial government-general took advantage of the

Christians and funded the mission in the pursuit of its assimilation policy. Yet from the narrative Anderson presents to the reader, it becomes clear that Christian institutions such as the Kumiai Kyōkai or National Christian Church Council were also eager to use any political decisions of the state for their own benefit. On this point, Anderson explains:

> Not simply a pathetic effort to appeal to the state's demands that they prove their loyalty and dispel fears of their forgiveness, these Christians engaged with these ideas and developed ministries that either aligned with state and colonial policy or strenuously critiqued it, out of their pursuit of Christian theology, ecclesiology, and community that made the most sense to them (14).

They strived to make the best of any situation for their ambition of unity or expansion of power, such as war, immigration on the American west coast, the colonization of Korea, or settlement in Manchukuo, which is described in detail in chapter 7. The views and actions of the Christian leaders regarding Japanese colonial expansion were not simply reactions to the policies made by the government, as is often thought to have been the case. Those Christians were close to government officials and thus to the center of the decision-making. They already had their own vision of the Japanese empire, and it was as if the church had been the institutional base for them to participate in politics.

In chapter 6, the scene shifts to rural Christian communities in Gunma Prefecture. Here, Kashiwagi Gien, who opposed imperialism and argued for becoming a "small country," is introduced at some length, including his reception of the thought of Tolstoy. Kashiwagi's agrarian evangelism is juxtaposed with that of Kurihara Yōtarō, who supported the idea of Japanese imperialism and expansionism. The reception of the folk high school—the educational system founded in Denmark—among Japanese intellectuals has been overlooked and not discussed in depth by other authors, and Anderson sheds light on this largely unexplored yet highly important research area.

Having followed this historical narrative up to this point, however, the reader may have an inkling of Anderson's disapproval of Japanese imperialism and the consequential approval of those Christians who opposed to it. The word *imperialism* today has mostly negative connotations, and the author's attitude is understandable. (In fact, it is a pity that the author does not define her meaning of those terms such as "empire," "imperialism," or "holy war," which are historically constructed terms and not value-free.) This negative evaluation of Japanese imperialism is also to be found in previous works of Japanese Christian scholars. Anderson evaluates current Japanese scholarship on the subject of Christianity and empire by saying that they tend to "express their ethical stance toward the relationship between Christianity and empire" assuming "the two are irreconcilable" (10). The author continues:

> Conversely, the scholars who focus on Christians categorized as pacifists or those opposed to imperial ideology characterize their subjects as exemplars of

> Christian living. Since these scholars are concerned with evaluating the beliefs and practices of these Christians according to a predetermined ideal of Christianity, they often do not critically examine how these Christians developed their beliefs and practices in relation to the state and the empire. Therefore, while these scholars have contributed an extensive amount of research on this period and have culled through a remarkable amount of archival material, their ideological commitment limits the range and extent of their inquiry (10).

Here, the author's argument seems to be three-fold. First, she seems to be against the scholars' tendency to take sides with the pacifist Christians in history, and "characterize their subject as exemplars of Christian living." In other words, those scholars turn a person into a representation of a political stance. For example, someone like Ebina, the imperialist, was a failed Christian, and Kashiwagi, the socialist (or pacifist, if one prefers the term), was a good one. Second, these personified political stances are made under judgment that is based on preconception informed by the scholars' religious commitment, without supporting argumentation. Third, therefore, for this type of Japanese scholar, "the range and extent of their inquiry" is somehow limited.

Anderson's criticisms would be valid if she could explain what "limits" this type of research and how she could overcome this shortcoming. She does not elaborate her criticisms further, and moreover, it is doubtful if a reader could see any difference in her historiography from what she criticizes. For instance, consider her treatment of Ebina and Kashiwagi. In Anderson's narrative, reasons for the opposite views held by these men are not explained beyond indicating that Ebina was a pastor of an urban church full of the leading intellectuals of the time and many students of Tokyo Imperial University, while Kashiwagi's mission was with the farmers in Gunma prefecture. Since the two men are not contextualized in their social structure, her argument does not explain the intellectual formation of these men, and how they "developed their beliefs and practices in relation to the state and the empire," and it is not clear what they shared as contemporary Christian intellectuals. For instance, the context of the history of socialist movements in Japan, which is a growing research area today, could have shed light on the development of Kashiwagi's thought. As a result, in parallel with the Japanese Christian scholars she discusses, Anderson also presents Kashiwagi and Ebina as fixed representations of political stances.

Also, the author's negative judgment of Japanese imperialism and positive evaluation of Kashiwagi's opposition to it is plain. In the section on the mission by Kumiai Kyōkai in Korea, Anderson argues "the limitations of a mission rooted in an attempt to legitimate colonial rule, and the inevitable failure of this mission to take root" (23). Allowing that Watase and Kumiai Kyōkai's attempt to evangelize Korean people was a failure, Anderson offers nothing to support the assertion that this failure was "inevitable." Anderson also makes a similar judgment about the settlement in Manchuria, saying that because the settlers were betrayed by the agency and the state as well as the Soviet Union's entry into the Pacific War, it "ultimately epitomizes the folly of seeking a means to build God's kingdom on earth through the Japanese empire" (222). The settlement in Manchuria caused suffering to both the previous inhabitants and the settlers, but again, there is no argument to support her evaluation of it as "folly." Anderson does not express any religious commitment, but her framework and preconceived judgment are similar to that of the Japanese scholars whom she critiques.

These concerns aside, the book is a careful and novel historical study of Japanese Christianity in the modern period. As the book describes, being a minority group, the Japanese Christians made a great amount of effort, which is almost painful, to show that they were relevant and useful in society. The Christians made every effort to be a tool of God's kingdom, which in reality was the instrument of imperial Japan. The voices of dissidents were drowned out in the face of total war. The image of their utopia was always bound to the reality they experienced on earth, no matter how it was constructed with religious language and representations. Around the time when Christianity took root in Palestine, the Kingdom of God was imagined as an earthly reign. Ever since, because of the imagery of Christ's kingdom and the notion of one God who is universal, Judeo-Christian tradition has been amenable to the idea of an earthly empire. The book vividly illustrates a historical example of a religious group earnestly trying to serve the needs of the nation, and the consequences it faced.

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