英文書評

Yasuo Furuya, Akio Dohi, Tosio Satō, Seiichi Yagi,
and Masaya Odagaki: *Nihon Shingakusi*

(『日本神学史』 *A History of Theology in Japan*),

Tokyo: Yorudan-sha, 1992, 213pp.

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The co-authors of this book are all well-known leaders of Christian studies in present-day Japan: theologians including a church historian writing on/interpreting the history of Japanese Protestant churches; at least one is known widely outside Japan. They were first approached by a German theologian to write a part on modern Japan for a project: *Theologiegeschichte der Dritten Welt*. The part appeared in German in 1991 a year ahead. It was originally planned to appear more or less simultaneously in Japanese, English and German, but the English version is yet to come out.

At any rate this review is based on the original Japanese version. The authors first wrote chapters assigned in Japanese, and the whole book was then translated simultaneously into English by Prof. Furuya, and into German by Dr. Martin Repp. The curious situation about this book is — and one may wonder why — not only that it was first published in German (but conceived and written in Japanese) but also that we cannot see Prof. Furuya's name on the German version's title page, who had played the role of organizer/editor in Japan by writing both introduction and conclusion, both of which are substantial enough for a book of this length. Although never meant to detract even slightly the value from the present monograph, it is by no means a pioneering work on the history of Japanese theological development nor for that matter a definitive or comprehensive one. It is not the first time that such a work has been attempted, for in the past books were written on theological development in Japan such as Carl Michaelson's *Japanese Contribution to Christian Theology*, 1960, and Charles H. Germany's *Protestant Theologies in Modern Japan: A History of Dominant Currents from*

1920-1960, 1965. These were written by English-speaking scholars who had stayed in Japan and watched the growing process of Christian theology among Japanese scholars with sympathetic (nonetheless outsiders') eyes, and their accounts end by '60 at the latest more than twenty years ago.

Yositaka Kumano wrote in Japanese *Nihon Kirisutokyō Shingaku Sisōshi* (*A History of Japanese Theological Thought*), 1968. More exciting, perhaps experimental ideas have since appeared generating heated debates. This part at least down to '70s was surveyed this time by two Japanese scholars in German: Keiji Ogawa's *Die Aufgabe der neueren evangelischen Theologie in Japan*, 1965, and my own "Christologie in der japanischen Theologie der Gegenwart," (*Theologische Berichte*, 2, 1973). (See also my own "Christology and Postwar Theologians in Japan," S. Takayanagi and K. Miwa, ed, *Postwar Trends in Japan*, 1975 and four follow-up articles on the matter in *The Japan Missionary Bulletin*, September-December, 1979.)

The present book is a small book, but it not only brings nearly up-to-date the survey of theological thinking in contemporary Japan but also gives intellectual stimulation; it is a path-breaking book not by being the first book on the history of theology in Japan but by having thought-provoking nature compared with previous similar books. Prof. Furuya certainly expresses with persuasion his forthright view on necessity for "the theology of Japan" taking this "of" as having the objective function, i. e. need for making Japan as the object of theological thinking, not simply theologizing in a Japanese fashion. Thus the book, slender as it may be, is a co-operative work by the five authors with different theological positions on this common idea. The division of work was done for the practical purpose, and it is divided into four chapters each written by one of the rest with the starting point in Meiji modernization (therefore the introduction of Protestant Christianity or for Catholics the reintroduction of Christianity) ending in the past decade.

The growing tendency in the history of Japan's theological thought is

from the initial, rather insufficient understanding of credal contents, and then attempt to cope with the traditional theological set of ideas and current theological systems introduced from abroad to the final emergence of full-fledged, somewhat unique theological concepts after the World War II, when theology was well established as an academic discipline with specializations, growth of specialists engaging in these fields and a good number of specialized academic societies. As Prof. Furuya clearly suggests in his "Introduction", the entire process corresponds in Protestant terms with the reception of German theologies and liberation from what he calls "the Germanic Captivity."

The first chapter: "Christian Leaders of the Founding Era" was written by Akio Dohi, professor of Church History at Doshisha University; he takes up four early charismatic leaders of Meiji Protestantism. The internationally best-known figure is Kanzō Uchimura (1861-1930), who has founded so-called non-church movement. The three other important figures are Danjō Ebina (1856-1937), Masahisa Uemura (1858-1925) and Hiromichi Kozaki (1856-1938). They belonged to the first generation of Meiji converts and their fervor made them preachers and apologetical writers, but were originally no theologians in the strict professional sense, but the circumstances of the founding era necessitated them to reflect and write theologically. Their common backgrounds were former lower-class samurai and their Confucian ethos and deep religious experience: the spiritual crisis at the time of modernization with the debacle of old values and the discovery of Christian faith as having some equivalence with Confucianism in strong ethical demand and of the former's moral superiority.

Their theologies were born out of religious experience they had had and the practical exigency of founding days. Those were the heydays of memorable American missionaries like Leroy Janes and William S. Clark. And the impact of their strong, impressive Christian personalities bore fruits in the founding generation of Japanese Christians who were then young impressive minds. Missionaries' version of Protestantism were reflecting the condition of their home country with

emphasis on moral life and social contribution rather than on theology. According to Dohi, Christianity introduced to any country has eventually to move in the direction of founding its own independent national churches, whatever possibilities and variety of forms there may be.

Perhaps Uchimura was the only Christian leader who went through a kind of formal theological education, and Ebina the one whose speculative abundance somehow spilt over the usual limits of Christian teaching. But all these leaders had to struggle with the problem of church-founding, and for that purpose they needed theology. Uemura played the role of guardian of orthodox faith; with his faith of an evangelical brand he hotly engaged in controversies with Michitomo Kanamori (1857-1945), who was heavily inclined to the "New Theology", a Unitarian, rationalist type of theology introduced from America, with the speculative Ebina over the Trinity and theology of the Cross, and with Uchimura over ecclesiology. Dohi considers Kozaki's uniqueness consists in his final realization of Christianity as revealed religion rather than moral teaching; he also condemned the "New Theology", but it was his conclusion after establishing his own theistic evolutionism. Uchimura was a Christian leader who emphasized two J's (Jesus and Japan). Regarding Uchimura's non-church movement as the first attempt to implant Christianity in Japanese culture, Dohi regrets that Uchimura's position was ignored or spurned by other founding leaders; the prefix: "non-" of his non-church idea does not signify refusal to accept ecclesial structure, but rather it emphasizes need to transcend the church's hitherto European past.

Theological development in the subsequent forty years between 1904 and 1945 is assigned to Prof. Toshio Satō, to whom it was his youth's experience. One needs not point out that this was the period which went through the traumatic experience of two World Wars, the rise of Nazism and Communism after the Russian Revolution, in Japanese terms the rise of militaristic nationalism and expansion policy after a short span of liberal democracy, and in Christian terms competition with secularist values introduced from the West and with Marxism.

And finally Japanese Christians were increasingly more obliged to take a stand as to the nationalist concept of Japan's peculiar body politic, and some swayed their course to "Japanese theology" like their German Christian counterparts (e.g. Ebina, Kanamori, and Tokio Yokoi). According to Satō all these Christian leaders had been those who had no clear concern with the Orthodoxy, influenced by liberal theological tendency inculcated by the New Theology, or the pious Christians who thought justification of the sinners by faith would lead them to be the paragons of the Japanese spirit.

The origin of Christian socialism must be traced back to the Meiji era, but the Student Christian Movement emerged out of the YMCA movement in the period under consideration; Sato mentions three leaders, Yonetarō Kimura, Enkichi Kan, and Shigeru Nakajima who was the most conspicuous writer. Characteristic of this period is the professionalization of theological disciplines: which can visibly be noticed in the fields of dogmatic history and exegesis. In the field of dogmatic history or that of early Christian thought, a peculiarly Japanese phenomenon occurred; national universities in the non-Christian nation started producing a host of good scholars who after historical studies became Christians and continued to do researches on early Christian thought (e.g. Seiichi Hatano and Ken Ishihara), while Doshisha University in Kyoto also produced such scholars as Tadaichi Uoki and Tetsutarō Ariga. It is interesting to note that those who studied at Tokyo Imperial University made further studies in Germany, while the Doshisha scholars in the U. S. Shigehiko Satō, a Lutheran, made his studies in Germany.

Dogmatic theology started also to take a clear form of academic discipline, but it was understandably conducted outside pre-war Japan's formal educational system. Social Christianity was an evolved form of evangelical Christianity with desire to put its social consciousness in practice. If we notice Enkichi Kan, one of the three SCM men, was a thorough Barthian, it is intelligible that enthusiasm with Karl Barth and his Dialectic Theology had connection with the practice of Chris-

tian life. All other systematic theologians like Setsuji Ōtsuka, Hidenobu Kuwata, Yoshitaka Kumano were inspired by Barth or Anglosaxon theologians with Dialectical inclination. In the field of exegesis Zenta Watanabe, Junichi Asano and Shōgo Yamaya are pioneers, whereas Toraji Tsukamoto and Kōkichi Kurosaki engaged in exegesis and biblical translation, while continuing Uchimura's non-church tradition. Satō mentions Sōichi Iwashita and Yoshihiko Yoshimitsu as the two only Catholic theologians in this period.

The perspective of post-World War II theological situation is treated in two chapters each by Seiichi Yagi and Masaya Odagaki; the former is an internationally known scholar, who is active in Christian-Buddhist dialogue and increasingly more in recent years engaged in breaking through the Christo-centric limitation of theology, though initially a biblical scholar, and the latter a systematic theologian whose orientation is theological hermeneutics and who is also engaged in breaking down the closure of theological speculation. For one thing, we must remember that Christian colleges and universities have been given full accredited status, and theological disciplines are officially recognized as such, bringing vast increase in the number of those engaged in these disciplines.

As already in the previous chapter Tosio Satō points out that the really genuine theology with depth started with the introduction of Barth into the Japanese Christian world, so Yagi explains Barth's relevance to the postwar Christians with its radical orientation to Christ and God. (Emil Brunner who stayed several years as a guest professor in the founding days of International Christian University received only respectful attention.) One must certainly grant Barth's utter dominance among many theologians, but there have been diverse trends both indigenous and introduced from abroad. The former example would be Kazō Kitamori's *Theology of God's Pain*, that is now well-known all over the Christian world; Kitamori's ideas are taken over by Hans Küng and Pannenberg. The general indigenous background influencing contemporary theologians is the philosophy of Nishida and

Tanabe; Odagaki, who characterizes the Japanese theologian's unique position as somewhere "between theology and philosophy", and includes his hermeneutic position in this tendency, repeatedly calls for an exodus from the Germanic Captivity, meaning overcoming the particular revelational framework of Christianity, typically manifested in the Barthian Neo-Orthodoxy. We may recall there was a debate between Barthians and Bultmannians, which has remained somewhere in the background. In coping with Buddhist philosophical speculative tradition, with deepened theological acumen, theology in postwar Japan as a whole at first up to '70 is according to Yagi "eminently Christological" and on that basis gradually shifted its attention to the more demanding reflection on the problem of God. Odagaki, who, though highly evaluating Yagi's recent work: *Philosophy of Front-Structure*, considers Yagi's concept of the transcendent as still in the end ontological, introduces meontologically the idea of nothingness to the understanding of God, inspired by Meister Eckhart and Zen Buddhism.

Japanese theologians' fascination with nothingness or emptiness as possibility to indicate God's nature seems to have started already in the immediate postwar "existential" situation. As Yagi describes, Sakae Akaiwa, who made an exodus from the church by abandoning his Barthianism and acquiring a Communist party membership, already expressed encounter with Jesus in terms of emptiness. Kitamori's *Theology of God's Pain* was obliquely connected with Christological controversy started by Nobuo Odagiri, who cast doubt on Jesus' Divinity, and finally carried out for a long while between Katsumi Takizawa, who developed oddly enough his theology of religions on his original understanding of Barth, and Yagi himself.

Against the background of university turmoil and on the basis of radical experience Sasagu Arai and Kenzō Tagawa developed their understandings of Jesus. All in all the multiple theological tendencies, Christological or otherwise, have behind them a crisis of faith in Christ's redemptive death on the Cross which is the heart of evangelical Christianity. Interestingly enough Masao Sekine, a non-church leader, who

has brought up to the world level Japan's Old Testament exegesis, is intensely engaged in studying the concept of emptiness in the OT to give a new light on the theology of the Cross. But these currents must be seen between the positions which deny the Cross' redemptive relevance and those which try to somehow retain its uniqueness. Yagi, who had a kind of mystic experience of satori in the days of studies in Germany and Masaya Odagaki, who is a disciple of Yosio Noro, an Existential theologian, and is so well versed in contemporary American theological and philosophical trends down to deconstruction theology, belong to the former. Theology of religion(s) developed on the Protestant side is to be seen as part of attempt to overcome the narrow interpretation of the redemptive death and inculturate Christianity in Japanese soil. There have been several sorties (e. g. by Furuya, Masao Takenaka). In the post-Barthian age in Japan's history of theology, these must lead inevitably to the theology of culture. Odagaki, referring also to such attempts made on Catholic sides (Yoji Inoue, etc.), discusses treatments on inculturation issues and reflection on Japanese Christianity's past, which is also Dohi's recent agenda.

Furuya in "Conclusion" stresses that theology whose object is Japan is necessarily ecumenical in the word's original sense: it is to be a theology open to the world; in concrete terms it has to theologically take up/grapple with the ultimate unchanged emperor cult, which is the heart of indigenous culture. He says so recalling the fact that Emperor Showa's demise coincided with the time when all the manuscripts were finished, and suggesting that theologians must consciously cope with this Shintoist culture. He seems to see a hint of an "ecumenical" theology in Koyama's theological works written in English. Theology of Japan to be born out of conversion and Japanese existential experience based on the event of Christ's Resurrection, to use Furuya's expression, has just started. To which direction? It is interesting at any rate that Odagaki suggests to the European theologians that his meontological philosophical theology is a radicalization of theology of the Cross—genuine conversion for proclamation.