

THE NEW POSSIBILITY OF MISSION IN JAPAN

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Abstract

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It is a fact that the numbers of Christians still remain to be less than only 1% of the whole population of Japan even today. Are there any possibilities for Christian mission in Japan today and in the future, even when people have been losing interest in any religion? In Japan, for more than 400 years from Francisco Xavier up to now, numberless missionaries and pastors have been making every effort to propagate the gospel messages, taking it as an absolute 'must' for their missionary activities. Most of them tried to carry out their mission with their own traditional method. As a result, there occurred almost necessarily some sorts of cultural and religious frictions among others throughout history. It is very interesting to know that Christianity in Japan had never been nationalized in history, though having been very often tempted to become a national religion. In my research project, I tried to trace out the acceptance history of Christianity in Japan, while keeping it in my mind to investigate the most important and basic themes, such as 'What is Christian mission?' or 'How could it be possible for us missionaries and pastors in Japan to serve the churches and anywhere else as true bearers of Christian mission in the present context?' While pursuing my research project, it became clear at least that the

statistic ratio of the Christian population in Japan does not necessarily lead to any conclusion as to whether Christian mission in Japan resulted in success or failure. Christianity in Japan still belongs to small and minor groups among other religious bodies, but the roles and functions which Christianity played in Japanese cultural society throughout history are great and immeasurable. It is undeniable that Christian population of Japan has been decreasing today, but from another point of view, Christian mission in Japan seems to have been rather successful, in the sense that Japanese people had not necessarily attempted to exclude Christianity, but, on the contrary, to accept it and to make it indigenize deeply into their minds and hearts, thanks to the most discreet missionaries from Xavier on.

Randi Walker, DMin, PhD, Coordinator

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Introduction

It seems there were three times in Japanese history, the 16th, 19th and 20th centuries, when circumstances were favorable for the successful acceptance of Christianity by the people of Japan. However, during each period, missionaries from abroad failed in their expectations of believing that Japan could be Christianized as rapidly as in other countries. Despite all of their enthusiastic propagation work the number of Christians in Japan remains even now to be less than 1% of Japan's entire population. Why is this so? Was it due to some concealed or conceited pride or prejudice of Western theology or culture? At each critical period in Japan's history, such as at the National Isolation, the Meiji Restoration, and during both World Wars I and II, the Japanese have felt unsteady in their efforts to secure their identity as a nation. During these periods, the Japanese people experienced the most difficult and severest identity-crisis. How and in what degree could churches in Japan function in response to the spiritual needs of people in those days? Keeping these questions in mind, I would like to pursue to seek some clues for the new possibility of the Christian mission in Japan at present and in the future.

The first thing I must do is to make a detailed survey of the history of the Christian mission in Japan by referring to the various sources and materials published in and out of Japan. The next step is to investigate whether the Christian mission was successful or not in Japan. If it were unsuccessful, I have to clarify why it was so. How can missionary activities be evaluated throughout the history of the Christian mission in Japan? I then

must try to obtain clues as to the new possibility of mission on a world-wide basis to establish the foundation of missiology. These research projects may include gathering information through questionnaires on missionary activities.

I would like to say that, up to now, Western Christianity may not have been successful in the salvation of the souls of the Japanese people. In my view, one of the reasons for this is that Christianity was 'imported' from Western countries by numerous missionaries who failed to adequately understand the spiritual identity of the Japanese people and therefore the missionaries were not accepted by them. Exclusionism, in a monotheistic idea of Christianity itself, might have caused an antipathy to the cultural and religious climate characterized in polytheism of Japan.

Under these spiritual circumstances, pastors in Japan who were influenced by Western Christianity inevitably fell into the trap of a double standard in which they worked with Westernized values in their missionary activities, while living their actual life in a non-Christian world. As a result, Christianity has remained to be an 'imported' or 'borrowed' religion, among others, never having been firmly rooted in the minds and hearts of the Japanese people.

Still, today Christianity is not globally recognized as the only one absolute and superior religion among others. Thus the focus of works required by missionaries, including myself, has shifted from a superficial transplantation of the Word of God to the undeveloped non-Christian world, to all the people of the world, beyond differences in language, cultural, and religious traditions. In the case of Japan, *Missio Dei*, in its proper sense of the term, should be required for the Japanese people in response to Japan's cultural and religious context. If the words of the Apostle Paul are true, it is in that "I

have become all things to all people that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22).

He must have taught us, beyond generations, what our mission should be in the true and proper sense. It is very necessary for all of us to recognize ourselves, first and foremost, as missionaries to be sent all over the world with the proper missiology, a theology of mission, and also that of dialogue. The ultimate goals of my Doctor of Ministry research project lay along these important theological themes in terms of missiology.

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Chapter 1

The Opening Act of Japan Mission

Francisco Xavier, the First Missionary in Japan

In order to discuss the long history of Christianity in Japan, we must acknowledge the tremendous fruits born by the missionary work of Francisco Xavier in the 16th century. At the outset of this chapter, I would like to make a brief review of the early period of Japan's mission in general, in reference to the Letters of Francisco Xavier.¹

Francisco Xavier first came to visit Japan in 1549. He brought the first introduction of the Christian faith with him at the time. In Japan even today, the term of *senkyoshi* (宣教師, missionary) is equaled almost to the name of Xavier. In a sense, Xavier as a proper noun is recognized as a common name. His name, along with his portrait, appears in every history textbook as the first missionary to Japan. Strangely enough, no other names of missionaries seem to be in the knowledge of most Japanese people. It is well known that Xavier was one of the chief members of the Jesuit orders together with Ignatius de Loyola² and others, and that he had been engaged in missionary works in response to the

¹ See, M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J., trans. introduced, *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier* (St. Louis, Missouri: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992). Costelloe translated Xavier's 137 letters in total addressed to various persons in his days from 1535 to 1553 A.D., together with instructions into English.

² See, Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean, trans., introductions, notes, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola Personal Writings: Reminiscences, Spiritual Diary, Select Letters including the text of The Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 281-358. Loyola established the Jesuit orders in 1534, and issued the so-called "The Spiritual Exercises."

request of John III, King of Portugal.³

Missionary activities at the time were not necessarily carried out independently by the Catholic churches, but were sponsored by national funds under King John. Xavier proposed to King John to begin trade with Japan, requiring funding for his missionary activities there. Jesuit orders supported Xavier's proposals as to the matter.⁴ Xavier persuaded the trade merchants to allow some missionaries to board a ship for Japan, by impressing them with the financial gain in trading with Japan in the Far-East. He also proposed to sell peppers at a high price to Japan, even by placing quantitative restrictions for this pepper trade. Also he made another proposal to prohibit trading with China, in order to arrive in Japan as soon as possible.⁵

Such unique meddling demonstrates the prominent figure of Xavier in his effort to make profitable his mission for the Japanese people whom he had not yet even seen. Were there not any hesitations or perplexities in his mind during those periods of preparation for his mission abroad? To make use of national authorities for Christian missions on the one hand might possibly lead to results in national power for Portugal, in some way or another.⁶ It is not clear what sorts of motivations were in the back of his mind, but Xavier's mission to Japan is subjected to criticism in the sense that he may

³ Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 14.

⁴ To Dom Pedro da Silva, Nov. 5, 1549, Costelloe, *Letters*, 321. "...if God so wills, a very profitable agency will be established."

⁵ To Father Antonio Gomes, Nov. 5, 1549, *Ibid.*, 318. "...for if it brings little, it will sell very well in Japan."

⁶ See, To Simão Rodrigues, April. 8, 1552, *Ibid.*, 378. Xavier advised the King not to send any fleets to Japan, by insisting that Japan did not seem to be so highly estimated for occupations under the King's authority. In so doing, he tried to wipe out the doubts of Japanese governmental leaders at the time, the doubts about Christian missions only as a means of occupation.

have seen Portugal's colonization policy towards Japan as a necessary consequence.⁷ This is a typical example which is continually discussed even today, in terms of the problem of the relationship between religion and state. I wonder if the missionaries in the days of Xavier might have recognized this kind of contradictions underlying their missionary activities. More than hundreds of years were needed before the missionaries became fully aware of such problems. In chapter two, I will go into some more details the faults and missteps of Japanese missionaries sent abroad during World War II.

Regarding Xavier's calling to mission to Japan, the facts of the matter are somewhat as follows. In one of the numerous letters to friends, he put on record information about Japan given by Portuguese merchants in Malacca.⁸ Even before then, most possibly, he might have already had heard of the news about "The Land of the Rising Sun," located far more east than China, by Marco Polo.⁹ By the way, it was not a missionary who first visited Japan. Some of the Portuguese merchants and seafarers happened to get to land on the coast of Japan because of a shipwreck in 1543.¹⁰ Then, people from Portugal, Spain, Holland, and England came to Japan mainly for the purpose of trading, and placed their own firms there. After four years, Xavier happened to meet Yajiro/Anjiro,¹¹ who eventually became a key-person, in a literal sense, thereafter.

⁷ Mark R. Mullins, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, Handbook of Oriental Studies, Sec. 5, vol. 10, (Boston: Brill, 2003), 3. "During the Age of European Discoveries, the Iberian nations of Spain and Portugal were extremely active in spreading their influence in lands beyond the seas, and their goals were trade, conquest and the propagation of religion."

⁸ To His Companions Residing in Rome, Jan. 20, 1548, Costelloe, *Letters*, 177. "...great news about some very large islands that have been recently discovered from here and are called the islands of Japan."

⁹ C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 1.

¹⁰ Ross, 21.

¹¹ See, Klaus Koschorke and others, eds., *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin*

Yajiro was said to be one of the lower-class samurais (warriors)¹² in the fief of Kagoshima, the far southern area of Japan. At that time he had run away from his fief on a murder charge in his home country to live in Malacca. George Alvares,¹³ one of the merchant adventurers, picked him up and brought him to Malacca to live safely. He kindly encouraged Yajiro to meet Xavier both for repentance for his sin of murder and for the salvation of his own soul. However, they could not meet at once, because Xavier was not at home when Yajiro tried to see him with such urgent spiritual needs. Yajiro was greatly disappointed, and in despair decided to return home to Japan. But on the way back, his trip was blocked due to a storm and Yajiro had to go back again to Malacca.

What kind of mystery was hidden behind this drama? Were it not for this storm, Japan's mission might have not realized, or might have been delayed at least for several years or more. As to the historical processes of the first mission to Japan, Xavier himself leaves some notes in details later.¹⁴ Thus Xavier and Yajiro met in Malacca for the first time in 1547.¹⁵ As has been stated above, Xavier must have already gotten to know Japan to some degree or another during that time. Also, as Xavier got to know Yajiro

America, 1450-1990: A Documentary Sourcebook (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 19. Some others mention his name as *Hanjiro*, but it may have come from somewhat different pronouncing of Japanese proper name.

¹² See, Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia, vol. 2, 1500-1900*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 36 (New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 69; Satoshi Nakamura, *日本キリスト教史* (History of Japan Mission) (Tokyo: Inochino-kotobasha, 2013), 40. Moffett conjectures that Yajiro belonged to 'a good upper-class', but he was from a lower class by S. Nakamura. The former possibly meant his status as a samurai, a man of the upper-class from the view point of social position under the feudal systems in Japan in which social status of the people was strictly differentiated into 4 levels, i.e., the classes of samurais, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen. The latter may have specified his status as belonging to the lower class among the samurais.

¹³ Ross, 21.

¹⁴ To His Companions Residing in Rome, Costelloe, *Letters*, 177. "The Ship on which he met he was sailing then turned around to go a second time to Malacca, where he met me and was most happy to be with me."

¹⁵ Ross, 21.

better he was greatly impressed by his deep insight and pleasant personality. Xavier was given a new vision towards the Japan mission. In those days, Xavier was very busy, devoting himself to the missionary activities in the Portuguese Indies, but his eyes were opened up again for the new mission to Japan as a result of the miraculous encounter with Yajiro. Such an encounter as this could have been one of the good examples of the calling given from above for the pastors and missionaries even today. Yajiro was called by God unexpectedly, but it must have also been out of necessity by the divine will.¹⁶

Yajiro, together with the other two Japanese men, learned the essentials of Christian faith at Saint Paul's College in Goa, and they were baptized to become Christians.¹⁷ Xavier encouraged them all throughout these procedures. Their Christian names were Paul, John, and Antonio respectively.¹⁸ On the basis of various information about Japan brought by merchants and also the very sincere attitudes of these three Japanese Christians, Xavier felt more confident to set out in a new way for his mission to Japan. He notes in one of his letters, suggesting the possibility of sending out some other missionaries to Japan in the near future, and said, "it seems to me that either I or another of the Society will go within two years to Japan."¹⁹

All the while, he continued to learn about Japan through Yajiro and the others, and made every effort to secure enough funds to carry out his Japan mission, by writing

¹⁶ It would be very necessary for us to get always ready to respond adequately to such a divine calling as this, while keeping in mind to the fact that the works of mission would never be initiated by our self-centered will or plans but only by the divine will or plans.

¹⁷ To John III, King of Portugal, Jun. 20, 1549, Costelloe, *Letters*, 267. "...they had been very well instructed and indoctrinated in the faith of Jesus Christ."

¹⁸ Arrupe Pedro and Ikuji Inoue trans., *聖フランシスコ・デ・ザビエル書翰抄, 上* (The Letters of Saint Francisco Xavier, vol. 1) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1949; reprint, 2009), 5.

¹⁹ To His Companions Residing in Rome, Costelloe, *Letters*, 178.

letters to King John.²⁰

Thus, at last, the Jesuit mission arrived at Kagoshima on August 15, 1549.²¹ Kagoshima was nothing other than Yajiro's homeland. Up to now, there seems to be no evidence whether he was interrogated about his crime or not upon his return home. Xavier's own record, before his landing in Japan, specified the names as "Father Cosme de Torres, Juan Fernandez, Paul of Japan and his companions, Manuel China, Amador, and me."²²

If Xavier's records are accurate, it is adequate to believe that the numbers and the names of the people who first landed in Kagoshima are most reliable, just as they had been recorded there.²³ And if the words of Xavier are true in specifying that Yajiro was accompanied by his own brother and his servants, he might not have been inquired for the crime of the murder. It was possible instead that Yajiro had to flee Japan rather unwillingly for an unfortunate accident that resulted in someone's death. The true fact goes far beyond our imagination, but it is no doubt that Yajiro might have been tormented continually by a guilty conscience throughout his life. He barely escaped having to live the rest of his life in a foreign country and eventually he came to the place where he was

²⁰ See, To John III, King of Portugal, *Ibid.*, 268. He expressed his gratitude for the benefit and support given by King John and the captain of Malacca.

²¹ Ross, 24. "...capital of Satsuma province on Kyushu, the southernmost of the three main islands of Japan."

²² To Fathers Paulo, Antonio Gomes, and Baltasar Gago, Jun. 20-22, 1549, Costelloe, *Letters*, 274.

²³ See, Ross, 24, Moffett, 70, S. Nakamura, 42 and Ikuo Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice*, Brill's Japanese Studies Library, ed. H. Bolitho and K. W. Radtke, vol. 16 (Boston: Brill, 2001), 1. According to Ross, those who arrived to Kagoshima at the time were 6 in number, "three Japanese Christians, Yajiro John and Antonio and two Jesuits, Father Cosme de Torres and Brother Juan Fernandez, Xavier." Moffett added to one more person who was "a Chinese baptized Emmanuel (or Manuel)." Nakamura added the other two Orientals other than these six persons, eight in total. Higashibaba notes eight persons in total, "three Jesuit missionaries, accompanied by Anjiro, his brother, and three servants."

to live his life ever after in Christian faith.

At the outset, Xavier applied to the governmental office of Shimazu Takahisa, the *daimyo* (feudal lord) of Kagoshima for a license for a Christian mission in the area of Kagoshima. Yajiro tried to welcome all the people who came to see him, and persuaded them most earnestly to become Christians. He was so successful in his missionary works that not a few numbers of people were converted to Christianity. Bernardo, among those converted Christians, was the first Japanese who visited Rome in history.²⁴ According to the record, which Xavier kept, Yajiro had “his mother, wife and daughter,”²⁵ which meant that he was a married man at the time. It was impossible for any Japanese to be allowed to become a priest. From the beginning there were no exceptions to this. It seems to be of no doubt that Yajiro’s missionary activities were highly evaluated by Xavier, but as to the personal history of Yajiro, the details still remain a riddle. In 1550, Portuguese ships were allowed to land in Hirado,²⁶ and Xavier, together with some others, went there, but Yajiro decided to stay in Kagoshima for his mission.²⁷ There are no other records in Xavier’s letters concerning Yajiro’s missionary activities thereafter.²⁸

In Hirado, more than 100 Japanese people were baptized by the efforts of Brother

²⁴ Takashi Gonoï, *日本キリスト教史* (History of Christianity of Japan) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2013), 38. “Next year Bernardo came to Japan with Xavier, went to Goa and also to Rome. Afterwards, he learned at the University of Coimbra, in Portugal” (trans. Kondo). He was eventually the first student sent to Europe from Japan.

²⁵ To His Companions Living in Goa, Nov. 5, 1549, Costelloe, *Letters*, 306.

²⁶ See, Ross, 25. Hirado is one of the city in Nagasaki.

²⁷ To his Companions in Europe, Jan. 29, 1552, Costelloe, *Letters*, 331. “I left Paul, a native of the land.”

²⁸ See, Georg Schurhammer, S. J., *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times, Vol. 4, Japan and China, 1549-1552* trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, S. J., (Rome, Italy: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982), 129, n. 22. Yajiro is said to have moved afterwards to China, by escaping from the Buddhists’ persecution at his homeland, and died somewhere in China, being attacked by the robbers. Others conjecture that he might have become a sea-robber and died at unknown place.

Fernandez who was then already well spoken in Japanese.²⁹ Afterwards, Xavier went forward to Kyoto, the capital of Japan at the time, in order to get a license for a Japan mission by *Ten'no* (天皇, Japanese emperor) because he had heard from Yajiro and others that Japan was, in those days, supposed to be under the reign of the emperors in Kyoto. However, the facts were quite different from what he had imagined. Japan had already plunged into *Sengoku-jidai* (a turbulent age), which was of rival warlords everywhere. The Emperor himself had no sovereign power over the whole country of Japan anymore. Xavier tried to be granted an audience with the *Ten'no*, but it ended in vain. He was too plainly dressed to be received in audience and offered no tribute which was an important custom at the Imperial Palace. He wished to meet some of the influential Buddhist monks in Kyoto area, but he was also unsuccessful in obtaining such meetings.³⁰ He was, rather reluctantly, compelled to leave Kyoto in despair, but he never gave up his mission toward Japan. He then tried to meet Ouchi Yoshitaka, a *daimyo* of Yamaguchi where he stopped on his way to Kyoto. Xavier applied to Yoshitaka for permission to establish missionary activities there, this time with letters from the governor and the bishop, together with a load of tributes. Yoshitaka was pleased to welcome them, and Xavier could carry out his missionary works for more than half a year there in the districts of Yamaguchi.³¹

During these days, Xavier could not recognize that he made a serious mistake in his missionary works. While Xavier learned the Japanese language under Yajiro, it was Yajiro who eventually translated the term of Deus into Japanese as *Dainichi*. Yajiro

²⁹ Ross, 26.

³⁰ Moffett, 70. "Even more depressing to him was the response of the powerful and militant Buddhist monks of the great monastery on Mount Hiei outside Kyoto. Despising his thin, black robe and apparent poverty they refused to receive him."

³¹ To His Companion in Europe, Costelloe, *Letters*, 332.

learned Christianity in Goa. He could not find the most adequate term to express the meaning of Deus, so he was somewhat forced to borrow the Buddhist term of *Dainichi* for *Deus*. *Dainichi* could be derived from *Dainichi-nyorai* (大日如来, *Mahavairocanasatathagata* in Sanscrit), the divine name of Shingon Buddhism.³² As a result, people fell into some fatal misunderstandings as to the concept of Deus in its true sense while listening to Xavier's sermons. Moffett notes; "Even Buddhist monks were pleased. Many of them believed that his religion was just one more of the many Buddhist sects of Asia."³³

Xavier became aware of his misunderstanding soon, and thereafter used the term Deus for God as it had been used thus far. Regarding the matter of the translation of Deus, Kishino has a different notion which may be interesting. He points out that Xavier might have used the term *Dainichi* for God intentionally in order to carry out his mission more effectively since *Dainichi*³⁴ was a familiar term to Japanese people at the time. However, Kishino's opinion is not reliable because of the following two reasons. One reason is the fact that Xavier himself stopped using the term *Dainichi*,³⁵ and the other is the fact that Valignano, one of his successors, was strongly suspicious of Yajiro's linguistic ability in

³² Higashibaba, 9. "Buddhist terms Anjiro used in his translation included *dainichi* (大日, Mahavairocana), *jōdo* (浄土, Pure Land), *jigoku* (地獄, Hell), *ten'nin* (天人, heavenly persons), *tamashii* (魂, souls)."

³³ Moffett, 72.

³⁴ Hisashi Kishino, "From Dainichi to Deus: The Early Christian Missionaries' Discovery and Understanding of Buddhism," in *Christianity and Cultures, Japan & China in Comparison, 1543-1644*, Bibliotheca Instituti Historici S. I. vol. 68, ed. M. Antoni. J. Üçerler, S.J. (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2009), 50. "...he predicted the danger of using the term *Dainichi* and the potential confusion resulting therefrom, his priority remained to establish communication with the Japanese people."

³⁵ Moffett, 72. "Xavier was horrified when he discovered what he had done and corrected the mistake by simply substituting for *Dainichi* the Latin word Deus."

translation work.³⁶ It would have been very natural that Xavier continued to have all sorts of difficulties in carrying out his missionary works in Japan, above all of which was the differences in the languages. He could not help rely on Yajiro's poor linguistic ability all the while in his activities. Also he did not have any techniques for adequately correcting mistakes to avoid misunderstandings which occurred among them.

We know that everyone's mother tongue consists of various backgrounds in terms of proper languages, cultures, and religions, and any translational works cannot be perfectly completed by themselves. In Japan, for example, the Bible in Japanese made use of the rather familiar term *Kami* for God. This translation has been accepted, though gradually, among Japanese Christians, since Protestantism was introduced to Japan in the Meiji period in the mid-19th century.³⁷

Xavier continued to challenge many Buddhist monks to argue all these matters during his missionary activities in Yamaguchi. Eventually, a *biwa* player called Lourenço became a Christian.³⁸ He tried to convey his messages of the gospel not merely by theological dogmas or doctrines, but rather, by playing simple *biwa* melodies which were

³⁶ Arrupe and Inoue, 聖フランシスコ, 40. "Each one of his words and sentences could never been express the real intentions which Fathers tried to speak, and moreover, everyone could not help laughing at those words while they are recited openly" (trans. Kondo).

³⁷ See, Norihisa Suzuki, 聖書の日本語 (Usages of Japanese Language of the Bible in Japanese) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006), 3-4; Arimichi Ebisawa, 日本の聖書: 聖書和訳の歴史 (The Bible in Japanese: The History of Bible Translation into Japanese) (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisutokyodan Shuppan-kyoku, 1964). With regard to the most possible translation of this *kami* in Japanese for God, more than several years were needed to be finally settled both from the side of Catholic churches and the Protestant ones in Japan. There have been all kinds of discussions among them concerning this matter. *Jotei* (the uppermost emperor), *Tenshu* (the Lord of heaven), *Shinshu* (the true Lord), etc., were candidate, and to each one of them priorities were divided from each other. *Kami* was derived originally from divine beings (*kami-gami* in the plural forms) based on Shintoism in Japan. Japanese early Christian leaders hesitated to borrow the term of *Kami* for God, fearing that God in Christianity might be easily misunderstood among the people.

³⁸ Ross, 27. Lourenço joined to the Jesuit orders as the first Japanese member. Ross refers to his great contributions to Christianity in Japan as follows: "As he composed his Christian songs he was creating the skeleton of an indigenous Christianity."

much more familiar for the people's minds at the time. We should keep this truth in mind in carrying out our mission. Just as Ross pointed out most adequately, the Christian faith in Japan could only be realized in the true sense of the word when the Japanese people could firmly recognize their own faith by themselves. Only then is it not merely a borrowed or imported religion but a truly indigenized one among them. At any rate, as a result of their most earnest missionary activities, the numbers of people who were converted to Christianity continued to increase. But at the same time, they almost inevitably roused Buddhist monks' antipathy during their missionary works. Costelloe refers to these feelings of antipathy from the side of the Buddhist monks.³⁹

Afterwards, Xavier went down to the district of Bungo (now called Oita Prefecture) in response to Otomo Yoshishige, *daimyo* of Bungo at the time, leaving Torres in Yamaguchi. Bungo became the place where Xavier's missionary works proved most fruitful. More than 500 people were baptized through Xavier's effort in this district.⁴⁰ Thus, during the first two years and a half of his missionary activities in Japan, he is said to have had almost 1,000 Japanese Christians.⁴¹ His mission was nothing other than a great challenge in an unknown land, quite different from his native country both in terms of culture and of language. A mysterious encounter with Yajiro motivated Xavier's missionary work in Japan, an unknown world for him. Then in November 1551, he had to

³⁹ To His Companions in Europe, Costelloe, *Letters*, 333. "The bonzes (Buddhist monks) were greatly distressed when they saw that many had become Christians."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 335.

⁴¹ Arrupe Pedro and Ikuji Inoue, *聖フランシスコ・デ・ザビエル書翰抄*, 下 (The Letters of Saint Francisco Xavier, vol. 2) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009), 5, 90-91. "100-150 people were baptized in Kagoshima, 15-20 in Ichiki, (one of the cities in Kagoshima), 180 in Hirado, and on his way to Yamaguchi 3 in number. In Yamaguchi 500-600, and in Bungo 30-50 people were said to have been baptized" (trans. Kondo).

leave Japan, for some reason or another, for India, boarding on a Portuguese ship⁴² from Bungo. While in Japan, he realized that it would be decisively necessary for him to do his mission to China first. He had also learned that Japan had been strongly influenced by Chinese cultural and religious traditions. It seemed to him that a China mission should have been a priority to his Japan mission. However, he died on December 5, 1552, before he could realize his aspiration toward his Japan mission. Xavier was never able to return again to Japan, the land of his destination.⁴³

He was unmistakably a pioneer of the Japan mission in the true sense of the term. Xavier himself left his notes as follows:

...the people with whom we have thus far conversed are the best that have as yet been discovered; and it seems to me that no other pagan race will be found that will surpass the Japanese.⁴⁴

These words by Xavier show how he loved the Japanese people to whom he tried to devote his whole life as a missionary. More than 460 years have passed since then, but the numbers of Christians in Japan still remain only minor. Why was it so? In the next section, I would like to trace the works of missionaries who succeeded Xavier up until the period of prohibited Christianity, following the period of Sakoku, the national isolation of Japan.

⁴² To His Companions in Europe, Costelloe, *Letters*, 339. "...so that I might meet and be consoled by the brothers in India and obtain the kind of priests of the Society for Japan that are required by the land, and also to secure some necessities in India that are lacking in Japan."

⁴³ Ross, 30-31.

⁴⁴ To his Companions Living in Goa, Nov. 5, 1549, Costelloe, *The Letters*, 297.

Successors of Xavier in the Early Period of Japan Mission

In 1551, Xavier left Japan for India together with Otomo Yoshishige's messenger with his letter from Otomo, *daimyo* of Bungo, addressed to the General of India. John and Antonio, both of whom were Yajiro's servants, and Bernardo, Mateo, and some other Japanese Christians joined them.⁴⁵ On July 25, 1579, after about 30 years later, Alessandro Valignano arrived in Japan. It is to be noted here that Valignano tried to review the method of the Japan mission adopted by his predecessors. He carefully and deliberately decided to promote further and more effectively Xavier's manner and method of adaptable mission for the Japanese people. What kind of factors were there in his unique missiology in his adaptation? How could the missionaries after Xavier succeed their seniors? The differences of the manner and method of mission would inevitably bring forth different results of their own.

For example, in India in many cases, missionaries tried to convert first the chiefs of tribes or the leaders of the districts into Christianity, and then to convert the general population in a single spell over a wide area.⁴⁶ In those cases the missionaries did not care whether their missionary works were adapted and accepted smoothly by the people who lived there in their own cultural and religious climate. But in Japan, the circumstances of Christian mission were quite different from those of Indian mission. Xavier himself refers to this sort of misunderstandings among his comrades in one of his missionary reports.⁴⁷ According to him, the Japanese people did not like to be forced by

⁴⁵ Gnoi, 44.

⁴⁶ See, Koschorke, 24-25. The mass conversion of the Paravas in Southern India.

⁴⁷ To His Companions in Europe, Costelloe, *Letters*, 328. "There are nine kind of doctrine, each one different from the others. Both men and women, each one according to his or her own wish, choose the doctrine which he or she desires, and no one is forced to belong to one sect rather than to another."

any heterogeneous religious ideas or faith different from those of their own. In a sense, they could choose their own faith by themselves. It is also undeniable that there were certainly some cases in which subjects of the Christian *daimyos* were forced to be mass-converted under their reigns. But in such cases it is doubtful whether they were converted to be Christians in the true sense of the term.

The works of missionaries and their Japanese Christian followers were, in many cases, successful for winning public confidence while devoting themselves to building hospitals, nursery homes, or asylums for the aged in the areas where they served. Among them, Luís de Almeida⁴⁸ should be included as one of the most influential persons in those days. He was a Portuguese merchant and a licensed medical doctor. According to Ganoi, he made every effort to propagate the Christian faith to the Japanese merchants who were on business in various parts of the country. Thus the numbers of Christians increased everywhere in the country.

Following Otomo Yoshishige, several other *daimyos* such as Omura Sumitada and Arima Yoshisada were baptized. They supported strongly the works of missionaries. Lourenço, who worked so hard as Torres' right hand person, made Takayama Ukon convert, and he left great footprints later in the history of Christianity in Japan.⁴⁹ There were also some Christian *daimyos* included who were called fence-sitters. Mullins points out there existed these time-servers in those days among Christian *daimyos* as follows:

The *daimyo* of the war-torn country, attracted throughout by prospects of a profitable trade with Portugal, gave permission for missionary work in their

⁴⁸ Moffett, 75. "...he opened a home for the homeless, and having had some acquaintance with surgical procedures, he went on to erect the first hospital in Japan to practice and teach surgery."

⁴⁹ Ibid., 74-75.

fiefdoms, but when the Portuguese ships did not enter their ports and they realized their hopes would go unfulfilled, they switched their positions and began to persecute the *Kirishitan*.⁵⁰

At any rate, the works of the Japan mission seemed to have been rewarded with good fruits by the help and support of influential lords, though it was not so clear whether these fruits were substantially good enough in the sense of true Christian faith. How could the works of missionaries after Xavier be characterized and evaluated?

At this point, the works of Cosme de Torres should be specifically referred to as he is one of the faithful successors of Xavier both in terms of his lifestyle and of the manner of his mission in Japan. He remained to live and serve in Hirado, and then moved to Bungo to continue his missionary activities at a nearby district. Xavier, his senior missionary, stayed only two and a half years in Japan, but Torres continued to serve as a missionary for 18 years, up until 1570 starting from since he came to Japan in 1552. According to Gonoï, through his most active and earnest missionary works, almost 30,000 Japanese people were baptized to become Christians. And about 40 churches were founded as the fruits of his missionary activities during those 18 years.⁵¹ In principle, the method and the manner of his mission were based on those of Xavier, his predecessor. Gonoï points out the four principles in Torres' mission as follows:⁵²

- (1) He tried to put his adaptation theory into practice on behalf of Japanese people.
- (2) He tried to secure, by permission from the feudal lords, the right of free mission toward their subjects and the people within their territories.

⁵⁰ Mullinus, 7. *Kirishitan* means Christian.

⁵¹ Gonoï, 46.

⁵² Ibid., 47 (trans. Kondo). Missionaries used to start their works in Kyoto first, because Kyoto was the capital of Japan at the time.

- (3) He tried to make the most use of the Portuguese trade ships which came to Japan for his missionary works there.
- (4) He tried to take an opportunity to carry out his mission in Kyoto.

It is said that Torres tried to appeal to the minds of the Japanese people by endeavoring to live an ordinary life similar to that of the Japanese. For example, he stopped eating meat when he was aware that the Japanese were not accustomed to eating meat. Also, he tried to wear silk-made kimonos when he wanted to make a better impression on the people. While staying in Japan, he learned that the Japanese always put a great emphasis on funeral ceremonies, so he held mass services for the deceased most discreetly. He built cemeteries for the deceased Japanese Christians.⁵³ In this way, he made every effort to carry out his mission to the Japanese people, believing that gaining their confidence would be, first and foremost, important for a fruitful mission. We have to keep in mind that in spite of various cultural and religious differences, the works of the missionaries were rewarded by certain fruits of their own, in so far as the basic elements and foundations of our Gospel messages are firmly preserved.

Throughout my research, my main academic concern has been centered on the specific theme of “How could Christianity be accepted or adapted in Japan at the present context and in the future?” To realize this purpose, I then tried to investigate the missionary works by our antecedents from the outset of imported Christianity in 16th century. Every missionary came to Japan with somewhat different posture from each other, but Xavier and Torres may have shared common postures in their missionary activities with one another. Both of them tried to adapt themselves both physically and

⁵³ Tomobumi Kurokawa, “日本におけるキリスト教宣教の歴史的考察, I (Historical Consideration of Japan Mission, Part 1),” in *Aichi Kyoiku Daigaku Kenkyu-hokoku*, vol. 51 (Aichi: Aichi Kyoiku-daigaku, 2002), 59.

spiritually into the Japanese way of life. It was just because of these characteristic stances of the first missionaries that Christianity seemed to have been accepted in Japan within a surprisingly short period since it was first introduced to Japan. It seems Torres sent his successor for him on his orders to India, and Pedro Ramirez was sent to Japan instead. Unfortunately, he died in a ship-wreck on his way to Japan. Almost all the missionaries, more or less, risked their lives whenever they were sent abroad for their mission.

Afterward, Francisco Cabral and Gnocchi-Soldo Organtino arrived in Japan as missionaries. Cabral did not seem to follow the policies of his seniors, refusing their adaptation methods in his missionary activities in Japan. He was wedded to the old and conservative customs of missionaries which were in those days self-centered colonialism.⁵⁴ He attempted to prohibit the custom of wearing Japanese kimonos, which had been used so far as a sign of respects toward Japanese cultural traditions and customs by the missionaries of Jesuit orders. In addition, he tried to prohibit any investments for the foreign trade ships. Naturally enough, these postures of Cabral's mission in Japan were never accepted among the Japanese Christian leaders. Valignano pointed out later the following 7 principles against Cabral's postures in terms of manners and missions. Regarding these basic principles, they could be summarized roughly as follows:⁵⁵

- (1) He would often say to them, 'After all, you are only Japanese,' showing them his understanding thereby that they were a double-dealing and low-minded crowd.
- (2) The Japanese *irmãos*⁵⁶ had to be treated in a completely different way from

⁵⁴ Gnoi, 87.

⁵⁵ Josef Franz Schütte, S. J., *From His Appointment as Visitor until His First Departure from Japan, 1573-1582, part 1: The Problem, 1573-1580*, Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan, vol. 1 trans., John J. Coyne, S. J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit sources, 1980), 255-257.

⁵⁶ See, *Ibid.*, 251. *Irmão* means scholastics or brothers.

the Portuguese *irmãos* in order to humble them.

(3) The Japanese must adapt themselves to our customs, not the Portuguese to theirs.

(4) Japanese customs must invariably be regarded as abnormal and to speak disparagingly of them.

(5) Not a single Japanese *irmão* must be allowed to learn Latin or Portuguese.

(6) As he held they should neither study nor become priests, there was no reason for them to discuss the erection of seminaries and colleges in Japan.

(7) What he firmly adhered to was that ours could never learn Japanese well, at least not well enough to preach in that language, nor could the Japanese language be learned by means of grammar.

If Valignano's criticism against his successors' posture is accurate and exact, Christianity itself might never have been propagated adequately by Cabral's ways of mission. It goes without saying that Cabral's mission, as a result, wounded the Japanese people's pride almost incurably. While in Japan, he met Oda Nobunaga who later happened to become an influential supporter of Christianity. He also got in touch with Otomo Yoshishige, a feudal lord of Bungo at the time, who he converted to Christianity. However, he later strongly incurred censures by Valignano in regard to the methods and manners of his Japan mission. He was eventually deprived of his rank as a superior in 1581, and moved to Macao in 1583. Nevertheless, he did not change his mind as to his missionary tactics and he remained in Japan as a missionary for more than 10 years.

This fact clearly exemplifies that Cabral was confident in carrying out his mission in Japan. It is interesting to know the motivation of each of these early missionaries to Japan. What sorts of attitudes were there among those carrying out their missionary activities? How did these missionaries recognize their responsibility and calling from above? And in what manner did they try to share their own faith with those whom they met first in other countries who spoke unknown languages and had different cultural and religious traditions from their own?

Gnecchi-Soldo Organtino came to Japan with Cabral on the same ship bound for Japan. He worked as a missionary mainly in the area of Kyoto, in cooperation with Luís Frois and Lourenço. During his missionary works, he adopted an adaptation policy following that of Xavier and Torres. He was fully confident that the Japan mission was to be carried out by adapting himself to the ordinary lifestyle of the Japanese people as much as possible. As it was pointed out by Valignano, Organtino, together with Frois, tried to study Buddhism for a year in 1574 in order to be ready for discussions with the Buddhist monks.⁵⁷ A great many Japanese people were pleased to be baptized at *Nanban-ji* (南蛮寺, Christian church) which was erected in 1577 under strong support by Oda Nobunaga, one of the influential feudal lords at the time. Nobunaga even founded *seminario* in Azuchi where Organtino was the first principal.⁵⁸ There at this *seminario* several Japanese students were allowed to study Christianity.⁵⁹

Alessandro Valignano arrived in Japan on July 25, 1579. Almost 30 years had passed since Xavier first came to Japan. In those days, Japan had been comparably stabilized politically under the reign of Nobunaga. One of the most difficult tasks in the Japan mission was not only Buddhist opposition to Christianity but also establishing the religion during the war-torn ages of the country. Nobunaga was expected to end these disturbances of war. Up until then Japanese churches had grown to count more than

⁵⁷ Kiichi Matsuda, Tadashi Sakuma and Hiroo Chikamatsu trans., *日本巡察記: ヴァリニャーノ* (A record of Inspection in Japan by Valignano) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995), 298.

⁵⁸ Josef Franz Schütte, S. J., *From His Appointment as Visitor until His First Departure from Japan, 1573-1582, part 2: The Solution, 1580-1582*, Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan, vol. 1 trans., John J. Coyne, S. J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit sources, 1985), 110-111.

⁵⁹ See, Kurokawa, 59-61. Takayama Ukon made a great contribution to found the seminary in 1580. There in this seminary, only 8 students learned at the beginning, but soon after the numbers of students increased up to 20~30. All of them resided in the school dormitory, and they learned not only theology but also choir music with organ. But it was destroyed at the time of Nobunaga's down-fall from his reign.

130,000 Christians.⁶⁰ Valignano harshly criticized Cabral's way of mission in Japan, and put his adaptation theory most adequately into practice. "Guiding Principles for the Japanese Superior"⁶¹ issued in 1580 under his leadership is very important in the sense that these basic principles became the pivotal line for Japan mission by means of his adaptation theory. Allow me here to quote from various articles in these Guidelines which cannot be overlooked in the task of mission.

Close union must prevail between European and Japanese missionaries. To this end, uniformity in treatment is especially called for; uniformity as regards food, clothing, and all else. There must, of course, be a distinction between the *fratres*⁶² and the *dojuku*;⁶³ but the Japanese and the Portuguese *irmãos*, the native and the European *dojuku*, should be regarded as of equal status. The greatest hindrance to union between the two groups of missionary personnel lies in the immense difference that exists between Japanese and European customs. Many things which for us denote politeness and good breeding sound the feelings of the Japanese; and as we live among them, we have to adapt ourselves to their ways. Hence European missionaries must learn and observe Japanese etiquette. They should not speak disparagingly of the native customs, as newcomers from India usually do. As soon as they arrive in Japan, their attention must be drawn to the matter; the superior is to see that from the very start they impress on their memories Japanese usages in keeping with the "Rules for the ceremonial and customs which Ours are to observe in one another's company and with strangers." Someone well acquainted with Japanese etiquette should introduce them to these customs and drill them thoroughly in them for some days, so that they may not be taken for uncouth and unmannerly people. These rules are important for the *dojuku* also. Superiors especially should excel in knowledge of Japanese ceremonial, as they have to treat with reigning princes and personages of distinction. Care has to be taken, too, that Japanese members of the order do not, through association with Europeans, grow remiss in observing their native forms of etiquette, as could easily happen. This would shock the feelings of externs. For that reason, too, they should have their rules

⁶⁰ Gonoï, 113.

⁶¹ Schütte, *Valignano's Mission, part 1*, 249.

⁶² *fratres* means 'brother.'

⁶³ See, Gonoï, 4. *dojuku* literally means 'a fellow lodger' in Japanese, and here to be specified as an assistant of missionaries. He sometimes teaches Christian doctrines, and undertakes the works of preaching also.

for association with one another.⁶⁴

As seen from the above quotations, Valignano had already learned from his own experiences as a missionary how important it is for both European and Japanese missionaries to keep close union with each other in the works of the Japan mission. To him, it was very necessary that European missionaries adapt themselves adequately to the Japanese way of life first and foremost while they were engaged in their missionary works in Japan.

In the same year, Valignano issued “Principles for the Administration of the Japanese Seminaries,”⁶⁵ and after he returned to India in 1583 he wrote “*Sumario*” (Summary).⁶⁶ Judging from the contents of these documents, we could infer how and to what degree he tried to promote his missionary policy on the basis of adaptation in Japan. At this point, we may be able to corroborate the Apostle Paul’s missionary figure in the Mediterranean Sea at the period of primitive churches, as exemplified in his letter to the Corinthians, in saying that “To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law (verse 21 omitted). To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings” (1 Cor. 9:20-23). Thus the methodology of adaptation, which Xavier, Torres, Organtino, and Valignano strived for, could be considered successful, and it may possibly give us some important hints even today, not

⁶⁴ Schütte, *Valignano's Mission, part 1*, 340.

⁶⁵ See, Schütte, *Valignano's Mission, part 1*, 346-54. These principles included various articles in details such as “Seminary Administrations,” “Daily orders for the Young Seminarians,” and so on.

⁶⁶ See, Schütte, *Valignano's Mission, part 2*, 268-71.

only for our missionary activities but also for our pastoral works in general.

Valignano brought back the so-called “*Tensho-embassy*” when he returned home from Japan.⁶⁷ With regard to this fact, Gonoï points out as follows:

He expected to acquire high evaluations from Jesuit orders during his works of Japan mission by introducing the fruits of the new religion of Christianity in Japan to the European Christendom, through Japanese young men whom Jesuit orders trained.⁶⁸

It is not certain whether the Jesuit orders themselves intentionally had territorial ambitions in some ways or other. But to some Japanese leaders there may have been reason to doubt the missionaries from Europe because they gradually became aware that even these missionaries were financially aided by the nations. Japanese leaders had already gotten wind of colonization, having heard of examples in other Asian countries. To them Christianity might have easily become ‘advance troops’, as it were, even in Japan in the like manner.⁶⁹

Challenges and Crises against Christian Faith in Japan

In those earlier periods of the Japan mission, missionaries sent to Japan from Jesuit orders always tried to keep close contact with the authorities of Japanese government by

⁶⁷ William J. Farge, S. J., *Translating Religious Experience Across Cultures: Early Attempts to Construct a Body of Japanese Christian Literature*, Üçerler, S.J., ed., *Christianity and Cultures, Japan & China in Comparison, 1543-1644*, Bibliotheca Institutii Historici S. I. vol. 68 (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2009), 83-84.

⁶⁸ Gonoï, 134 (trans. Kondo).

⁶⁹ See, Gonoï, 179. Valignano disagreed to send missionaries from Europe except those of Jesuit orders. It was mainly because he thought that newcomers from the other orders might easily deepen the doubts of Japanese people against Christianity, without sufficient knowledge about Japanese religious circumstances.

asking permissions for their missionary works. Oda Nobunaga was one of the most influential supporters during their missionary activities as a whole, but, unfortunately, he was assassinated by Akechi Mitsuhide, one of his top-ranked subjects, at *Hon'no-ji* (本能寺) in Kyoto in 1582. Afterwards, his reign was succeeded by such influential feudal lords as Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and others. These successors began to exclude Christianity, though gradually, in order to gain control without the help of foreign powers over their rivals. Most of them intended to keep contact with the Western countries in their trade business, but at the same time they began to feel, almost intuitively, concern about colonization by these foreign powers. The *Sengoku-jidai* (turbulent ages) came to an end after 100 or more tragic years of war, and now these political leaders began to grope for their unique policy of establishing a unified Japanese government. A sort of nationalism may have come to the fore in those days of Japanese history. A series of edicts of prohibitions against the Christian mission were issued one after another from the government. Finally, Japan took up a national isolation policy which lasted for more than 300 years. Christianity was exposed to the most severe dangers and harsh difficulties under these political circumstances. Almost all the Christians, including missionaries, were severely persecuted with no exceptions. Martyrdoms occurred almost as a standard among these Christians.

How then could Christianity face these difficulties under the severest of persecutions by the national power? And what became of Christianity in Japan afterwards from the time of persecutions and martyrdom? It is interesting to know how these feudal lords of Japan responded to Christianity brought by the missionaries in rapidly changing times. What sorts of meanings were there in an imported religion called Christianity to

these Japanese rulers? How could Christianity have been accepted by the Japanese people, and how was it rejected by them? Keeping all these questions in mind, I would like to trace briefly the historical process of Christianity during these periods.

On March 16, 1586, Gaspar Coelho, the Jesuit Vice-Provincial, and his party first met Hideyoshi.⁷⁰ He welcomed them, though only seemingly. He intended to take their ships from them in order to send his troops to Korea or China for the military purposes. According to Ross, “The most important undertaking of Hideyoshi was the invasion of Korea in 1592 with the aim of achieving suzerainty, not only over Korea but also over China.”⁷¹

Anyway, Coelho succeeded in being permitted by Hideyoshi to go around various districts in Japan and eventually the mission was successfully carried out by his enthusiastic activities. Gonoï conjectures that the number of Christians in those days was not less than 200,000 in total, and there were about 200 churches, including both large and small ones, in Japan at the time.⁷² But Hideyoshi’s conspiracy ended in vain, and he began to feel suspicious of the missionaries. Takayama Ukon, one of the most influential Christian *daimyos* at the time, was deprived of his privileges as samurai. Hideyoshi was very anxious that Christianity might easily be made use of by his antagonists, because he already perceived, more or less, the enemy’s movements against him. Prestino analyzes these anxious feelings within Hideyoshi’s mind, in saying that “there seems to be a firm and strong sense of union among the *Kirishitans* which might outdo that of among

⁷⁰ Ibid., 143

⁷¹ Ross, 68.

⁷² Gonoï, 160.

brothers.”⁷³

In fact, Christianity had gotten a considerable number of followers among influential lords and soldiers in Japan in those days.

When Ukon refused to obey Hideyoshi's command to cast away his Christian faith, Hideyoshi was inflamed with rage and immediately issued the so-called *Bateren Tsuiho-rei* (伴天連追放令, The Edict expelling Jesuit Missionaries). Moreover, he commanded these missionaries to be deported from Japan within 20 days.⁷⁴ This is the first example of expelling Christians officially carried out in Japan. Coelho and some others opposed Hideyoshi, expecting somehow to get support from the Governor-General of the Philippines. Valignano did not agree with this treatment, insisting that it would not be wise to use armed force for the solution of the problem.⁷⁵

Valignano came to Japan again as an ambassador of the Governor General of Portuguese India and met Hideyoshi on March 3, 1591. He was then accompanied by João Rodrigues as an interpreter. He was an able person and gained Hideyoshi's confidence. He emphasized the necessities of the Jesuit orders with regards to the merits of the trading business with Portugal. Thus the *Tsuiho-rei* substantially became nullified.

On February 5, 1597, there occurred the most tragic incident in Japan's Christian history. 26 *Kirishitans*, including missionaries, were crucified to death in Nagasaki. Regarding the incident, Luís Frois reported in detail⁷⁶ as the last written document of his

⁷³ Antonio Prenestino, *The Letters of Antonio Prenestino*, 1587, trans. by Takashi Gono in: *Ibid.*, 147.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 163-64.

⁷⁶ See, Luís Frois, *Relatione della gloriosa morte di XXVI, posti in croce : per comandamento del re di Giappone, alli 5. di febraio 1597*, trans. Ryogo Yuuki, *日本二十六聖人殉教記* (The Twenty-six

life. According to Frois, there were at least three reasons why they were martyred. Firstly, while Jesuits restrained themselves from their missionary activities in order to avoid the persecutions under Hideyoshi's reign until the *Tsuiho-rei* was nullified, one of the Franciscan orders who came to Japan as ambassadors of Governor General of the Philippines started his missionary works in Japan publicly in spite of Hideyoshi's warnings. Secondly, when The San Felipe, a Spanish ship from the Philippines, was cast away on a coast of Japan, Chosokabe, the local feudal lord of the district, forfeited the cargoes and made an ill report to Hideyoshi. And thirdly, Zenso, a physician to Hideyoshi and at the same time one of the Buddhist monks, harshly persecuted Christians.⁷⁷ At any rate, this incident happened to be the first unforgettable martyrdom in the history of Christianity in Japan caused by national power.⁷⁸

Valignano came to Japan again for the third time on August 5, 1598, but the circumstances of the Christian mission in Japan became all the more worse thereafter. Hideyoshi died of illness on September 18, 1598. Valignano continued to make an appeal to both Spanish and Portuguese missionaries to cooperate with each other for the common mission in order to regain their footing even under the severe persecutions, which had lasted more than 10 years up until then. Also, he tried to set about the work of rebuilding churches and other facilities destroyed under the persecution.

Tokugawa Ieyasu succeeded Hideyoshi after his death, and in 1603 the Tokugawa

Martyrs), (Nagasaki: Seibono Kishisha, 2014).

⁷⁷ See, Yuuki, 34-36.

⁷⁸ See, Gono, 183. On December 23, 1861, 23 Franciscans were ranked as the Saints by Pope Pius IX, and on March 25 in the same year, 3 Jesuits were added to the Saints respectively.

shogunate called the *Edo Bakufu* (江戸幕府) to begin.⁷⁹ He refused the request from Jesuit orders to nullify the edict of prohibition of Christianity, but offered convenience to their missionary activities perhaps only for the benefits of trade with Portugal.⁸⁰ Ieyasu's policy was carried out in a way that he tacitly tolerated the works of missionaries only domestically, but notified the prohibition of any missionary activities outwardly. The *Bakufu* was rather pleased to accept Protestant nations such as Holland and England and allowing them to start anew, because these two countries did not seem to have any religious intentions in trading businesses. These facts were deemed a threat to Portuguese people and to the Jesuits both financially and politically.⁸¹ Ieyasu was successful in giving a strong impression of *Bakufu*'s authorities and powers by granting an audience not only to the Jesuits but also to the Franciscans and the Dominicans. During those days, Christianity in Japan seemed to regain peace, though only temporarily.⁸²

However, these peaceful situations for the Christian missions in Japan did not last long. Ieyasu began to make his attitudes clear toward Christianity while his suzerainty was to be firmly established. He shifted his basic policy toward Christianity from an acceptance policy to that of refusal which eventually resulted in prohibition. One of the cues for all this political shift by Ieyasu was an incident which occurred in 1611. It was a bribery case between Okamoto Daihachi, one of the influential *Kirishitan* samurais and

⁷⁹ Ross, 79. "...he was eligible to receive the formal title of Shogun from the Emperor in 1603."

⁸⁰ See, Gonoï, 189. He (Ieyasu) gifted the land for the monastery, and moreover he guaranteed Christian *daimyo*'s faith.

⁸¹ See, Moffett, 86-87.

⁸² See, Gonoï, 206, and also see S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 86. Regarding the Christian population at the time, Gonoï conjectures about 370,000 in number, but about 600,000 by S. Nakamura's conjecture. There is quite a big difference between the two researchers, but the actual numbers still remain unsolved.

Arima Harunobu, a *Kirishitan daimyo*. As the case was somewhat related to territorial disputes between the two, and both of them were *Kirishitans*, Ieyasu feared that the news of the incident would threaten his ruling system and the shogunate government might be destroyed. As a result, he executed his policy of prohibitions on Christianity.⁸³ Prior to this final decision, the edicts of prohibition were already issued at some local areas in Japan. But in 1614, *Bakufu* issued the edicts to the whole land, expelled all the missionaries-residing in Japan, and tried to execute those who rebelled against national rules. The basic principles of “The *Bateren tsuiho-bumi* (伴天連追放文, Edict of Expelling Christian Missionaries) issued by *Bakufu*” were exemplified in a way that Japan as a nation should be founded on the basis of Confucianism, keeping it as her fundamental political ideology, and also that Japan should continue to be a land of gods and at the same time a Buddhist nation. Christianity was regarded by the government as one of the most doubtful means to overcome the land of Japan. To the government, Christianity seemed to be nothing other than a perverse religion which should never be accepted in Japan.⁸⁴

Thus Ieyasu’s policy against Christianity became all the more harsh and strict. It was very necessary for him to wipe away all the antagonistic forces against him, centered in the remnants of the defeated party of Hideyoshi, his former ruler. He was extremely anxious that these remnants would easily be unified under the flag of Christianity. *Bakufu* expelled one by one the missionaries and *Kirishitans* who rebelled under the edicts. Ukon had already been deprived of his status as a *daimyo* by Hideyoshi but he was still influential as one of the *Kirishitan* leaders in those days. He was finally expelled to

⁸³ Gono, 198-200.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 204-5.

Manila in 1614.⁸⁵

Ieyassu died in 1616, and his shogunate was inherited by his son, Hidetada. He succeeded his father's policy of prohibiting Christianity, persecuted *Kirishitans*, and expelled them through and through. He issued further the Edict called "The *Bateren Shumon Goseikin Hoshō*" (伴天連宗門御制禁奉書) in 1616, prohibiting any missionaries to enter Japan.⁸⁶ In so doing, *Bakufu* intended to keep the other rival *daimyos* perfectly under its control. The government feared that they might become strong enough politically to threaten its ruling systems all over the nation by the benefits of trading business with foreign countries.

According to Satoshi Nakamura's analysis, these prohibition policies adopted by Japanese rulers were most probably due to the fact that both the thoughts and ideas of Christianity were basically incompatible with the feudal political system of Japan at the time. S. Nakamura's notion regarding these problems may be summarized somewhat as follows.⁸⁷

- (1) Monotheistic idea of God in Christianity and its principle of equality under this God were regarded as antagonistic toward the ethical ideas exemplified in the relationship between the two classes or parties within different power structures, such as that of ruler and ruled, that of parents and children, and so on.
- (2) Christianity prohibits any acts of suicide. From the point of *Bushi-do* (traditional code of the Japanese samurais), *Seppuku/Harakiri* which meant a sort of ritual suicide by self-disembowelment by a sword had a tendency to be glorified especially among the samurais.
- (3) Christianity insists on monogamy, but in Japan polygamy was much popular not only among the samurais but also among the ordinary people.
- (4) Most of Japanese rulers believed that Japan was a divine country or a land of

⁸⁵ See, Mullins, 12.

⁸⁶ Gono, 209.

⁸⁷ S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 87-88.

the gods.

S. Nakamura's analysis summarized above seems to me the most persuasive and hits the mark in the sense that the history of the Christian mission in 16th century Japan, from its beginning to its end, continued to be that of encounters and collisions with quite different cultures and ideologies from their own. Throughout the period of these difficulties, including even martyrdom and unendurable persecutions, how did Christianity manage to stay alive? Did our Christian mission end unsuccessfully, without being rooted deeply in the minds of the Japanese people? Did the prayers prayed by the missionaries who came to Japan at the risk of their lives remain unheard by God who sent them to Japan?

The Kakure-Kirishitans under Seclusionism

Under the national powers of those Japanese rulers, it seems as if the Japan mission was interrupted at the halfway point. Almost everywhere in Japan, *Kirishitans* were forced to renounce their Christian faith. In many cases they were tortured even to death and were thus martyred. The late Endo Shusaku described their tortures and martyrdoms in some details in one of his outstanding novels titled *Silence*.⁸⁸

In addition to "The Twenty-six Martyrs" already referred to above, 27 *Kirishitans* were executed to death in Edo (Tokyo) in 1614, and 71 *Kirishitans* who were residents of Keihan (Kyoto and Osaka) districts were deported to unknown lands. In Nagasaki in Kyushu, Takayama Ukon, together with his family that included 96 missionaries, were

⁸⁸ Shusaku Endo, *Silence*, trans. William Johnston (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1982).

exiled to Macao and Manila.⁸⁹ In 1622, 70 *Kirishitans* were executed to death. All of the 53 *Kirishitans* executed in Kyoto in 1619 were laymen and laywomen.⁹⁰ Most of these executed people were decapitated or burned alive. In Nagasaki, some of the *Kirishitans* were tortured by means of pouring highly heated waters drawn up from the hot spring of Unzen upon their heads or backs.⁹¹ After these most unbearable tortures, a considerable numbers of *Kirishitans* were compelled to renounce their Christian faith.

Tokugawa Iemitsu succeeded the Shogunate position from Tokugawa Hidetada, his father, and he also inherited his Father's prohibition policy against *Kirishitans*. The *Bakufu* of the Tokugawa shogunate began to press all the more strongly its policy of *Sakoku* (鎖国, Seculusionism) since 1633 and thereafter. The *Sakoku* policy seemed to have its origin not merely in government's economic diplomacy but also in its strong wariness against Christianity itself. As is well known among us Japanese, *Shimabaranoran* (島原の乱, Revolt at *Shimabara*) in 1637 was one of the biggest revolts against the *Bakufu* during the whole period of Tokugawa's reign. It was regarded typically as a revolt against the government roused by the *Kirishitans*, but actually it was roused by farmers pressured by heavy taxes imposed on them. It is said that Christianity happened to be made use of as a medium to unify these rioters.⁹²

With this incident of revolt as a turning point, Iemitsu decided to exclude

⁸⁹ Catholic Weekly Online, “高山右近、福者に (Takayama Ukon beatified),” Catholic Weekly Online, February 8, 2017, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.cathoshin.com/news/ukon-beatification/11363>. Takayama Ukon was officially endorsed by the Vatican as “beatus” the stage below a saint, at a beatification ceremony in Osaka. His descendants were invited and about 10,000 people attended.

⁹⁰ Gono, 215.

⁹¹ Boxer, 352.

⁹² See, Gono, 221-24.

Christianity thoroughly from Japan. At the same time, he made a decision to stop all trading businesses between Portugal and Japan, being enticed by François Caron, one of the Dutch merchants who promised not to bring Christianity into Japan. He proposed that he could take over the businesses in place of Portugal. Thus the trades between Portugal and Japan which had lasted for about 100 years ended.⁹³ Eventually, Nagasaki remained the only open port for Japan's foreign trade and Japan's trade partners were restricted to only three countries: Holland, China, and Korea. The main purpose of the *Sakoku* was to exclude Christianity thoroughly from Japan, together with its influences, in order to secure her national stability. The *Sakoku* lasted until Japan became 'awakened' by Commodore Perry's U.S. fleets in 1854.

In principle, there were two sorts of policies to exclude Christianity from Japan. One of them was the so-called '*Tera-uke*' (寺請)⁹⁴ in Japanese which meant a system of guarantee by the Buddhist temples. *Tera-uke* system, introduced by *Bakufu* for the restriction of the Christian faith at the time, was one of the most effective religious policies. The Shogunate gave orders to all the Buddhist temples to verify that all residents were not *Kirishitans*.⁹⁵ And the other one was the so-called '*Shumon-aratame*' (宗門改, literally, reconfirmation of one's denomination/sect).⁹⁶ Tokugawa shogunate issued publicly this edict, and tried to conduct statistical research to know officially each

⁹³ See, *Ibid.*, 225-26.

⁹⁴ Yasuhiro Ono, ed., *日本宣教事典* (A Dictionary of Japanese Religion) (Tokyo: Kobundo, 1985), 686. Political system of the Tokugawa government for the restriction of Christian faith. The Shogunate gave orders to all the temples to verify that all the residents are not Christians.

⁹⁵ See, Mullins, 14, and Yasuhiro Ono ed., *日本宗教辞典* (A Dictionary of Japanese Religions) (Tokyo: Kobundo, 1985), 686.

⁹⁶ Kyuichi Yoshida, *近代仏教の歴史* (History of Recent and Modern Buddhism) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1998), 33. One of the governmental policies issued by the Tokugawa-Shogunate. The government made statistic researches to know officially each individual's faith, later specifically Christians.

individual's faith, specifically of the *Kirishitans*.⁹⁷ Under these laws every nation of Japan, without exception, was forced to be taken into the Buddhist religious system as a believer of Buddhism. Each individual was deprived of his/her own faith. Buddhism eventually became the national religion of Japan. Buddhist temples were counted and regarded simply as one of the administrative systems under the rule of the government. Monks were not required to propagate their own believers anymore. In those days, Buddhism might have become amalgamated into Shintoism, one of the representative indigenous religions, which continued to exist in Japan from an ancient period of history. This sort of religious atmosphere may, though in part, remain among the Buddhist temples even today.

Ever since 1628, *Bakufu* devised a new method of the so-called '*fumi-e*', (踏絵, literally, 'trampling of the picture') in order to find the *Kirishitans* among the people. All of the people were forced to tread on a copper tablet with a crucifix to prove him/herself a non-Christian.⁹⁸ Thus it is reported that in 1657, 608 *Kirishitans* in sum were arrested and 411 among them were decapitated while others died in prison. Only 99 *Kirishitans* were released.⁹⁹ At Bungo, 517 *Kirishitans* were arrested within 12 years, from 1660 to 1682, and in Owari (Aichi Prefecture), more than 2,000 *Kirishitans* were arrested in the same way. Many of them were executed.¹⁰⁰ Endo Shusaku, one of the most popular novelists in Japan, described skillfully how these people were afflicted by this '*fumi-e*'

⁹⁷ Kyuichi Yoshida, *近現代仏教の歴史* (History of Recent and Modern Buddhism), (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1998), 33.

⁹⁸ S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 92.

⁹⁹ Gono, 238.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

method being imposed on them, and how they encountered the crucified Jesus carved on the *'fumi-e'* in the midst of unbearable afflictions. Endo described the scene of the dialogue between Kichijiro, a hero and a weak betrayer in the novel, and crucified Jesus carved on the copper tablet in the following way:¹⁰¹

Even now that face is looking at me with eyes of pity from the plaque rubbed flat by many feet. 'Trample!' said those compassionate eyes. 'Trample! Your foot suffers in pain; it must suffer like all the feet that have stepped on this plaque. But that pain alone is enough. I understand your pain and your suffering. It is for that reason that I am here.'

'Lord, I resented your silence.'

'I was not silent. I suffered beside you.'

'But you told Judas to go away: What thou dost do quickly. What happened to Judas?'

'I did not say that. Just as I told you to step on the plaque, so I told Judas to do what he was going to do. For Judas was in anguish as you are now.'

He had lowered his foot on to the plaque, sticky with dirt and blood. Yet he could not understand the tremendous onrush of joy that came over him at the moment.

These *Kirishitans* managed to keep their Christian faith while hiding themselves in secret even under the strong guard of the government. The hiding lasted from 1614 to 1873. While reciting the *Orashio/Oratio* (prayer)¹⁰² in their hearts, they trampled on the *fumi-e* in order to get out of dangers which might easily lead immediately to arrest and death. They are often called as the *Senpuku-Kirishitans* in Japanese which means literally 'latent' Christians.¹⁰³ They managed to keep their Christian faith somehow or other

¹⁰¹ Endo, 297.

¹⁰² See, Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan, A Study of Their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day*, (Richmond: Japan Library, 1998), 19. *Orashio* used to be recited among these *Kirishitans* from "...a combined prayer book and catechism." Various documents and sources along with pictures introduced by the author are useful for the researchers of the *Kakure Kirishitans* in Japan.

¹⁰³ *Senpuku Kirishitans* and *Kakure Kirishitans* often used to be placed in the same category, but nowadays the two names have been distinguished from each other among the researchers. The former

without missionaries even under these severe religious circumstances. However, sooner or later during that period, they had to face one of the critical problems of syncretism. Some of them tried to hide their Christian faith secretly in Buddhism or Shintoism in order to get rid of persecutions by the *Bakufu*. One of the most typical examples of these phenomena was the worship of *Maria-Kan'on* (Mary the Goddess of Mercy)¹⁰⁴ which was tacitly made similar to one of the Buddhist statues. Thus Christian faith in Japan had been inherited among Japanese people for more than two hundred years. It was almost inevitable that their Christian faith was affected, more or less, by the traditional religious customs among the Japanese people. Usually, it was regarded that Christianity in Japan was irresistibly transformed both in its form and contents from that of original one which was brought by the missionaries two hundred years ago. Perhaps this kind of analysis may be true, but what in the world is so-called 'pure' Christianity? The answer to this question seems to be not always self-evident. While keeping close contact with the people of the land, missionaries always had to confront different cultures and a different sense of value from their own. Ever since the *Kirishitans* lost these missionaries as their shepherds, the problem naturally became all the more urgent and critical. At times they experienced repulsion from indigenous people, and at other times they were compelled to compromise their religious feelings or faith with that of the people of the lands where they lived. We may have to take these problems into consideration more seriously in order to find clues or hints for the problem of indigenization of religion, specifically of

belonged to Christians who came back to Catholic churches after they were released from oppressions, and the latter belonged to the Christian groups who did/could not come back there even after the period of persecutions ended for various reasons. See, Turnbull, 1. See also, Kentaro Miyazaki, 隠れキリシタン (Kakure-Kirishitan,) in: 岩波キリスト教辞典 (Iwanami's Dictionary of Christianity) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 206.

¹⁰⁴ Turnbull, 61 and Kodo Fujita, 甦るマリア観音 (The resurrected Kannon) (Tokyo: Kokusho Kanko-kai, 1972), 18-29.

the Christian mission at this point. S. Nakamura points out that even throughout the adaptation history of Christianity by the Jesuit orders from Xavier to Valignano, various elements might have lead up to this religious syncretism.¹⁰⁵ According to H. Nakamura's analysis concerning the matter, the faith and facts of the *Kakure-Kirishitans* is outlined roughly as follows.¹⁰⁶

(1) From the very beginning, Japanese Christians in those earlier periods did not understand the truth of Christianity itself in its depth and in an adequate sense of the term. As a result, their Christian faith brought from Catholicism in the Middle Ages could not help being replaced easily by a sort of syncretism mingled with Buddhism, Shintoism, and some other folk religions which were already fixed in the Japanese religious minds.

(2) Their faith, along with their lifestyle as *Kirishitans*, seems to have no clear-cut point of contact with Catholics.

(3) Christians in the true sense of the term ceased to exist for a while in the mid-17th century in Japan.

More than 230 years later since Konishi Mansho, the last missionary, was martyred, these *Senpuku-Kirishitans* eventually met Fr. Bernard Petitjean on March 17, 1865 at Urakami in Nagasaki Pref. Among them, some were pleased to join the Catholic church lead by Petitjean, but there were other *Kirishitans* who did/could not. Hundreds of these people had been long compelled to keep their faith without missionaries. As a result, there occurred an unrecoverable gap between Catholicism brought on them anew and the *Kakures'* faith which had already been amalgamated into a syncretistic indigenous religion of Japan. Their faith had been developing quite differently, even into a new religion, from the faith of their ancestors. Taking this historical process of the *Kakures'*

¹⁰⁵ S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 97.

¹⁰⁶ Hiromu Nakamura, *宣教と受容: 明治期キリスト教の基礎的研究* (Mission and Acceptance; Basic Studies of Christianity in Japan in the Meiji Era) (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2000), 180-81 (trans. Kondo).

faith seriously into consideration, we have to make sure whether we can come to any conclusions that their faith might have been a false and erroneous one.¹⁰⁷

What kind of meaning or significance could our Christian faith have in these contexts? And how could we participate in our missionary works with this faith? Keeping these basic questions in mind, I would like, in the next chapter, to trace back again the historical process of acceptance of Christianity in Japan further up until the Meiji era of mid-19th century when Protestantism was first introduced into Japan. It would be very necessary for us to refer, at the outset, to the so-called *Senpuku-Kirishitans*, in some more details, before going into further investigations toward a new opening act of Christian mission in Japan. In those days both Catholicism and Protestantism had to face quite a new phase in the history of Christian mission in this country.

¹⁰⁷ See, Anri Morimoto, アジア神学講義, グローバル化するコンテキストの神学 (Lecture of Asian Theology: Globalizing Theology of Context) (Tokyo: Sobunsha, 2004), 7-8. At this point, Morimoto suggests in the following way: “Nowhere does exist *such Christianity as called to be pure* before having been indigenized. Christianity has already been indigenized in America, in Europe, and also in Greece and in Rome, before it was indigenized in Japan.”

Chapter 2

A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan

Appearance of the Senpuku Kirishitans on the Stage at the Opening of Japan to Foreign Countries

Christian history in Japan seemed to have been interrupted once and for all soon after the edicts of the prohibition of Christianity were issued repeatedly by the *Bakufu*. The *Senpuku-Kirishitans* eventually lost their missionary leaders, but were just able to keep their own faith, even though they could not get rid of temptations to be fused with some sorts of syncretism. At the *Meiji* Restoration in 19th century, the *Sakoku*¹⁰⁸ period came to an end at last, and at that same time missionary activities were started by Catholic, Protestant, and also by Orthodox missionaries. These missionaries from abroad exerted themselves to the utmost in carrying out their missions in Japan. But there were, very naturally, various walls and difficulties to overcome in order for the Japanese people to acquire freedom of faith in the true sense of the term. How and in what way could their mission have been carried out in Japan? How would it have been possible for the Japanese people to accept the Gospel messages which these missionaries conveyed? Here at this point, it is to be noted that even at the earliest period of Christian history of Japan the Japanese churches tried to be independent of the mission boards from abroad. Surprisingly enough, missionary activities for foreign countries were started soon by the Japanese themselves. In this chapter, I would like to trace first and foremost, though only

¹⁰⁸ See, my footnote 92.

briefly, an outline of Christian history in Japan from the period of the Meiji Restoration in mid-19th century to the World War, by focusing on the works of missionaries from abroad. How could Japanese people respond to their addresses in terms of Christian mission under their cultural and religious climate throughout history?

In 1853, almost two centuries after the prohibition of Christianity, Matthew C. Perry suddenly arrived in Japan with four black naval vessels and urged the country to open. After heated discussions among the *Bakufu* leaders, a decision was finally made to open the country, and in 1854 the Convention of Peace and Amity was established between the US and Japan.¹⁰⁹ In 1858, Japan also entered into a treaty with France.¹¹⁰ As a result, the *Bakufu*'s authority was undoubtedly weakened, and there occurred domestic conflicts frequently within the government. In due course, a new political regime of *Ten'no* (Emperor) – centered government was formed as opposed to the *Bakufu* in 1868. This historic turnabout in Japan is generally called *Meiji-Ishin* (明治維新, Meiji Restoration).

As is well known among historians, there were certainly a number of missionaries who tried to land in Japan even before the country opened itself to others. For example, in 1833, Karl Friedrich August Gützlaf made a call at Naha, the capital of Ryukyu Kingdom, for a week and gifted three volumes of the Bible translated into Chinese to the King of Ryukyu at the time. Even after having returned to China, he continued to concern himself with the tasks of the Japan mission. He took care of three Japanese fishermen at his own home and learned Japanese from them. Years before, some of the Japanese fishermen had

¹⁰⁹ Moffett, 502. “It divided the shogunate council into two factions. One resisted any change; the other, impressed as much by new Western technology as by the size of the ships’ guns, argued that change was inevitable.”

¹¹⁰ Gono, 248.

been ship-wrecked on the west coast of the U.S. where they fortunately survived and were rescued by the people there. Moreover, they also learned English.¹¹¹ Afterward, again in 1837, Gützlaff sailed for Japan together with S. Wells Williams and others in order that he might return the three Japanese castaways back to their home country, but his plan ended in failure for some reason or another.¹¹² From the Catholic churches, Théodore-Augustin Forcade was sent from the Missions Étrangères de Paris to Naha and stayed there for two years from 1844, but his missionary activities there were hindered under the strict guard of the authorities.¹¹³

Even under these harsh and difficult circumstances, Bernard Jean Bettelheim continued to stay in Naha for about eight years. He was deeply impressed and affected by Gützlaff, his senior missionary. According to Nakamura's investigations with regard to Bettelheim's missionary activities in Japan, he forced his way through the walls of prohibition to work as a missionary in Naha together with his wife and two children. He was proficient in Japanese and was engaged in the task of translating the New Testament from English. As a medical doctor, he started a clinic in the area, and took care of many patients who asked to be treated. As a result, some his patients were among those baptized as Christians. He served as an interpreter, though temporally, when Perry visited Ryukyu in 1853. Afterward, the Bettelheim family went across the ocean to America with Perry after he had successfully opened the door to Japan previously closed due to her

¹¹¹ See, S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 108-9. It has been already well-known among us Japanese that he translated the Gospel of John along with other three Johannine epistles into English and published them at Singapore in 1837. This was the first Bible translation into Japanese, though only in part from the New Testament. The words and sentences thus translated into Japanese reflect here and there the dialects of Owari where these fishermen were grown up.

¹¹² Charles W. Iglehart, *A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1960), 29-30.

¹¹³ Gono, 246.

seclusion policy.¹¹⁴

In 1856, Townsend Harris came to Japan as the first American consul general. He was a devout Christian and requested that the *Bakufu* guarantee the freedom of faith for Americans in Japan and that the *fumi-e* policy should be abolished thoroughly.¹¹⁵ The opening of the country had long been awaited, not only among trading merchants but also among all the missionaries from abroad, both Catholic missionaries as well as Protestants.

In 1862 Prudence Seraphin-Barthelemy Girard, sent by Missions Étrangères de Paris, built *Tenshu-do* (天主堂, Cathedral) in Yokohama and in 1865 Louis-Furet and Bernard-Thadée Petitjean built another *Tenshu-do* in Oura in Nagasaki.¹¹⁶ The Oura *Tenshu-do* was dedicated specifically in memory of the 26 martyrs. In the very midst of its dedication ceremony at Oura, an amazing thing happened. Moffett describes the situation at the time most impressively as follows:

Four weeks later, in March 1865, as Father Bernard Petitjean was looking at his new church he saw a group of about twelve or fifteen people standing in front of the closed door in a very silent and respectful way.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ See, S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 111-15. As has been pointed out by Nakamura, Bettelheim could stay in Naha for such a long years even under the harsh persecutions, mainly because he tried to serve the people there in the district by his heart-warming medical treatment for them. In fact, already in 16th century, Christianity had been accepted by the people by means of various sorts of loving activities by those missionaries together with Japanese co-workers for the sick and the poor in those days. People's hearts could be easily and simply moved by these missionary activities whenever we try to be with those who are crying and suffering. Here may be, I believe, one of the key-motifs of our missionary works beyond time and space.

¹¹⁵ Gono, 247.

¹¹⁶ Nagasaki Chiho-bunkashi Kenkyujo in Junshin Joshi Tanki Daigaku, ed., “プチジャン司教書簡集 (Letters of Bishop Petitjean,)” (Nagasaki: Junshin Joshi Tanki Daigaku, 1986), 62. Iglehart specifies that the *Tenshu-do* was built in 1865 at Urakami, Nagasaki (Iglehart, 33), but it is not true. It was not until 1879 when a small *Tenshu-do* was built at Urakami.

¹¹⁷ Moffett, 503.

In fact, these people were nothing other than the *Senpuku-Kirishitans* and the descendants of Japanese *Kirishitans* who were deemed to have been disappeared completely from Japan's Christian history. During the time Christianity in Japan was strictly prohibited under the *Bakufu's* religious policy, they had been keeping contact with each other in secret by some means or another. But since 1867, these *Senpuku-Kirishitans* reformed their funeral ceremonies in Buddhism, being guided by the missionaries who re-entered Japan in those days. Naturally, the *Bakufu* found out the facts very soon, and even harsher and stricter persecutions against these Christians began under the guise of the government. The great persecutions repeated four times in Oura in those days are called '*Urakami-kuzure*' (浦上崩れ, Urakami Incident/Crumblings).¹¹⁸ The Meiji government was established in 1868 in place of the Tokugawa Shogunate, but the persecutions against Christians were not yet over. It was not until 1873 that the edicts of prohibition of Christianity were finally abolished as a result of repeated requests and pressures given by missionaries and various foreign consuls.¹¹⁹ Both the *Bakufu* and the *Meiji* government persistently hindered the Japanese people from the Christian faith.

Petitjean left very interesting notes explaining that the *Senpuku-Kirishitans* in Urakami did not attend the worship at Protestant churches there.¹²⁰ They found that the Protestant missionaries at these churches were with their wives when, according to their ancestral Christian faith, missionaries should remain single all their lives. Even after being without their missionaries during the long period of persecution, this Catholic tradition still continued to be in the memories of the *Senpuku-Kirishitans*.

¹¹⁸ See, Mullins, 21.

¹¹⁹ Gono, 266.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 251.

Among the *Senpuku Kirishitans*, those who did not come back to the Catholic church are called the ‘*Kakure*’ *Kirishitans*, or more simply the *Kakure*. Even today some of them are found to live with their somewhat ‘unique’ though not to say ‘authentic’ Christian faith, mainly in the Nagasaki area. It is also a fact that the numbers of these *Kakure* have been remarkably decreasing within the last several years. On October 6, 2015, it was reported in the Digital Asahi Shimbun (Asahi News Paper) that Kakiuchi, one of the most representative *Kakure* communities, had been recently disorganized.¹²¹ However, even under these difficult situations, their faith has still been preserved in the way that they hold memorial services for the deceased.¹²² As late as 2000, the *Kakure* were reported as holding services even amidst Shintoism at *Karematsu-Jinja* (shrine). Recently, Nakazono, one of the curators in Hirado, has raised a question which would be worth noticing among researchers against the rather simple and common theory of syncretism of the *Kakure*’s faith. With regard to this notion, Nakazono points out most suggestively as follows:

Although the faith of the *Kakure Kirishitans* was so far regarded as the results of syncretism or of co-fusion of various traditions, but it was merely because the *Kakure*’s faith, which used to be co-existent with other faith or religions, was forced to be combined rather simply with such syncretism.¹²³

¹²¹ The Asahi Shimbun Digital, “長崎のかくれキリシタン信仰、存続危機 人口減・高齢化 (*Kakure*’s Faith in Nagasaki: Crisis of its Continuance, Decreasing Population, and Aging Problem.)” The *Asahi Shimbun* Digital, 24 Oct, 2015, accessed 11 March, 2016. <http://www.asahi.com/articles/ASHB86JBHB8TOLB00X.html>.

¹²² Noriko Yahiro, “長崎, ‘キリシタン神社’で250人祈る: 枯松神社 (In Nagasaki, 250 people offered a prayer at Karematsu, one of the *Kirishitan* shrines.)” The *Asahi Shimbun* Digital, 4 November, 2014, accessed 3 November, 2015. <http://www.asahi.com/articles/ASGC35GQBGC3TOLB007.html>. *Karematsu-jinja* was built at the Meiji era. Here at this shrine, Catholics, *Kakure-Kirishitans*, and also Buddhists would gather together and hold the memorial services annually for their ancestors who kept their own faith throughout the history. This article cannot be accessed now, since it expired already in March 16, 2016.

¹²³ Shigeo Nakazono, *かくれキリシタンとは何か; オラシヨを巡る旅* (What is

In fact, even today in Japan, it is quite natural that people can have two or more religions at the same time, such as Buddhism and Shintoism. This does not seem to be a point of contradiction among the Japanese. Such characteristic religious feelings among Japanese people should always be kept in mind whenever we try to understand the real meaning of faith and religion in Japan. Generally speaking, the *Kakure*'s faith used to be regarded as a different religion from original Christianity, having been substantially transfigured as a result of syncretism. But how can such a notion be so simply concluded? Was it a result of some one-sided and prejudiced ideas from the side of monotheistic perspective of Christianity?¹²⁴ The history of transmission of the *Senpuku/Kakure Kirishitans* throughout the history of Christianity in Japan is an extremely complicated one as a whole. It is beyond our rather simple imagination, and needs to be investigated further in more detail, along with the history of the acceptance of Christianity in Japan. The problem is somewhat closely related to one of my main concerns as to a new possibility of missiology at the age of multi-culturalism in Japan. This will be addressed later in Chapter IV in this paper. However, before advancing to the problem itself, I have to deal with the history of the acceptance of Protestant Christianity during the Meiji era and thereafter.

Kakure-Kirishitan?: Travelling Around of Orashio) (Fukuoka: Genshobo, 2015), 22-23. Nakazono points out the fact that the funeral services held here in this district alternatively at times in the *Kakure* style and in Buddhist at other. This means that the two religions are not fused nor mixed syncretically with each other but are co-existent, standing side by side.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 49. In such areas as Sotome and Urakami in Nagasaki, missionaries still continued to stay hidden, and the *Kakure Kirishitans* managed to transmit their Christian faith in correspondent to the age of persecutions. But in the areas of Ikitusuki and Hirado, they lost their leaders since a Jesuit Constanzo, P.Camillus was executed to death in 1622. But most possibly, they could preserve their Christian faith exactly as they were taught by the missionaries from the very beginning. Nakazono notes as follows: "The faith of the *Kirishitans* did not exist in the same style and form throughout the whole period or the whole areas as in Europe, but it was different from each other both in terms of its period and of its areas of propagation."

Protestant Missionaries and the Japanese Churches

During 1859, just a few years after the opening of Japan toward foreign countries, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries from abroad were sent to Japan one by one in rapid succession. John Liggins and Channing Moore Williams, as American Episcopalians, arrived in Japan for missionary work, as well as Dr. James Hepburn, M.D., as a Presbyterian. G.H.F. Verbeck, S.R. Brown, and D.B. Simons were missionaries of the American Dutch Reformed Churches. Next year, Jonathan Goble came to Japan as a missionary from the American Baptist Free Mission Society, and in 1861, Ivan Kasatkin (known as Father Nikolai) from the Russian Orthodox Churches came, and furthermore, James H. Ballagh from the American Dutch Reformed Churches did so as well.¹²⁵

As has been already stated above, they were not permitted to do any missionary activities in Japan until the edicts of prohibition of Christianity were eliminated in 1873. In addition, the *Senpuku-Kirishitans* could not accept Protestantism at this time when it was first introduced to Japan as their own religion to come back to as their spiritual home. As a result, it was necessary for these Protestant missionaries to make their own way for their Christian mission. All the while, they criticized the *Kirishitans* (切支丹) as ‘*Jashu*’ (邪宗), which means an evil religion, and called themselves as ‘*Yaso*’ (耶蘇) which was somewhat transliterated from ‘Jesus.’ Thus they also tried to distinguish themselves from Catholics.¹²⁶

In Japan, except in the Ryukyu Kingdom, Yano Mototaka was baptized as the first

¹²⁵ See, Ganoi, 250-251 and Moffett, 504-7.

¹²⁶ Ganoi, 270.

Protestant Christian by Ballagh in 1865.¹²⁷ He may have been, most possibly, encouraged to become Christian while engaged in translating the Bible into Japanese as one of the Japanese teachers for the missionaries. But contrary to Yano's case, Ichikawa Einosuke, who assisted D. Green as his Japanese teacher, was arrested in 1871 on charge of violation against the prohibition laws issued by the government, and died in prison the following year.¹²⁸ In those days it was a matter of life and death for the Japanese people to keep their Christian faith. In many cases, these Protestant missionaries served as English teachers, while engaging in their own missionary activities and devoting their services to establishing mission schools. Missionaries qualified in medicine contributed a great deal to the field of medical care for people. It is to be noted that J. Hepburn made his effort to translate the Bible into Japanese together with S.R. Brown, D. Green, and with some others. Hepburn is famous among the Japanese for his great enterprise in developing the so-called Hepburn system of Romanization. In 1872, Okuno Masatsuna, Matsuyama Kokichi, and Takahashi Goro joined Hepburn's team of Japanese translators and started the Yokohama Translation Committee.¹²⁹ H. Nakamura set up his hypothesis in verifying that this Committee might have translated the King James Version into Japanese with the help of Hepburn's 'A Japanese and English Dictionary.' With the English vocabulary which could not be found in Japanese, the Committee borrowed most

¹²⁷ See, Moffett, 506 and S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 126. Mototaka was a teacher of Japanese for S.R. Brown and Ballagh while working in Japan as missionaries. He was engaged in the work of translation of the Bible from English into Japanese. He is said to have asked for his baptism only a month before his death caused by a lung disease.

¹²⁸ S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 131.

¹²⁹ H. Nakamura, *宣教と受容*, 138.

of them from the Bible in Chinese.¹³⁰ Thus after more than 300 years since Xavier and Yajiro tried to translate the English Bible into Japanese, by making strenuous efforts, the New Testament in Japanese was at last published in 1880, and the Old Testament in 1887.¹³¹

Soon after the Meiji Restoration, the Catholic missions resumed, along with the Protestant and Orthodox ones who also began their missionary activities. The Meiji government did not always agree with these Christian missions to Japan. The new government aimed at establishing a sort of centrally governed state by setting the *Ten'no* at the top of its governmental system. And in 1870, they issued the *Daikyosenpu-no Mikotonori* (大教宣布の詔, which literally means “an Imperial edict of proclamation of the greatest religion”) in which Shintoism should be officially approved as the only authorized religion of Japan.¹³² Various sorts of persecutions against the *Senpuku-Kirishitans* were nothing more than the results of these basic political principles of the Japanese government in those days. However, these extreme nationalistic policies of the government toward religions, especially Christianity, were harshly criticized internationally and the government came under pressure to modify its plans. Adding to this, the government left the matter of religious edification to prevent further expansion of Christianity in Japan to Buddhism, which had then lost its national protection. Thus Buddhism could preserve its religious influence in Japan, though Shintoism always

¹³⁰ Ibid., 169.

¹³¹ S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 119.

¹³² Kirisutokyoshi Gakkai, ed., *宣教師と日本人: 明治キリスト教史における受容と変容* (Missionaries and Japanese People: Adaptation and Transfiguration of Christian History in the Meiji Era) (Tokyo: Kyobun-kan, 2012), 24.

remained the main religious stream among others.¹³³ Day by day, persecutions against *Kirishitans* became bitter and harsh and missionary activities were strictly restrained. The voices of protest and reproach from abroad against the religious attitude of the Japanese government had become louder and louder.

In 1871, the government sent some 50 delegates, the so-called “Iwakura Mission to the West”,¹³⁴ to America and some countries in Europe, aiming at improvement of some articles of the “Treaty of Peace and Amity between Japan and America.” Although they failed in this attempt, they learned instead much about the political and cultural circumstances of foreign countries. At the same time, they were strictly criticized almost everywhere concerning Japan’s policies toward religious freedom among the people. Thus, at last, the edicts of prohibition of Christianity were abolished in 1873, and the *Kirishitans* were released from imprisonment. However, this release was only a pretense toward foreign countries. Japanese Christians still had to wait a long time to be unrestricted from persecution and to become free in the true sense of the term.

Under these difficult circumstances, ‘The Church of Christ in Japan’ (日本基督公会) was established in Yokohama under the leadership of Ballagh as a non-denominational church body in 1872. Ballagh tried to found his church body as a non-denominational one, because he, along with other missionaries, sought cooperation under the pressure of prohibition despite denominational differences. They also sought to avoid the harmful outcome of cases in the China missions where various dominations established at random were not successful.

¹³³ Gono, 261.

¹³⁴ See, Kitsunezuka, Yuko, “岩倉遣外使節 (Iwakura Kengai-shisetsu.)” in *Iwanimi Kirissuto-kyo Jiten* (Iwanami’s Dictionary of Christianity) (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 2002), 103-4.

However, soon after the edicts of prohibition were abolished, each one of the various denominations managed to start their own churches and eventually such non-denominationalism movement tended to fade from Japanese churches. Table 1 below shows the list of main Protestant denominations in Japan since 1873, along with those foreign missions as their parental church bodies. (Table 1.)

Table 1. The New Dawn of a New Denomination in Japan

Year	Denomination	Based denomination
1872	Church of Christ in Japan /日本基督公会	Non-denomination
1877	United Church of Christ in Japan /日本基督一致教会 *To be distinguished from the present name of “UCC in Japan” started in 1941.	Presbyterian Church in Japan Church of Christ in Japan United Presbyterian Mission of Scotland
1874	Congregational Church in Japan /日本組合教会	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (USA)
1884	Methodist Church in Japan /メソジスト教会	Methodist Episcopal Church (USA)
1887	The Anglican-Episcopal Church of Japan /日本聖公会	Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church (USA) Church Mission Society (England) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (England)

Source: Gonoi, 267, 273-78, Moffett, 508-13 and Kirisutokyoshi Gakkai, ed., 宣教師と日本人, 20-22.

Most of the leading members of the renewed Protestant churches during the Meiji period were from the samurai class. To those people in the samurai class who were defeated by the force of the new Meiji government, it was a matter of urgent necessity that they learned English, and not only the language but also English studies as a whole from these missionaries from abroad. By learning English they expected that a new way

would open up for them to carve out a promising career for themselves at the coming new age. They were affected and stimulated by these missionaries, and eventually a considerable number of these former samurais accepted Christianity. In their Christian faith there were undoubtedly some sort of nationalistic tendency in which they expected to re-build Japan as a renewed nation by catching up with the Western civilization.¹³⁵ Up until 1899, no foreigners were allowed to move freely within Japan. As a result, missionaries could not help but rely on Japanese co-workers to carry out their missionary activities in Japan. This quickened the progress and leadership of Japanese Christians themselves for the mission on the one hand, and at the same time instigated independent missionary activities apart from the missionaries from abroad and also from foreign denominations. These tendencies also might have been charged with some dangers in which Christianity in Japan could be swept along very easily in exclusionism later.

The Meiji government itself tried to approach Western civilization most positively toward building up modern Japan, and, as a result, became interested in Christianity for its spiritual and cultural background. Yet these tendencies were limited in the urban areas. In the rural areas, because of long lasting customs of the *Tera-uke*¹³⁶ policy under the *Bakufu*, together with the somewhat nationalized religion of Shintoism even under the new government of *Meiji* era, Buddhism and Shintoism were so-deeply rooted in the hearts of the people that antagonistic feelings against Christianity could not be wiped out easily. Furthermore, those who were repulsed by the civilization policy of the new government tended to show their repulsion either directly or indirectly towards

¹³⁵ Gono, 269.

¹³⁶ See, my footnote 95.

Christianity itself.¹³⁷

Even in the midst of these difficult religious circumstances of Japan, Christianity in Japan did, though only gradually, grow step by step. In 1875, Joseph Neesima, soon after having returned from America, founded Doshisha in Kyoto with the help of the American Board. In 1877, Tokyo Union Theological School (東京一致神学校) was started as a training school for pastors, and the same year Trinity Divinity School (東京三一神学校) was established by C.M. Williams. In 1879 Methodist Episcopal Church Theological School was founded by R.S. Maclay, and in 1886, Sendai Theological School was started by Oshikawa Masayoshi and W.E. Hoy.¹³⁸ Japanese pastors who graduated from these theological schools in various areas of Japan continued to work hard for their missions, and thus Christianity in Japan expanded very rapidly.

In the mid-1880s, the Japanese government tried to promote policies which led to the Westernization of Japanese culture. Leaders of the government aimed at the modernization of Japan, while at the same time directing the improvement of the unequal treaty. The government changed, though a bit pretentiously, its attitude toward Christianity. Some government officials who belonged to the upper class socially dared to join the church activities, and were pleased to send their sons and daughters to the mission schools which sprang up here and there in Japan.

Most of the Protestant missionaries who came to Japan in the early period of the Meiji era had, more or less, the common characteristics of Puritanism in their basic spiritual stances at the time. Accordingly, it was very natural that they required Japanese

¹³⁷ Ibid., 271.

¹³⁸ See, S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 161-62.

people who wanted to become Christians to keep a somewhat higher ethical standard of their own. These people who belonged to the intelligentsia class in Japanese society desired to rival Western countries by accepting their civilization and culture with all their mind and heart. On the one hand, to them, Christianity colored with Puritanism was nothing other than the most attractive entrance to the new age to come. On the other hand, these tendencies resulted in the decisive failure in the Christian mission in the sense that Christianity could not always be accepted widely enough by the people of Japan in general. While taking into consideration that most of the people in Japan belonged to the class of farmers with almost no higher education, it was in due course that the Protestant mission would very soon come to its limit. Protestant missionaries could approach, in most of the cases, only the samurai and intelligentsia class in Japan.

The Meiji government tried to bring about better relationships to foreign countries but only for the purpose of ranking beside Western civilizations. It was regarded as somewhat highly objectionable for her most effective national regiment that Christianity would be propagated too widely among the people in Japan. Throughout history from the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1896) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), including the two World Wars during the period of Taisho and Showa, and to the present, there was, almost uninterruptedly, a sort of highly strained relationship between Christianity and the national power. It is very certain that the problem between religion and state continues to be bound by fetters too heavy to be set free. The problem itself will be treated later in Chapter III of this paper. But now at present, before discussing this problem in some more detail, the great roles which women missionaries played in the early period of the Christian mission in Japan will be dealt with in the next section.

Women Missionaries from U.S.A.

Previously, all the missionaries whom I have dealt with were males with no exceptions. However, most of the Protestant missionaries who have been sent from the U.S.A. to Japan since 1859 were naturally accompanied by their wives who were also missionaries. So it could be assumed that women missionaries actually existed in Japan already at this point.¹³⁹ At the same time, a considerable number of single female missionaries had been sent already to Japan. According to R. Kohiyama, the numbers of missionaries who served in Japan were as follows: 104 married male missionaries together with their 104 spouses, 82 single female missionaries, and 23 single male missionaries.¹⁴⁰

The problem here at this point is that both the wives of the male missionaries and single female missionaries were not allowed to be ordained in those days. This fact itself restricted more or less their missionary roles in Japan as an inevitable obstacle against the realization of the fruitful mission. In most of the cases, they were expected only to be helpers or assistants for the male missionaries. Furthermore, for those women missionaries with children to nourish, their time tended to be taken up with childcare and with other domestic works in general. As a result, there became somewhat of an urgent need for single female missionaries for more effective missionary activities.

The most acceptable explanation of the number of female missionaries on the stage

¹³⁹ Rui Kohiyama, *アメリカ婦人宣教師: 来日の背景とその影響* (Women Missionaries from U.S.A.: The Background of their Coming to Japan and its Effects) (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1992), 56-57. The basic roles of the male missionaries' wives were to show as an example what a Christian home should be like to the gentiles. See, also Mullins, 43. "In fact, women made an important contribution to Protestant missionary work in general, and may have found it easier to work with Japanese men since they did not present a direct challenge to male authority."

¹⁴⁰ Verbeck, G. F., *日本プロテスタント伝道史, 下* (History of Protestant Mission in Japan, Part 2) (Hakodate-shi : Nihon Kirisutokyōkai Rekishi Hensan Iinkai, 1984-1985), unnumbered last page, quoted in Kohiyama, 187.

in those days was that after the U. S. Civil War, the social status, or position of middle class women, had been greatly changed. In former times, American women lived in traditional, agricultural societies, and devoted themselves to childcare and housekeeping while carrying, though partly, a role of producers together with their husbands or spouses. However, in the rapid stream of modernization, their roles as producers remarkably decreased, and the time had come for them to enjoy their leisure time. They tried to join most actively, and positively, the movement of the Second Great Awakening and created quite a new social identity of their own in the midst of church fellowship to which they belonged.¹⁴¹ While keeping in close contact with their churches and missionaries thereof, they managed to start various sorts of social welfare services based on Christian charitable spirits. It is to be noted that many of these welfare services were actually initiated and administrated by women themselves. Especially, such works as the relief movement for poor women and children, that of anti-prostitution, that of emancipation of slaves, that of women's liberation, etc., are to be noted as typical examples. After the Civil War, these movements had been expanded from somewhat local levels further up to nationwide ones. Above all, temperance movements were soon developed widely enough to whole areas of the country, as the evil effects of drinking were regarded as resulting in miserable discords within a family. Furthermore, their energies increased higher and higher up to the movement for female suffrage. There seems to be no doubt that these historical streams urged women's active participation in the foreign missions.

The Women's Union Missionary Society of America for Heathen Lands was thus

¹⁴¹ Kohiyama, 36. "They expanded positively the areas of women from private spaces of home to the social and public ones by means of these church activities" (trans. Kondo).

established in 1861.¹⁴² Similar sorts of societies were given birth one by one, even among various denominations. These missionary societies tried to send many female missionaries abroad by providing them with financial funds sufficient enough to support their missionary works there. With regard to historical necessity and a basic background in the rise of women missionaries at this stage, Kohiyama describes it somewhat as follows:

Women missionaries being sent abroad did not evolve from a natural desire on the part of women in ministry. Rather, behind every one of these female missionaries, there was a certain historical stream of 19th century America which produced social activism among women throughout that period of modernization and the Civil War. ... (Several passages omitted.) ... They were sent abroad as representatives of America, women having been pushed forth under the unique female cultural power in the U.S. at the time.¹⁴³

They were trained at first in Female Seminaries which were established in various places in America. From the beginning, it was almost in due course that they found employment in teaching jobs as school teachers. In most of the cases, they were paid very low wages. An annual salary for women missionaries sent to Japan was said to be \$600 in sum, in contrast to the male missionaries who were paid \$800. However, their wages were considerably high compared to wages paid in the U.S. Saito points out as follows:

It goes without saying that these women missionaries tried to make an application to the missionary works abroad with a firm Christian faith of their own, but at the same time they might have tried to choose most discreetly one of

¹⁴² Motoko Saito, *女性宣教師の日本探訪記: 明治期における米国メソジスト教会の海外伝道* (The Report of Japan by Woman Missionary: Foreign Mission of American Methodist Church in Meiji Era) (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 2009), 37.

¹⁴³ Kohiyama, 181 (trans. Kondo).

their jobs or occupations as missionaries.¹⁴⁴

But actually, their jobs in Japan were not always to preach or to administer the Sacrament at the worship services at church every Sunday as men pastors usually did. They were not permitted to do so in those days. What they could do was to carry out their missions in such a way, which was somewhat different from men pastors, as to provide Japanese women with the chances for education, to help them become independent and self-supportive in a society, so that eventually, they could play a great role in the Japan mission. They also devoted themselves to establishing the rights of Japanese women in the same way that they had done in America. This sort of pastoral works by women pastors functioned in providing themselves and women in general both in Japan and in America with the places or chances to be released from their miserable circumstances bound by domestic matters at home only.

Mary Eddy Kidder came to Japan in 1869 as the first single woman missionary and in 1870 she succeeded Mrs. Hepburn's school which Clara, J.C. Hepburn's wife, started in Yokohama. This is the predecessor of the present Ferris University.¹⁴⁵ Kidder was not from a status of wealth in America, but grew up in the most pious Christian home. She was trained at seminary and was an experienced teacher there. It may have been very natural for her to become one of the pioneers for women's education in Japan. Surprisingly by the efforts of these women missionaries, more than 38 mission schools for young women were founded in Japan within only a very short period from 1870 to

¹⁴⁴ Saito, 42.

¹⁴⁵ Ferris Jogakuin Honbu Jimukyoku Somuka, ed., “創立の頃のフェリス女学院 (*Ferris Jogakuin: Days of its Founding*.)” accessed 11 March, 2016. <http://www.ferris.jp/history/enkaku/index.html>. See also, Moffett, 515. Moffett notes the year of its foundation as 1869, but formally it was in 1870.

1893. These schools are still in active existence today, though their names were sometimes changed, and some of them later became co-educational institutions.¹⁴⁶

As has been stated above, the Protestant mission targeted the people of the Samurai class which had begun to collapse at the time, and they wanted to achieve a higher position for themselves by means of acquiring knowledge of Western civilization. People such as the intelligentsias of the elite class, prominent persons of the government, wealthy merchants, and even rich farmers almost unanimously sent their daughters to these mission schools established by women missionaries. Women missionaries responded to their needs most faithfully and seriously. Various sorts of scholarships for the girls in needs and for those who worked their way through colleges or seminaries were established.¹⁴⁷

Along with educational movements for the young women, the Kobe Woman's Evangelistic School (神戸女子神学校) was founded in 1880 for the purpose of training Japanese women pastors. Julia Elizabeth Duddley and Martha Jane Barrows had been sent to Japan by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to start a training school for the first time in Japan for women pastoral workers, even though there were only six students.¹⁴⁸ Among those who were trained at this school were some widows and divorced women. Even in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances

¹⁴⁶ See, Kohiyama, 184-186 and Kikuko Yamamoto, ed., *豊かな恵みへ: 女性教職の歴史* (Toward the Grace Abounding: History of Women Pastors) (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisutokyodan Shuppanyoku, 1995), 23-25. See also Kirisutokyo Nenkan Hensan-iinkai, ed., *キリスト教年鑑 2013* (Christian Year Book, 2013) (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shinbunsha, 2013), 193-251.

¹⁴⁷ See, Kohiyama, 232-233.

¹⁴⁸ Masao Takenaka, *ゆくてはるかに: 神戸女子神学校物語* (The Bright Future: Stories of Kobe Woman's Evangelistic School) (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 2000), 23. Later, the name of this school was changed as Seiwa College. Its historical background had been buried for a long time, but recently Prof. Takenaka collected almost all sorts of source materials throughout its history and published in 2000.

both socially and economically at that time, they came to know the gospel messages in the Bible and decided to devote their whole lives thereafter to the people and to God. Also, not a few pastor's wives were trained at this school. They felt it very necessary to be trained sufficiently enough to assist their husbands as missionaries, while working together with them on various missionary activities.¹⁴⁹ For an instance, Ohno Yasu became widowed and lost her two sons, but she made up her mind to dedicate her whole life to God and studied at this school. After graduation in 1893, she served as a missionary until her retirement at the age of 70.¹⁵⁰ According to Takenaka, 54 women in total graduated from this school. Among them, 24 women served as missionaries as in the case of Yasu, nine women served as pastor's wives, and six women as faithful laywomen at various churches. Two graduates served as social welfare workers. Nothing is known of the other nine graduates.¹⁵¹ The statistical figures show that the Kobe Woman's Evangelistic School produced a considerable numbers of women Christian workers in those days. However in 1896, with the rise of nationalism in Japan, the school had to be closed temporarily under the harsh historical circumstances of anti-Christianity at the time. Next year, in 1897, the school restarted with the most earnest prayers of the people concerned. In 1941 and in 2009, the school experienced amalgamation twice because of various reasons, but it continues to be active in its broad educational contributions to the young people of Japan based on Christianity even up to now.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ See, *Ibid.*, 31-32.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁵¹ See, *Ibid.*, 80. Among these 54 graduates, 8 of them are introduced in his book somewhat in detail regarding their activities both at the churches and in some other areas.

¹⁵² In 1941, it was amalgamated into Lambuth Training School for Christian Workers and Early Childhood Education of Hiroshima Woman's College, and the school name was changed into Seiwa

Thus the fruitful result of earnest missionary activities by many women missionaries sent from abroad, especially from the United States, gave birth to a considerable number of women Christian workers in Japan. All of them contributed a great deal to the churches in different areas of Japan both as missionaries and as social workers. In those days, it was rather difficult for male missionaries and pastors to get in touch with domestic matters. Women missionaries and pastors sometimes could play greater roles than men could by making use of their domestic networks at the time. It is very certain that they were responsible in part for the mission in Japan together with men.¹⁵³

In Japan, women were able to be ordained comparably early during this period in the world. The reason was nothing other than the great contributions of these women who devoted their whole lives to the Christian mission even under the most difficult situations of feudal and male-centric social systems in that early period of Christian history in Japan.

Women pastors in Japan

The first Japanese woman pastor in Japan

A woman named Hisano Takahashi was mentioned in the book edited by

College. Very recently in 2009 it was amalgamated into Kwansei-gakuin. By the way, my grandmother graduated from this school in 1933, my mother in 1961, and my elder sister in 1987, and one of my aunts in 1967. My grandmother served for her church as an organist at the worship services, and as one of the leaders for women's group at her church. She was pleased to assist Rev. Tanaka, her pastor, who came to take charge of Nagaoka Church in Nagaoka, Niigata Pref., after having come back from Pohnpei Island mission in Micronesia. Both my mother and aunt have been serving as pastors' wives even up to now. See, Ibid., 408.

¹⁵³ See, Ibid., 219. Hepburn together with his wife was critical against these moves of the Woman Missionary Society, by insisting that a single woman missionary tends to retire from the front line of their mission by getting married, and also that the missionary works were sometimes too heavy for them to bear in the foreign countries.

Yamamoto as the first woman pastor in Japan.¹⁵⁴ She was the first woman who was ordained as a pastor. She had her own history quite different from the other women pastors in European and American countries. Surprisingly enough, she was ordained in 1933, more than 20 years before the first woman was ordained in the US.

Yamamoto refers to the history of women pastors in the US as follows:

Margaret E. Tauner was ordained in 1956. She was one of the missionaries who had been sent to the Church of Christ in Japan by the United Presbyterian Church in the United States. And in the same way, in 1960, Rachel Henderlite was the first woman pastor ordained in the Southern Presbyterian Church in the United States. WCC discussed this matter for the first time in 1961, at New Delhi. Taking this fact into consideration, for more than 20 or 30 years earlier than in the US, Japanese churches had already accepted ordination of women pastors.¹⁵⁵

This is only a part of quotations from Yamamoto's analysis in the book edited by herself, and needs to be testified if she is quite correct in her analysis about this matter more in detail. I found among the lists of 'Denominations granting full clergy rights to women,' Congregationalists might have already granted 'full clergy rights' to women in 1853 according to *Ordaining Women*.¹⁵⁶ I am not yet sure what this 'full clergy rights' means, whether it means that at that time they could have already accepted ordination to women pastoral workers as regular ordained pastors or not.

¹⁵⁴ Yamamoto, 豊かな恵みへ, 58. See, my footnote 146. Yamamoto's investigation is one of the most outstanding ones in which she discussed almost exclusively about women pastors in Japan. She collected and analyzed most adequately almost all the commemorative publications of each Mission school in Japan, varieties of reports still preserved in UCCJ, and each individual writings or autobiographies, and so on. At present, as the ratio of women pastors has been increasing, the characteristics and effects of their pastoral works should be investigated in some more details hereafter.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 15-16 (trans. Kondo).

¹⁵⁶ See, Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious organizations* (London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 16-17.

According to the statistics, the total number of pastors in UCC in Japan is 3,359, and among them women pastors are 781 in number. This means only 23% of all pastors in UCCJ are women pastors.¹⁵⁷ More than 80 years have already passed since the first woman pastor was borne in the history of Japanese churches. How can we understand this statistical situation of Japanese churches in terms of women pastors?

According to Yamamoto's analysis, the details of the history of the birth of the first women pastors in Japan are described as follows:

It seems to have been somewhat very simple and dealt with somewhat naturally from the time of the first ordination. I could not find the records of any sorts of heated discussions or disputes about this matter, neither in terms of qualification tests nor in terms of ordinations. (Several passages omitted here) The first ordination of the woman pastoral worker had been carried out very quietly, even at midnight, though this might have been an epoch-making event in the history of churches in Japan. It may have reflected somewhat symbolic features in Japanese churches. The ceremony was done, as it were, in a way that nothing in particular happened at that time, and somewhat secretly. Thus the Protestant churches in Japan accepted the ordination of women pastors. Some of theological problems about this matter had been left unsolved, but the way was certainly opened for the women to serve as ordained pastors who could convey the words of God and carry out the Sacrament.¹⁵⁸

As has been stated above, the process in which women pastors in Japan were accepted was somewhat different from other countries where they were forced to struggle for many years with all kinds of hindrances only because of them being women. The contents of the report are interesting in describing the discussions as to whether women presbyteries and deacons are to be accepted in the church or not. The discussions were done as follows:

¹⁵⁷ Nihon Kirisutokyodan Jimukyoku, ed., 日本基督教団年鑑, 第 68 卷 (Annual Reports of United Church of Christ in Japan) (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisutokyodan Shuppan-kyoku, 2016), 225.

¹⁵⁸ Yamamoto, 16-17 (trans. Kondo).

When the matter was discussed at the annual meeting of the year, women deacons were accepted, but those of women presbyteries were not. 38 delegates denied, and 31 accepted. In some more detail, 30 Japanese delegates accepted and the same number of delegates did not accept. On the contrary, among missionaries from abroad at the meeting, only one of them accepted, and all the other 8 missionaries did not accept. It is said that most of the people there felt very sorry about this sort of conservatism as has been shown in the result.¹⁵⁹

As has been stated above, women deacons were accepted, but women presbyteries were not at this point. In the case of women presbyteries, Japanese delegates divided into fifty and fifty whether they are accepted or not. Missionaries from abroad were rather conservative in deciding the matter. Only one of them accepted a woman presbytery, while the other 8 missionaries did not accept. Eventually, missionaries thwarted the attempt by churches in Japan to open up the new way for women leaders in Japanese churches.

However, it goes without saying that missionaries from abroad played very important roles for the first woman pastor to appear in the history of Japanese churches. In fact, up to 1900, a number of missionary boards called 'Female Foreign Missionary Society' had been already established both in the US and Canada. 'The Women's Union Missionary Society of America and Heathen Land,' which was founded in 1861, founded theological schools for women one after another. In Japan, Christians called the women graduates from these schools as 'Sensei' which means literally 'teacher' in Japanese, but in this case, 'pastor' in particular with some respects, just as the same as men pastors, and they were pleased to listen to these women pastors, just as to men pastors. Would it be true that in those days women missionaries might not have been welcomed as pastors just

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 36 (trans. Kondo).

in the same position as men pastors in their native countries? They might not have been recognized as ‘qualified’ pastors to preach or to lead the Sacrament,¹⁶⁰ I wonder.

Under these circumstances, women missionaries tried to make every effort to devote themselves to their mission by means of education for women. From 1870 on, they founded women’s schools here and there in Japan, and these schools were called ‘mission schools.’ These mission schools were founded everywhere in the main cities of Japan, and many of these schools has existed successively even up to now, and has played an important role in the Japanese educational systems. A lot of women students were baptized to become Christians.

In these schools, women missionaries were sometimes appointed to be principals, and they played a leading role in their schools. Women who learned there and were baptized became leaders at the churches to which they belonged. They sometimes told the message of the gospels, tried to lead the Bible study, and served just as the same as pastors did. In 1913, the first Japanese women’s mission board was established, following the Women’s Missionary Society abroad both in its system and in its form. The women pastors who graduated from Kobe Woman’s Evangelistic School worked hard almost everywhere in Japan, and in 1920, Yasu Oda¹⁶¹ was appointed one of the first woman professors who taught Old Testament theology. Thus it was, in a way, very natural that the first woman pastor appeared in Christian history in Japan.

Hisano Takahashi was the first woman pastor in Japan. She was ordained as a pastor in 1933. This was really an epoch-making matter both in terms of the history of women pastors and also of that of history of Christianity in Japan as whole. Tamaki

¹⁶⁰ See, *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁶¹ Takenaka, 187.

Uemura was also ordained as a pastor in 1934. She was one of the daughters of Rev. Masahisa Uemura, who was one of the most representative Christian leaders in Japan at that time. It is said that she had baptized more than 500 people in her whole life as a pastor.¹⁶² But I have to add to note, at this point, that the first woman pastor who was ordained by being examined if she was to be qualified as a pastor or not was Ms. Hana Hamada. At any rate, it is certain that already in the 1930's the way was opened to women to become pastors. It is not true that any particular women were nominated as pastors arbitrarily without any qualifications.¹⁶³

Later in 1941, the 'United Church of Christ in Japan' (UCCJ) was founded with some political compulsion under harsh historical situations at the time of the Second World War, remaining uncertain with regard to the proper theological understandings of the difficult days and situations among each denomination or church. As a result, various churches and denominations could not help but decide by themselves how they should deal with women pastors who were not yet ordained in those days.

In 1941, at the time of establishment of UCCJ, 192 women missionary workers were ordained as regular pastors, and the total number of women pastors surpassed 200.¹⁶⁴

As has been stated above, women pastors were admitted in Japan comparatively at an earlier time as a whole in Christian history of the world. But it may be also true that Japanese society has still remained a men-centered one, both during those days and even today. Women pastors could not help being affected by those unchanging streams of old

¹⁶² Yamamoto, 69.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 148.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 116.

history. It seems to be that the birth of women pastors and abolition of discrimination toward women are quite different even at present. Generally speaking, women pastors in Japan experienced more or less discrimination while they are working as pastors in the churches.

The women pastors studied Christianity with their whole heart and mind, and acquired their faith and knowledge from their predecessors, in many cases from those missionaries from abroad, and conveyed the messages of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in almost all the places and areas of Japan. They did not necessarily play only the role of supplication for male pastors, but they worked in their own way as in the same level as male pastors. They may have even worked better than male pastors! In many cases, their works as pastors may not have been evaluated enough in Japan, but they may have been satisfied enough in their mission as pastors. These figures of women pastors in Japan could be estimated highly enough in the history of Japanese churches.

At this point, let me add and say one thing about this matter by quoting again Yamamoto's analysis concerning the actual situations of women pastors in Japan. She says as follows:

The problems are somewhat related with Japanese churches as a whole. Even though they tried to accept women pastors only in principle, but in fact, many of them would not like to offer a position to women pastors in their churches. They would like to agree in principle, but not to agree with individual cases.¹⁶⁵

Fortunately, I have never had such a feeling of discrimination as many women pastors have had ever since I was ordained as a pastor 10 years or so ago. I have had my faith nourished by women pastors over these years, studied among women students, and

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 155 (trans. Kondo).

worked with women pastors with no distinctions. However, in the course of my study, I have known that I myself might have been indifferent about the difficulties and hardships of those people who had been oppressed socially, mentally, and even physically. The numbers of women pastors would surely be increased from now on, and they would surely receive the gift of grace from above. Nobody could disturb this stream of grace abounding from them because every one of them was surely selected by God as the vessel or instrument prepared by God.

Present Situations of Women Pastors in Japan and their Future Image

So far in my thesis, I have been discussing something about women missionaries from abroad and also about Japanese women pastors. It is almost of no doubt that their missionary and pastoral works made enormous contributions not only within churches in Japan but also to Japanese society as a whole. Above all, they played a great role in the field of preschool children's education and higher education of women in Japan. They could contribute a great deal to the improvement of women's position or status in Japanese society. Thanks to their ardent effort, the numbers of women pastors in UCCJ have also been increasing, though only gradually, recently. But the fact is that women pastors are still limited to only 23% in their ratio of all the UCCJ pastors.¹⁶⁶ Given these situations, the male-oriented tendencies even within our church communities should be improved as soon as possible. How do they actually feel as women pastors while being engaged in their ordinary pastoral works? I attempted to make an interview with three women pastors who belonged to churches of UCCJ with regard to their present situations

¹⁶⁶ See, my footnote, 157.

where they were located.¹⁶⁷

Interviewee #1

She is a pastor's wife with a license of pastor. She hoped to attend the same church together with her family where her husband was serving as a pastor. Her church did not employ her as a pastor, mainly because of economic reasons. Almost inevitably, she has been supporting her husband's pastoral work as a housewife. When her husband was sent as a missionary to their church, it was her husband only who was invited. She was accepted only as one of the family members. But actually, she was asked to play double roles, one as a pastor and the other as pastor's wife. It was a pity that there was no problem when she took her children to one of the UCCJ meetings, but there occurred somewhat awkward atmosphere among the people there when the husband tried to take their children with him. But now she feels that the circumstances of women pastors have been much more improved compared to before.

Interviewee #2

Her husband is not a pastor, so this is different from the case of #1. She could not but take leave from her work as a pastor during considerable period of her pregnancy, child-birth, and nursing. Her church was not always sufficient enough to support her both economically and spiritually. Most of the small local churches with no good economic basis cannot afford to employ a temporary pastor instead of their woman pastor on leave.

¹⁶⁷ I made interviews with women pastors who belonged to UCCJ. It should be noted that all these interviews were done confidentially. Interviewees' names are withheld by mutual agreement between me and the interviewees. I used the terms Interviewee #1, #2, and #3 for each person. This time, the interviewees were limited to three persons, but I am looking forward to investigating this topic of women pastors further more in detail in the near future.

In addition to these phenomena around women pastors, churches themselves tend to become more and more conservative and self-protective against hiring women pastors. Aging tendencies of churches within themselves might have swollen these conservative ideas against women pastors. Regrettably, adequate systems for women's pastorage have not yet been established here in Japan in order that every one of women pastors may be able to give birth to their children without anxiety and to nurse them while being engaged in their everyday life as pastors. Interviewee #2 feels it far more difficult that at present she could be paid equally to men pastors during the period of nursing her children, including her pregnancy and childbirth.

Interviewee #3

She has been serving her church as a pastor, single and alone by herself. At the same time, she was working in the kindergarten attached to her church. It was comfortable for her to work there, because there were some other women childcare workers. At present, she quit her job as a pastor to work in one of the mission schools. She is expecting to get married and to meet her life's events hereafter, such as childbirth and nursing children.

These interviews with women pastors were limited only to three cases being restricted by time, but I found that most of these women pastors would have various sorts of worries of their own because of being pastors in particular, quite different from those in case of men pastors. There are only a few opportunities for women pastors to be given an important role in the office that is just as the same as men pastors. Sometimes their

salaries are not paid by the same standard as in the case of men pastors. They are sometimes forced to take leave from their job for marriage, pregnancy, or childbirth. These tendencies are not limited only in the case of women pastors, but also rather common to all the women workers in general. Our church is consistently based on the ideal of equality between men and women under God's sovereign rule. It is very necessary for us to reconfirm this fact more definitely and with accuracy.

To study the problems faced by women pastors in Japan would surely be linked directly to deal with the problems of minorities in our society throughout the ages. Churches in Japan are always expected to meet face to face with the problems of those who are socially disadvantaged, in order to walk hand in hand with one another. This is nothing more or less than what I wanted to mean by the term 'mission.'

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Chapter 3

Missionary Activities in Japan Reconsidered

Japan Mission and Christianity during the two World Wars

Throughout these periods, rapid changes have occurred in the history of Christian mission in Japan. Those changes of historical situations in Christianity and Christian churches in Japan were just like waves endlessly breaking and receding. As has been stated in the previous chapter, a considerable number of churches and theological schools were founded in various areas of Japan in 1880s, and Christianity became a sort of boom, while being boosted by a tail wind of the government's policy of Westernization. But only after 10 years or so, the weather of missionary works in Japan took a sudden turn and went into a slump. Governmental policies in favor of too rapid a Westernization gave birth to strong feelings of antagonism among the people, and nationalism came to the fore instead. Thus throughout the whole history of Christian mission, there have been always sources of trouble in the sense that Christian missions tended to be accepted comparably easily when it is supported by the stream of Westernization and when the people lost their own confidence, but when the extreme patriotism created by nationalistic ideas instead became influential among the people, various expulsion movements of Christianity also tended to occur in the history of Japan.

For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of the Enlightenment thinkers and a founder of Keio University, was somewhat antagonistic toward Christianity at the beginning, but

after he happened to participate in the Diplomatic Mission in 1862,¹⁶⁸ he was becoming more interested in it. He sent his son to a missionary to learn English, and after the abolishment of the edicts of prohibition of Christianity he himself tried to attend the lecture meetings of Christianity. Afterwards, he spent a period of time with the feelings of repulsion against it. And again, in the stream of the government's Westernization policies, he did not hesitate to accept it.¹⁶⁹ In the like manner, the so-called intelligentsia at the time were in some way or another influenced by the current streams of the period and changed their attitudes toward Christianity. In most of the cases they were flexible in their attitudes. This might have been one of the characteristics of Japanese people in general toward religions, whether it may have been Christianity or any other ones. Among them, there were a lot of people who felt repulsive toward these hasty governmental policies of rapid Westernization along with the rather easy-going acceptance of Christianity, because most of them had been already deeply influenced by the prohibition edicts of Christianity for a long period of time.

In the 1890s, Japanese government tried to focus its every effort on policies of increasing wealth and military power in order to get rid of the dangers and risks of being colonized by the forces of Western countries. For this purpose, the government brought forth again a state-sponsored religion of Shintoism in order to bring the people of Japan under its control. These nationalistic policies were more or less based on antagonistic feelings from the side of conservative forces which did not agree with the Westernization policies. To them these Westernization policies were of no use to improve the present

¹⁶⁸ See, Aogu Koizumi, "Hukuzawa Yukichi (福沢諭吉)" in 岩波キリスト教辞典 (Iwanami's Dictionary of Christianity) (Tokyo:Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 962.

¹⁶⁹ Koji Nakashima, 近代日本の外交と宣教師 (Diplomatic Policies of Modern Japan and Missionaries) (Tokyo, Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2012), 102-3.

situations of the unequal treaty between Japan and America and other European countries. People who felt repulsive toward Westernization policies became so earnest in regaining the state sovereignty. As a result, both exclusionism and extreme patriotism gradually came to the fore. ‘The Constitution of the Empire of Japan’ (大日本帝国憲法) issued in 1889 was, as it were, a climactic symbol of these political and ideological movements in Japan at the time.¹⁷⁰

In article 28 of this Constitution, the freedom of faith was established for the first time in Japanese history, though with a side issue of ‘to the extent that it does not interfere with the people’s duty.’ Japanese Christians welcomed this freedom rule in the Constitution. However, once ‘The Imperial Rescript on Education’ (教育勅語) was issued in the following year, it became evident that the *Ten’no* (Emperor) was regarded as the only sacred and inviolable person among all the people in Japan. It became evident also that these Emperor-centered religious systems should never be accepted by monotheistic faith of Christians. But they could not help but go along with the current of the times, and accepted these nationalistic religious policies of the government, though unwillingly. Just as the *Kirishitan daimyos* (Christian feudal lords) joined, though reluctantly, to Hideyoshi’s edicts of dispatch of troops to Korea, most of the Christian churches in Japan supported the governmental policies of the Sino-Japanese War which broke out in 1894. Moreover, some of them tried to establish Japanese Christianity by Japanese people independently by doing away with the missionaries from abroad. They attempted to cooperate with the government even more positively for the Russo-Japanese War which broke out in 1904. Uchimura Kanzo, together with some others, was critical

¹⁷⁰ Gono, 280.

of these moves of compromising attitudes of Christianity in Japan in those days. Later, he became one of the representative leaders of the so-called Non-church movement.¹⁷¹

Coming into the 20th century, churches in Japan were all the more forced into a compromise with national authorities of the government, and began to keep a certain distance from missions abroad. In 1905, the United Church of Christ¹⁷² which belonged to the Presbyterian Mission decided to interrupt any cooperative activities with the foreign missions, intending to be independent. Some of the Methodist churches also shifted their helms toward the Japanese- centered missionary activities. Thus most of the missionaries from abroad were replaced by Japanese pastors in their activities in Japan. They were expected only as co-workers for Japanese pastors.¹⁷³

After the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the *Ten'no* himself paid a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine for the purpose of honoring the memory of the war dead, and, as a result, the emperor reigning system became all the more firm and strong along with Shintoism as a state religion. The government made the most use of religion as its national policies. In 1912, the Japanese government called a conference for representatives from Shintoism (sect Shinto), Buddhism, and Christianity and required all of them to support the (Emperor's) Throne (皇運扶翼) and to accelerate the national morals among all the people in Japan.¹⁷⁴ Most of Christian leaders were pleased to be invited to this conference, accepting this calling favorably in the sense that Christianity could have been dealt equally with the other mainline religions in Japan. There were quite a few Christian

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 289.

¹⁷² To be distinguished from the present name of "UCC in Japan" started in 1941.

¹⁷³ Gono, 290.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 291 and S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 194.

leaders who felt anxious about dangers of being adapted into absolutistic Emperor's system sooner or later.

In 1912, with *Meiji-ten'no's* death, the imperial era name was changed to Taisho. In the period of World War I (1914-1918), Japan joined the democratic allies and was affected both ideologically and religiously by these foreign countries. Democracy came to the fore in place of nationalism. Universal Manhood Suffrage Movement and Women's Suffrage Movement contributed a great deal to establish the idea of individualism among the people. Western culture based on Christianity accelerated the propagation of Christianity in Japan. According to Gono's analysis, the numbers of Catholics in Japan were 67,000 up until 1920, and those of Protestants were more than 164,000 (79,000 in 1912).¹⁷⁵ However, Ogawa Keiji raised a question with regard to this statistic as follows:

Certainly, churches in Japan seemed to have been developed and grown outwardly. But from the point of view of our ideal figure of church-shaping, tendencies of intellectualism at churches became all the more strong, and those of un-indigenization and of surface abstractness became determinative in Japanese churches.¹⁷⁶

Why could Christianity in Japan not have been indigenized in a true sense of the term as successfully as had been expected? Christianity seemed to have been extremely attractive to the people of intelligentsia class who lived in urban areas, and to those who welcomed democracy as an ideal social system. Churches in Japan accepted it as a matter of course. But it was a pity that in most of the cases, missionary activities to the people

¹⁷⁵ Gono, 292.

¹⁷⁶ Keiji Ogawa, “土の薄い石地に立つ教会: 賀川豊彦をめぐって (Churches founded on Stony Lands, centering around Kagawa Toyohiko,)” in *日本キリスト教史における賀川豊彦: その思想と実践* (Kagawa Toyohiko in the History of Christianity in Japan; His Thoughts and Activities), ed., Kagawa Toyohiko Kinen Matsuzawa Shiryokan, (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 2011), 160 (trans. Kondo).

who lived in rural areas such as farmers and other agricultural people, including laborers in cities, seemed to have been neglected rather than otherwise. Even under these missionary circumstances, Kagawa Toyohiko devoted himself in various missionary fields, such as in relief works of the needy or the laborers who suffered from heavy labors. He was a pastor and at the same time an activist in a social movement. In 1929, he took the lead in the so-called “The Kingdom of God Movement.”¹⁷⁷ This movement could successfully be expanded to the wide areas of Japan, by securing the strong cooperation of those who could share the common ideal together with Kagawa. But regrettably, churches at the time could not provide them with sufficient opportunities for young people who intended to devote themselves in voluntary social works. After all, even up to now since then, majority of churches with comparatively large congregations have been centered around city areas. Church activities at the local and rural areas have been still limited both in terms of the numbers of churches and their congregations. In every period of the history of churches in Japan, churches were expected to be a nexus for social movement, but there seems to be a certain difference in temperature between churches and the actual society around them. In 1931, the Manchurian Incident broke out and the leading people of Japan became all the more swung to the right, and, as a result, the atmosphere of anti-Christianity became remarkable. Thus Kagawa’s social movement grew stagnant almost as an inevitable result.

Under these difficult circumstances, some of the foreign missionaries happened to be put on trial as enemy spies, and in 1932, one of the Catholic students of Sophia

¹⁷⁷ See, Gono, 292-93.

University was accused of not having worshipped at Yasukuni Shrine.¹⁷⁸ In a while, various sorts of severe persecutions befell on Christians successively. Both Protestants and Catholics could not resist these pressures from authorities, but, on the contrary, most of them tried to adjust themselves to the governmental or military policies of Japan at the time. In 1941, the ‘Religious Organizations Act’ (宗教団体会法)¹⁷⁹ was issued by the government, and religions were put under control by authorities. Along with these historical streams, the ‘United Church of Christ in Japan’ (UCCJ), to which I now belong, was organized in 1941.

In 1941, Japanese Air Forces attacked Pearl Harbor, and World War II broke out. The Catholic churches in Japan and UCCJ also joined hands with these governmental policies of Japan. Only a few minor denominations which did not participate in UCCJ for some reason or another refused to join in these policies, and as a result, they were harshly persecuted. Holiness churches joined UCCJ somewhat reluctantly at the time of the formation, but some of their leading pastors among them were arrested, and there were cases in which some of the holiness pastors were imprisoned and died in confinement. After the War, UCCJ finally made public the ‘Confession on the Responsibility during World War II’ in 1967.¹⁸⁰

It is all the more clear that Christian mission in Japan has been strongly affected by the political current of each historical period, from the Meiji Restoration up to World War

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 294.

¹⁷⁹ See, S. Nakamura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 242. Approval by the Minister of Education was naturally needed in order to start UCCJ according to this law. Also the approval was always with severe conditions in that any religion would never interfere with public orders and peace. Whenever they may rebel against the duties of the people, the approval could be necessarily cancelled.

¹⁸⁰ United Church of Christ in Japan, ed., “Confession on the Responsibility during World War II,” issued on 26 March, 1967, accessed 11 March 2016. <http://uccj-e.org/confession>.

II. If it would be possible for me to say rather boldly, Christianity might have been increasingly accepted by Japanese people whenever Japan as a state remained sluggish and weak on the one hand. But on the other hand, it might have been quite the contrary when Japan as a state seemed to have been strong and firm in its political power. In the same way, whenever the self-consciousness as a Japanese nation becomes weak, Christianity could be popular among the people of Japan on the one hand, but whenever the sense of self as a Japanese nation prevails in their mind, Christianity could easily lose its missionary energy because of Japan's antiforeign sentiment on the other hand. But even in these vicissitudes of history of Christian mission in Japan, Christianity in Japan could secure its certain status among other religions. Christian population increased from 304,602 in 1933¹⁸¹ up to almost one million in 1988. Since this year, the statistical figures of Christian populations in Japan have reached a limit up to the present, still remaining less than 1 % of the whole population. It seems to be extremely difficult at present for the Christian churches to increase the percentage of Christian population in Japan. There seems to be no such difficulties for the churches in Japan at the level of those almost unendurable hardships and difficulties experienced during the War period, as Japan has enjoyed peaceful days of their own with no experiences of war troubles up until today. There seems to be no need for religions or any other means for securing relief for their souls. Under these historical and religious circumstances of the present day Japan, Christianity itself seems to have lost its basic motivations for missionary needs. How could Christianity in Japan find and secure these motivations at present and also in the future? It goes without saying that the economic prosperity does not always lead to

¹⁸¹ See, Doshisha Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyusho, ed., *特攻資料による戦時下のキリスト教運動 I* (Christian Movements under the Wars shown in the Materials of the Special Higher Police in Japan) (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 2003), 18-19.

the happiness of people. Also the so-called power-balance theory by military forces among various countries in the world could never secure the peace in a true sense of the term. There are almost uncountable problems in the world-wide basis, such as those of wars, poverty, famine, etc. Japan at present is no exception. There are evidently much more difficult problems in Japan than some of other foreign countries. There are problems of disparity between the rich and the poor even in Japan. Egoistic ideas are prevalent among the people, and many of the communities are at the risk of break-down in various areas in Japan. People are forced to bear the feelings of loneliness. Once we take a quick look at these problems, it would be all the more plain that Christian churches in Japan still have, or should have, at least some sense of responsibilities or the roles to play more adequately even in present day Japan.

Japan Mission and Christianity after World War II

Historical Background

The Japanese government accepted the Potsdam Declaration on August 15, 1945, and the very next day *Ten'no* Akihito at the time declared that the wars came to an end at last. Thus, the absolute Emperor system under *Ten'no* was disrupted, and the people of religions were released finally from the strict controls and oppressions by the state. For instance, new policy of democratization was promoted by the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Occupying Forces, and the Religious Organization Act was abolished. In 1947, two years after the War ended, the new Constitution of Japan instead of the old one was adopted. In regard to the freedom of religion, the new Constitution stipulates in article 20 as “Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall

receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority.”¹⁸²

After the War, Christianity in Japan was rapidly expanded both in terms of its populations and also its power of influence to the society, by having been released from oppressions by the state. This phenomenon was brought forth as the results of GHQ’s support¹⁸³ on the one hand, but it may also be certain that young people who were disappointed with traditional religions of Japan expected to find hope in Christianity on the other. A lot of people, especially young ones, rushed to churches together. In fact, almost all the churches in Japan were crowded by people. The so-called ‘Christian boom’ occurred very soon. Such a Christian movement as one prompted by Kagawa Toyohiko seemed to be very much successful and fruitful in Japan at the time.¹⁸⁴ However, the boom of Christianity soon died within a decade, and there were only limited numbers of the Christian population who remained faithfully within church membership of their own. Why was it so? One of the reasons for this may have been in the fact that the churches at the time tended to target only the people who belonged to the middle class in society and the intelligentsia as ever before. It may be true to say that “Japan could recover the peace

¹⁸² Ministry of Justice, Japan, “The Constitution of Japan,” Japanese Law Translation Database System, accessed 14 March, 2016.
<http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail/?id=174&vm=04&re=01&new=1>.

¹⁸³ See, S. Nakaura, *日本キリスト教宣教史*, 282-84. Douglas MacArthur was zealous for Christianization of Japan.

¹⁸⁴ Nobuo Kaino, “敗戦直後の賀川豊彦：新日本建設キリスト教運動を中心として (Kagawa Toyohiko immediately after the World War II: The Movement of Building up of New Japan as its Center,)” in *日本キリスト教史における賀川豊彦: その思想と実践* (Kagawa Toyohiko in the History of Christianity in Japan: His Thoughts and Practice,) ed. Kagawa Toyohiko Matsuzawa Shiryo-kan (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2011), 346-47. According to Kaino’s analysis, the statistics of Kagawa’s missionary activities almost all over the whole country of Japan shows that the period of his activities lasted for two years and nine months, from July 1946 to March 1949, with numbers of meetings counted up to 1,168 times, the amount of audience was 734,654 in sum, and those who decided to become Christians within the period were 186,508 in number.

and order again very soon after the War.”¹⁸⁵ This fact might have caused the prevention of Christianity from being rooted firmly in the minds of the Japanese people.

As has been stated above, Christianity was in some degree successful in its propagation whenever people expected radical social changes. When they feel content with things as they are, with no need to be changed, they would not rely upon any religions including Christianity. After World War II, the ruling system of the emperor left as it stood though only as a symbol, and Japan could soon take its place among the ranks of economic superpowers. There were almost no spaces in Japanese people’s minds to accept Christianity as a clue to supply their spiritual needs under difficult circumstances. Furthermore, changes and destructions are two sides of the same coin. It was almost impossible for the people of Japan to accept Christianity in a rather stabilized society which they could secure soon after the harsh experiences during the War period.

In fact, it is extremely difficult for an ordinary Japanese to be converted to become a Christian. He/She must necessarily confront such problems as dealings with shrines and temples to which they belong as a family member, and those of memorial services for their ancestors along with maintenance task of their tombs. Even though he/she belongs to a church as a Christian, he/she may participate in various religious ceremonies held by different religions as a member of his/her family. There are some instances in which he/she may be ostracized within a village or community because of his/her Christian faith. During the periods of my pastoral work in Japan, I know personally that there were not a few people who hesitated to be baptized for these reasons. Pastors, including myself, were expected to make every effort to carry out their mission most seriously and carefully,

¹⁸⁵ Manabu Ishida, “日本の宣教を考える (Reflections upon Japan Mission,)” in *宣教ってなんだ？ 現代の課題と展望* (What is Mission? : Issues and Prospects,) ed. Hirohide Koshikawa (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shuppansha, 2012), 9.

keeping all these matters in mind while engaging in their pastoral work.

Some Reflections upon Interviews at Pilgrim Place in Claremont

These tasks were not merely limited for the Japanese pastors. Soon after the War, many missionaries from abroad arrived in Japan for their mission beyond the differences in denominations. All of these missionaries worked so hard even in the unknown land of Japan for the propagation of Christian faith. Personally, I could have an opportunity to visit the Pilgrim Place in Claremont in December 2015, and conducted interviews with some retired people who had once served in Japan.¹⁸⁶ Most of them learned the Japanese language at the outset for their work in Japan at Japanese language schools in Japan, and then were sent forth to various places such as the churches, schools, the social centers, and other institutions. Wherever they were sent forth, they had to meet face to face with the people there with different cultural and religious background from their own. All the while, they managed to know the quality of spirituality of the Japanese people, standing at the very front line where religions and cultures of Japan and those of European countries are mingled with each other.

One of the most impressive key words for me throughout all the interviews was the special term of ‘contribution.’ Naturally, they played a great role in propagating Christianity in Japan, but it is important to know that their basic purpose was not always to ‘convert’ Japanese people to Christianity. In fact, among those missionaries, there were

¹⁸⁶ Pilgrim Place is a resident home for retired missionaries in Claremont, California. I was given a great opportunity to visit most respectful 13 persons there, including couples, who had once served in Japan, and interviewed them personally during my stay from December 2 to 4, 2015. Some of them served as missionaries, and others as professors or social workers. Some of them came to Japan already in 1948, only three years after the War, and devoted themselves in their missionary works most enthusiastically for the people of Japan who were then discouraged under the harsh spiritual and economical conditions. They belonged to different denominations from each other such as Disciples, Lutheran, Methodist, Southern Baptist, etc.

some who tried enthusiastically to convert Japanese gentile people to Christianity. But these missionaries were unsuccessful in their missionary works, being baffled soon and had to come back home with no fruits. On the contrary, most of the missionaries were at the very beginning called merely foreigners ('Gaijin' in Japanese with some disparaging connotation), but soon afterwards they were called simply 'his/her parent.' Sometimes, they were called uncle/aunt ('*Ojisan/Obasan*' in Japanese) in a rather friendly and familiar manner.¹⁸⁷ These missionaries were indeed the people who could become true neighbors to Japanese people, and eventually they were most successful in their missionary work in Japan, even though they could not succeed in taking the Christian population in Japan up to a high percentage of from only 1% to 30%. It is very certain that these missionaries contributed a great deal to Christianity in Japan both in the fields of education and in those of social welfare services. Their selfless and dedicated work for the Japanese people were most favorably accepted, and swept away people's sense of distrust toward Christianity. In fact, Christian population in Japan had been increasing, though bit by bit, at least up until 1996.¹⁸⁸

Patricia Patterson, one of my interviewees, taught in Japan as a missionary teacher, and later served as a coordinator of 'Japan North American Commission'. She analyzed somewhat in detail the reasons why it was difficult for the Japanese people to attend the

¹⁸⁷ Eliot Shimer and Antoinette Shimer, interview by Makoto Kondo, digital recording, 2 December, 2015, Pilgrim Place, Claremont.

¹⁸⁸ However, one of the greatest tragedies caused by the most odious cult incidents of *Omu-shinrikyo* (オウム真理教) which occurred in 1995 disrupted these rather favorable streams of Christianity in Japan. The sense of distrust became all the more strong not merely toward Christianity, but also toward any other religion in general. The ratio of the attendants became lower and lower, and the parents hesitated to send their children to church meetings including Sunday school. Regrettably, these phenomena still remain as they were in the past period in almost all the churches in Japan even today.

churches, whether it was Christian or not, in the following way.¹⁸⁹

- (1) Family objects.
- (2) Church is not attractive to them.
- (3) They feel they are not good enough to become Christian, a misleading perception.
- (4) They believe becoming a Christian may alienate them from Japanese society or become an obstacle to employment and other relationships.
- (5) They see the history of Christianity in Japan as threatened and persecuted or sidelined.
- (6) They just don't feel like committing themselves to church fellowship.

It is very necessary for any one of the Japanese people to get over rather high hurdles such as those of family relationships and those of communities to which he/she belongs. People are closely related and tied with each other under special religious and cultural traditions. Churches in Japan have been struggling even up to now with these problems throughout the long history of Christian mission. We should have to take these missionary tasks even more seriously into consideration.

Eliot and Antoinette Shimer served as a social worker and a teacher for around 20 years in Nagasaki, Nishinomiya, and Tokyo, and came back to America in 1970. They began to feel that there remained only a few extra spaces for them to contribute to the specific fields in Japan as a social worker, knowing that not a few Japanese social workers who were trained sufficiently enough in America started their social work in their home country by themselves. The United Methodist Churches which had sent them forth to Japan as social workers shifted their policy, putting its center of works not on Japan but rather on other various areas in Africa. To them, any missionary activities in foreign countries are nothing but only temporary. They know that they would play their

¹⁸⁹ Patricia Patterson, interview by Makoto Kondo, digital recording, 3 December, 2015, Pilgrim Place, Claremont.

roles as missionaries only so far as the people could carry out their works by themselves. Earl and Nijiko Bergh who served Japanese local churches as missionaries and retired in 1996 said clearly that the role of missionaries in Japan had already ended.¹⁹⁰ I was made known by the interviews with them that the main purpose of their missionary works in Japan was never on colonization or on Westernization of the Japanese people, but that they only managed to become neighbors with people there by propagating the love of Christ into action.

More than 1,700 missionaries were sent forth by Methodist Churches to Japan from 1873 to 1993, and served at more than 164 schools and other institutions or organizations in various areas of Japan.¹⁹¹ Their contributions must have been great indeed and unaccountable in cultural and religious history of Japan.

Japanese Missionaries to foreign countries (Until WWII)

So far up to now, I have been following the course of history of Christianity in Japan since the two World Wars and afterwards. Japan was originally seen as one of the non-Christian and undeveloped countries. Almost innumerable missionaries were uninterruptedly sent to Japan since 16th century, and made every effort for the propagation of the gospel messages. Lots of the people of Japan were baptized to become Christians, and some among them were called to be missionaries or pastors. From 20th century onward, some of them devoted themselves to missionary work in foreign countries.

¹⁹⁰ Earl Bergh and Nijiko Bergh, interview by Makoto Kondo, digital recording, 4 December, 2015, Pilgrim Place, Claremont.

¹⁹¹ See, John W. Krummel, ed., 来日メソジスト宣教師辞典 1873-1993 (A Biographical Dictionary of Methodist Missionaries to Japan: 1873-1993) (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1996).

Roughly speaking, there were two types of missionaries among them. One was those who served the churches abroad alone by himself, through receiving a divine calling from above personally. And the other was those who went abroad as some sorts of instrument of national policy at the time. The former naturally aimed to propagate the gospel messages to the people there along with their own Christian faith. The latter aimed to share their Christian faith with the Japanese people in particular who lived there in those areas for various reasons. Otherwise, they also tried to placate the Christians of the local churches or local residents in the neighborhood so as to meet the needs of Japanese national policies.

Here in this section, I would like to describe in some detail the qualities of foreign missions by Japanese missionaries by referring to the circumstances of their activities at the places where they served. For this purpose, several concrete examples are to be dealt with somewhat as follows. At this point, I am keeping in my mind one of my main concerns in this paper as to the theme of ‘What is the mission?’ and ‘Where is the basic meaning of Christian mission in today’s context?’

A missionary who worked for the native people in the Korean Peninsula

It was only in 1896 when the first Japanese Protestant missionary appeared in the history of Christianity in Japan from the seeds sown by the Protestant missionaries from abroad who had come to Japan since 1859. According to Nakamura’s investigations, Masayasu Norimatsu (1863-1921) was this very first Japanese missionary.¹⁹² He

¹⁹² Satoshi Nakamura, *日本プロテスタント海外宣教師* (History of Japanese Protestant Overseas Missionary) (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2011), 16. I owe much about Norimatsu’s biographical data to Nakamura’s thorough-going investigations along with the facts and process of his missionary activities in Korea.

belonged to 'The Plymouth Brethren' and went to the Korean peninsula alone by himself during the era of the Joseon Dynasty. The first thing that he did was to learn the Korean language, and then he conveyed the Gospel messages not only to the Japanese people there but also to the people in Korea. In 1898, H.G. Brand¹⁹³ joined him and helped his missionary activities there. Norimatsu lived almost all of his life in Joseon Dynasty style, and taught only Korean language to his own children.¹⁹⁴

Because the Plymouth Brethren had no particular institutions regarding the holy orders, he had no such supporting systems for his mission. He had to live an extremely difficult life economically. It is said that he lost his first wife, Tsuneko, because of his poverty. But even under these difficult life situations as a missionary, his works were gradually accepted and evaluated by the people of the land. In 1909, a church building together with its land was given in Suwon by sincere efforts and earnest prayers of the people there. More than 400 people gathered together at the church meeting in 1912.¹⁹⁵ After more than 70 years since then, in 1979, a new church building was dedicated and celebrated with great joy among the people of the land, and the name of Norimatsu was introduced to the whole congregation as the person who had sown the first seed in the land.¹⁹⁶ It may not be too much to say that this sort of a Norimatsu figure as a missionary who tried to become one of the Koreans in his mission might have been the basis and the starting point of our missionary activities abroad. He had to come back to Japan because

¹⁹³ H.G. Brand came to Japan as missionary in 1888 after graduating from Cambridge University. Norimatsu was greatly affected and stimulated by Brand for his enthusiastic missionary activities in Japan, and Norimatsu eventually entered 'The Plymouth Brethren' led by Brand. Cf. Ibid., 15.

¹⁹⁴ See, Ibid., 19.

¹⁹⁵ See, Ibid., 19-20.

¹⁹⁶ See, Ibid., 24.

of his critical disease, but after his death his ashes were buried in the land of Suwon in accordance with his last wish.

There were a number of Japanese missionaries who followed Norimatsu, but many of them served only the Japanese residents in Korea. In some cases, missionaries from Japan to Korea tended to avail themselves to working only in the framework of colonizing power of the Japanese government. In fact, these missionary enterprises naturally fell out of the place soon after they left the land to return to Japan and could never bear fruit. If we could keep these facts firmly in our minds, we need to know that we would have to make the land where we were sent, as it were, our last home. If not so, we may not be able to win the confidence of the people of the land in the full sense of the term.

A missionary who served the Japanese immigrants in Hawaii

In 1885, the first Kanyaku (literally means ‘sponsored by the Government’) Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii.¹⁹⁷ They were told that they could earn enough money to live there, but the fact was a quite different and unexpected one. They were harshly treated, as if they were slaves. The first approach to save them and to propagate the Gospel messages to them was done by ‘The Hawaiian Evangelical Association’ (HEA).¹⁹⁸ This HEA was organized by the missionaries of ‘The American Board of

¹⁹⁷ See, Yujin Yaguchi, *ハワイの歴史と文化* (The History and Culture of Hawaii) (Tokyo: Chuuko-shinsho, 2002), 25-27. Immigrants sponsored by government. In 1894, the Republic of Hawaii was established following the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii in the previous year, so government sponsored immigration became invalid and was abolished.

¹⁹⁸ Ryo Yoshida, “アメリカン・ボード日本ミッション宣教師の「越境」伝道” (The Border Mission by Missionaries from the American Board), in *Nihon Kenkyu* No. 30 (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2005), 36.

Commissioners for Foreign Missions' (ABCFM).¹⁹⁹ HEA functioned in the field of evangelical works, education, and social welfare, etc., as the agent for the immigrants, representing the people there. HEA hired a person named Aoki as an interpreter, and tried to start its work in education and missionary work. But for some reasons, the work remained to be unsuccessful.

Another approach was taken by another religious body through a different route to the Japanese immigrants. This is no other than the '*Fukuin-kai*'²⁰⁰ which was founded in 1877 in San Francisco for the evangelization of Japanese immigrants there. As it is well known, this '*Fukuin-kai*' is an antecedent of the Pine United Methodist Church to which I belonged then as a missionary until 2016. Kan-ichi Miyama²⁰¹ sailed to Hawaii alone, and started his missionary work there in 1887. The consul general of Japan in Honolulu at the time gave full support for Miyama's missionary work, and Miyama's work was very much successful and bore many fruits even within a short and limited period. Soon after in 1888, the Japanese Methodist Church was borne in Honolulu. In the beginning, Methodist church leaders seemed somewhat hesitant, fearing that their activities might bring some conflicts with HEA, but finally in 1893, the Hawaii mission was recognized officially, and they decided to send Japanese missionaries to Hawaii from Japanese Methodist Church in San Francisco.

On the other hand, HEA sent Jiro Okabe²⁰² to Japan from the Hawaiian Board of

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 35.

²⁰⁰ See, Ibid., 39. Deriving from this small Bible study group, various church bodies gave birth to, including the Pine United Methodist Church to which I am now belong as a missionary from Japan.

²⁰¹ See, Ibid., 39. Later in 1893, Kan-ichi Miyama was invited by the Ginza Church (one of the representative churches of UCCJ at present) in Tokyo as its second pastor.

²⁰² See, Kojiro Iida, “移民の魁: 星名謙一郎のハワイ時代前期 (Antecedent of Hawaiian

Mission in 1892. Furthermore, HEA made an appeal to gather applicants for its mission at Doshisha, and succeeded in having several of them respond. In the following year, HEA invited some of the Doshisha students to respond to its mission. Shiro Sokabe (1865-1949)²⁰³ was one of these students who responded to the appeal. In his younger days, Sokabe was attending the Imabari Congregational Church in Ehime Pref. where I had served for three years after my graduation from the School of Theology, Doshisha University.²⁰⁴ Afterwards he left Doshisha before graduation. He was not yet ordained but worked very hard as one of the missionary workers at several churches in Japan. Rev. Danjo Ebina who was then the leading pastor of the Kobe Congregational Church introduced him to Okabe, and Sokabe was eventually to sail to Hawaii Island in 1894. There he happened to see a lot of immigrant people from Japan who were forced to labor just like slaves under extremely harsh and miserable circumstances. These laborers came to Hawaii to live a happy life of their own, seeking their world of utopia, so to speak. But the fact was wholly different from what they asked for. The hours of work were too long for them to bear and the pay was too low to bring up their children. They could not earn enough money for their children to be educated sufficiently. Even the public schools did not admit any Asian children to enter. Eventually, Japanese immigrants' children could

Immigrants: In the Former Period in his Stay in Hawaii,)” in *Osaka Shogyo Daigaku Ronshu* No.6-4 (Osaka: The Society of Commerce and Economic Research, 2011), 30. According to Iida, he was ordained in 1890 at the Central Union Church in Honolulu.

²⁰³ Jiro Nakano, *Samurai Missionary*, (Honolulu: Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1984). See also, Yukuji Okita, “曾我部四郎 (Sokabe Shiro,)” in *同志社山脈: 113 人のプロフィール* (Great figure: 113 Profiles of Doshisha Graduates,) ed. Doshisha –Sanmyaku Hensan Iinkai, (Kyoto: Koyo Shobo, 2002), 78f. Nakano describes in some detail about Sokabe's biographical stories. According to Nakano, Sokabe did not like to leave any records about his missionary enterprises at Hawaii for later generations, so Nakano tried to collect data on Sokabe as much as possible, by tracing out memories about him as Sokabe's biography.

²⁰⁴ While I was serving as a pastor at Imabari Church, Hilo Coast United Church of Christ, which Shiro founded, visited there in order to find their 'roots' for the first time.

not help but speak sometimes Japanese, sometimes Hawaiian, sometimes English, and sometimes Portuguese. They spoke in much mixed and messy language. In order to improve these difficult situations, several numbers of missionaries tried to establish some educational systems for the immigrant children,²⁰⁵ and Sokabe was one of these missionaries. Juei Kanda founded the first Japanese school in Hawaii in 1893, and two year later in 1897, Tamaki Gomi founded his school. In 1896, Takie Okumura founded the third school, and in 1897 Sokabe himself started his own school.²⁰⁶ Sokabe was an extremely unique person as a missionary. He preached not only by quoting from the Bible but also by quoting from Japanese and Chinese historical materials and sources freely. Immigrants were pleased to listen to his sermons which included somewhat ecumenical sources without being confined only to the Biblical texts. He would take his students with him even to various Buddhist temples and shrines and also to Catholic churches. He was pleased to meet the people of different denominations coming to visit him and his church, and discussed various themes with most friendly manners. Moreover, he even helped the monks of Soto-shu (one of the Zen Buddhism groups) to build their temple. He loved people with all his mind and heart beyond the differences of religion or denomination. This sort of ecumenical attitude was followed by the people and the children there as one of the ideal figures of ecumenical encounters.

²⁰⁵ See, Yukio Negawa, “近代における-日本人キリスト者の越境ネットワーク (The Shaping of A Border Network by a Japanese Christian in Modern Ages)” in *Nihon Kenkyu* No. 46 (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2012), 132. Regarding the foundations of these unique educational systems for Japanese immigrant children at Hawaii.

²⁰⁶ Nakano, op. cit., 44.

Missionaries sent from the Congregational Church in Japan to Korea

In 1886, 31 churches which were borne in Japan as the fruits of the mission by ABCFM gathered together to form one church order which was named '*Nihon Kumiai Kirisuto Kyokai*' (The Congregational Church in Japan).²⁰⁷ In 1910, after 24 years, this Congregational Church established the 'Division of Korean Mission,' following rather unhappy historical incident of Japan and Korea's annexation. The chief leader of this Korean Mission was Tsuneyoshi Watase (1867-1944).²⁰⁸ According to Nakamura's analysis, Korean mission to him was a quite different one from that of Masayasu Norimatsu, his senior missionary in the era of Josean Dynasty, both in terms of the manner and the contents of its mission. Watase's mission had somewhat different purpose from purely oriented evangelization in Korea. His main purpose was to promote Japanese national policy in the guise of Christian mission. Naturally, this kind of mission could never be successful in its proper sense. Eventually, no missionaries from abroad, those from America or from Europe, were accepted in this mission project initiated by Japanese missionaries. Watase, along with the other Japanese missionaries, let himself be compromised by Japanese nationalism to amalgamate Korea into the Japanese colonizing regime. He believed that Christianization of the Korean people in some way or another would serve the best interests of the nation. His idea was fully in accord with the nation's policy of colonization against the Korean people.

In 1911, Watase hastened to establish 'The Congregational Church in Korea' in Keijo and in Pyeongyang. In 1918, seven years later, the number of these Korean churches

²⁰⁷ S. Nakamura, 日本プロテスタント海外宣教師, op. cit., 29.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 29.

increased up to be as many as 149.²⁰⁹ It was indeed a great leap for the churches in Korea. However, this sort of phenomenon did not always mean the most successful result of serious missionary efforts made by ‘The Congregational Churches in Japan’ themselves. It was only a part of pretended fruits of mission sponsored by Japanese political and business establishments. It may also be probable to say that Japanese Congregational Churches in Korea forced Korean Christians to join them only for the purpose of their own churches’ numerical expansions. In those days, the Governor-General of Korea was in some difficult situations in successfully carrying out their colonizing policies in Korea. Eventually, the Government welcomed Watase’s ideas and methods of mission even by making the most use of religion.

Against these missionary actions fused into political powers of the Japanese Government, there naturally occurred various sorts of harsh criticisms even among the Congregational churches in Japan. Gien Kashiwagi, Jiro Yuasa, and Sakuzo Yoshino were representative persons who were in the center among these critics against the manners and method of mission, insisting that Watase and others were critically wrong in misusing Christian mission only as an instrument for the colonization of Korea. Watase, together with the leaders of the CCJ at the time, ignored these criticisms in silence. At the annual general meeting in 1921, the CCJ abolished the Division of Korean Mission, and decided to replace it by the Congregational Christian Church in Korea instead. Degeneration of the churches became apparent and was almost miserable afterwards. In 1920, the CC in Korea had more than 15,000 Christians in its total numbers, but in 1921, only after a year, the numbers of Christians (in terms of attendance to the church) decreased to less than

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 32. S. Nakamura notes with his doubt these almost unimaginably rapid increase of the numbers of churches in Korea in those times only within seven years.

3,000.²¹⁰ Why did this sad phenomenon occur in the CC in Korea at the time? It was only because the Government of Japan stopped to aid financially the CCJ after the Sam-il-undong.²¹¹ In these figures of the CCJ's mission to Korea, we are able to see evidently some typical phenomenon of Christian missions fused with colonizing political forces at the time which finally ended in failure. These sorts of missionary activities could never be successful in the true sense of the term. They could not lead the people's mind to Christ, even if they could increase the numbers of attendees only temporarily. However, it makes one feel grateful to find out that such persons as Kashiwagi, Yuasa, and Yoshino, together with some other great ones, raised their voices of conscience even under the difficult historical circumstances of the time. Some other denominations in Japan, such as the Church of Christ, the Methodist Church, and the Episcopal Church, also tried to carry out their missions to Taiwan, Manchuria, Sakhalin, etc., but the contents of their missionary activities were substantially the same, and served only the colonizing policy of the Japanese government.

Missionaries sent from the "UCCJ" to foreign countries

The United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ) was established in 1941 when 34 protestant Japanese churches were united together as one church body.²¹² Since the first protestant mission in Japan in 1859, each one of Japanese churches carried out its

²¹⁰ Ibid., 43.

²¹¹ Izumi Iida, "三・一独立運動" (March 1st. Resistance Movement for Independence), in *岩波キリスト教辞典* (Iwanami's Dictionary of Christianity) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 441. The March 1st Movement in 1919 was one of the earliest public displays of Korean resistance during the occupation of the Korean Empire by Japan. According to Iida, more than 7,500 people were killed in charge of these resistance movement against Japanese colonizing policy. Most of the leaders of resistance are said to have been Christians or church-related persons in Korea.

²¹² Kirisutokyo Nenkan, 97.

missionary activities rather independently. But at around 1939, a joint plan was pulled together rather forcibly when the religious organization law was issued by the Japanese government. At the general meeting of its foundation, the UCCJ declared in the following terms that “We are Christian and at the same time a Japanese subject, and we are to be, first and foremost, faithful to our Empire.”²¹³ Thus, the UCCJ was inevitably merged into the Japanese national policies to carry out the war against neighboring countries on the pretext of establishing the so-called “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. The UCCJ started the “*Toa-Kyoku*” (東亜教区, literally means ‘Department of East Asia’) in 1944. This department tried to continue their missionary work abroad, and requested to send pastors as missionaries to East Asian countries under Japanese military administration. They tried even to cooperate with national policy, while expecting to get financial aid from the government for their missionary work. Japanese government responded to their request by assisting UCCJ’s missionary activities. In 1941, the Department of the Army General Staff sent their religious squad to the Philippine Islands. There in the Philippines, Japanese religious squads divided into two teams, one for the Catholics and the other for the Protestants. In the Philippines, Catholics occupied the majority of people in churches, and adding to this fact, the Roman Curia was closely related to Italy which was then allied with Japan. Japan had to deal most carefully with the relationships between Catholic churches and those of Italy. The squad for the Catholics made every effort to set up a favorable relationship with the Catholics in the Philippines by requesting to secure the cooperation of the Japanese military administration in the Philippines, but their effort for this was not so successful.

²¹³ S. Nakamura, *日本プロテスタント海外宣教師*, op. cit., 187. This was the first article issued at the first General Assembly of UCCJ held at the Fujimi-cho Church in Tokyo in 1941.

On the other hand, one of important and expected role of the squad to the Protestant churches in the Philippines was to separate the Philippine churches from American missionary leadership, and to let the churches be independent churches. The only thing which was needed for the squad was to build up favorable relationships with Philippine Protestant churches in the sense that they may be able to secure the cooperation of Japan's national policy. But most of the American missionaries rejected to sign the written oaths to cooperate with this religious policy, and thus they were forced to be imprisoned in the concentration camps there for three years until they were finally liberated from encampment in 1945.²¹⁴

In Japan, the pastors were, more or less, persecuted and oppressed by the authorities as the religionists for the enemies, but in the Philippines, they were forced to be embzzled into Japanese colonizing policy against the foreign countries. They were to bear some pacification work, whether reluctantly or willingly. Their situations were extremely delicate. Some of them tried even to support the Philippine churches with all their minds and hearts, but only on the personal level. Once in 1919, about 20 years prior to this time, Hiromichi Kozaki (1856-1938)²¹⁵ founded the “*Nanyo-Dendo-dan*” (南洋伝道団, The Missionary Groups of the South Sea Islands). As has been said in the previous chapter, the CCJ tended to be fused with national policies, and therefore, the works of the Dendo-dan remained to be only fragmentary and far from success. Kinzo Tanaka²¹⁶

²¹⁴ See, Ibid., 190. In 1943, several denominations were united together, and the ‘Evangelical Church in Philippine’ was established, but this united church was abolished soon after the World War II.

²¹⁵ The first leading pastor of Reinanzaka Church in Tokyo, one of the representative CCJ churches at the time. Ozaki was one of Nijima's disciples who founded Doshisha.

²¹⁶ S. Nakamura, *日本プロテスタント海外宣教師*, 112. I owe much about his biographical stories to Nakamura's study already referred to above. He came back to Japan after the war, and served Nagaoka

served as a missionary for about 24 years from 1920 to 1943 in Pohnpei Islands. His works were supported financially by the *Dendo-dan*, and so he served only as a missionary who cooperated with Japanese national policy. But the fact is that he always served for the benefit of the Islanders, the people of the land, and sometimes assisted and helped at the side of these people who were compelled to work even on Sundays. He was very often harassed by the *Nanyo-cho* (南洋庁, The Government Office of the South Sea Islands) for this reason. These Japanese missionaries, including Tanaka, were symbolic figures who struggled with the governmental power systems in between their conscience of faith in Jesus Christ and the stream of history.

Japanese Missionaries to the foreign countries (Up to the present)

A Japanese missionary who was called and invited by Pohnpei

The Pohnpei Islands, where the capital city of the Federate States of Micronesia is now located, was discovered by Spanish traders in 1825. The history of the Pohnpei missions seem to be far more complicated, comparing to those of other South Sea Islands where they have been Christianized one after another.²¹⁷ Spain insisted on her dominion over Pohnpei Islands, but it was only in 1887 when Spain actually set her government office there. Spain continued to neglect administering their lands adequately for more than 60 years. During these periods, several missionaries had been sent from ABCFM since 1852. Afterwards, Pohnpei Islands were sold by Spain to Germany, and some

Church in Niigata Pref. until his retirement.

²¹⁷ See, Yoshiharu Arakawa, *遣わされた人々の足跡: ポナペワークキャンプの記録* (Foot Stamps of the People Sent: Record of Work Camp in Pohnpei) (Saitama: privately printed, 2008), 153-56. Arakawa traces back a brief history of Christian missions to the Pohnpei Islands. His analysis is very interesting to find out some clues for a new possibility of our Christian mission.

numbers of missionaries were sent there from Germany in 1906. Since 1914, Japan had been entrusted with full powers over the South Sea Islands. In 1920, all the German missionaries were expelled from the places where they had been working so far. Strangely enough to the Japanese government, the people of the lands requested to have missionaries sent for them at an opportunity of negotiation regarding the administration of these islands under Japanese dominion. Japanese governmental officials might have certainly and greatly been embarrassed by these proposals from the side of the Islands. Yusaburo Kato, the Minister of the Navy²¹⁸ at the time, happened to live very close to Reinanzaka Congregational Church referred to above, and he was a good friend to Hiromichi Kozaki of this church. Thus the Navy asked Kozaki to send missionaries to the Islands. Kozaki looked for the missionaries to be sent there, and the military office got ready for the money. Beginning from 1920 up to the end of Japanese rule over the Islands, 8 missionaries were sent to Pohnpei, Truk, and Ohwa Islands.²¹⁹

Afterwards, the United American Overseas Mission continued to send some missionaries there from 1945 to 1963. After 1963, there were no missionaries sent there for more than 13 years. During these periods, Mormons and/or Jehovah's Witnesses came into the Islands, and the Pohnpei Congregational Church was exposed to the menace of these new religious groups.²²⁰ They decided to request the UCCJ to send missionaries for them. According to Yoshiharu Arakawa,²²¹ the conditions for their proposals were somewhat as follows: (1) he/she should speak and write English, (2) he/she can teach the

²¹⁸ S. Nakamura, *日本プロテスタント海外宣教師*, op. cit., 109.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 111.

²²⁰ Ibid., 209.

²²¹ Arakawa, *遭わされた人々の足跡*, op. cit., 11.

people there as a pastor, (3) he/she can be a leader and teacher for agricultural works in the area, and (4) he/she has no children. Each one of these conditions seemed to be so difficult, but fortunately enough, Arakawa and his wife Kazuko were found to be the best couple to bear all these tasks, and finally, they were sent to the Pohnpei Island as a missionary and his wife in 1976. They devoted themselves wholly for their missionary works, and it is reported in 2008 that as one of the fruits of their works, about 40 hectares of land which the Pohnpei Congregational Church possessed then was valued duly as much as \$400,000.²²² By using these funds as a basis, the Ohwa Christian High School was established, and in 2001, The Bible College started. This Bible College was nothing other than the rebirth of the Ohwa Theological School which Kiyoshi Azumi, a missionary, had founded already in 1925. Arakawa, together with the other co-workers with him, continued to carry out the so-called 'work-camps' there for more than 39 times from 1977 to 2010. 533 workers in total visited the Island for their works as volunteers from Japan. Most of them were church-related people in some way or another beyond the difference of denominations.²²³

Rev. Arakawa himself thought that the Pohnpei mission should be carried out by the people of the land themselves and that he should be only a helper to assist them to get on their own feet. However, the fact was that the Pohnpei churches in those days were, more or less, too dependent on the others because they continued to be ruled by foreign powers for more than 300 years in terms of colonization. But even under these difficult circumstances, Arakawa, together with other leaders, assisted and helped the Pohnpei

²²² Ibid., 261.

²²³ Yoshiharu Arakawa, 続・遣わされた人々の足跡: ポナペワークキャンプの記録 (Foot Stamps of the People Sent: Record of Work Camp in Pohnpei, part 2) (Saitama: privately printed, 2010), 382.

churches persistently, and, as a result, they could, though having been only step by step, handle their own independent projects to help themselves both economically and spiritually within their own churches. Thus the school project there grew to have been officially recognized within the Islands. Arakawa's first reports regarding work-camp activities with many of his co-workers for about 40 years there was published as a private press edition in 2008, and the second one in 2010. Both of these two (missionary) reports are extremely important to learn the proper meanings of history of Japanese missionary works after World War II. The contents as well as the messages in the reports may surely be linked, in some way or another, with the most important tasks toward forming the new paradigm of mission, which I was dealing with over the last few years.

Japanese Missionaries sent by UCCJ at present

At present missionaries and some other Christian workers, mostly teachers, who are related to the Committee of World Mission of UCCJ have been serving in India, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, USA, Canada, Brazil, Bolivia, Belgium, Germany, and Czech Republic. The contents of their works are quite different from one another and divergent in accordance with their actual circumstances where they were located to live. Once a year, the "Missionary Reports" are collected and edited by the Committee with a subheading of '*Tomoni-tsukaeru-tameni*' (literally means, 'For Serving Together').²²⁴ All of these missionaries are requested to report regarding their activities within the year in the following articles: (1) Brief outline of history of their appointed spot/area/country, (2) Main background of their works, (3) Main contents of

²²⁴ Sekaisenkyo Iinkai, ed., *共に仕えるために No.30 (For Serving Together)* (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisutokyodan Sekaisenkyo Iinkai, 2014).

their activities, (4) The results or fruits of their works there, (5) Future prospects of their works, and (6) Main subjects for their prayer. Let me introduce as some typical examples of missionary works by two Japanese pastors sent by UCCJ on the basis of these annual reports as given below.

Rev. Makiko Koinuma,²²⁵ a missionary sent to the Alto da Bonadade Methodist Church in Brazil did her best in building up the community center along with its nursery school, and her project was accomplished most successfully in 2014. But during these happy days, she had to suffer from an unendurable tragedy. Her contractors ran away from the spot with money to be paid for the people, and as a result the case was brought into court by those people who were not paid. But the somehow brilliant smiles of the children and Rev. Koinuma in the pictures in the front of the newly built nursery school made every one of us feel very much comfortable and grateful because of the divine mercy given to her during the whole period of her missionary life.

Rev. Yoko Kihara,²²⁶ a missionary at “Gilmore Park United Church” in Canada let me know that there the people would not use the word ‘missionary’ today. Why so? There may have been a sort of reviewing of the past failures in which the people were apt to accept easily the cultural assimilation policy, ignoring the culture and spirituality of the people of the land. Every sort of mission could never be successful if they would stick to the old type of mission only from the view point of the bystanders. It may be more reasonable to use an ‘overseas minister’ instead, following Kihara’s proposal, in order to avoid repeating the same unhappy errors regarding the missions abroad.

Koinuma’s and Kihara’s works, along with Arakawa’s, have had something in

²²⁵ Ibid., 23.

²²⁶ Ibid., 21.

common in the sense that they tried to carry out their mission not only for Japanese immigrants, Japanese-Brazilians, or Japanese-Canadians, and others related to Japan, but also for all the people in those areas where they were sent as missionaries. They tried to make every effort to get certain contacts with the people there. They devoted themselves in conveying the good news of the Bible among the peoples of the community. Here on this point, there may surely be some clues for the newly oriented missionary works at present and even in the future. The so-called ‘paradigm shift’ may have been occurring even at this point in a field of our Christian missions.

Japanese Language Mission in the Pine United Methodist Church in U. S. A.

Here in this section, I would like to say something about the basic themes of my missionary tasks which I could find out during the whole period of my stay as a missionary at Pine United Methodist Church for five years from 2011 to 2016.²²⁷ Pine was preceded by the *Nihon-jin Fukuin-kai* (日本人福音会, Japanese Gospel Society) started by Japanese immigrants. In 1886, it was approved as a Japanese Mission by the California Conference of the Methodist Church. Details could not but be cut out here concerning Pine’s history, but almost all the Japanese-American churches also experienced severe difficulties during the war period. In fact, Japanese Americans had been forcefully removed between 1942 and 1945, and Pine was closed during the war. But surprisingly enough, immediately after the war, worship services were regained in response to the people’s most earnest and enthusiastic prayer. And even today after 130 years since its foundation, two groups of congregations have been co-existing. The one

²²⁷ I had served the Pine United Methodist Church in San Francisco as a Japanese language pastor from October 2011 to April 2016.

consists of Japanese-speaking people, and the other consists of English-speaking ones.

At Pine, I was expected to carry out my missionary works tentatively for the Japanese people in particular there, but I also felt rather strongly that I had to enlarge the scope of my mission more widely also for the other people in the area. There seemed to be almost no problems such as poverty or discrimination against Japanese-Americans there, so I had only to do my best as an 'overseas minister.' However, the people who speak Japanese are decreasing year by year nowadays, and a majority of the congregation of Pine had been shifting from the *Issei* (the first generation) immigrants to the *Nisei* (the second generation) or even to the *Sansei* (the third generation). As a result, it became more and more difficult for us to have worship service every Sunday only by means of Japanese language. Still, it was also certain that there were urgent needs for us to have worship services in Japanese, in so far as the church could provide the people such as even the temporary residents or students from Japan with some sorts of reliable and secure spots for them at church. Every one of us was requested to be bilingual or sometimes trilingual or more, in order that we could know the people's needs with their own different historical and cultural backgrounds in a full sense of the term.

In those days, I had been expected to lead the Sunday service as a preacher in Japanese for the Japanese congregation every Sunday. As a rule, once a month, I took part in joint worship service of Japanese/English speaking congregations as a preacher either in Japanese or in English. Besides those, some other routine works as the pastor such as the meetings of Bible study, home-visit care services for Pine members, and various sorts of Committee meetings in-and-out of the church took place, too. At Pine, the pastor for the English-speaking congregation and the Japanese pastor for Japanese-speaking

congregation were serving for church activities as co-workers. Some of the church members at Pine looked forward to having a bilingual pastor, but the church's present situation was accepted as things were like before, because it seemed to be too difficult to hire such an able talent. It meant that Pine was dependent on Japanese pastors sent by UCCJ with which Pine concluded an agreement.

Other than ordinary pastoral works, Pine provided various 'outreach programs' for young adults together with their families. These programs successfully functioned as a place of recreation and relaxation for the Japanese residents around the church to get in touch with Japanese language and culture. Also Pine had been counted for a long time as a member of Japanese American Religious Federation in San Francisco (JARF).²²⁸ JARF has been playing an important role in holding various religious ceremonies in the community even today. The main activities of this JARF organization were such as a joint worship service at the Japanese cemetery for the deceased Japanese located at Colma,²²⁹ services for the Day of Remembrance which memorializes the internment camp, and some other religious festivals held around the Japantown area. This organization still continues to be a sort of religious body far beyond the framework of different religions or of different denominations, and it may well be investigated further as a concrete model of co-existent religious activities. However, percentages of Japanese-speaking people who participated in these activities had been decreasing year by year, and in all the meetings English was the only language to be spoken.

Likewise, the congregation who speak Japanese as their common language have

²²⁸ Jonathan H. X. Lee, Fumitaka Matsuoka, Edmond Yee, and Ronald Y. Nakasone ed., *Asian American Religious Cultures, Volume 2*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015), 563-64. The Japanese American Religious Federation (JARF) is an interfaith consortium of Buddhist, Christian, and independent faith traditions.

²²⁹ 1300 Hillside Blvd. Colma, San Mateo County, CA.

been decreasing, and on the contemporary scene it has become difficult for the church to hire a full time Japanese language pastor. In fact, some of the Japanese-American churches which had existed around the Bay Area could not but be closed one by one. The last Japanese-speaking member at the Lake Park UMC in Oakland died in 2015, and various meetings by Japanese there, including those of Bible study and prayer meetings were ended. So far at present, only two UMC churches in the Bay Area have Japanese pastors. The one is Pine UMC in San Francisco where I had served as a pastor (2011-16), and the other is Wesley UMC in San Jose. In addition, churches which belong to the ‘*Sowan Nichigo Methodist-kai*’ (桑湾日語メソジスト会, Japanese American United Methodist Church in Bay Area)²³⁰ have their own joint programs where Japanese is used as a common language. There are two kinds of Bible study classes every month, and training sessions called the ‘Retreat’ are held twice a year for the purpose of covering Japanese language ministries for the churches with no Japanese pastors.

It is certain that decreasing and aging tendencies of church members may be urgent and pressing tasks for the churches, not only for those churches in the Bay Area but also for almost all Japanese-American churches in America. Nowadays, Japanese people who are entering the US, either for business or for study, tend to be indifferent to any religions as their background, and also numbers of the Japanese themselves are decreasing for various reasons. It may also be one of the reasons for the decreasing tendencies that the so-called ‘mainline denominations’ in America seem to be losing their evangelical fervor for the people concerned. Among those Christians who were baptized in the US churches, there were those who could not easily adapt themselves to the churches in Japan after

²³⁰ This assembly has been active up to now by Pine UMC, Wesley UMC, Buena Vista UMC, Aldersgate UMC, and some others in San Francisco Bay Area.

they came back home from abroad. Different atmosphere at different denominations in Japan sometimes caused them to hesitate to continue their Christian life in Japan as in the US. Each one of the churches, either located in Japan or in the US or any other countries, has been founded in their own historical, cultural, and religious context. In a sense, every church, both in and out of Japan, has its own particular mission. There are some devices for these particular missions for the people who had come back home from abroad, but they are very limited in numbers so far up to now. It is very necessary for the churches in Japan and those abroad to join hands with each other for the common tasks of mission. It is now an urgent task to create bridges to unite all the Christians together, beyond the differences of denominations, for one purpose. Personally, I tried to carry out these missions as one of the missionaries who had experienced various activities at Pine for five years.

It is undeniable that there might have been some missionaries who were used, though unwillingly, by an instrument of national policy. In fact, in the history of missions, some of the missionaries were almost always exposed to the higher risks to have been involved irresistibly into the rapid streams of history. These phenomena occurred not only among Japanese missionaries but also among all the missionaries. But we should never forget that even under these limited situations they always tried to do their best in carrying out their missions. It may be very easy for us to criticize them severely by saying that they made a great mistake in their missionary works after all the matter had ended. On the one hand, Rev. Watase whom I had already referred to in this section founded a theological school for the purpose of training the 'Not Western educated missionaries' in 1940. He tried to establish his own ideal Asian Christianity in Japan and

also in Asia. But against these ideas, severe criticism was naturally raised even from within the Congregational Church in Japan. His ideal ended in fatal failure.

On the other hand, we should always keep in mind that there were surely some missionaries who worked for the salvation of the people's souls even at the risk of their life. As I had already introduced in this section, Rev. Norimatsu carried out his missionary works in Korea just like one of the Korean natives together with his family. He lived his whole life, following literally Paul's way of missionary life, as he writes in his letter, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews," in 1 Cor. 9:20. In verse 22, Paul says also as follows; "To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak."

There were certainly some missionaries who supported and helped the people of the land to live their lives together right on the same level of the people in the community. Here at this point, one of the well-known parables might fit into the context in a positive sense, "When you are in Rome, do as the Romans do." Missionary works of the primitive churches by Jesus himself and by his disciples along with Paul and others could have been still the best examples of mission today.²³¹ The UCCJ has not provided their missionaries with enough economical aids so far, but it is mainly because our UCCJ expects somehow each of the missionaries to be free and independent at the places where they were sent. For these ideal figures to be fully actualized, the best cooperative relations between us the missionaries and the people of the lands have to be firmly established. I believe that these tasks seem at first to be ineffective but finally to be most

²³¹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission-Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 185. David Bosch emphasized this point, but with some reservations in that we should never forget that we live quite different ages from those of the first or the second generation of the primitive churches. In other words, each one of us has a responsibility to find out by ourselves certain clues for the new paradigm of mission while learning from the past history.

steady and fruitful in our missionary activities.

From another point of view, the Protestant missions in Japan was carried out, in most of the cases, by the people who were sufficiently sponsored both economically and spiritually by firmly established religious bodies. As a result, so-called ‘mission schools’ were founded one after another in various cities in Japan, and not a few numbers of churches were borne in almost all the cities in Japan. However, strangely enough, Christian population remains quite a few from more than 100 years ago up to now. Christians are still a part of a minority group in the religious society in Japan. Regrettably, we have to admit that the mission in Japan has not been successful as has been expected. We cannot ignore this fact simply on surface, but on the contrary, we have to think about the problem most seriously again face to face in the present context. We are now right at the stage to find out the new mission paradigm as a challenge, a challenge given from above. By responding to this sort of challenge most adequately, we will be surely able to go a step forward for the future fruitful missionary works with never ending hope promised in the divine words, “I will be with you,” in Exod. 3:12.

Keeping these facts in mind, I would like to pursue my main concern further in some more details with regard to the new possibility of the Japan mission. The first thing for me to do for this purpose is to refer to the process and history of adaptation of Buddhism throughout Japanese religious history. Evidently enough, Buddhism was one of the good examples among other religions in Japan which could have been adapted more or less successfully into the religious mind of the Japanese people, although Shintoism and some other indigenous religions had already been rooted deeply into their hearts as their proper and traditional religions of old. How could Buddhism have

co-existed or stood on par with these indigenous religions of Japan under these somewhat dubious religious situations?

Buddhism was originated in India, and landed in Japan by way of China. It was nothing but of foreign origin and merely one of the imported religions to the Japanese people just as in the case of Christianity in Japan. However, it could have been accepted and adapted in Japan whatever its final form and shape may have been, while being naturally influenced by various other Japanese traditional folk religions throughout the whole history of Japan. But it could have at any rate survived even under the harsh political persecutions at all times. What made it possible for Buddhism to have been so adapted and accepted in the Japanese people's mind? By tracing the adaptation history of Buddhism in Japan, I believe we will be able to find out at least some of the crucial hints or clues for our present and future possibilities of Christian mission in Japan. In the next and final chapter, I would like to step into this point further in some more detail in reference to my basic and main concern with the problem.

Chapter 4

A Challenge Toward the New Paradigm of Mission in Japan

Brief Review of Historical Process of Adaptation of Buddhism in Japan

Introduction of Buddhism into Japan and Traces of its Spread

It goes without saying that both Buddhism and Christianity have affected Japanese culture and traditions a great deal even up to the present day. The two religions also played roles in shaping the mentality of the Japanese people. Throughout the whole adaptation history of these two main religious streams, there were times when this adaptation seemed to be successful, but at other times it seemed to be rather unsuccessful. Success or failure of adaptation may have been, most naturally, due to the abilities or capacities of Christian missionaries or Buddhist monks at the time. However, it is also certain that both missionaries and monks were inevitably affected by the political and cultural circumstances under which they lived and worked.

While engaging in my research with regard to the theme of missiology, I have been focusing my study on a simply Christian mission so far. Yet, now I am fully aware that I need to widen and deepen the scope of my study further into the areas of other religions.

How and in what sense could the so-called 'imported' religions, including Christianity or Buddhism, have been accepted and adapted into Japanese minds in history? Were they successfully adapted or not? What sorts of historical background were there until these religions became adapted to the Japanese religious climate? Here in this

section, I try to trace the historical process of adaptation of Buddhism, first, by investigating the process in which Buddhism could have successfully taken an element of ancestral worship of Shintoism.

Buddhism, and Mahayana Buddhism in particular, was first introduced into Japan in 552 A.D.²³² by way of India, China, and Korea, but only as a means of ruling systems of the government at the time. Already in about 8th century, Buddhist temples in various places in Japan began to pray for peace and order of the country and Buddhism became a sort of a national religion. Emperor Shomu (聖武天皇, reigned 724-749) sent students to Tang Dynasty in China, and they brought six Buddhist sects²³³ to Japan. Studies of Buddhism became all the more popular among the people with higher academic standards in Japan. Thus Buddhism continued to be a kind of an academism without being rooted in the minds of the general public.

In the period of Heian (794-1185) at length, Saicho, one of the representative Buddhist monks at the time, along with others advocated a new doctrine of Buddhism apart from political authorities. This new doctrine won the hearts of the people who were in a state of desolation because of natural disasters or disturbances which occurred frequently at those times. The Buddhist monk, Shinran, founded a new Buddhist sect of his own and his teachings began to infiltrate the mass public. He continuously pursued the truth of Buddhism while investigating the idea of faith of Glaubendes Herzens, which

²³² Joseph M. Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings, ed., *Buddhism and Asian History*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 267.

²³³ See, Mitsuyoshi Saegusa, 仏教入門 (An Introduction to Buddhism) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2010), 224f. *Nanto Rokushu*; six sects of Buddhism brought to Japan during the Nara period. (*Sanlun, Satyasiddhi, Faxiang, Abhidharmakosha, Vinaya, and Huayan.*)

means a single-hearted faith in English,²³⁴ somewhat in common with our Luther's proposals of sola fide.

In many cases, the relationship between the state and religion brings forth complicated and difficult problems with one another in every age and period wherever it may be. This fact is no exception in Japan. Later, even the *Jodo-shinshu*, founded by Shinran supposedly and specifically on behalf of the people, gradually acquired strong military power under the historical turmoil in those days. Oda Nobunaga, a dominant ruler at the time, became uneasy with those tendencies and subdued almost all these Buddhist forces against his authority. Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Shogunate of the Edo period (1603-1868), also issued strict laws against the Buddhist powers in order to cut them down. At the same time, he tried to put pressures upon Christians by issuing the laws of prohibition of Christianity. Christians in those days were treated most harshly, sometimes by means of persecution and martyrdom, and at other times as expulsion to foreign countries. The laws of the *Shumon-aratame*²³⁵ and the *Tera-uke* system²³⁶ were typical examples. Under these laws every nation of Japan, without exception, was forced to be taken into the Buddhist system as a believer of Buddhism. Each individual was deprived of his/her own faith based on free will. Buddhism eventually became the national religion of Japan. Buddhist temples were counted and regarded simply as one of the administrative systems under the rule of the government. Monks were not required to propagate their own believers anymore. In those days, Buddhism might have become amalgamated into Shintoism, one of the representative indigenous religions from the

²³⁴ Tomomi Kato, 親鸞とルター (Shinran and Luther) (Tokyo: Waseda University, 1987), 268.

²³⁵ See, my footnote 96.

²³⁶ See, my footnote 94.

ancient period of Japan. This sort of religious atmosphere of Buddhism may, though in part, remain among the Buddhist temples even today.

In the period of Meiji, political authorities were shifted from the Shogunate to the renewed government which tried to set up a new regime under an emperor who had been warded off so far. The new government tried to make use of Shintoism as an ideological basis for their ruling system.²³⁷ Thus, Buddhism was replaced by Shintoism as a national religion. The government issued a law of the *Shinbutsu-bunri-no-rei* (神仏分離の令),²³⁸ aiming at the separation of Buddhism and Shintoism. However, along with the stream of civilization and enlightenment, with under strong pressures by Christian foreign countries, the time was ripe toward freedom of religion. At last, the laws of prohibition of Christianity were abandoned in 1873. Still, the basic principles of the Japanese government remained to be Shintoism. The laws of the separation of Buddhism and Shintoism naturally gave a fatal blow to Buddhism. Yet, as a result of this shocking blow, Buddhism could experience its rebirth as a true and most persuasive religion. Great leaders appeared in history and seriously tried to reform Buddhist traditions and faith while being affected with Western thoughts and cultures which they learned anew.

Ancestral Worship and Funeral Services by Buddhism as Some of its Examples

Buddhism, and Mahayana Buddhism in particular, was born in India, grew in China, and was conveyed to Japan by way of Korea. It must have been transfigured in its process of adaptation in each one of the countries. In Japan, Buddhism has been criticized

²³⁷ Chuodaigaku Jinbunkagaku Kenkyujo, ed., *近代日本の形成と宗教問題* (Shaping up of the Modern Japan and the Problems of Religions) (Tokyo: Chuodaigaku Shuppanbu, 1992), 166.

²³⁸ Yoshida, *op. cit.*, 62.

severely in the sense that it has degenerated by falling into the trap of a money-making religion by means of funeral services.

However, it is not necessarily appropriate to define this phenomenon only negatively as the degeneration of Buddhism. I would like to say that such flexibility is how Buddhism might have been adapted and accepted by the Japanese people. Yushin Ito, one of the outstanding scholars of Buddhism in Japan, emphasizes that a religious phenomenon of *Shinbutsu-shugo* (神仏習合, 'syncretism of Shinto and Buddhism' in Japanese) gave birth to a proper Japanese Buddhism.²³⁹ For the Japanese, funeral services for the deceased were extremely important and a significant matter. The deceased, whoever he/she may have been, were most respected and their existence was indispensable in this world as well as the world after death. At this point, a global Buddhism was merged into a local and indigenous religions, linked somewhat to the ancestral worship of Shintoism.

Every August in Japan the Bon Festival is celebrated with much enthusiasm at every house, whether it may belong to the Buddhist sects or to the Shintoist sects. People come back to their hometown to gather together and to pay a visit to the graves of their deceased family members and ancestors. Friends and relatives share their faith in the belief that the recently deceased, as well as ancestors, have a special opportunity to come back home during the Bon Festival. The Japanese people are patient with the troublesome traffic jams of more than a dozen miles long to come back home during this time. This sort of religious custom might have been one of the results of syncretic fusion of Buddhism and Shintoism in terms of ancestral worship succeeded by Buddhism in Japan.

²³⁹ Yuishin Ito, *日本人と民族宗教* (Folk religion and the Japanese) (Kyoto: Hozokan, 2001), 203.

From a historical point of view, Buddhism was first introduced to Japan as a national project for only the aristocrats by focusing on its academic studies, not to be propagated to ordinary people. Up to this point, Buddhism remained to be unsuccessful. However, once the focus was shifted to incorporate the ancestral worship of Shintoism, which was another aspect of the indigenous religion of Japan, it was gradually adapted and accepted by the people of Japan. The people in Japan continuously sought peace of mind while being afflicted both physically and spiritually. According to Ito's analysis, what the people in Japan asked for was such important words as uttered in the following sentences:

...the monks who could supervise the funeral services or other religious services most adequately and properly, and also the temples which can provide the people with the proper places for worship along with adequate religious systems for the funeral services.²⁴⁰

In those days, villages were continuously burnt to ashes, and their houses destroyed incessantly by the troops. While living under these miserable social circumstances, people could not but pray for the peace of their villages and households. To these people, both Buddhism for the state and the sacred mountains for the monks to be trained were nothing other than meaningless.

Yushin Ito continues to say as follows:

...the reason why Buddhism in Japan spread far and wide all over the country, beyond the specific classes or specific districts of Japan, was only through the ancestral worship, and it was only in 15th and in 16th centuries when this sort of

²⁴⁰ Ito, *Ibid.*, 62 (trans. Kondo).

religious phenomenon occurred.²⁴¹

Buddhism was introduced into Japan in 552, but the period of its spread to Japan was, at length, almost in the same period when Christianity was brought to Japan by Xavier in 1543. This suggestion by Ito would be linked with that of Yamaori's view.²⁴²

It was only after 15th century when Nianfo movement rooted in Honen and Shinran was accepted and supported by the people in the form of 'Ikko-ikki' riot movements, raised in revolt from the side of the people under the leadership of Rennyō (1415-1499). It was almost at the same period that the seeds sown by Dogen (1200-1253) and Nichiren (1141-1215) bore fruits in the form of the more developed religious orders.

I found that no religion, at that time, could be rid of the temptations to be used erroneously and easily by the national powers. Each one of religions, whether it may be Christianity, Buddhism, or Shintoism, should never be taken into the hands of the dominant rulers.

Christianity could not avoid this temptation in the age of colonialism, and Buddhism in Japan also sometimes invented an excuse for the justification of wars or battles conditioned by the state. On the one hand, Christianity contributed a great deal to the developing countries worldwide, but it also destroyed indigenous cultures and traditions.

What could be the main concern with regards to our missionary task at present? Where is it possible for us to find the key to our mission? Undoubtedly, it could be found not in the colonialist's idea of forcibly converting people, but in serious and sincere

²⁴¹ Ibid., 63.

²⁴² Tetsuo Yamaori, *仏教とは何か* (What is Buddhism?) (Tokyo: Chuokoron Shinsha, 2011), 150 (trans. Kondo).

dialogue, standing at the same level with one another beyond the differences of culture, tradition, and even-religious background. Just as Jesus Christ served his people with supreme love, we also should serve our neighbors who are now suffering, whoever they may be: Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, or Shintoists. Here, I believe, as one of the missionaries, are the proper meanings and tasks of our mission.

Soon after the Great Earthquake and Tsunami occurred in northeastern region of Japan on March 11, 2011, a system of training professionals called ‘*Rinsho-Shukyoshi*’ (臨床宗教師, ‘Interfaith chaplain’ in Japanese) was started. A special three-year course was created at Tohoku University, and since 2012, people who studied there are now working very hard at various places.²⁴³ Active support has been given to disaster-stricken areas continuously by religious circles. Special courses at Tohoku University were provided to meet the people’s different religious needs in those areas nearby. They never intended, nor tried to convert people to Christianity or Buddhism. They solely and most fervently tried to become a neighbor to those who were crying with suffering. It was not a question of what religious group anyone belonged to, but people of all faiths have voluntarily been rushing to help and support the desolate together. I myself was one of them before coming here to San Francisco in October 2011. People gathered together in serious dialogue, and discussed what they could do and how the supporting work should be carried out most properly for the people suffering.

Taio Kaneta, one of the *Rinsho-Shukyoshi* (interfaith chaplain) sent from Zen Buddhism, recently suggested great roles of Buddhism in the article issued in one of the representative Japanese newspapers. Only few words would be sufficient to express the

²⁴³ Tohoku University, ed., *Rinsho Shukyo-shi (Interfaith Chaplain) Training Program*, accessed 17 February, 2016.
<http://www.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/p-religion/neo/wiki.cgi?page=FrontPage>.

needs and necessity of the works of interfaith chaplains at the time. Kaneta most adequately explains the fact in the following way:

...before the disaster occurred, Buddhism used to be harshly criticized as ‘Buddhism only for the funeral services’ and for a kind of money-making enterprise, but now the evaluation by the media has been changed completely in the sense that religions of the northeastern region could adequately meet the needs of society, wrestling with the problems even by means of their funeral services for the deceased by natural disasters.²⁴⁴

Buddhist monks and Christian pastors working together in almost perfect harmony, and close cooperation beyond all sorts of differences, shared in easing the burdens of people in need.

I am concerned whether this last paragraph sufficiently conveys my intention, but it is certain that the theme which I have been wrestling with so far remains to be a very significant element for my future study of missiology.

A Survey of Religious Sentiments of the Japanese people at Present

While confronted with the somewhat severe fact that Christians in Japan remain to be less than 1% among the whole population of Japan, I would like to propose that churches in Japan, as a whole, should play the most important and decisive role in their ‘missionary’ activities with much more seriousness and enthusiasm. Of course, it is very necessary for missionaries to be perfectly proficient in any language, both written and spoken, in the areas wherever they are sent forth, but language skills alone are not enough. They are naturally required to know the national characteristics or traits of the people

²⁴⁴ Taio Kaneta, “臨床宗教師という仕事 (The Works of Interfaith Chaplain,)” *Asahi Shimbun* (Asahi Newspaper), 22 April, 2015 (trans. Kondo).

there, along with full and exact knowledge of its historical, cultural, religious, or even political background. Above all, without understanding religious sentiments of the Japanese people most exactly, our mission would never be successful in Japan. I wonder to what degree churches in Japan could have dealt with these tasks so far. In order to carry out our mission here more effectively and substantially, we have to know ourselves first and foremost. It is just for these reasons that, in my thesis, I have allotted a substantial portion to the historical considerations, somewhat consistently, about Christianity in Japan.

With regard to the Japan mission in particular, some important problems that need to be improved, even though little by little, came up as urgent tasks for us today. For instance, our basic image of the propagation of Biblical messages to Japanese should be thoroughly changed. These messages should not merely be an imitation of those adopted by foreign missionaries from the old days, but with appropriate language developing a method that best fits the religious circumstances of Japan today. We should change our attitude of our missionary work as propagating some 'superior' gods to the people who live in 'undeveloped' countries. On the contrary, our churches should not remain to be only branch offices of foreign religions. They should be expected to grow out of their old style and to renew themselves as the churches for the people of Japan under their own religious and cultural circumstances.

This is nothing new to be pointed out. Yet there seems to be certain reasons why Christian missions in Japan have not been fruitful in its expansion despite a rather long history of more than 150 years even in the limited case of Protestantism. It is very certain that churches in Japan had to confront many sorts of difficulties throughout its history up

to now, but still they have not been able to walk along closely enough with the minds and hearts of the Japanese people. Churches in Japan sometimes acted only self-protectively under difficult historical circumstances and lost their proper dynamism provided in the primitive churches at the apostolic age. Keeping all these problems in mind, churches in Japan are expected to go forward in establishing the appropriate missiology. Missiology for Japan, in particular, means neither adjusting to Japanese society and culture nor being syncretized into other established religions in Japan.

Viewing the Christian population in Japan statistically, it would be possible to say that the Christian mission in Japan has been unsuccessful thus far. Most probably, Japan could not be counted as one of the Christendom even in the future. However, as has been stated above, freedom of religion is firmly guaranteed as in the article 20 of Japan's constitution. Mission (Christian) schools exist all over the country, making tremendous contributions to education in Japan. Churches have been founded one after another in different areas of Japan.²⁴⁵ Wedding ceremonies and Christmas events have become increasingly popular and accepted among the Japanese people, though without the religious elements as those of Christians. Generally speaking, Japanese people do not feel any sense of discomfort in paying visits to shrines on New Year's Day or Coming of Age Day. They are used to joining the funeral services for relatives and friends held at Buddhist temples. They do not hesitate to have Christian style wedding services held at churches or sometimes even at the ceremony hall of gorgeous hotels. It may be true to say that the Japanese people in general are comparably tolerant of religious sentiments. These facts exemplify some aspects of the secularization of Christianity in Japan.

²⁴⁵ See, Nihon kirisutokyodan, 日本基督教団年鑑, 224. There are 1,711 churches in sum which belong to UCCJ, according to the statistics of 2011.

In Western countries, both modernization and secularization of religions were realized when people began to think for themselves by means of their own reason instead of religion, being stimulated by the rise of the so-called Enlightenment and idealism. In the case of Japan, modernization seems to have been rapidly promoted in terms of industrialization and urbanization, but not much so in terms of secularization of religion. Regarding these problems of modernization and secularization of Japan, Mitsumasa Ueda pointed out that “(These two) still remained to be only those with no Reformation and with no Renaissance, retaining old and traditional religious ideas unique in Japan.”²⁴⁶

It is certain that economically Japan grew rapidly, and surprisingly enough after World War II, but it could not attain the high degree of reformation and democratization as seen in Western countries. The *Ten'no* system, which was retained even after the War, might have caused this historical phenomenon. India could achieve, to some extent, its purpose to build up democratic systems of their own after independence from England, and China chose quite a different way from other colonial countries to build a socialist republic against Western imperialism. While in Japan, its cultural and religious identities based on Shintoism or Buddhism were retained as they were in the former days, even up to now when modernization has already been achieved to some extent.²⁴⁷ Japan seemed to have been successful in modernizing itself while somehow doing away with Christianity. The *Ten'no* system was retained, though only as a symbol, even after World

²⁴⁶ Mitsumasa Ueda, *日本の伝道を考える I: 日本人の宗教性とキリスト教* (Reflections upon Japan Mission I: Religious Sentiments of Japanese People and Christianity) (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 2015), 24.

²⁴⁷ David J. Bosch, *宣教のパラダイム転換 下: 啓蒙主義から 21 世紀に向けて* (Transforming Mission Paradigm shift in Theology of Mission, Part 2), ed. trans. Tokyo Mission Kenkyujo (Tokyo: Shinkyo shuppansha, 2007), 19. Bosche's book was translated into Japanese in 2007, and there in its preface, Robert Lee points out most persuasively about Japan's religious situations in those days as has been stated here.

War II in Japan, as found in the very first article of Japan's Constitution:

The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.

It is well known that the *Ten'no* system had been once closely bound with the specific religion of Shintoism as a Japan's national religion especially after Meiji Restoration. Military forces at times tried to make the most use of this *Ten'no* system for its governmental administration. Christian churches in Japan almost necessarily had to confront the military forces face to face. Various sorts of persecutions were faced by the Christians who tried to resist these military powers. Christianity in Japan fell into an unendurable crisis. After the War, the Emperor system became completely symbolic, but people's religious sentiments attached to the system still remain in the minds and hearts of Japanese people even to this day. Certainly, it is one of the most urgent tasks for us to deal with these problems more seriously, whenever we try to carry out our missions here in Japan in the present context.²⁴⁸

Religious Sentiments of Japanese People viewed from Statistics

With regard to the religious sentiments of Japanese people, Ishii Kenji's survey is

²⁴⁸ See, Tokyo Mission Kenkyujo, ed., *天皇制の検証: 日本宣教における不可避な課題* (Reviewing the Ten'no System: Inevitable Tasks for Japan Mission) (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 1991), 159. With regard to *Ten'no* system in Japan, see, Akio Dohi, *天皇とキリスト: 近現代天皇制とキリスト教の教会史的考察* (*Ten'no and Christ: Historical Considerations of Recent and Modern Ten'no System and Christianity*) (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2012). Takeshi Hara, *昭和天皇実録を読む* (Reading the Historical Documents about the Emperor Showa) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2015).

very suggestive and useful.²⁴⁹ Regrettably, he does not refer directly to Shintoism as a national religion under the *Ten'no* system in Japan. Shintoism dealt here in the survey only in limited terms as a denominational one among other religions.²⁵⁰

Statistics for five years from 1946 to 1951 show that 56.4 to 71.2% of the population of Japan said “Yes” to the questionnaire as to the question: “Do you have a specific religion or not?”²⁵¹ According to Ishii’s analysis as shown below on Table 2, those who have specific religion(s) have been decreasing from 60% down to 30% among the whole population of Japan in the 60 years immediately from the time after World War II. In other words, I presume that almost 30% of the whole population of Japan have their own religions at the present. However, this is only 7 to 9% among those belonging to specific religious organizations. This means that all the other people do not belong to any religious organizations in particular, even though they may have their own beliefs in their hearts. Among those who said “Yes” are those affiliated with Shintoism, Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions. There are some others who said, “I don’t know.” The total percentages of the people who said “Yes” went over 100% in number. It is of no doubt that the same person could have more than two religions. He/She could have both Shintoism and Buddhism as his/her religion at the same time in Japan. This phenomenon

²⁴⁹ Kenji Ishii, ed., “世論調査による日本人の宗教性の調査研究 (Research Studies about Religiosity of Japanese People viewed from the Public Opinion Polls,)” (Tokyo:Kokugakuin Daigaku, 2011). This research program was carried out under the sponsorship of the ministry of education of Japan, firstly as “日本人の宗教意識・神観念に関する世論調査 (Religious Sentiments and the Concepts of Divinity, viewed from the Public Opinion Polls,)” in 2008 (1,339 respondents), and secondly as “日本人の宗教団体に対する関与・認知・評価に関する世論調査 (Participation, Recognition, and Evaluation toward Japanese Religious Organizations, viewed from the Public Opinion Polls,)” in 2009 (1,362 respondents).

²⁵⁰ See, Ibid., 26, and 29. Here in Ishii’s research, Shintoism, Buddhism, Christianity, and other religions in Japan are dealt with. He deals also with some other so-called ‘new religions.’

²⁵¹ See, Ibid, 8-9. According to the research by Jiji Press, the respondents who said “Yes” to this questionnaire came up to be 56.4 - 71.2% of the whole.

concerning religious sentiments is common to almost all the people of Japan even today.

The Christian population remains to be only 2.2% on Table 2 as shown below.²⁵²

Table 2

Q: question, SQ: sub-question.	2003	2008
Q7 Ratio of the people who have any specific religion as a whole	29.1%	27.8%
SQ Ratio of Christians among them	7.7%	7.8%
Ratio of Christians among the whole population of Japan	2.2%	2.2%
Q10 Ratio of the people who belong to any specific religious organizations	8.8%	6.8%
SQ Ratio of Christians among them	12.9%	N/A

Table 3

Q: question, SQ: sub-question.	1999	2004	2009
Q5 When do you pay a visit to the shrines? New Year's day (At the beginning of the new year)	70.1%	69.5%	74.9%
Q6 When do you pay a visit to the Buddhist temples? Bon Festival or Higan week	56.4%	55.0%	56.8%
Q7 Ratio of the people who have any specific religion as a whole	27.0%	27.7%	27.8%
SQ Ratio of Christians among them	7.2%	6.0%	7.1%
Ratio of Christians among the whole population of Japan	1.9%	1.7%	2.0%
Q11 Do you feel that Christianity (Christian church) is trustworthy?			
I feel it fully trustworthy.	4.5%	3.6%	4.6%
I feel it trustworthy in some degree.	25.2%	35.1%	35.5%
I do not feel it so trustworthy.	19.5%	24.0%	22.9%
I can't feel it is trustworthy.	17.1%	13.1%	12.6%
I have no idea about it.	33.8%	24.3%	24.4%

²⁵² Ibid., 25-26.

As seen in the Table 3,²⁵³ there seem to have been considerable changes in the percentages of people who feel Christianity is trustworthy in 2004. The effects of the so-called “9.11 attacks” in 2001 and thereafter may have caused these changes within the churches and Christianity in Japan. In Japan, a horrible event occurred in 1995, as sarin was scattered on subway trains in Tokyo by the *Aum-Shinrikyo* cult group. It is well known among us that 13 people died and more than 6,000 people were injured by this heinous crime. Afterwards, people began to be wary of any sort of religious movements and didn’t feel comfortable sending their children to Sunday school at churches. Up until then, almost all the churches in Japan were filled with children, because church activities were highly regarded for the religious and moral education of the young people. In most of the churches, figures of children tended to disappear. The Christian population itself has been decreasing even today.

Finally, let me introduce two sorts of phenomena as typical examples of the religious sentiments of Japanese people. Almost 30% of the test subjects have religion(s) of their own. Seventy percent of them would pay a visit to shrine(s) on New Year’s Day, and 50% of them would not hesitate to visit Buddhist temple(s) also. In most of the cases, they think that they would like to join the traditional events or festivals only as customs with no religious elements. They may feel it to be only as a social obligation. Sometimes, they may feel it necessary to join the household religion as a member of their family. Here are some of the characteristics of religious sentiments of the Japanese people.

According to Ishida Manabu’s analysis, there are three main characteristics of

²⁵³ Ibid., 28, 30-31. Table 3 shows the results of a survey in regard to concerns, recognitions, and evaluations of Japanese people toward religious organizations. Research was carried out 3 times over 10 years, i.e., in 1999, 2004, and 2009.

religious sentiments of Japanese people, as shown in the following themes.²⁵⁴ (1) Relationship to their ancestors' spirit: It is extremely important for them to respect their ancestors' spirit. Ancestor worship has been deeply permeated into their spiritual mind even today. (2) Concept of impurity and purification: To Japanese people in general, a sin comes from each individual behavior, and there is no such idea of original sin as seen in Christianity. There is no such idea of forgiving of sin as in Christianity, but specific ceremony for one's purification is emphasized. When people happened to be defiled, they should and could be purified from their impurity by specific ceremonies of purification held at shrines. (3) Benevolence of god(s) and cursing: People pay a visit to the shrine on New Year's Day, and say a prayer for their peace and happiness for the new year. When their wishes are fulfilled, they return to the shrines or temples to offer thanks. Various spirits in nature might cause them to meet misfortunes, whenever they may contact them thoughtlessly. It would be enough for them to entertain cordially once or twice a year. Ordinarily these spirits should, or could be, hidden deep in a back room of the shrine.

Ishida continues to say as follows:

Not a few Japanese people used to say, 'I am not concerned with any religion.' And they say also, 'I am an atheist.' They seem to believe that it is good for them to have no concerns with any sorts of religions, while sticking to being an atheist. To them, it is only necessary to have religion at times of difficulties or when there are any sorts of suffering in their life. They feel that they are happy enough in so far as they do not feel it necessary to be conscious about god(s) in their everyday life.²⁵⁵

As has been stated above, there seems to be a great difference between Christian

²⁵⁴ Ishida, 15-17.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 18 (trans. Kondo.)

and traditional Japanese religious sentiments such as that seen in Shintoism or Buddhism. The most difficult task of Christian mission lies, I believe, right at this point in such problems which we have to confront with face to face. In the whole process of our missionary activities in Japan, it is certainly one of the most urgent tasks for us to adequately understand these religious sentiments of the Japanese people and to take them seriously. Also, we need to know whether this sort of Japanese religious sentiment would be simply a phenomenon only in Japanese society. What are the realities in the cases of other polytheistic societies around the world? And how could Christianity confront these polytheistic religious sentiments of the Japanese people?

I do not believe that any missionary activities without the full understanding of the essence of the religious sentiments of the Japanese people could ever be fruitful and successful. Unfortunately, missionary activities in Japan tended to have been carried out merely as an imposition of Christianity from above, as it were, without full knowledge of people's true nature deeply rooted in their minds and hearts. In many cases, missionaries from abroad might have been possessed with an idea that Christianity was a religion completed in itself. However, Christianity itself was given birth in the Middle East, and then expanded far into the European countries, being changed and transformed in both form and content, including through the Reformation. It would be very natural that the Christianity of Japan could not help but experience constant changes in confronting a different culture and traditions from its origin. God has been still working alive even today, as it has ever been so. In this sense, Christianity is still on its way to completion, in so far as God works alive for the fulfillment of his salvation in history. It is necessary for us to reconfirm our faith as one of the co-workers with this God who works alive

throughout the history. Even under totally different cultures and traditions, all the missionaries who were called to be messengers of the Gospel are expected to “become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some” (I Cor.9:22), as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church.

Suggestions and Proposals for the Probable Missiology in Japan

Missiology Reconsidered at the Present Context and the Future

Throughout the entire history of the Christian mission in Japan, there were golden opportunities that came its way at least three times. The first was the missionary activities by Xavier in 16th century. Without him the Japanese people might have never been affected by Christianity as much as they are today. The second was those missionary activities which were carried out in Japan along with the policy of Westernization of the government at the period of Meiji Restoration in the latter half of 19th century. The third one came at the period of the so-called ‘Christianity boom’ immediately after World War II ended in a catastrophic defeat for the Japanese. In all of these three periods, there occurred great and rapid changes, almost beyond imagination, in the social structure of Japan. Christianity was brought forth to Japan in the midst of these radical social changes. In other words, there seemed to be no room for Christianity to be accepted by people in so far as Japanese society could secure its stability both socially and historically.

By the time it was brought to Japan, Christianity already had a history of more than a thousand years as a firm basis of social structure in not a few European countries. To the Japanese people, it was almost inevitable that they would feel cultural conflicts in accepting Christianity as that of a foreign religion. Furthermore, many governmental

leaders of Japan at that time already knew that European forces had attempted to colonize some undeveloped countries in Asia and Africa. Naturally, their wariness toward missionaries from abroad, and against Christianity itself, increased. They feared that Japan's identity itself might be deprived by the introduction of Christianity into Japan. It was considered unavoidable in Japan's history that the harsh persecutions of the *Kirishitans* occurred. In a while, expulsion movements of the foreigners and policy of national seclusion followed.

Soon after the Meiji Restoration, this national seclusion policy was lifted, and Japan became rapidly westernized. As a result, Christianity tended to be expanded and became more and more popular in Japan. At the same time, there also appeared some extreme nationalists backed by traditional Japanese culture and religion, with Shintoism in particular, who were against those who favorably received Western culture and tradition along with Christianity. As it is well known, in the first half of 20th century, Japan attempted to invade other Asian countries by means of military force in order to rank with various European/American countries.

Almost the same structure in regard to the Japan mission could be recognized in the way that Christianity was brought forth to Japan by the Westerners. In many cases, those missionaries sent forth to the countries in Asia, Africa, and others, including Japan, believed that Christianity had already achieved its completion, having been already established in the world. It is of no doubt that these somewhat arrogant and overconfident attitudes of the Westerners in their missionary activities in Japan wounded the people's minds and eventually provoked antipathy toward Christianity itself. As has been stated so far, Christian mission to the countries abroad has been severely criticized among scholars,

emphasizing that it tended to be carried out from the view point of a ‘superior’ and ‘upper’ culture, value, and religion looking down on the ‘inferior’ and ‘poor’ ones. Wilbert R. Shenk points this out, interestingly enough, as follows:

It is well known that Christian mission to the people in Latin America, Africa, and Asia deviated radically the messages of Jesus Christ to the humankind, and that it stirred up the fire even more against the tense relationship between the Western churches and other ones.²⁵⁶

Christian mission, by those missionaries sent from the countries where Christianity had already been established as a majority, may contain in itself a sort of a problem. Most of the missionaries from Western countries were from these mainstream Christian societies. Their missionary activities could not be adapted sufficiently enough to be accepted by indigenous people where Christianity remained within minority groups from the religious point of view. At times, they managed anyhow to make Christianity become mainstream in Japanese religious society, and churches in Japan tried to work hard by responding to these needs seriously and faithfully. As a result, not a few Japanese churches preferred to stand at the side of the majority together with Buddhist temples and shrines of Shintoism. They eventually cooperated with the national policies of Japan even at those critical periods of World Wars I and II. Manabu Ishida points this out as follows, by analyzing the situation of Christianity in Japan in such a way that there might have been one of characteristic theological and social elements affected by Western Christianity.

²⁵⁶ Wilbert R. Shenk, “日本語版への補遺 (Addendum for Japanese Version,)” in David J. Bosch, *宣教のパラダイム転換, 下: 啓蒙主義から 21 世紀に向けて* (Transforming Mission Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, part 2,) trans. Tokyo Mission Kenkyujo (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppansha, 2007), 452 (trans. Kondo).

The West European countries were Christianized rapidly after the Edict of Milan was issued in 313, and in 392 Christianity was recognized officially as the state religion/church of the Roman Empire. Only within several decades of years after the period of persecutions the Roman Empire as a whole was transfigured into the state of Christendom.²⁵⁷

Under these historical circumstances, most of the missionaries sent forth to the countries abroad, including Japan, aimed to carry out their mission only for establishing Christendom at their mission lands. But it goes without saying that both Jesus himself and the apostle Paul had no such ideas of establishing Christendom everywhere around them by means of their own missionary activities. By no means so! However, temptations were indeed almost irresistible for those missionaries to go along with the current of the times under the regime of the Roman Empire where the state makes use of religion, and religion does the same to the state. In many cases, they were easily tempted to fall into self-protection and hypocrisy without any sense of serving others as their neighbors. We should never forget that each one of us is called by God only for the purpose of conveying the Gospel messages to the whole world, while participating in the Missio Day as missionaries together.

As has been stated above, from a historical point of view, it was only because Japan felt anxious of being colonized, and, in the future, the social structure being changed against their will that they tried to exclude Christianity from their domain. Furthermore, recently, there are some common feelings among Japanese people that justice cannot be achieved merely by Christian terminology. Some think that the wars and struggles which have lasted almost uninterruptedly in the worldwide context might have been possibly caused by intolerable ideas of Christian monotheism and the like. And if it

²⁵⁷ Ishida, 21-22.

is true to say that the justice or an absolute truth of Christianity “deviated the fundamental message of Jesus Christ from its proper meaning,”²⁵⁸ not only Christianity, of course, but also religions in general might easily lose people’s confidence, while leaving them untouched by the true message of the Bible or those of the other religious teachings.

In fact, Christianity imported from Western countries has nowadays been losing its priority among the world religions from the point of view of the ratio among religious populations. Regarding these tendencies, Wilbert Shenk pointed out adequately that “the majority of the Christians are resident today in various countries other than in those of the West.”²⁵⁹

Under these religious situations, I would like to say that Christianity in the West now needs to learn the manner and way of mission most sincerely from those in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is one of the most urgent tasks for us today to meet face to face with the most basic challenge of “What is Christianity?” and “How could (Christian) mission in Japan be defined at the present context?”

The Apostle Paul carried out his mission to the Gentiles rather than to his fellow Jews. He often criticized the strict and obstinate single-mindedness of Jewish Christians for sticking to Jewish laws. As a result of the efforts of leaders in the early church, including Paul, Christians who were only minorities at the beginning soon became the majority in society. Twenty centuries after Paul and the primitive churches, heated discussions in churches and in Christianity shifted from the distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, or between people who carry out missionary activities and those who

²⁵⁸ Shenk, 445.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 445.

receive the messages conveyed by these missionaries, to discussions about radicals and conservatives among Christians. Different ideas or themes have been discussed among various denominations of churches on a worldwide basis. Concerns with other religions, such as Buddhism, Shintoism, and others, have been raised increasingly today. We may refer to these moves as a sort of a 'paradigm shift' occurring in Christian mission today.²⁶⁰ Let us here, in this context, reconfirm the fact that Christianity has not yet been established and completed ever by itself, but rather that it has been transforming always both in its form and contents, together with its proper divine messages to the people as the Words of living God.

The term 'mission' was derived from '*missio*' in Latin, and meant something like 'letting go,' 'sending away,' or 'dispatching.'²⁶¹ It is supposed to have been used among Christian leaders in the sense that the prophets of the Old Testament or the disciples of Jesus in the New Testament were sent forth to various places for their missionary activities while being inspired by the divine calling. But soon after the Reformation in the 16th century, its connotation was gradually displaced by the expansion of the territories of Christianity to the whole world. Various denominations, not merely Catholic but also Protestant, tried to achieve the most successful results in their missionary works. Missionaries were sent to almost every country in the world where they baptized the people. Not a few missionaries among them might have intended to establish Christendom by their missionary activities on the worldwide basis. These missionaries accepted, with no doubt, their calling in the literal sense in Jesus' words as in Matthew

²⁶⁰ See, David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 421. According to Bosch, "Mission and evangelism are not synonyms but, nevertheless, indissolubly linked together and inextricably interwoven in theology and praxis." He tries to define evangelism in various manners far up to 18 items in sum.

²⁶¹ Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1151.

28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Missionaries from the Western countries had been sent to the world throughout the ages of the Discovery and those of Imperialism, and Christianity became, as a result, one of the world religions. Today in the 21st century, there seems to be almost no land where Christianity has yet set foot. The meanings and contents of mission have been radically changed. Accordingly, the proper tasks of mission should rather be concentrated not in sowing the seeds of the Gospels into the new lands, but in protecting those seeds already sown, raising and nourishing them most properly right at the present context. Moreover, it should never be forgotten that even in the so-called Christendom there are still many non-Christians today. In other words, people of the Christendom are not always Christians. Today, the huge waves of globalization covering the world as a whole, with the result of rapid development of transportation and communication systems, are enticing the world into a complicated multi-plural society. Also, everybody knows that such a simple and outdated structure of one nation with only one culture and one religion does not work any longer, in Western countries in particular.

In response to these tendencies and in seeking the new paradigm of mission, two outstanding documents were published from the point of view of ecumenism. One is “*Evangelii Nuntiandi*” (1975) [EN] by Pope Paul VI, and the other is “Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation” (1982) [ME] issued by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. These documents contain some remarkable proposals with regard to not only “the people who are not Christians” but also “the people who are no longer Christians.” Ecumenical movements do not remain merely

between various Christian denominations, but nowadays ardent dialogues, even among various other religions, also have been started. It would be useful and necessary for us to reconfirm our future missionary prospect in response to these new moves of Christian mission right from the point of view of our ‘missiology.’²⁶²

These moves necessarily urge us to the most fundamental question of “What is Christianity?” and “What is mission?” Today we need to ask most seriously such questions as “Why do we work as missionaries or pastors in the present context?” and “How could we convey our gospel messages most properly for the people who live their lives today?” Bosch criticized the Japan mission at present somewhat harshly, in saying that “mission was only what Western missionaries were doing by way of saving souls, planting churches, and imposing their ways and wills on others.”²⁶³

How can we overcome Bosch’s criticism against the Japanese way of mission? It goes without saying that missionary works should be carried out independently and with self-support and that the works should be done with ‘missiology Japan proper,’ not by some borrowed one or only an imitation of the Western style of mission. How could we establish this sort of ‘missiology Japan proper’ both theologically and missiologically?

In fact, there are only a few textbooks available to met the actual needs of the students in theological schools in Japan. The reason might be simply that churches in

²⁶² See, Kenji Kanda and Yoshifumi Murase, ed., *宗教間対話と共生のために: エキュメニカルな指針* (For the Dialogues and Mutualisms between Religions: Ecumenical Guideline) (Tokyo: Shinkyo-shuppansha, 2006.) With regards to these dialogues between different religions, Kenji Kanda and Yoshifumi Murase provide us with excellent analyses in relation to recent ecumenical movements. Kanda and Murase translated the three basic documents about the dialogues between religions at WCC, titled as (1) Ecumenical Considerations for Dialogue and Relationship with People of Other Religions, issued in 2003, Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations : Ecumenical Considerations, issued in 1992, and Ecumenical Considerations on Jewish-Christian Dialogue, issued in 1982, all of which are extremely important and suggestive in considering the themes of recent missiological and theological problems.

²⁶³ Bosch, 531.

Japan tended to have been relying too much on the Western style of missiology, and that they tended to neglect to pursue seriously how to carry out their mission for Japan and the Japanese people within their own cultural and religious climate. It is no doubt that theological knowledge acquired from the West could not necessarily be adapted or accommodated for the Japanese people. There might have been some prejudice among the people in the sense that the true messages of the Gospel were quite incompatible with the cultural and religious climates of Japan. It is only when such narrow-mindedness is conquered once and for all that the new possibilities of Japan missiology could be opened up both at present and in the future.

Possibilities of Japan-mission as a Creative Minority

So far up to now, I have been discussing something about the problems of Westernized Christianity in Japan along with its rather harmful effects of expansionism, but only in order to find out some more effective and new possibilities of mission in Japan. For this purpose, I tried to trace the history of the Japan mission in some more details, cited its examples of success and failure, and also managed to face seriously the problem of "What is mission?" Here in the final chapter of my thesis, I would like to introduce some practical examples as those of challenges for mission during my pastoral works. Even though the churches in Japan remain a minor group compared to other major religious bodies, they could surely send out the most persuasive messages to the people who are in need even today and in the future. Churches in Japan could be a creative minority even in the critical situations where they are placed.

During the whole course of my pastorage, my main concern was on the theme of

“How and in what degree could I contribute to Japanese society as a whole?” and of “How could I become a neighbor for all the people whom I happened to meet, whoever they may be, and whichever social status they may belong to, beyond all the differences of their social status, sex, and so on?” With no doubt, Christian population remain to be undeniably and miserably few, if compared to the other major religious organizations of Japan, such as Buddhism or Shintoism, even including some other so-called new religions. But we do not always need to lose confidence because of those superficial statistics in our pastoral and missionary activities. Statistics might easily lead us to desperate feelings of loss and failures even in the midst of our pastoral works. Here at this point, the concept of ‘creative minority’ in our actual Christian mission could surely be in the forefront. This concept, I believe, was already exemplified in the parables of Jesus, such as those of ‘the seed sown on the good soil’ as in Matthew 13:1-9, and also of ‘the mustard seed’ and ‘the leaven’ in Matthew 13:31-33. These gospel messages show us the fact that the words of God bear fruits of their own most creatively and with certainty in spite of its smallness and minority. How could this faith be activated in our actual missionary and pastoral works?

I had served the Uwajima Shin’ai Church, one of the UCCJ churches, as a lead pastor from 2007 to 2011. This church was founded in 1888, soon after Protestant mission started in Japan. It was one of the local churches which was typical in its smallness and locality. Throughout the seven years of my pastorage there at Shin’ai, attendants of every Sunday worship service remained only fewer than 20. There were huge Buddhist temples and shrines around the church area, firmly indigenized and influential, and a great majority of the people of Uwajima used to gather together at every

annual festival. There seemed to be no extra space for the church to make an inroad into this sort of religious atmosphere there around. However, some of the senior pastors and missionaries continued to sow seeds of the Gospels for more than 130 years or so up until today. There were almost no vehicles other than horses or Rickshaws in those days, so most of them had to reach their mission land on foot all the way far from a long distance. Sometimes people had to rely on a sea trip, which was more dangerous to them. Today, it takes only one hour and a half by car by the way of express road in order to reach Uwajima from Matsuyama, but in the days of old, people were often forced to stay overnight on the way without lodging places to rest.

Under these difficult situations for mission, the words of “*Yamaji-koete*” (山路越えて, Far beyond the Mountain Path,) one of the most popular and favorite hymnals among us Japanese Christians even today, was written by Sugao Nishimura in February 1903 on his way to Uwajima from Matsuyama. He was struggling to walk on foot through a narrow and steep mountain road at sundown, and began to feel very anxious. Then he recalled the tune of “Golden Hill” which he loved very much at the time. It is said that he could almost spontaneously write the lyrics of the hymnal verse by verse as follows.²⁶⁴

- Verse 1 Though walking alone through the steep mountain path,
 I feel quite at ease and peaceful in my mind.
- Verse 4 As the path is too steep and narrow,
 The destination of my journey is too far from here.
 When can I reach the land of my mission?

²⁶⁴ Nihon Kirisutokyodan Sanbika-iinkai, ed., 讚美歌 21, 466 (The Hymnals 21, 466) (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisutokyodan Shuppanyoku, 1999), 769 (trans. Kondo). See, edited by the same, 讚美歌略解 (An Exposition of the Hymnals) (Tokyo: Nihon Kirisutokyodan Shuppanyoku, 1998), 292-293. In 1953, a monument of this hymnal was built in memory of Nishimura, right on the road side of Hoketsu Pass where he wrote this hymnal words.

Verse 5 But, I pray to Thee, O Lord!
My journey may come to an end very soon safely.

The main church activities of Shin'ai were carried out by worship service on every Sunday and Bible study meeting held once a week. On one occasion, one of the women members of the church, who happened to retire from the chorus group of the city, requested to start the choir group at Shin'ai Church. Members of the choir group were pleased to gather together once a month, and had choir practices most ardently at the church hall. Every time, I tried to give a brief comment to explain the meanings of the hymnal words, citing from the Bible texts, and at the end of every choir meeting I used to pray for the people there, though most of them were non-Christians. Members of the choir group increased, though only gradually, and numbers of the people gathered for choir practice at church often multiplied even beyond those of attendants at Sunday worship services. After the choir meeting, we used to have a fellowship hour, enjoying tea time together. When we planned to have an organ concert at the church hall, they were pleased to join us by singing the hymns together with our church members. Furthermore, they participated in the special concert held at Matsuyama district prison where I had served as a prison chaplain.

There at Matsuyama prison, I was given precious opportunities to speak to the prisoners, who were confined in prison, as a chaplain twice a month. In most of the cases, prison chaplains used to be sent to each prison in Japan, and I was appointed as one of these prison chaplains. At times, I was requested to play the role of counselor for the prisoners. As a Christian chaplain, I could hold both Easter and Christmas services there in the prison every year. Thanks to these works as a chaplain, I could get in touch with

those people who were confined in prison for various and sometimes unknown reasons. I found out that almost all of them needed to be taken care of by specialists trained enough both in terms of counseling techniques and of pasturing minds for all of these people in urgent spiritual needs.

Once, I undertook the role of a conservator for one of my church members who was then without a single personal connection. As is well known, the number of old people who die alone without anybody knowing is increasing even here in Japan. The problem has become all the more a serious and urgent one. As a pastor, I was expected to keep her public pension and to pay her expenses in order that she may manage to live her everyday life more safely. In so far as every one of my congregation may be regarded as our father or mother or brother/sister for one another, all of us should become a guarantor for each other in the church fellowship. I tried to encourage my church members to join this assisting program for the old people who were in urgent needs in their everyday life. We should always keep it in mind that it was Jesus himself who walked along close to the people who were estranged from society alone by themselves.

Once a year I joined one of the study groups which tried to cope with a problem of *Buraku* discrimination hosted both by local government and churches nearby, and pursued the basic problems of discrimination which still remain deeply entrenched in Japanese society. Other than the problem of *Buraku* discrimination, there is another type of social discrimination among us the Japanese, i.e., that of against *Zainichi* Koreans (在日本韩国朝鮮人) which means Koreans with permanent residence in Japan. Both of these systems of discrimination in Japan have somewhat unique and regrettable historical backgrounds of their own to us Japanese people.

The Pine UMC where I had served for 5 years declared to be a ‘reconciling church’ as its motto in 1994 and thereafter, and coped with such problems as equalities among races, sexes, colors of skin, social minorities as found in the problems faced by LGBT persons, and so on. We are sharing those problems with each other here also in Japan. It is very necessary for us to have interests and concerns for these problems, while making every effort to promote more effective and concrete mission policies for this purpose. We need to reconfirm the fact that almost innumerable numbers of women missionaries came here to Japan all the way from abroad, even without knowing their destination. They tried to devote themselves in conveying the Gospel messages at the risk of their lives, and dedicated their missionary works for Japanese women and children who were the socially disadvantaged people at the time. I would like to share this sort of enthusiasm in my pastoral activities here in Japan that those women missionaries had in those days.

Finally, I would like to introduce here one of my challenges while having been engaged in my pastoral career at Shin’ai Church. I tried to have an open-house meeting once a month for young people in the neighborhood. More than 20 people, including their children, gathered together every time. All of them seemed to have very much enjoyed the fellowship with each other, sometimes working together for the various events at my church. Their children also enjoyed setting up Christmas decorations. At least three couples were formed through this fellowship, and let their children enter the UCCJ’s kindergarten located in the area, hoping that they would be educated under Christian ideals. They were not necessarily Christians, but they seemed to have found their own identity through these fellowship meetings in a Christian atmosphere. I believe that the doors of churches should be always kept open for the people to enter through these doors,

whenever they want to. Christianity should never be confined only in closed community, sticking to the narrow-mindedness of self-protective dogmatism which led to the idea of exclusionism in the history of Christianity.

Shin'ai Church was one of the typical small local churches in Japan, and it would be almost impossible for the church to carry out its mission successfully and effectively alone by itself. However, only if each one of the members of the church could be sent to their own homes, to their schools, to their workplaces, and everywhere else with a sense of their own mission, the Holy Spirit would surely work together with them, allowing them to bear fruits abundantly. This sort of mission was not merely a future ideal but had already been activated most successfully in the primitive churches 2,000 years ago.

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.²⁶⁵

After all, Japan mission initiated by Xavier could have been successful only when missionaries and pastors tried to make steady and serious efforts in order that they might be able to build full relationship of trust in their neighborhood. Most of the people who gathered at churches in Japan only in the period of the so-called 'Christianity booms,' which occurred rather frequently in religious history of Japan, disappeared from churches very soon. According to the statistics, the numbers of Christians who belong to UCCJ are 171,690 in 2015, but average attendants of every Sunday worship service remain to be only 52,913. 57,223 do not seem to live a Christian life. This fact means that only 30.8% of UCCJ Christians attends every Sunday service but the rest of them are not very much

²⁶⁵ Acts 2:46-47.

faithful as Christians in their everyday life.²⁶⁶ This statistical phenomenon with regard to the Christian population in Japan may be more or less common in other denominations in Japan.

Now I have been serving Kobe Tamon Church which belongs to UCCJ as a lead pastor, after having resigned from Pine UMC in San Francisco, and my title changed as a pastor instead of a missionary. But the quality of my missionary works is not quite different from the period when I served as a missionary for Pine Church. My basic mission is to meet face to face with those people who need pastoral and spiritual cares for them at any time. I will have to convey the Gospel messages most adequately in response to their needs. In this sense, I believe that it is very necessary for us pastors to take upon ourselves the responsibilities of mission as missionaries. Throughout the whole of my investigations so far up to now, every one of those missionaries who dared to devote themselves in the Japan mission gave me the most precious and unforgettable suggestions for my present and future mission as a pastor.

²⁶⁶ Nihon Kirisutokyodan Jimukyoku, 日本基督教団年鑑, 224.

Conclusion

So far in my thesis, I have attempted to discuss a variety of topics concerning the future possibilities of the Christian mission in Japan. In tracing the history of Christianity from its very beginning and opening act by Xavier in 1549 up to today, I've included the introduction of Protestantism to Japan in 1859 by Protestant missionaries from abroad.

As I have previously stated, it is no doubt that the principle of "*accomodatio*," which Xavier and Valignano established in their missionary activities in Japan, contributed immeasurably to the Japan mission. They dared to wear Japanese kimonos, ate Japanese food, and learned the Japanese language most earnestly. They tried to raise Japanese young men to become Jesuits. On the contrary, Cabral often treated Japanese people with contempt, sticking to the old-fashioned missionary traditions of his own. He could not accept that the Japanese people might become Jesuits. To him, it was of no use for the missionaries from abroad to learn the Japanese language. If it were not for the fact that Valignano relieved Cabral of his post, any missionary activity in Japan might have necessarily and fatally been frustrated in history even before the Edict of Christianity was issued.

Valignano and his friends tried to get away from the mere opportunism which tended to be dominant among other missionaries in those days, and insisted on missions proper for the Japanese people instead. Their mission policies were focused on those of accommodation, adaptation, indigenization, and enculturation even under Japan's unique

and complex religious circumstances. Their great contributions to the history of Christianity in Japan should be re-evaluated again even in our present context, in order that we may find some important clues for our future missionary activities in Japan. They were not at all pretentious or opportunistic in their missionary activities but were most sincere and honest among the people of Japan. This sort of sincerity and honesty verified in their missionary attitudes must have been the very reason why a great number of Japanese people at the time accepted Christianity as their faith within a comparatively short period of time. Christian mission as only a predecessor of colonialism could never lead to successful results. It was very fortunate and happy for us, the Japanese people, to have had these great missionaries from the Jesuit community in our country. Indeed, colonialism continued to be dangerous temptations for the mission lands everywhere in the world throughout world history.

One of the basic motivations of my thesis about the Christian mission in Japan was the rather simple one as stated in my Introduction. After more than five hundred years, why does the number of Christians in Japan still remain so few, at less than one percent, despite enthusiastic missionary activity? Was it due to possible mismatches between missionaries from abroad and the peoples in their mission land? Or was it due to some failure in the policies or methodology of the Christian mission here in Japan?

Researchers tend to analyze this statistical phenomenon by assuming that the attempts of a Christian mission in Japan resulted in failure and were unsuccessful as a whole. Yet I wonder if these analyses are adequate and agreeable in a true sense of the term.

While having been engaged in pastoral works, both in churches in Japan and in San

Francisco, I have been gradually inclined to think that the real meaning of Christian mission may not necessarily depend on the surface numbers and quantity of churches or Christians but on their quality itself. Unless we stand firmly on this perspective as to the Christian mission in Japan, we would easily be lost in a maze in our missionary works at the present and also in the future. In fact, soon after Christianity became a so-called 'national religion' under the Roman rule, it degenerated quickly losing its basic and primary religious functions. It is certain that Christianity expanded rapidly in the vast areas in European countries on a worldwide basis. The Christian population increased almost in haste in the vast areas of colonized countries, even in Asia and Africa. Still, is it true that the Christian mission could bear fruits successfully in its true sense of the term? I do not think so. Nowadays it has been made known, though only gradually, that augmentation of the increase of the Christian population itself did not necessarily lead to substantial and successful results of our Christian mission.

Christians, with no exception of pastors or missionaries, are expected to play the most adequate role as 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' in a strict sense of the term. The proper task of a Christian mission is nothing other than reconfirming this fact in the present context. I dare to say also that the Christian faith should not be confined simply in the sphere of individualism. The idea of being a chosen nation would be out of the question in regard to somewhat arrogant feelings in the sense that Christians might be superior to any other people of different faiths or religions. Our Christian faith requires us to serve others as our own neighbors whoever they may be, beyond every kind of difference, even those of nationality, race, sex, color of skin, and so on. After all, there is nothing more that is required of us as Christians than to love our neighbors as

ourselves. I believe that the basic task of our Christian mission is nothing other than to put this teaching of love thy neighbors into practice, both literally and substantially, as taught by Jesus, in the present multicultural age.

With reference to this, the apostle Paul points out the necessities of the ministry of reconciliation by saying, “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2Cor.5:18). In response to Christ’s intercessional works of reconciliation on the cross, we are entrusted to carry out our mission as reconciliatory to break down all walls and/or barriers that separate each from another. Paul also says as follows:

“To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law. ... To those outside the law I became as one outside the law.”²⁶⁷

Thus we should and could become as a Jew, as a Gentile, and also as a Japanese, in order to win each one of them as our true friends and neighbors, sharing with them our Christian faith beyond all sorts of differences, even beyond those of religious backgrounds. We should never lose this perspective while being engaged in our Christian mission here in Japan. The reason why I referred to, though only partly in this thesis, acceptance history of Buddhism in Japan, was nothing but for this purpose. Buddhism was surely accepted by the Japanese people in the religious history of Japan, even though it was, as it were, one of the ‘imported’ religions of Japan. Surely there are important clues and hints for us Christians to learn many things from this acceptance history of Buddhism.

²⁶⁷ 1 Cor. 9:20.

It is a fact, with no excuse, that Christians in Japan still remain to be only a minority group among all other traditional and comparatively large religious bodies such as Buddhism, Shintoism, and others in this country. Yet throughout the whole religious history of Japan, Christianity undoubtedly continued to play influential roles in those areas such as in education, medical care, and social welfare in Japan. Christianity in Japan has been producing excellent and significant results as the 'salt of the earth' to the contemporary scene in spite of its quantitative smallness in number.

I do not think that the Christian mission met with total failure in the religious history of Japan. On the contrary, it was rather successful and able to bear much fruit of its own in the sense of missionary activities, in one aspect or other, without being taken over by the mere colonizing forces. Colonialism was indeed one of the most dangerous temptations of the Christian mission in Japan on the one hand, and stereotyped dogmatism also was a far more dangerous temptation, a trap that people tended to fall into very easily throughout history. We have to be very careful of these two sorts of dangers and temptations in our missionary activities.

While having investigated the details of the history of the Christian mission, I came to know that one of the most urgent and necessary tasks for us is to know the limits of the expansion policy in our Christian mission. It is important to build a new and most creative paradigm for its future in line with my investigations as has been discussed in this thesis. This task will never be a simple and easy one, but I would like to pursue it further more continuously hereafter.

Eventually, what seems to be the most important themes and tasks to be investigated as to the true and appropriate missiology in our present context must depend

on whether our Christian faith may be regarded as true and sincere or not. Jesus was, without any doubt, extremely successful in his missionary activities almost everywhere in those areas where he conveyed his gospel messages. Even in the midst of numerous antagonists against him, including the leaders of Judaism under the Roman rules, his ministry grew. He was able to gather around him a great many people who sympathized with his messages. The key to this success was nothing other than the fact that he tried to meet face to face with people who were afflicted and suffered miserably, whether it was from sickness, poverty, discrimination, and whoever they may have been, even beyond all sorts of differences. In his days, he tried to live his life with those who were suffering and were afflicted. He was crucified on the cross to death, but his followers never stopped increasing thereafter, even to this day. Apostle Paul was also one of these followers who worked and served as bearers of the Gospel mission even at the risk of their lives. How could we follow these great leaders in our present context? Even today, there are surely immeasurable numbers of people who are suffering from various kinds of difficulties. How could we keep in touch with these people in our missionary activities? And how can we live a life together with those people in affliction? The roles of our Christian mission would surely be all the more important and urgent one today. There is, I believe, one of the decisive keys to find out in our present and future mission. All of us are called and invited to be bearers of these missions.

In summary, the proper tasks of our mission lie not in finding out something new or a singular idea concerning missiology, but rather simply in coming back to the original missionary and pastoral works which have been already activated by Jesus himself and his followers together with the people of the primitive churches.

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