

# Book Reviews and Notes

## Reviews

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### **A History of Christianity in Asia, Vol. I: Beginnings to 1500**

Samuel Hugh Moffett

San Francisco: Harper, 1992. US\$45.00

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*Reviewed by Scott W. Sunquist,  
Trinity Theological College, Singapore*

THE STORY OF Christianity in the West has often been told, but the history of Christianity in the East is not as well known." So begins this first-time attempt at a complete narrative of Christianity in Asia. This book, the first of two volumes by the former missionary to Korea and professor of ecumenics and mission at Princeton Seminary, bridges many gaps. Although a former missionary from a family of missionaries, Samuel Moffett writes like some of the best missionary scholars, with his heart in Asia and his mind in a library at Princeton; thus he bridges a cultural gap.

This work comes, one might guess, as one of the last great books about Asia not written by an Asian. Local histories of such places as the Philippines, Indonesia, Korea, and India are coming out rapidly; most are written by local scholars and church leaders. Moffett must depend on some of these Asian scholars for the best information about, for example, the Indian church (Father Mundadan); thus the book bridges an evolutionary gap in scholarship. Finally, this book bridges the gap in scholarship covering survey or Asia-wide scholarship in general. It is much easier to study a

specific tribe or city, but the survey work is needed also to give a clearer ecumenical picture of Christianity. Besides, most seminaries and Bible colleges in Asia offer such survey courses, but until now without a single volume to use for reading. It is helpful to have that gap filled now.

In terms of style, Moffett writes with the faint echo of his mentor K. S. Latourette speaking across the pages. First, there is thoroughness in research. The 29-page bibliography is not exhaustive, but it is an excellent place to begin research about theological as well as social issues related to early Asian Christianity. Secondly, he writes while looking through the telescope with one eye and the microscope with the other. Details of Mongol marriages and Persian purity rites as well as grand summary statements of the Asian church are found. For example, in summarizing the sudden collapse of the East Syrian Christian enterprise in China, he concludes: "Thus the first wave of Christian advance to the Far East came in with one change of the political tide and was washed away by the next." This leads to a third reminder of Latourette: the relationship between Christian advance and its social climate or, in contemporary terms, the text and context interplay. Almost to the point of being "scientific" about his church history, Moffett explains the political climate that nourishes or neutralizes the church. This reminds one of Latourette's "effect of Christianity upon the environment," and "the effect of the environ-

ment upon Christianity." This is not a bad style to imitate at all.

This first volume (the second to be published next year) is divided into three parts. The first part, From the Apostles to Muhammed, has four sections: 1. First 200 years; 2. The early Sassanid period; 3. The later Sassanid period (400-651); 4. Christianity in South Asia (Indian and Arab). Part two covers the outreach of the church while its center is under Islam. Part three is entitled Pax Mongolica: from Genghis Khan to Tamerlane. The story is well-told by Moffett, but as a story it is rather tragic. The first volume accurately portrays the Asian church entering the sixteenth century with little internal strength or reason for optimism. The second volume, a more difficult work by far because of the availability of sources, will record many of the reverses of this tragedy.

Regarding the details of this volume, Moffett has provided us with six helpful maps, lucid endnotes and a good index. There are minor, though at times humorous, problems in the index and footnotes (Timer the Great, see Timberlane), and recent scholarship from Asia is missing at some points. For a survey of this nature it would have been helpful to know both Arabic and Syriac in the original and to have a working knowledge of the contemporary Chinese scholarship (especially in China) regarding the early Christian communities under the Tang Dynasty. All of this would really require the resources and training of more than one person, and this raises an important question. Should such a volume or work even be attempted by one person today? Especially in volume two, there will be great limitations of language (Portuguese, Spanish, Indonesian, Hindi, Tamale, Burmese, Japanese, et cetera); should one person even attempt such a clearly limited work? This reviewer would say, yes. Once acknowledging the limitations, the worth of having one historian-sto-

ryteller weave a single tapestry of the church in Asia must be admitted.

As I have traveled to seminaries in South Asia and East Asia, I have found much interest in this book coming from those who struggle every year to teach the story of Christianity in Asia. I think too of the great value to the church that Neill's *History of Christian Mission*, and Latourette's *History of the Expansion of Christianity* have been. If Moffett's volume comes out in paper (or printed in India), it will be equally as valuable for Asia.

One brief and final note: Moffett is very conservative and cautious in his historical analysis. This is a welcome discovery in an age when polemics often rule the day even in historical study. Because of this caution, Moffett's seven-page conclusion at the end of this volume (503-507) must be carefully weighed.

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### The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-century Japan

J. F. Moran,  
New York: Routledge, 1933.

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*Reviewed by Scott W. Sunquist,  
Trinity Theological College, Singapore*

EARLY JESUIT missionaries in the East include names that seem almost larger than life: Francis Xavier, Matteo Ricci, Roberto de Nobili, and Alessandro Valignano. Of these, Valignano may be the least well-known outside Japan, but had rulers looked a little bit more favorably upon his work (or simply looked less upon the work), Japan could very well have become the second Christian nation in Asia. By the year 1601 there were over 300,000 Christians (mostly on the southern island of Kyushu) with only 103 Jesuits tending the flock. For all of the ambiguities and compromises, the work estab-

lished very loyal congregations, towns, and rulers.

In Moran's understated but direct manner he identifies many of these ambiguities and compromises, generally allowing Valignano, the Jesuit Superior-General's "Visitor" of the Far East, to speak for himself. Moran notes, for example that because of the great distance from Rome, the Jesuit work, or more precisely its hungry brothers, were often on the brink of starvation; one annual voyage lost at sea and the year's income would be lost. So Valignano, the Jesuit, defended and at times supervised the trade of silk from Macao to Nagasaki to support his work in Japan; "alms from the China ship" as it was called. Unlike his brothers in Brazil, Valignano was not in principle against slaveholding or even trading. He only opposed certain types of slavery. While preaching the Savior of the poor and needy, Valignano, like his counterparts in China, consciously focused on the rich and powerful. Friars, for whom Valignano had little time, were very critical of the life style these ambassadors of Jesus were trying to maintain. Yet it would be difficult to argue that any other approach would have brought about results in the strictly regimented, subservient society of sixteenth and seventeenth century Japan.

Moran's book is ordered by what he sees as major subjects or issues that present themselves to the student of Valignano. Each of these chapters is precisely worded, with concise (often to the point of unclear) end notes, revealing a facet of the mission from the perspective of receiving and sending letters ("Ships and sealing-wax"), publicity concerning the work ("The press"), relationships with other orders and nationalities ("Friars from the Philippines").

Amid the many issues and intricacies of the work in Japan, perhaps the most fascinating even for mission work, is the view of mission and accommodation (or today, enculturation) which Valignano professed.

The Jesuits were prejudiced towards the East Asian races and Valignano is no exception. [The Japanese, were clearly prejudiced against East Asian races that were not their own.] Thus it was easy to think of adapting to this neat, organized, and clean culture. It is clear that Valignano, an avid student of Xavier, was the great designer of the approach the Jesuits became known for in East Asia, but it may be, as Moran illustrates, that he was more of a Christian pragmatist than a theologian. Valignano argued, for example, that Japanese should be included in the Jesuit order as soon as possible because "they know all about the writing and the language of Japan," among other practical reasons. His arguments for the Jesuit model of inculturation is similarly pragmatic. As Moran summarizes, "convert the ruler and his subjects would come flocking to the Church...the Christian lord would in effect impose Christianity on his subjects." To complement this strategy, Valignano thought it expedient to "convert" the European "lords" to his enterprise, so he placed great emphasis and invested much time and money on an embassy of four Christian Japanese lads who spent four years traveling to visit these Western rulers. It was hoped that greater support would come from this extended contact with people of influence.

Moran's dense but somewhat disjointed volume is a valuable resource on the earliest known Christians in Japan. As a thematic study it is a lucid and extremely valuable resource. For the teaching of Japanese church history, or mission history, the self-contained chapters can be read to evaluate one particular issue in isolation. The problem I had with the book, reading it as a whole, is that the story does not hold together very well. There is a four-and-a-half page "Orientation," which gives an overview of Valignano's life, but this is inadequate if not a little frustrating. A larger survey of Valignano's life, or a detailed time-line

would help to hold the book together as a historical reading. With this one limitation Moran's study is a wonderful collection of vignettes of the complex and effective work of the early Jesuits in Japan.

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**Religion and Society in Modern Japan:  
Selected Readings**

Mark R. Mullins, Shimazono Susumu, and Paul L. Swanson, eds

Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1993. x, 310pp. including bibliography. Paper \$22.00, cloth \$50.00. Available in Japan from the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 18 Yamazato-chō, Shōwaku, Nagoya 466. ¥2,500 plus postage. (Order by mail or fax [052-833-6157]; you will be sent an invoice and a postal or bank transfer form.)

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*Reviewed by David Reid,  
Seigakuin University*

I SHALL GIVE MY conclusion at the outset: this is an excellent anthology. It will be useful not only to the university students for whom it is intended but also to specialists who want to keep abreast of developments in the larger field and of course to the general reader—a formidable achievement. The editors have organized the book under four headings: Japanese Religiosity, Religion and the State, Traditional Religious Institutions, and New Religious Movements. Each introduction concludes with a list of supplementary English-language readings, and each reading is furnished with notes that identify the writer and guide the reader to other sources, both Japanese and English. There are fourteen readings in all, several of which are freshly translated from Japanese and thus appear in English for the first time. The writers, incidentally, come from many countries; Japan and the U.S. predominate,

but also represented are Austria, Belgium, England, Germany, Scotland, and Hong Kong. At the end of the book is a cumulative 10-page bibliography that lists over 200 sources, mostly in English, quite a few in Japanese, and a smattering in German.

One organizational feature that will be appreciated by readers is that the editors have given the book extra-wide left and right margins, using this space to insert occasional *kanji* or Japanese terms in the text.

To give a brief indication of the kinds of readings presented, Part 1, Japanese Religiosity, deals with the place of Shinto in Japanese religious history, with Shugendō, and with religion in contemporary Japan.

Part 2, Religion and the State, begins with a handy collection of historical documents, then presents one article on Japanese civil religion and another on Yasukuni Shrine and Japanese ideas about pacifying the spirits of those who die an untimely death.

Part 3, Traditional Religious Institutions, has five readings that take up the role of Buddhism as a religion of the family, religious rites in a Japanese factory, memorials for the spirits of aborted children, temples where aging people pray for sudden, painless death, and an account of the education and daily life of Sōtō Zen nuns.

Part 4, New Religious Movements, has an article about Sōka Gakkai and its change from militancy to accommodation, another about magic and morality in Japanese exorcism, a third about Christianity as a new religion, and a fourth on the expansion of Japan's new religions into foreign cultures. All in all, quite a smorgasbord!

To individual readers, some of these articles will doubtless be more attractive than others. I myself was especially impressed by the articles on New Religious Movements, not least because of Shimazono's masterful introduction—an illuminating essay in its own right. But each part has arti-

cles worth reading, and some that will bear re-reading.

There is clearly no way to assemble articles that would completely cover a subject as complex as Japanese religion and society, but I do wonder a bit about why certain things were left out. Nearly everybody recognizes, for example, that the *matsuri*, or festival, is the main avenue by which ordinary Japanese people come in touch with Shinto, but one looks in vain for a reading that describes and explains the Shinto festival. Again, it is universally accepted that ancestral rites play a central role in Japanese religious behavior, but one will not find here a description or analysis of rites for the ancestors as practiced by ordinary Japanese people. I have no quarrel with the principle of including the innovative, but it seems a bit odd to omit what is central in a book intended to give undergraduates a reasonably balanced view of the field.

This cavil aside, I commend the editors on having done a superb job. In fact I urge them to bring out a new edition every four or five years, replacing perhaps half the articles in each edition. This would make it possible to extend, little by little, the scope of these readings while preserving what proves to be essential. Such a series of new editions would allow for continuing growth, edition by edition, and the collected editions would prove invaluable reference material for students, teachers, and libraries.

I would further like to suggest that from its next incarnation the book be furnished with a general index. I realize that it is a bit unusual to prepare an index for an anthology, but there is precedent, and it seems a pity not to take advantage of the now available index-generating software to provide future editions with a feature that would considerably enhance the usefulness of the book for student and teacher alike.

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### **Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission**

David J. Bosch

New York: Orbis Books, 1991. 587pp.

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*Reviewed by John Schmidt, Kobe*

THIS IS A TIME WHEN the values and world-views inherited from past centuries are being seriously reexamined. The former paradigm, shaped by the Enlightenment and long dominant in Western culture, is today being challenged by a disillusioned postmodern culture as well as by thought patterns shaped by non-Western cultures. The new paradigm is asserting itself against the old, and this has brought confusion and discouragement as well as exciting new ways of approaching the task of mission. In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch does a commendable job of putting this shift of worldview into a biblical and historical perspective, boldly charting out some practical consequences for the church as it engages and embraces the emerging paradigm.

Bosch contends that a proper response to the crisis causing the change in the church's concept of itself and its mission is neither a failure of nerve nor a comforting return to earlier missionary consciousness and practice. Crisis presents the church not only with danger but also with the opportunity to capture a new vision for movement toward a different kind of missionary involvement.

In the task of approaching a new model for mission, Bosch first takes an in-depth look at the changes in missions and the missionary concept during the last twenty centuries. He refuses to give a unified biblical theology of missions. Instead, in Part 1, *New Testament Models of Mission*, he maintains that even within the New Testament period there was a shifting of

paradigms. Therefore he treats separately the issue of mission as presented by Jesus, Matthew, Luke/Acts, and Paul. Without setting the New Testament figures in opposition to each other, Bosch makes the reader aware of the ways in which differing ministry contexts have significantly shaped New Testament views of mission. After extended exegetical treatment, he ends each subsection with a summary of the individual author's "missionary paradigm."

In Part 2, Bosch examines historical paradigms of mission. Heavily indebted to the work of Thomas Kuhn and Hans Kung for his basic historical analysis, Bosch claims that theology doesn't grow and change gradually and cumulatively but rather has relatively stable periods of shared worldview (paradigms) that are challenged, and to a great extent replaced, in a short period of time. Each paradigm, however widely believed at the time, is partial, incomplete, and socially and culturally biased. Yet this incompleteness, Bosch asserts, does not make them relativistic, as though anything is acceptable in theology. It is true that we only see in part, but we do see. We must be committed to our understanding of revelation, yet we should also maintain a critical distance from that understanding.

He proposes viewing church history as subdivided into six major paradigms:

1. the apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity;
2. the Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period;
3. the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm;
4. the Protestant (Reformation) paradigm;
5. the modern Enlightenment paradigm; and
6. the emerging ecumenical paradigm.

Bosch examines these six historical paradigms individually, emphasizing especially how they defined the church's sense of

mission. The reader senses how each not only built upon the foundation of the previous paradigm but also confronted and essentially replaced it. For Bosch, each paradigm had strong points within its limitations, and he gives an exceptionally sympathetic treatment of every one. Again and again I felt treated to an "insiders" look into each historical paradigm. After reading Bosch's section on the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm, for example, I was better able to understand how a sincere, theologically astute Christian like Augustine could advocate the use of state pressure to compel the Donatists to surrender their erroneous beliefs, although I strongly disagree with the stance.

Part 3, entitled *Toward a Relevant Missiology*, offers a superb survey and analysis of twentieth-century Roman Catholic, World Council of Churches, and Lausanne publications. Bosch highlights and evaluates a far-reaching variety of changes affecting the church. Nearly twenty pages of the book are dedicated to sketching out the emerging paradigm, which Bosch terms the "ecumenical missionary paradigm." Since we are still in a time of great change, all the characteristics of the developing worldview are not yet clear. Through the use of several definitions of "mission," however, Bosch attempts to compare and contrast the newer view to the ones being challenged. By defining mission variously as "*missio dei*," "mediating salvation," "the quest for justice," "evangelism," "contextualization," and "liberation," among others, he provides a forum for revealing some of the theoretical and practical differences being accepted by the church that are changing its concept of itself and its mission.

Bosch's ideas and observations may not be new to some readers, but I personally found it helpful to have, in one volume, such a broad and thorough treatment of the biblical and historical issues affecting the church's concept of mission. He subjects to

rigorous biblical and historical analysis many issues I had only tentatively examined. Although I had already observed many of the pieces of the emerging views, I needed a work like this to help me put them together into a more coherent concept of mission.

A careful reading of this book will benefit anyone concerned about the mission of the church. Regretfully, the author's untimely death precludes further opportunities to benefit from more of his work.

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**That Far-Off Self: The Collected Poetry of Maruyama Kaoru**

Robert Epp, translator and compiler  
Stanwood, Washington: Yakusha, 1992.  
320pp. Introduction, appendices, indexes.

**Egg in My Palm: Selected Poetry of Tsuboi Shigeji**

Robert Epp, translator and compiler  
Stanwood, Washington: Yakusha, 1993.  
278pp. Introduction, notes, appendices.

**Rats' Nests: The Collected Poetry of Hagiwara Sakutarō**

Robert Epp, translator and compiler  
Stanwood, Washington: Yakusha, 1993.  
250pp. Introduction, appendices.

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*Reviewed by Noah S. Brannen, Tokyo*

THESE THREE VOLUMES, each presenting representative works of an individual poet of the modern period, are a welcome addition to a comparatively sparse section of the library of Japanese literature in English translation. A few anthologies, such as *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse*, present selections from various poets of the modern period in the context of Japan's nearly 2000-year poetic tradition, and a few collections, such as Shiffert and Sawa's *Anthology of Modern Japanese Poetry*, concentrate on the mod-

ern period, but rarely has a volume been dedicated to a single poet. One notable exception is Tanikawa Shuntarō, who has appeared in English in a number of individual collections, chiefly through the efforts of Elliott and Kawamura. (Tanikawa Shuntarō. *62 Sonnets and Definitions*, translated by William I. Elliott and Kawamura Kazuo. Santa Fe: Katydid Books, 1992).

Especially welcome is the volume on Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886-1942). This groundbreaking work for the modern period of Japanese poetry has been translated into English a number of times, and a single volume of his first published collection, *Tsuki ni hoeru* (1917), has appeared in English. (Satō Hiroaki. *Howling at the Moon*. Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1972). However, Robert Epp's careful selection, editing, and chronological presentation in *Rat's Nests* provide the reader with valuable insights into the poet's thought, feelings, and technique as he developed during his poetic career.

Hagiwara is a spokesman for the Later Symbolists (1912-1935). Influenced by the "new poetry" movement, part of which may be termed a literary renaissance that emerged in the wake of the Meiji Restoration, these poets were inspired by translations from French, German, and English as well as by *Shintaishi-sho* ("Collection of Poems in New Forms"), the epochal 1882 publication produced by a group of professors at Tokyo University that introduced new forms and emphasized the use of colloquial language. In short, though the "new poets" maintained the 5-7-5 rhythm that appears to be an inherent feature of the Japanese language, fixed lines and stereotyped seasonal words and images that characterize the mainstream tanka and haiku forms were abandoned.

Cat's Carcass

*Kaimen no yo na keshiki no naka de  
Shittori to mizuke ni fukurande iru.*

*Doko ni mo jinchiku no sugata wa miezu  
Hen ni kanashige naru suisha ga naite  
iru yosu.*

*Soshite, moro to shita yanagi no kage  
kara*

*Yasashii machibito no sugata ga mieru  
yo.*

*Usui katakake ni karada o tsutsumi  
Birei na gasutai no isho o hikizuri  
Shizuka ni shinrei no yo ni samayotte  
iru.*

*So, Ura, sabishii onna!  
"Anata itsumo osoi no nee."*

*Bokura wa kako mo nai  
Mirai mo nai.*

*Soshite genjitsu no mono kara kiete shi-  
matte.....*

*Ura! Kono hentoko ni mieru fukei no  
naka e*

*Doroneko no shigai o umete oyari yo.  
—Hagiwara Sakutarō*

Sopping and bloated in a spongy land-  
scape,  
no animal, no person in sight, only what  
looks like  
an oddly plaintive weeping water  
wheel.

Under the willow's misty shadows  
I see that gentle one waiting.  
Wrapped in a thin shawl,  
her lovely diaphanous garments aflutter,  
she floats silent as a wraith.

Oh, Ulla, cheerless woman!  
"Dear," she says, "you're always late,  
you know."

With neither future nor past,  
we've faded from the realm of real  
beings....

Ulla! Bury the cat's oozy carcass in this  
uncanny scene.

The "new poetry" included traditionalists who continued to write tanka and haiku but with a modern twist, represented by neo-romanticist Yosano Akiko (1878–1942) and realist Ishikawa Takuboku (1886–1912), and modernists who severed themselves

from the mainstream. In turn, the modernists aligned themselves into three coteries: the pseudo-classicists, the romantics, and the realists. Of the latter group, two divisions appeared, determined in large part by non-literary forces, such as growing international tension and the outbreak of the Second World War. It is in the light of these developments that I will consider the two other poets of the trilogy: Tsuboi Shigeji (1897–1975), who is representative of leftist poets, and Maruyama Kaoru (1899–1974), a member of the Japan Romantic School and contributor to the group's magazine, *Nihon Romanha*.

In his introduction to Maruyama, Epp calls on contemporary poet-critic Ooka Makoto to explain why Japanese poetry tends to be emotional rather than intellectual: "In modern Japan it has sometimes been disastrous to be an 'intellectual poet.'" In his introduction to Hagiwara, Epp suggests that this orientation to subjective emotions and intuition "limited [the poet's] art." Hagiwara is one of ten poets in Japanese literary history who is allotted a single volume to himself in the 31-volume *Treasury of Japanese Poetry* published by Chūōkōron-sha between 1968 and 1971. Despite this reputation, Epp suggests that Hagiwara's dictum that the special talent of Japanese poets lay in exploring sentiment limited him in terms of universality.

But it is precisely this intuitive, confessional aspect of Japanese literature that enabled these poets, and other authors such as Nagai Kafu, Tanizaki, and Kawabata, to survive the ideological brainwashing of the 1920s and 1930s. A literary work should be dealt with not only as an expression of a sensitive artist's intuitive grasp of "truth" as he realizes it in his inner world but also as a reflection of the external forces penetrating that private world.

One important aspect of modern Japanese literature is its pursuit of the free individual in modern society. The harshest



ordeal was during the 1920s and 1930s when the remains of the feudalistic value system and society was tactfully transformed into a militaristic totalitarianism. This period put the awakening awareness of the individual in Japan to a severe test, the most dramatic manifestation of which was seen in what is called *tenkō* (“conversion”). In literature, the works of writers who “converted” is known as *tenkō bungaku* (“literature of conversion”).

Of the three poets treated in this review, Tsuboi Shigeji best illustrates how the literati struggled to maintain that “freedom” during an era of increasing totalitarianism. Tsuboi began as a writer of the *Puroretaria-ha*, embracing Marxist ideals and championing a social revolution. As his freedom became more and more restricted, he joined with other writers to form the Sancho Club, which “by parody, exaggeration, and caricature...hoped to make Japan’s rulers, political policies, and suppressive methods the objects of ridicule.” After experiencing arrest, detention, and imprisonment many times, with the 1946 publication of his second collection of poems, “Fruit”, Tsuboi ostensibly fell in line with the new guidelines set by socialist organizations for proletarian writers. After the war he was able to publish poems like the following:

Behind the Flowers

I look at my big brother’s face,  
 only a photograph now  
 smiling within a frame.  
 I hate war.  
 When I offer azaleas on our home altar,  
 my brother who was fond of them  
 talks to me  
 from behind the flowers  
 He smiles.  
 I bite back my tears.  
 I hate war.

These volumes will certainly be of interest to anyone who is curious about what Japanese poets were feeling, inasmuch as they were free to express these feelings, during the period of the rise of Japanese militarism. They will be of interest to students of modern Japanese poetry, since the poets presented here (though no longer contemporary) were leaders of the “new poetry” movement. There are, however, some inadequacies in the presentation as found in these publications. In the first place, the printing is not high quality. Each volume also contains some ten kinds of material besides poems; the books are overcrowded with extraneous matter. Such a presentation could only please fellow professors of Japanese literature in English translation like myself.

I respect Epp as a translator of Japanese literature. At one time we collaborated by contributing translations of Shiina Rinzō for the *Japan Christian Quarterly*. His translation of “Cat’s Carcass,” in terms of accuracy, is an improvement over Donald Keene’s much earlier translation in *Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Grove Press, 1956) —at least he keeps his subjects straight. (How could a man [lover?, husband?] address Ulla as “anata”?) Still, “bloated” sounds a little odd as a description of a water-soaked water wheel.

For the most part, however, the translations are perhaps too faithful, hence prosaic. More attention could have been paid to the English poetic ear. For example, it is ill-advised in English poetry to break poetic lines arbitrarily as the translator seems to have done in the following:

I’d like to ask  
 them—  
 Are you truly alive?  
 What does your future  
 hold? (Tsuboi 1993, 195–96)

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[大学の神学]

[Theology of the University]

古屋安雄

Furuya Yasuo

Tokyo: Yorudansha, 1993, 308p.

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*Reviewed by Mitani Takayasu,  
Matsuyama Shinonome Women's University*

EVER SINCE RETURNING to Japan in 1959, following graduate studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and Tübingen University, Furuya has taught and served as chaplain at International Christian University in Tokyo. During this time he has continued to study the problem of the absoluteness of Christianity in relation to culture, which was the theme of his doctoral thesis. He has been a productive scholar, whose publications include translations of works by Troeltsch and Tillich and a number of books on Christianity and modern culture. Furuya has a real talent for synthesizing the work of many scholars, clarifying many issues and identifying the key problems that contemporary theology must address. He always takes a historical approach and introduces his readers to the thought of many theologians and thinkers in a concise and coherent manner. Thus, his books give readers a broad overview of the subject. In *Shūkyō no shingaku* [Theology of Religions, 1985], for example, Furuya pointed out how the study of Barthian theology, which has such a strong influence in Japan (particularly at his alma mater, Tokyo Union Theological Seminary), has made the Protestant church very exclusivistic towards the other religious traditions in Japan. In *Nihon no shingaku* [Theology of Japan], which he co-authored with Ohki Hideo in 1989, he emphasized that Japan's theological community must make an "exodus" from German theology. As a theologian, he

possesses a keen insight and ability to anticipate the times. His latest work, *Daigaku no shingaku* [Theology of the University], is a timely book that clarifies many difficult issues and contains a number of suggestions worth serious consideration.

To better appreciate the significance of this book and Furuya's reasons for writing it, I would like to begin this review with several observations regarding higher education in Japan and recent theological trends. First of all, universities (including colleges and junior colleges) in Japan today are in a difficult situation due to fundamental demographic changes. The eighteen-year-old population or number of young people who would normally be entering university is now in a period of drastic decline. Ever since the "baby boom" surge in population after World War II, the number of eighteen-year olds increased each year, reaching a peak in what is called the "second baby boom." Individuals from this group have already reached college age and many schools were founded in recent years to absorb them. In fact, the number of new universities established to accommodate this "second baby boom" was greater than the number of new universities founded after educational reforms were instituted in the early postwar period. Now that the college-age population is declining, universities will have to face the difficult task of student recruitment in order to survive in the years ahead.

Universities in Japan have also entered a difficult period of institutional reform and curriculum revision. In the early postwar period, educational reforms led to the establishment of scores of colleges and universities, contributing to the age of mass education. Over the years, however, the educational content and academic standards of Japanese universities have fallen short of international standards. Several years ago the government, through the Ministry of Education, reformulated university accred-

itation standards in an effort to improve and invigorate teaching and research in universities. At the same time, it required each institution to initiate its own organizational reforms. Universities throughout Japan are responding to the demands of the Ministry of Education and seeking to improve the quality of education. This is not surprising since almost every university in Japan, including most private institutions, would not be able to survive financially were it not for the aid received from the Ministry of Education. In light of this situation, it is no wonder that numerous works are being written on the problems of higher education in Japan.

Furuya's book, written in response to this crisis in higher education, also needs to be placed in the context of recent theological developments. One dominant trend in contemporary theology is sometimes referred to as *mokutekikaku no shingaku* or "genitive case theology." Liberation theology, minjung theology, black theology, feminist theology, and narrative theology would all be included under this umbrella term. What these theologies have in common is their attempt to address a specific set of circumstances faced by a particular group of people. In this sense, we have a new paradigm that surpasses the framework of earlier Western theology. As one who has taught for over thirty years in a Japanese university, Furuya's theological reflections regarding this particular situation can be said to follow the flow of recent contextual theology.

He begins his radical theological analysis with a comparison of American universities and recently established Japanese universities. In the first chapter, Furuya offers a poignant description of the current state of Japanese universities and argues that both students and teachers have changed for the worse. The root of this lies in the "psychology of dependence" found in both teachers and students. "First of all, from the beginning students themselves expect to be indulged.

Their dependent attitude is 'It's okay to just have fun at least for four years at university because we've suffered through examination hell.' Second, the faculty are soft on these students: 'They had the aptitude to pass the entrance exams, so we can let them do whatever they think is appropriate and let them graduate.'" (p. 30) Consequently, higher educational institutions in Japan today are difficult to enter but easy to graduate from. Unlike other professions, moreover, faculty with no certified qualifications can enjoy a life of social influence and guaranteed lifelong employment in a system where seniority counts. This system may have worked until now, but with the decrease in the college-age population universities will no longer be able to conduct business as usual. In an increasingly competitive environment, universities will be forced to offer a quality education. In fact, the weeding out process has already begun. According to Furuya, this crisis represents an excellent "opportunity" to work out the original and true purpose of a university.

Furuya considers the problem of what constitutes a true university through an extensive analysis of Princeton University. Beginning with the Presbyterian roots of Princeton, he sketches its development from its beginnings as a log cabin college in the colonial period to a modern university. We sense the author's strong attachment to Princeton across seventy pages of description. He writes about speeches made by various presidents and their contributions to university education. In spite of the many strengths of this institution, Furuya concludes that Princeton, like other ivy league schools, could not avoid the path of secularization.

In the third chapter entitled "The Fundamental Problems of Today's Universities," Furuya considers the crisis universities face today, basing his discussion primarily on Alan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. He indicates that the intellectual cri-

sis involves both the problem of truth and the problem of ethics. By the 1960s, universities in the United States had accepted the relativism of truth and value, following the intellectual shift that had occurred in German universities in the 1930s (p. 105). This was particularly evident in the humanities, where assertions about truth were no longer allowed (p. 108). Drawing upon Bloom's interpretation, Furuya argues that this shift in consciousness is due to the "German connection," beginning with Nietzsche's nihilism ("God is dead") and carrying on through the work of Weber and Freud. The relativization of truth and value shakes the foundations of a university and gives rise to anarchy in the academic program as well as in faculty and student relationships. "An open relativism," Furuya maintains, "gives rise to an indifference that makes everything acceptable" (p. 114). This is apparent in the rampant dishonesty on many campuses, something previously unthinkable among people working in American universities. For this very reason, Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, concentrated his efforts on reestablishing moral education in American universities. The problem of truth and the problem of ethics are two sides of the same coin.

According to Furuya, the Christian response to the problem of relativism so rampant in our age is to be found in the confessing church in Germany. Christians in the confessing church were thoroughly able to resist the Nazi rule in stark contrast to the universities. Why could individuals in this church, such as Barth, resist Hitler while individuals in the universities could not? Because "they had the foundation of a theology based on faith and reason" (p. 163). For this reason, Furuya expounds the need for Japanese and American universities to construct a "theology of the university" and pursue absolute truth in order to conquer the relativism of the present situation. Fur-

thermore, Furuya explains how keenly he feels his responsibility to make a contribution to this effort because of his position as a faculty member, professor of theology, and chaplain of a Christian university.

In the fourth chapter, he expands on what he means by a "theology of the university." In a word, he attempts to explore the "intrinsic nature of the university" from a theological standpoint. After a brief introduction to John Henry Newman's *The Idea of the University*, he provides an overview of cultural relativism and pluralistic values in the work of Troeltsch and Weber. He then proceeds to discuss the notion of cultural synthesis and Tillich's conception of "divine culture," which is "an attempt at a comprehensive integration and revitalization of the various values that comprise culture, the most central being that of religion" (p. 190). Finally, Furuya argues that H. Richard Niebuhr's understanding of "radical monotheism" provides the foundation for a new way of thinking about truth and values in the university. In other words, it is not a matter of choosing between relative pluralism or absolute monism, but seeking a third way based on radical monotheism. According to Niebuhr, "just as radical monotheistic belief provides the foundation for a democratic society, so theological doctrine does for the university" (p. 209). When universities are grounded upon such a belief, they can 1) operate without political or societal constraints in pursuing truth; 2) maintain high ethical standards; 3) aim towards universal intellectual work; 4) contribute to mutual service; 5) build a base for a thorough understanding of equality; and 6) create the possibility of realizing true "internationalism, globalism, or universalism" with a theology that supports academic pursuits.

A theology of the university, Furuya maintains, must include both "theology as criticism" and "theology as formation." The first is a theology that can continually critique science so that knowledge will not be abso-

lutized (here, Furuya illustrates his point with reference to Einstein's conscientiousness as a scientist). Simultaneously, such a theology must be thoroughly self-critical. On the other hand, the role of theology as formation is to integrate the various academic disciplines and make possible the development of a true or real *universitas*. Using the doctrine of the trinity as a framework, Furuya attempts to integrate the natural, human, and social sciences with creativity (father), reconciliation (son) and salvation (holy spirit). "If theology concerns knowledge about God, then the various sciences that study nature, human beings and society which are God's creation cannot be separated" (p. 241). Moreover, "to inquire into God's ultimate and total reality" will help us overcome the specialization and fragmentation of modern research methods. Worship must also have a central place in a Christian university.

In the final chapter, Furuya draws on George M. Marsden's, *The Secularization of the Academy*, and reviews the current state of American universities, noting that most have already been swallowed up by the wave of secularization. He writes that "Universities still publicly stating that they are Christian are in non-Christian Asian countries, including Korea, Thailand and Japan" (p. 282). Furuya suggests that Christian universities in Asia with a history of more recent Christian activity provide some hope for the future. He concludes with a challenge to Christian universities in Japan, which have so many more academic and financial resources, to work with institutions in other Asian countries in an effort to create truly Christian universities.

Furuya's timely book has drawn a variety of comments from reviewers. I would like to make several critical observations. First, the author has attempted to objectify the university and comprehensively address the problems of high education in Japan. From his writing and analysis, however, I cannot

help but sense that he is thinking primarily about International Christian University in Japan and Princeton University in the United States. Both are certainly excellent schools and fulfill leadership roles in their respective cultures. In Japan, however, there are many other Christian universities and colleges, the majority of which are junior colleges. Furthermore, most of these Christian institutions are for women. These women's colleges and junior colleges are declining in quality due to the ill effects of *hensachi* or scholastic ranking and placement according to a deviation scale. While this book provides a helpful analysis of the issues facing one particular university (ICU), Furuya's treatment can hardly be regarded as complete or comprehensive since he does not address the problems of these many other institutions.

Second, readers can learn a great deal regarding the theological issues surrounding higher education through Furuya's discussion of the views held by Weber, Heidegger, Tillich, Troeltsch, Niebuhr and Pannenberg. These thinkers, however, must be understood in terms of their own historic time and place. I find it problematic to generalize and abstract their different approaches. In particular, it seems to me impossible to theorize about the postwar American university in the same terms as early twentieth-century German universities. The same sort of abstraction occurs in Furuya's attempt to use a Trinitarian framework to integrate the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in the university. I must point out that the doctrine of the Trinity is not rendered in the Bible; it is a later conceptualization of the celebratory act that became widespread in the worship services of the early church. The form or expression of the believers' faith came before this conceptualization. It seems rather artificial to employ such a doctrine as an integrating principle for the various sciences, if at the same time there is not an

effort to integrate these various sciences in the actual teaching that goes on in the university. This is simply not happening yet. In introductory courses across all departments, instructors simply attempt to teach the common principles of various sciences from their own intellectual understanding of that area of knowledge.

Third, quoting Kondō Katsuhiko, the author writes that "faculty and administrators should participate in the 'worship' at the college" (p. 285), but does not provide a concrete description of what sort of worship service is meant. There is always a danger that such worship services will simply become dogmatic in content. The more fundamental problem facing Christian uni-

versities is the fact that Christian faith is fading. Without the revitalization of Christian faith on campus, it is unrealistic to expect worship to have a central place in the university.

The university is a cultural institution created in the West that has penetrated the entire world. Born in the Middle Ages, long before the establishment of the modern educational system, universities today are in need of integration and a balance between education and research. All those involved in higher education, whether students or faculty, will find Furuya's book a significant contribution that clarifies many issues and offers many practical suggestions for solving the problems faced by higher education today.