

KUMAZAWA Yoshinobu and David L. SWAIN, comps. and eds., *Christianity in Japan, 1971–90*. Tokyo: Kyo Bun Kwan (The Christian Literature Society of Japan), 1991. 380 pp. Paper ¥3,500; ISBN 4-7642-7133-8.

This book fills a significant need in the English-speaking world. The last work in this field inclusive of all Christian traditions to appear in English was this reviewer's *A History of Christianity in Japan* (Wm B. Eerdmans, 1971). This was followed by James M. Phillips's *From the Rising of the Sun: Christians and Society in Contemporary Japan* (Orbis Books, 1981). Phillips's book gives a particularly fine account of the student troubles affecting the Christian church in Japan and its educational institutions beginning in 1968–69, as of the larger range of political, social, and economic issues of the post–World War II period. The focus of Kumazawa and Swain's work brings knowledgeable readers up to date on the state of the Christian movement in Japan, information best understood if read together with the other two books.

The present book is cited as successor to *The Japan Christian Yearbook*, which was published every year over the period 1932–1970, and in the format of its predecessors from 1903, and gave as an important part of its content a survey and interpretation of the previous year's events relating to Christian activity in Japan. Like the *Yearbook*, its format includes the contributions of many persons: forty writers and twenty translators. The book is an ecumenical venture, endorsed by the National Christian Council in Japan, and endeavors to include almost the whole range of Christian bodies and activities: Roman Catholic and Protestant, ecumenical and evangelical. Its most notable lack is the absence of significant treatment of the Eastern Orthodox churches in Japan. The appendix includes major statistical data concerning the churches and their personnel. A brief chronology of events from 1945 to 1990 is also given in the appendix. Highly important for proper understanding of the significance of Christian activity in Japan are statistics on the sale of Bible supplies in Japan, 1970–90. Given the total membership of the Christian churches, cited as 939,210, in a population of over 115 million, the sale of whole Bibles or portions thereof is astonishing, ranging from eight to nearly twelve million copies each year over much of the period. These figures are all the more notable in comparison with the figure of zero for the year 1945.

The editors rightly refer to the period of their survey as turbulent – indeed, for the whole of Japanese society as well as for the churches. The student pro-

tests characterizing the late sixties and early seventies erupted in almost every university-level school in the land, public or private, religious or secular in tradition. As much or more than other churches in Asia, the Japanese churches are concerned with the larger context of their place in world Christianity. Excellent articles on this larger world begin the book, with a significance given to "Asian Churches and Projects" beyond that common in earlier years in Japan. The major content, however, is clearly that which deals with "Christians in Turbulent Japanese Society" (pp. 63–187).

The chapters in this section begin with treatment of issues relating to the emperor system and its focus in "possible" state support of Yasukuni Shrine, which memorializes in Shinto religious context those who died in military service to the nation. Almost all Christian churches, together with most Buddhist organizations, are opposed to state support of Yasukuni Shrine. Christian attitudes toward the emperor system, however, especially among the laity, vary more than this book suggests, I would opine.

There follow excellent articles on the student protests and on intra-church conflicts over the issue of Christian participation in building a Christian Pavilion at the Japan World Exposition in Osaka in 1970. Other articles take up environmental and women's issues, the problems of ethnic minorities in Japan—Koreans, *burakumin* (sometimes referred to in English as "outcasts"), Ainu, and, recently in increasing numbers, Asian migrant workers—to an extent beyond most former general treatments. One recognizes that the position of the editors and of most of the writers represents what may be called theologically ecumenical and socio-economically liberal views, views that I myself tend to share. But there is serious concern to be fair, and the book gives space to evangelical churches, councils, and movements without any "put-down."

Referred to again and again in many articles in this book is a deepening sense in the Japanese churches of their own role and responsibility in cooperating with Japanese military expansionism beginning with the colonization of Taiwan and Korea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Emphasis is placed particularly on relations with other Asian countries, specifically the Japanese invasion of China, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and other Asian lands. This spirit of repentance with fresh commitment to Christian faith and praxis religiously autonomous vis-à-vis Japanese society, its government, and its institutions is also being expressed in recent Japanese Christian theological works. It emerges in numerous public as well as private expressions of Christian faith, including the surprisingly large number of Christian novelists. It is particularly appropriate that this book should include, therefore, a major section on Christian caring ministries in Japan. This last has been an element of the Christian presence in Japan from the earliest period in the sixteenth century to the present, an element, it would seem, freshly beautiful and inspiring in every generation.

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