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Japanese Immigrants and their Christian Communities in North America A Case Study of the Fukuinkai, 1877–1896

On 6 October 1877, several Japanese Christian students living in San Francisco gathered and organized the Fukuinkai (Gospel Society) for Bible study and to encourage mutual concern and support among members who shared similar difficulties and struggles. In addition to being the first organization established by Japanese in the United States, it was regarded as a “Japanese student’s cradle society,” which provided a supportive environment that enabled migrant students to continue their studies and cope with the challenges of living in American society. A review of the literature indicates that the Fukuinkai has largely been studied from the standpoint of church history or in relation to missionary programs and been seen primarily as an agent of assimilation into American culture. This case study reveals a more complicated picture and indicates that the established interpretation needs to be re-examined. An analysis of the educational programs of the Fukuinkai shows that it cultivated hybrid activities among its members. It provided the context for Japanese students to reconsider and appreciate their own cultural values and heritage, but also nurtured a transnational consciousness through its social, political, and cultural ties with Japan. At the same time, it helped to develop a consciousness of rights among members in their relationship to and involvement with the host society.

KEYWORDS: Japanese Christian immigrants — Fukuinkai — transnationalism — racial discrimination

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THE STUDY of Christianity in Japan has often focused on the history of various mission churches and institutions or biographical studies of significant missionaries and well-known Japanese Christian leaders. The Japanese encounter with Christianity has not been limited to these domestic experiences often mediated by foreign missionaries. An important but often overlooked dimension of Japanese Christianity—particularly in its Protestant forms—is related to the experience of immigrants and students outside of Japan.

Overseas migration is one way in which Christian activities and consciousness expand beyond a single nation-state or region. A “transnational” approach is needed in order to explain some early developments among Japanese Christian immigrants overseas.¹ For our purposes here, I define “transnational” Christian activities and consciousness as the political loyalty and cultural identity of de-territorialized Christians looking to a single national territory. These transnational religious activities and consciousness serve to maintain and intensify social, political, and cultural ties with the home country. A study of the Fukuinkai 福音会 (Gospel Society), an important organization among early Japanese immigrants in the United States, will illuminate the nature of transnational Christian consciousness and its role in shaping the development of Protestant Christianity in both countries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

On 6 October 1877, several Japanese Christian students living in San Francisco gathered to form the Fukuinkai for Bible study and to encourage mutual support for life in America. The Fukuinkai was the first organization formed by Japanese living in America and can be considered “a cradle society for Japanese students.” It responded to the needs of migrant working students and provided a supportive environment that enabled them to continue their studies in American society. The organization’s activities and services included night classes, dormitories, meals, assistance in finding employment, and support for studying abroad. These programs were not just beneficial to Fukuinkai mem-

1. EBAUGH and CHAFETZ (2002, 6) explain that: “Immigrants bring with them many religious practices from their home countries that they subsequently adapt to their lives in the United States. Likewise, as they communicate with family and friends left behind in their homelands, they influence religious structures and practices there. Not only does this reciprocal pattern change religious customs in the immigrants’ countries of origin, but it prepares future migrants for what awaits them in religious institutions in the United States.” The significance of transnationalism for the study of religion has been attracting more serious scholarly attention in recent years (see, for example, WARNER and WITTNER 1998, and EBAUGH and CHAFETZ 2000).

bers. The various activities also nurtured a vision and concern for the welfare of others outside of the organization. While the educational and missionary work by American Protestant churches among Japanese students during this time is often noted, it needs to be recognized that the Fukuinkai also played a major role in the initial formation of the Japanese community.

Research on the transnational activities and consciousness of Japanese immigrant Christians in North America has been minimal. Brian HAYASHI (1995) mentions the Fukuinkai in his study of assimilation and nationalism in Japanese churches in Los Angeles, but he only considers its role in encouraging Japanese students to accept American values and the evangelical Protestant faith. But the Fukuinkai was not just sponsoring activities that led to cultural accommodation or the acceptance of American values. YASUTAKE Rumi (2004) demonstrated the trans-Pacific network that existed between Japanese members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Japan and on the Pacific Coast. Despite its importance in Japanese immigrant and church histories, however, she did not examine the Fukuinkai, which provides an earlier example of transnational activism by the Japanese immigrant Christians in America.

The most important source for studying the Fukuinkai is a collection of documents titled the *Fukuinkai enkaku shiryō* 福音会沿革史料 (Gospel Society Historical Sources, hereafter cited as GSHS), which is thought to have been compiled around 1935. Although Japanese scholars only became aware of these materials in the 1980s, they have already received considerable attention in a number of studies.² Drawing on these primary materials, this article will sketch the organization and development of the Fukuinkai and provide an analysis of its multiple activities and roles in the Japanese immigrant community.

Japanese Students in San Francisco

Studying abroad was the most novel and exciting method for Japanese who vigorously pursued Western civilization in order to modernize Japan.³ America was the most popular destination. According to Ishizuke Minoru, the enthusiasm for studying in America from the end of the 1860s to the beginning of the 1870s was shaped by the close Japanese-American relationship following the end of the Tokugawa regime, the advancement of mission work and educational projects for Japanese by various American Protestant denominations, and the Meiji government's favorable inclination towards these developments (ISHIZUKE 1972, 156).

The concept of "Manifest Destiny," which emerged during the 1840s, was the

2. The research and literature on the Fukuinkai and GSHS in chronological order is as follows: ARAI 1986; SAKATA 1986; IIDA 1989; YAMAMOTO 1991; ARAI 1991; YOSHIDA 1991; ANGEVINE and YOSHIDA 1991; YOSHIDA 1995; DŌSHISHA DAIGAKU JINBUNGAKU KENKYŪJO 1997.

3. For research on students studying abroad, see ISHIZUKE 1972 and BURKS 1985.

“Great Theory” that legitimized both America’s imperialistic expansion towards the West (Asia) and the foreign missionary enterprise, which aimed at civilizing and saving Asia out of its darkness. The Meiji government accepted missionaries and their educational activities, recognizing them as a source and means of acquiring the accumulated knowledge of Western science and modern machine technology. These missionaries zealously spread their faith, engaged in educational work, and constructed mission schools in various places. The process of Christianization began to be considered identical with “civilization.” As Christianity spread over the Japanese community and denominational churches and institutions were established, many individuals came to regard involvement with missionaries and their educational projects simply as a means to acquire Western culture.

The early educational work of Protestant missionaries had an impact beyond institutions in Japan. Many were involved in preparing promising youth for study in America. During this time, it was well known that the Reformed Church missionaries in Japan were acting as intermediaries for students seeking to study at Rutgers University, an institution established by the Reformed Church in America (ISHIZUKE 1972, 157–59; BURKS 1985, Part II). The more extensive involvements of missionaries are also evident in the relationships and connections with visitors to the west coast of the United States. For example, Miyama Kan’ichi, a leading member of the Fukuinkai, was introduced to Thomas Guard, the minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Howard Street in San Francisco, by George Cochran, a Canadian Methodist missionary in Japan. Furthermore, Miyama met Otis Gibson, the superintendent of Chinese Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), through Guard and was baptized by him. The early development of the Fukuinkai occurred under the leadership of Gibson (YOSHIDA 1993).

Foreign students during that time were financed by the Japanese government or privately. Some students who were financed privately were sponsored while others were “immigrant working students” who worked as houseboys or held other odd jobs while pursuing their studies. The majority of the students who became involved with the Fukuinkai were such “migrant working students.”⁴ According to ISHIDA Kumajiro’s *Kitare Nihonjin* (1886, 31–32), a guidebook for studying in America, there were two hundred Japanese living in San Francisco in 1880 and by 1885 the number had increased to five hundred and fifty-seven. Drawing on information provided by Fujii Saburo, the Japanese Consul at the time, ISHIDA explains that “the majority of Japanese were between the ages of fifteen to twenty-five” and many youths were from wealthy business families or from families engaged in agricultural enterprises. They were “all educated

4. Regarding the life of “migrant working students,” see the first chapter of ICHIOKA Yuji (1988). [Editors’ note: See also the studies of Nitobe by George OSHIRO and Uchimura by John HOWES in this issue of *JIRS* for concrete examples.]

in their own country to some extent, having finished compulsory education in Japan.” Furthermore, “their aim was to study English in America in addition to learning the customs and manners of white people, enabling them to gain a desirable position in their home country.” These were the students who became a part of Fukuinkai, an organization that became the primary support for their lives (ARAI 1986). As WASHIZU Shakuma 鷺津尺魔 also recounts in his memoirs, “the San Francisco Fukuinkai was indeed the cradle society for Japanese students. For those who went to America from 1884 to 1890, it was rare not to have the assistance of the Fukuinkai” (*Nichibei shinbun*, 23 August 1924, page 42; see also TAMURA 1991). It was the Fukuinkai that responded to the students’ needs and provided the environment necessary for them to continue their studies in American society. In short, this organization protected and nurtured students, and assisted in their acceptance of the host society’s culture.

The Formation of the Fukuinkai

The early Japanese immigrant community in America developed from this core of self-supporting migrant students who were political refugees from the *Jiyū minken undō* 自由民権運動 (Freedom and Popular Rights Movement) at the end of the nineteenth century. The only other Japanese at the time were involved in the entertainment business or prostitution. Although their backgrounds varied, the Japanese who gathered around San Francisco—the gateway city of the west coast—formed the organizations that shared common ethnic concerns and aimed at providing mutual support in a foreign country.

Protestant mission boards, particularly those of the Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches, provided the locations and know-how for the formation of the Fukuinkai (DŌSHISHA DAIGAKU JINBUNGAKU KENKYŪJO 1997). The organization’s charter states that: “This Society is to be named the Fukuinkai. Meetings are to be held every Saturday night and are to consist of a lecture or speech on the Bible. The membership fee is to be two cents. A president and a treasurer are to be appointed and will hold a general meeting every two years for reports and the election of officers” (GSHS, Part I, A). This charter did not specify any particular denominational affiliation and membership did not require a confession of a specific creed or participation in a particular religious service or sacraments. There was no special position for a minister and there was no reference to the kinds of objectives that were typical of a Christian missionary organization. The charter defined a minimal organization that was concerned with study the Bible, acquiring education through lectures, and exchanging opinions. In other words, it was a club that imposed few restrictions on members and open to anyone interested in studying the Bible.

Weekly Meetings

The central activities and programs sponsored by the Fukuinkai included weekly meetings, the operation of an English night school, a dormitory that provided room and board, support in finding jobs, and a network for sharing information. The most important activity was clearly the regular weekly meeting. Assemblies, held every Saturday, usually consisted of a lecture on the Bible, speeches from several people, and a debate. Speech and debate were new methods of self-expression in Japanese in the early Meiji period and embraced by youths. At the same time, members could meet compatriots and speak freely in their mother tongue, and gain much information. The Fukuinkai provided them with a regular place to go, liberated their spirit, and encouraged them by providing practical advice for daily life. Although it was a Christian organization, many attendees seemed to value speech or debate more than the lectures on the Bible. Holding the weekly meeting on Saturday avoided competition with churches, but it also symbolized the fact that the contents of the meeting were not understood primarily in terms of a worship service. An analysis of these meetings reveals that their aims were much broader and they were not simply an imitation of Christian worship services.

What was discussed at the programs of regular meeting? What interested the students? There were often at least three speeches at a meeting. Their titles suggest that their perspective was limited to Japan as their home country and to the concerns of the small community in which they were living. The phrase “our country” or “this country,” which appears in many speeches, referred to Japan, and the term “foreigner” referred to all non-Japanese. Very few speech titles appear that indicate a topic related to something other than Japan. Although they sometimes discussed the necessity for Japan’s modernization, they offered little in the form of concrete assistance. One exception was their fund raising and donation of sixty dollars for the establishment of Doshisha English School (GSHS, Part II, c). This direct involvement may have been inspired by the consecutive visits and speeches at the Fukuinkai by two well-known Christian leaders, Honda Yoitsu and Oshikawa Masayoshi, on 20 October 1888 and 23 March 1889.⁵

The titles of the various speeches reveal the values and practical concerns related to mutual support and cordiality among members and to activities that would contribute to success and socio-economic advancement. Consider, for example, the following titles: “The Necessity of English Study” (22 January 1887), “The Necessity for Proficiency” (22 January 1887), “The Pitiful Situation of Com-

5. Honda Yoitsu was the Principal of the Tōkyō Ei-Wa Gakkō 東京英和学校, who later became the President of Aoyama Gakuin Daigaku 青山学院大学, Pastor of the Hongō Kumiai Kyōkai 本郷組合教会, and eventually President of Dōshisha Daigaku 同志社大学. Oshikawa Masayoshi was the President of Tōhoku Gakuin Daigaku 東北学院大学, an institution associated with the Reformed Church in Japan.

patriot Residents Finding a Way Out from Insufficient English Skills” (22 June 1889), “Japanese Should not Stay Long in America based on the Economic Principle” (3 August 1889), “A Wish for the Future of this Society to Associate with People Outside the Society” (9 August 1890), “The Principle of Self-love (2 July 1892), “Preserve Courage (5 November 1892), “Small Steps to Big Achievements” (25 February 1893), “The Necessity of Ability” (21 October 1893), and “Asserting the Necessity of Savings” (16 July 1896). The goals of self-improvement and personal advancement were apparent in every period of the Fukuinkai.

Concerns related to health and hygiene matters also appear in many speech titles. Consider, for example, the following “hygienic arguments” and topics: “The Bad Effects of Smoking” and “The Bad Effects of Drinking” (26 March 1887), “Hygiene Theory” (7 April 1888), “Things to be Careful About in Everyday Life from a Medical Perspective” (20 July 1889), “Regarding Lung Disease (most common among students)” (9 November 1889), “About Food” and “About the Body” (3 September 1892), and “Teeth Hygiene” (2 December 1893). All of these speeches reflect the importance placed on each individual taking responsibility for his or her own health care and following the guidelines necessary for maintaining a stable and healthy life. These preoccupations and concerns were undoubtedly related to the fact that most of the people involved were young. While there were eventually some older, long-time members, they still adjusted their topics to the youth who were constantly coming in and sought to enlighten and inspire them.

The Formation of a Transnational Network: The Organization of Chapters in California, Hawai‘i, and Japan

The activities of the Fukuinkai were not limited to the San Francisco area, but were expanded to include other areas where Japanese students went. A chapter was organized in Oakland in March 1884, in Japan in January 1885, and in Honolulu in 1888 (YOSHIDA 1983).⁶ Miyama Kanichi, the Fukuinkai’s first president, organized the branches in Yokohama and Tokyo on his return to Japan in 1885 (GSHS, Part 1, A). Following the patterns established by the Fukuinkai in San Francisco, each chapter held its meetings on Saturday and emphasized the educational programs aimed at Christian cultivation and personal advancement. The Japan chapters also received financial support from the Methodists and the assistance of American missionary workers (RMEAM 1890, 96–97, 107, 109–10). According to the 1895 activity report of the Yokohama Fukuinkai (RMEAM 1895, 127–28), the programs of the Japan chapters had grown in just ten years to include 1) the hosting of preaching sessions, lectures, prayer meetings, outdoor meetings, socials, prayer meetings, and literary meetings; 2) a free

6. Though a branch of the Fukuinkai was not established in Honolulu, Miyama did follow the migration route of Japanese and Methodists from San Francisco to Honolulu.

library with hundreds of Japanese and English books; 3) a dormitory; and 4) continuing education courses in English, the Chinese classics, bookkeeping, and the English Bible. By 1905, the branches in Japan had expanded to five cities (Yokohama, Tokyo, Hiroasaki, Nagoya, Osaka) and the average number of students attending the night school exceeded three hundred (RAMMEC 1905).

The transnational network and mutual relationship between chapters of the Japanese branch and the Fukuinkai in San Francisco is well documented. It is clear, for example, that some of the leaders who played an active role in San Francisco also supported branch activities in Japan (such leaders as Ogata Sen-nosuke, who became the principal of the Tokyo Fukuinkai night school, Ninomiya Anji, who became the vice-president of the Yokohama vice-president of the Yokohama chapter, and Ukai Takeshi, who served as the principal of the Tokyo Fukuinkai English school). Likewise, many of the youth who attended the Japanese Fukuinkai meetings later became members of the Fukuinkai in San Francisco.⁷ Other organizations that assisted Japanese seeking to go abroad, such as the Aiyūkai 愛友会 (Friendship Society) and Kōnōkai 興農会 (Raising Agriculture Society), were also known to have close relationships with Miyama and the Fukuinkai (ARAI 1986).

Political Identity

The students attending the Fukuinkai shared the modern Japanese nationalistic viewpoint that wanted Japan to “leave Asia and join the West” (*datsu-a nyū-ō* 脱亞入歐). The members longed for and supported the development and modernization of their country, but at the same time showed respect for the Emperor. The Fukuinkai always celebrated the Emperor’s Birthday, either by organizing a festival on their own or by joining in a celebration hosted by other Japanese organizations. The nationalistic orientation of the members was also apparent in their actions during the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). The war was discussed in speeches at the regular meetings and five members volunteered for enlistment in the Japanese Army and returned to Japan (GSHS, Part II, B).

The national and ethnic orientation of Fukuinkai members can be better appreciated if we consider the social context in which it was organized. The Japanese leaders who formed the Fukuinkai thought it was needed—in part at least—as a response to the racial persecution directed toward Asians in late-nineteenth-century California. At the time, anti-Chinese hysteria was at its height; it took concrete form in legislation for the exclusion of Chinese, in anti-Chinese campaigns in the press, and even in lynching. It was in the hostile social climate following the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) that a Fukuinkai leader appealed to the Japanese authorities to take some action to

7. “Miyama,” *Kirisutokyō shinbun* 8 April 1885, *Nichibei shinbun* 17 June 1922. Abiko and Yoneyama were both from the Tokyo Fukuinkai (TAMURA and OSAWA 1994).

protect the future interests of Japanese in America. Ōsawa Eizō, a former president of the Fukuinkai, submitted a report to Kawakita Shunsuke, Japanese Consul in San Francisco, and demanded that “ignorant people” who will inevitably be discriminated against should not be allowed to go overseas because the “sanctions” suffered by Chinese in America would definitely be applied to them (RDA 1, 8 June 1889). Later in the same year, Ōsawa reported to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs his fear and concerns that prostitution by Japanese women was rampant, and petitioned that women involved in prostitution be prohibited from going abroad. One of the reasons given for restrictions on Chinese travel to America at the time was that Chinese women were being forced into prostitution by organized crime. Ōsawa feared that Japanese would be treated like the Chinese and subject to the same restrictions and sanctions that had been created to deal with the Chinese in America.⁸ He was concerned that the increase in the number of immigrant workers—without quality control—was leading to the “vulgarization” of the Japanese community in America.

The immigration law was revised in March 1891 (“An Amendment to the Immigration and Alien Contract Labor Laws”), and it prohibited the so-called “undesirable” applicants from entering the country, which included prostitutes and the poor, that is, any people who were likely to require public aid. As a result of this new legislation, the majority of Japanese applicants who sought work in the United States were not allowed to enter. Consul Chinda Sutemi considered the situation to be a serious one and he insisted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reject anyone who would be a disgrace to the Japanese and requested such people not be allowed to depart from Japan. It had become clear that the exclusionary practices toward Chinese in America were gradually being applied to the Japanese as well.

The Fukuinkai lobbied for the Japanese to be treated separately from the Chinese. While the Chinese community in America protected the right for childrens’ education in a segregated school (see WOLLENBERG 1976 and McCLAIN 1994), there was no detailed regulation regarding education for Japanese in America, despite the “Indian and Mongolian” restriction that was specified in the school act. Therefore, Japanese went to public schools freely because of their omission

8. Ōsawa’s petition to restrict entry by prostitutes is as follows: “Recently, an increasing number of Japanese women staying in America are involved with illegal activity of prostitution in the cities of Washington and Oregon. In San Francisco, many of them set up these prostitution houses, form streets to engage in illegal business, and present a disgraceful situation. This has generated controversy among Americans and recent female Japanese immigrants have been refused entry. It is no doubt that the involvement of Japanese women in such illegal activities humiliates the national position and dignity of the country’s people.... There are thus many grounds on which to exclude Chinese immigrants or to deport them from America, in short, the ground is Chinese women’s involvement with illegal prostitution. Many of our country’s women came to America to do illegal activities.... If this tendency continues to develop, it is obvious that the treatment toward our country’s people in America will be the same with the treatments toward Chinese.” RDA 1899.

from the segregation provision. They did not want to go to segregated schools, as the Chinese did, and preferred to study at public schools with white children. While the exclusion was being focused on Chinese in America, the rights of Japanese in America (mainly students) were somehow secured. At one time there might have temporarily been favorable treatment of Japanese as a work force compared to Chinese workers in America, it seemed inevitable that the exclusionary practices would eventually also be applied to Japanese in America. Especially after the mass inflow of Japanese workers from the 1890s, the situation in the educational environment suddenly deteriorated. On 14 June 1893, the San Francisco Board of Education resolved that unrestricted entrance of Japanese pupils to public schools be ended and that they be allowed to enter only the segregated schools for Chinese (*San Francisco Chronicle* 15 June 1893; see HATA 1978, 42–145 and KAGAWA 1999, 113–17). Along with other organizations, the Fukuinkai submitted a petition objecting to the Board of Education's decision (RDA 1893), which it withdrew in response. Explaining its revised position, the president of the San Francisco Board of Education stated that it is unnecessary to force Japanese to go to the segregated school as it would spoil their real intention and was an unreasonable policy for friendly citizens.⁹ The Board of Education reserved the right to exclude “undesirable” pupils, however, but recognized the need to provisionally accept such students in accordance with the School Act until the establishment of a segregated school.

Although it was not an entirely satisfactory response, the Board of Education as the administrative body did determine to treat Japanese residents as friendly citizens. However, B. E. Hyde, the President of the Board and the one who was responsible for handling the problem, was not fair at all. He stated that “the Board of Education has the right to exclude undesirable pupils,” which just meant that Japanese in America had not “yet” become the subject of exclusion. The exclusion of Japanese in America occurred later when the reference to segregated schools was broadened to the category of “Oriental” in 1906. The attitudes of the establishment revealed that it was willing to push other minorities into the category already established for Chinese in America. While the focus here is on the Japanese situation, we should not downplay the excessive discrimination experienced by Chinese in America. Nor should we downplay the significant activities and efforts made by the Chinese to at least secure the right for segregated education. It should also be recognized that the Japanese in America and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also had an incomplete understanding and lack of appreciation for the situation of Chinese in America and treated their existence only as the embodiment of a discriminatory subject without recognizing their efforts.

Despite the difference in the degree of discrimination and exclusion experi-

9. The *Chronicle* expressed this part as “suggestions.”

enced by Chinese and Japanese, the national consciousness of Fukuinkai members was clearly reflected in their conviction that they should not be regarded and treated in the same way as Chinese in America. Although extensive documentation from Fukuinkai materials is not possible, it seems certain that these attitudes toward Chinese were widely accepted among Japanese in America—including Fukuinkai members and other elites from Japan. One useful source that reveals this is *Beikoku imafushigi*, written by AKAMINE Seiichiro (1886), who once was the president of the Taylor Fukuinkai in San Francisco. Akamine begins with a description of the dirty streets of Chinatown in San Francisco and observes that Chinese in America are “uncommonly scorned” and discriminated against but “they do not care.” He goes on to explain that:

They just worked like slaves to earn money and regarded returning home as their ultimate objective. In California it is assumed that mixing Chinese children with white children at primary school would spread bad customs, disturb morals, and would have harmful effects on society. So no primary schools accept Chinese children. All these treatments are the same as the African people suffered before the Civil War. But Chinese were not purchased by Americans. The difference is that they were purchased for a certain period by six companies established by Chinese businessman for migration and became their slaves and came here. Chinese in San Francisco revile at Japanese as the devil whenever they see them. They are to be pitied. (AKAMINE 1886, 49–50)

The report of the 1906 pupil segregation incident in the local newspaper also noted that “the relationship of these two national groups are far from friendly” (*San Francisco Morning Call*, 16 June 1893).

Members of the Fukuinkai members never gave up their strong consciousness as Japanese even while actively promoting the acceptance of the Christian religion. It is well known that many Japanese who went to the west coast of the United States experienced humiliation due to racial discrimination and that these experiences reinforced their self-consciousness as Japanese. This treatment naturally made them think about their home country and motivated them to act in a way that would raise their dignity and social standing. The intensification of the Chinese exclusion movement certainly contributed to this kind of consciousness among Fukuinkai members. They believed that Japanese people were fundamentally different from the Chinese, that they were the only people of a “first-class country” that had managed to “leave Asia and join the West,” and that they should be treated in a manner appropriate to such an achievement and with full recognition of the international position of their home country.

Conclusion

In the history of Japanese immigrants in America, the end of nineteenth century is seen as the period of “Sojourners” distinct from the formation of a per-

manent ethnic community of Japanese Americans that followed. Nevertheless, among the so-called migrant working students, there were leaders who tried to shape the thought of many in the Japanese Christian community in America. Though their attempts were fragile, they helped to lay the cornerstone for Japanese American Christian communities that developed in subsequent years.

There were other Japanese Christian organizations that joined the Fukuinkai in supporting education. The night school program, which prepared students to enter high school or university, always drew the greatest number of attendees during the time. Successive organizations also recognized that this was the greatest need among Japanese in America. The Japanese Christian churches, WCTU, YMCA, YWCA, as well as Buddhist churches responded to the ambitions of second-generation [Nisei] youths to climb the social ladder. These organizations felt a responsibility to prove the high “assimilability” of Japanese in America. At the same time, these Christian organizations supported the formation of transnational consciousness that fostered and preserved a Japanese orientation and ethnic culture.

The Fukuinkai developed the transnational network that connected Japan and America and facilitated studying abroad. Before the 1924 immigration law, Japanese Christian organizations provided various programs that helped newcomers from Japan to adjust to their new lives in America. During the 1930s, these organizations also helped some Nisei Christians to travel to Japan and study at such Christian institutions as Keisen Jogakuin 恵泉女学院, Tokyo Joshi Daigaku 東京女子大学, and Dōshisha University. The experiences and skills gained by members in the Fukuinkai would deeply affect the later development and organizational styles of Japanese Christian churches before World War II. The everyday religious lives that Japanese Christians experienced not only promoted their acculturation to American culture and society, but also reinforced their transnational solidarity and consciousness.

Japanese Christians in California were in strong alliance with the main tenets and interests of the Japanese nation in a manner similar to the way that Christians in Japan identified Christianity with manifest destiny. The Japanese churches in California employed Japanese pastors educated in Japan (or educated both in Japan and America), invited well-known Japanese Christian leaders such as Ebina Danjō (leader of the Nihon Kumiai Kirisuto Kyōkai 日本組合基督教会), Uemura Masahisa (leader of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai 日本基督教会), Honda Yōitsu (leader of the Nihon Mesojisuto Kantoku Kyōkai 日本メソジスト監督教会), and Yamamuro Gumpei (leader of the Nihon Kyūsei-gun 日本救世軍) as guest lecturers of the Keihatsu undō 啓発運動 (Campaign of Education). Members of these Japanese Christian churches in California also donated to the Japanese war efforts during the Russo-Japanese War (1904), the Manchurian Incident (1931), and the Sino-Japanese War (1937). The Christian organizations that Japanese established were racially and ethnically segregated churches

affiliated with particular Protestant denominations. This quite clearly hindered Japanese from being absorbed into Anglo-American society and in effect reinforced Japanese ethnic solidarity and transnational consciousness. Although these Japanese Christians—unlike some Christians in Japan—did not establish self-supporting independent churches, they did form non-denominational organizations such as Fukuinkai and, later, the Dendō dan 伝道団 (Japanese Interdenominational Board of Missions). These ethnic organizations worked closely with other Japanese organizations, including the Zaibei Nihonjin kai 在米日本人会 (Japanese Association in America) and Bukkyō kai 仏教会 (Buddhist churches), which collectively reinforced transnational consciousness.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- GSHS *Fukuinkai enkaku shiryō* 福音会沿革史料 [Gospel Society Historical Sources]. Owned by the University of California, Los Angeles.
- JDR Japanese Diplomatic Records. Item on the Report of the Incident of Japanese Pupils Rejected to Enter Public School 「公立学校入学拒絶事件具報ノ件」, Attached Records 2 in *Nihon gaikō bunsho* 日本外交文書, ed. Gaimushō, vol. 26, 1952.
- RMEAM *The Records of Methodist Episcopal Church Annual Meeting*. Owned by Aoyama Gakuin University.
- RAMMEC *Report of the Annual Meeting, Methodist Episcopal Church*. Owned by Aoyama Gakuin University.
- RDA Records of Diplomatic Archives. 1889—“Item on the Statement of the *Fukuinkai* Secretary Eizō Ōsawa sent to Consul Kawakita,” Formal Correspondence No. 48 from S. F. Consul Shunsuke Kawakita to Vice-minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Shuzo Aoki, in “Miscellaneous Records on Situation and Regulation of the Japanese in America, Vol. 1, From 1888.” 在桑港領事河北俊弼ヨリ外務次官青木周藏宛、「福音会幹事大澤栄三ノ河北領事ヘノ上申書送附に件」『在米本邦人状況并渡米者取締雑件彙』; 1899—Petition of a Japanese Student in America to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 1899. 「在留書生による外務省への請願書」.

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