



# Handbook of Japanese Christian Writers

Edited by Mark Williams, Van C. Gessel and  
Yamane Michihiro

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# Handbook of Japanese Christian Writers



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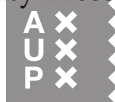


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**Kevin M. Doak** holds the Nippon Foundation Endowed Chair in Japanese Studies at Georgetown University where he is Professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures and an Affiliate Faculty member in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies. He has published widely on Japan and Catholicism, including “Beyond Endo: The Hidden Renaissance of Japanese Catholic Novelists” at <https://benedictinstitute.org/2019/07/beyond-endo/>, as well as articles on Catholicism in Japan in *Nova et Vetera*, *First Things*, *New Oxford Review* and elsewhere. His major publications include *Xavier’s Legacies: Catholicism in Modern Japanese Culture* (University of British Columbia Press, 2011) and *Tanaka Kōtarō and World Law* (Palgrave Macmillan 2019), a study of Japan’s leading Catholic jurist. He translated Sono Ayako’s *Kiseki* (Miracles; MerwinAsia, 2016; republished by Wiseblood Publications, 2021). His current research involves a study and translation of Japan’s most important Catholic theologian, Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko (1904–1945).

**Philip Gabriel** is Professor of Japanese literature in the Department of East Asian Studies, the University of Arizona. He is the author of *Mad Wives and Island Dreams: Shimao Toshio and the Margins of Japanese Literature* and *Spirit Matters: The Transcendent in Modern Japanese Literature* and he has translated many novels and short stories by the writer Haruki Murakami and other modern writers. He was recipient of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature (2001) for his translation of Senji Kuroi’s *Gunsei* (Life in the Cul-de-Sac), and the 2006 PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prize for his translation of Murakami’s *Umibe no Kafuka* (Kafka on the Shore).

**Van C. Gessel** is Professor Emeritus of Japanese at Brigham Young University. During his 31 years on the BYU faculty, he served as chair of the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages and as the Dean of the College of Humanities. Before moving to BYU in 1990, he taught at Columbia, Notre Dame, and UC Berkeley. His academic specialty is modern



Japanese literature, particularly Japanese Christian writers, and he has translated eight literary works by the Japanese Catholic novelist Endō Shūsaku, including *Samurai* (The Samurai) and *Fukai kawa* (Deep River). He was literary consultant for Martin Scorsese during the production of the film adaptation of Endō's *Chinmoku* (Silence). In 2016, he received a Commendation from the Foreign Minister of Japan and in 2018 was inducted into the Order of the Rising Sun (*Kyokujitsu chūjushō*) by the Japanese emperor. He was awarded the Lindsley and Masao Miyoshi Translation Prize for lifetime achievement as a translator of modern Japanese fiction in 2020.

**Anthony Haynes** received his PhD in Christian ethics and practical theology from the University of Edinburgh in 2018. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the connection between art and mysticism in the life and thought of the French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain. He has since worked as an adjunct professor and visiting lecturer in philosophy and religious studies for several universities, including Lakeland University (Japan Campus) and the Pontifical and Royal University of Santo Tomas (Philippines). His academic research centers on the practical expression of religious belief and experience, particularly in fiction, visual art and ascetic ways of life.

**Irina Holca** came to Japan to further her education after graduating from the University of Bucharest with a major in Japanese Studies and a minor in British Studies. She obtained her MA and PhD degrees in modern Japanese literature, from Nara University of Education and Osaka University, respectively. She joined Kyoto University's Institute for Research in the Humanities as a senior lecturer in 2014 and went on to become an associate professor in UTokyo's PEAK program in 2019. She specializes in modern and contemporary Japanese literature and is also interested in translation and media studies. In 2018, she published the Japanese monograph *Shimazaki Tōson hirakareru tekusuto: media, tasha, jendā* (The (re)opened text: Media, otherness, and gender in Shimazaki Tōson's works; Bensei Shuppan). In 2020, she co-edited the volume *Forms of the Body in Contemporary Japanese Literature, Society, and Culture* (Rowman and Littlefield).

**Imai Mari** is a literary critic who took both an BA and MA in Japanese Literature from Seishin Women's University. Focusing mainly on pre-modern and modern Japanese literature, she is a member of the Japan PEN club, the Japan Society for Literature and Christianity and the Endō Shūsaku Research Association. Since 2007, she has been involved in a series of exhibitions devoted to the life and works of Endō Shūsaku, both at the "Kotobarando" section of the Machida City Literary Museum and at the Endō Shūsaku Literary Museum in Nagasaki. Her published monograph is entitled *Sore demo kami wa iru: Endō Shūsaku to aku* (And yet God exists: Endō Shūsaku and evil; Keio University Press, 2015); and her co-authored works include *Endō Shūsaku kenkyū* (Studies on Endō Shūsaku; Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, 1979); *Endō Shūsaku: Chinmoku sakuhin ronshū* (Collection of essays on Endō Shūsaku's *Silence*; Kuresu, 2002). Her recent essays include "Sore demo ningen wa shinjirareru ka? Endō Shūsaku to Aushuvittsu" (Can humans believe in spite of everything? Endō Shūsaku and Auschwitz, 2006); "Aku no okonawareta basho: *Umi to dokuyaku* no hikari to kage" (The place where evil was carried out: Light and dark in *The Sea and the Poison*, 2006); "Bara to fukkatsu: Endō Shūsaku no gikyoku *Bara no yakata o kangaeru*" (Roses and the resurrection: Some thoughts on Endō Shūsaku's drama *The*

*house of roses*, 2013); and, “Aku no tobira: Endō Shūsaku to Sado” (The door to evil: Endō Shūsaku and Sade, 2003). She has also written a series of commentaries on Endō’s work.

**Miyasaka Satoru** is Professor Emeritus at Ferris University. He began his teaching career at Fukuoka Prefectural Women’s University before moving to Ferris University where he served as Assistant Professor, Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Letters and President. In 1998, he spent a year as a special research fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. In 2006, he founded the International Society for Akutagawa Studies, where he remains an advisor. His published works include *Sakuhin-ron: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke* (The literary works of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke; Sōbunsha, 1990); *Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: hito to sakuhin* (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: The man and his works; Kanrin Shobō, 1998); *Akutagawa Ryūnosuke to Kirishitan-mono: Ōzei, kōsa, ekkyō* (Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and his *Kirishitan* tales: Polyphony, intersections, border crossing; Kanrin Shobō, 2014). He also helped edit the 24-volume *Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū* (Collected works of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke; Iwanami Shoten, 1998).

**Leith Morton** is Professor Emeritus, Tokyo Institute of Technology, and has lectured in Japanese at many universities in Australia and overseas, including the University of Sydney (1979–1992), the University of Newcastle [Australia] from 1992–2003, where he was appointed to the Chair of Japanese, and later, to the Head of the Department of Modern Languages. He has written many books on modern Japanese literature and culture, including: *Divided Self: A Biography of Arishima Takeo* (Allen & Unwin, 1988); *Modern Japanese Culture: The Insider View* (Oxford University Press, 2003); *Modernism in Practice: An Introduction to Postwar Japanese Poetry* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2004); *The Alien Within: Representations of the Exotic in Twentieth-Century Japanese Literature* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2009); and *The Writing of Disaster: Literary Representations of War, Trauma and Earthquakes in Modern Japan* (Peter Lang, 2020); he also co-edited the *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature* (Routledge, 2016).

**Nagahama Takuma** is Professor of Japanese literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. His 1993 MA dissertation focused on the works of Shiina Rinzō. In 2000, he contributed a chapter to *Sakuhin-ron: Endō Shūsaku* (Sōbunsha) entitled “‘Kiiroi hito’: gyakusetsuteki na ‘onchō no sekai’ no teiji” (“Yellow man”: Depiction of the paradoxical “world of grace”) and, in 2016 he received his PhD from Kwansai Gakuen University with a thesis entitled “Endō Shūsaku kenkyū: rekishi shōsetsu o shiza toshite” (A study of Endō Shūsaku: From the perspective of his historical novels). Thereafter, with three additional chapters focusing on Konishi Yukinaga, he published his first monograph, *Endō Shūsaku-ron: rekishi shōsetsu o shiza toshite* in 2018 (Izumi Shoin). Building on his 2011 article “Nihon sengo bungaku to kirisutokyō: seisho no juyō to tenkai o chūshin ni” (Japanese postwar literature and Christianity: With a particular focus on the reception and dissemination of the Bible), in 2022 he published his *Sengo bungaku to seisho* (Postwar literature and the Bible, Kanyō Shuppan), a study spanning works from Kawabata Yasunari to Endō Shūsaku. In all this his focus remains on the connection between Japanese literature and Christianity.

**Ryōta Sakurai** is a PhD student at International Christian University (ICU). Before starting his PhD, he was a Japanese cultural program coordinator at Colorado College (2017–2019).

His research focuses on themes of writing about faith, particularly in the cultural context of postwar Japan. His publications include “Ogawa Kunio no seisho keiretsu sakuhi ni miru ‘aidentiti no kiki’ to saisei” (The identity crisis and recovery in Ogawa Kunio’s novels of biblical themes), *Studies in Literature and Christianity* (April 2021); “Uchinaru tasha no bungaku: sengo Nihon ni okeru ‘kaku koto’ to ‘shinjiru koto’ no kōsa no saikentō ni mukete” (A literature of internal others: Toward a reconsideration of the intersection of “writing” and “faith” in postwar Japan), *The Annals of the Japanese Association for the Study of Puritanism* (March 2022); and “Remembering and (Re)storing War Memories: The Postwar Fiction of Shimao Toshio”, *Japan Review* (forthcoming 2022).

**Sekino Miho** was an Assistant at the Institute for East Asian Studies at Nishogakusha University and is currently teaching at Toho Junior and Senior High School. She has published numerous essays on the writings of Takahashi Takako and others, including “Takahashi Takako: *Botsuraku fūkei* oboegaki: Yamanouchi Shinko ni tsuite” (Thoughts on Takahashi Takako’s *A Ruined Landscape: on Yamanouchi Shinko*); “Yami kara no kōbō: Takahashi Takako *Sora no hate made-ron*” (Light out of the darkness: A Study of Takahashi Takako’s *To the end of the sky*) and “Kōfuku e no kibō to tsumi no denpa: Takahashi Takako *Natsu no fuchi-ron*” (Hope for happiness and the propagation of sin: A Study of Takahashi Takako’s *The abyss of summer*).

**Massimiliano Tomasi** (PhD Nagoya University). Professor of Japanese and Director of the Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University. His publications include *Rhetoric in Modern Japan: Western Influences on the Development of Written and Oratorical Style* (University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), *The Literary Theory of Shimamura Hōgetsu and the Development of Feminist Discourse in Modern Japan* (Mellen, 2008); *The Dilemma of Faith in Modern Japanese Literature: Metaphors of Christianity* (Routledge, 2018); and the edited volume *Religion and Spirituality in Japanese Literature* (Association for Japanese Literary Studies, 2016). Prof. Tomasi is currently working on a book manuscript that explores the intersections between Christianity and Japanese literature from the 1930s to the immediate postwar period.

**Mark Williams** is Vice President for International Academic Exchange at International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. Until 2017, he was Professor of Japanese Studies and Head of East Asian Studies at the University of Leeds, UK. He took his BA in Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford and a PhD in Japanese Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. He was Chair of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at Leeds between 2006 and 2011 and President of the British Association for Japanese Studies, 2007–2011. Between 2011 and 2014, he was seconded to Akita International University, Japan, where he served as Vice President for Academic Affairs. His published works include *Christianity and Japan: Impacts and Responses* (co-edited with John Breen; Macmillan, 1996); *Endō Shūsaku: A Literature of Reconciliation* (Routledge, 1999); *Representing the Other in Modern Japanese Literature: A Critical Approach* (co-edited with Rachael Hutchinson; Routledge, 2007); *Imag(in)ing the War in Japan: Representing and Responding to Trauma in Post-war Japanese Literature and Film* (co-edited with David Stahl; Brill, 2010); *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Japan* (co-edited with Hiroko Takeda; Routledge 2020); and *Tenkō: Cultures of Political Conversion in Transwar*



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*Japan* (co-edited with Irena Hayter and George Sipos; Routledge, 2021). He is also the translator of *Foreign Studies* and *The Girl I Left Behind*, two novels by Endō Shūsaku. In 2017, he received a Commendation from the Foreign Minister of Japan.

**Yamane Ibuki** is a PhD candidate in the Graduate School of Arts and Science, the University of Tokyo and a Research Fellow of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science. He is a contributor to the *Endō Shūsaku jiten* (Endō Shūsaku dictionary) and author of the following articles: “Endō Shūsaku *Chinmoku* ni okeru kon’in shinpi shisō: ‘Kirisuto no kao’ ni okeru ‘okikae shuhō’ o megutte” (The mystical marriage in Endō Shūsaku’s *Silence*: The technique of “transposition” in the “Face of Jesus”); “Endō Shūsaku *Chinmoku* ni okeru jakusha no sukui: muishiki ni okeru dōhansha e no ‘kawaki’ o megutte” (Salvation of the weak in Endō Shūsaku’s *Chinmoku*: The unconscious ‘thirst’ for a constant companion) and “Endō Shūsaku *Shikai no hotori* ni okeru shōseijin no tsūkō: Igaru-shi no shōgen to jūsanshō no kōzō ni chakumoku shite” (The “Communion of Saints” in Endō Shūsaku’s *Shikai no hotori* [By the Dead Sea]: Focusing on the testimony of Ygal and the structure of chapter XIII).

**Yamane Michihiro** is Professor in the Institute for Research of Christian Culture at Notre Dame Seishin Women’s University. He graduated from Waseda University and took his postgraduate degree in literature from Rikkyō University. He is currently President of the Endō Shūsaku Research Association. With a focus on the relationship between literature and Christianity, he has published widely, not only on the works of Endō Shūsaku, but also those of Yagi Jūkichi, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Miyazawa Kenji, and others. Beginning in 1986, he worked closely with Endō’s dear friend, Father Inoue Yōji, in creating the “Pneuma no ie” (House of Wind) movement dedicated to the enculturation of Christianity into Japan and has helped edit its journal, *Pneuma*. Following Endō’s death in 1996, he was closely involved in the publication of the 15-volume *Endō Shūsaku bungaku zenshū* (Collected Literary Works of Endō Shūsaku, Shinchōsha, 1999–2000). Following the death of Inoue Yōji, he was in charge of editing the 11-volume *Inoue Yōji chosaku senshū* (Selected works of Inoue Yōji, Kyōbunkwan, 2018). On the 25th anniversary of Endō’s death, he was in charge of the editorial team for the *Endō Shūsaku jiten* (Endō Shūsaku dictionary; Kanae shobō, 2021). His main monographs include *Endō Shūsaku: sono jinsei to Chinmoku no shinjitsu* (Endō Shūsaku: His life and the truth behind *Silence*, Chōbunsha, 2005); *Endō Shūsaku: Fukai kawa o yomu: Mazā Teresa, Miyazawa Kenji to hibiki-au sekai* (Reading Endō Shūsaku’s *Deep River*: Parallels with the worlds of Mother Teresa and Miyazawa Kenji, Chōbunsha, 2010); and *Endō Shūsaku to Inoue Yōji: Nihon ni nezuku kirisutokyō o motometa dōshi* (Endō Shūsaku and Inoue Yōji: Two men who sought to root Christianity in Japan, Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan Shuppankyoku, 2019). He is also co-author of several works on the literature of Endō Shūsaku, as well as those dealing with the relationship between literature and Christianity more broadly.



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# Abbreviations

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ARZ	<i>Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke] (24 vols., 1995–1998). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
ATZ	<i>Arishima Takeo zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Arishima Takeo] (15 vols., 1979–1986). Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.
DOZ	<i>Dazai Osamu zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Dazai Osamu] (13 vols., 1998–1999). Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.
ESBZ	<i>Endō Shūsaku bungaku zenshū</i> [The Collected Literary Works of Endō Shūsaku] (15 vols., 1999–2000). Tokyo: Shinchōsha.
GNKBZ	<i>Gendai Nihon kirisutokyō bungaku zenshū</i> [Anthology of Modern Japanese Christian literature] (18 vols., 1972–1974). Tokyo: Kyōbunkwan.
HTZ	<i>Hori Tatsuo zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Hori Tatsuo] (8 vols., 1977–1980). Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.
KDZ	<i>Kunikida Doppo zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Kunikida Doppo] (10 vols., 1964–1967). Tokyo: Gakushū Kenkyūsha.
STZ	<i>Shimazaki Tōson zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Shimazaki Tōson] (12 vols., 1981–1982). Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.
ShTZ	<i>Shimao Toshio zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Shimao Toshio] (17 vols., 1980–1983). Tokyo: Shōbunsha.
SRZ	<i>Shiina Rinzō zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Shiina Rinzō] (24 vols., 1970–1976). Tokyo: Tōjusha.
TZ	<i>Tōkoku zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of (Kitamura) Tōkoku] (3 vols., 1950–1955). Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
YJZ	<i>Yagi Jūkichi zenshū</i> [The Collected Works of Yagi Jūkichi, 1982] (3 vols., 1982). Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō.



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# Preface

*Mark Williams, Van C. Gessel and Yamane Michihiro*

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When the first Christian missionaries arrived in Japan in the late-16th and early-17th centuries, the response was dramatic. Indeed, a whole generation of scholars of Japan has been raised on the picture offered by Charles Boxer<sup>1</sup> and others which suggests that the reaction to these westerners was rapid and enthusiastic. Equally well documented, however, was the success of the incoming Tokugawa shogunate in brutally suppressing this wave of foreign influence—and the extent to which its policy of *sakoku* (whereby Japan was “closed” almost entirely to the outside world) resulted in a curtailment of virtually all interaction with the foreign missions. With the return of imperial rule following the “restoration” of the Meiji emperor in 1867–1868, the western missions were able to return,<sup>2</sup> and widespread efforts were made to make up for lost time in implementing a Christian infrastructure across Japan. The results of such evangelization were decidedly mixed, however, with scholars agreed that the subsequent century and a half of Christian proselytizing has led, at best, to the conversion of about one percent of the Japanese population.

The impetus behind this volume is the fact that, for all this seemingly low rate of Christian affiliation in the country at large, the contribution of the Christian community in the fields of literature, education, medicine—even politics, where eight of the sixty-two 20th-century Japanese prime ministers have professed affiliation to the Christian faith<sup>3</sup>—has been disproportionate. In the sphere of literature, too, the proportion of writers who have either been baptized or significantly influenced in their work by Christian teachings is much higher than this one percent threshold. The trend is not entirely absent even in works of the Tokugawa era where, for all the suspicion of any overt references to Christian affiliation, we can find a variety of important literary documents, including Kabuki plays, that touch upon Christian themes or subjects. It was, however, with the return of the Christian missions following the Meiji Restoration and the move towards greater religious freedom that we come to see the creation of a series of works dealing with specifically Christian material. The trend was initiated by the likes of Kitamura Tōkoku, Kunikida Doppo and Shimazaki Tōson, and continued into the 20th century, becoming particularly pronounced in the immediate postwar era as a small minority of those who were returning from the front or who had struggled in other ways to find spiritual solace during the years of hostilities sought to make some kind of sense of their experience by embracing literary activity. Indeed, a reading of these postwar works shows that some, at least, of these authors found themselves inspired by the hope that the Christian teachings offered.

This volume examines the works of seventeen such authors, all of whom employed themes and imagery in their writings influenced by Christian teachings. For a few, such activity was inspired unashamedly by a desire to use their pen for the purpose of proselytization. For many, however, there was a clear determination not to subsume their literary endeavors to such ends, to ensure that their work would not be read simply through such a religious lens;



even here, though, these works are the products of individuals for whom the Christian faith represents an important element of their identity and this, in turn, can influence our reading experience.

In the Japanese context, it is arguably the postwar novelist, Endō Shūsaku, who has grappled most concertedly with the question of what we mean by the concept of “Christian literature.” Writing essays even before he made his debut on the literary stage, he was to argue, “Catholic literature involves not a literary portrayal of God and angels but must limit itself to scrutiny of human beings.... If, for the sake of creating a truly Catholic literature, or for the purpose of preserving or propagating the Catholic doctrine, the personalities of the characters in a novel are subjected to artifice and distortion, then the work ceases to be literature in the true sense of the word.”<sup>4</sup> And it is this focus, not on saintly or angelic beings, but on the regular human beings whom these authors and all of us encounter in our daily lives that pervades the works of all the authors discussed in this volume. Yes, there are instances in these works of protagonists who defy our expectations of normal human behavior; indeed, there are examples of characters who quite literally lay down their lives to save others. (We are thinking here, for example, of Mitsu in Endō’s *The Girl I Left Behind*, who ends up being crushed by a truck in a desperate attempt to protect the eggs that have been raised at the leprosarium where she volunteers, or of Nagano Nobuo in Miura Ayako’s *Shiokari Pass*, who throws himself in front of a run-away train in order to save the lives of the passengers on board). There are others who endure trials and tribulations in their lives that would seem to render them outside any human ambit. (Here we have in mind Shimaō Toshio’s protagonist, Toshio, who, having avoided inevitable death when his *kamikaze* mission was delayed by 24 hours on 14 August 1945, ended up devoting over two decades to caring for his wife whose psychiatric problems he attributed to his marital infidelity). These and other characters are certainly memorable. But this is not to detract from the fact that, in essence, they are portrayed, first and foremost, as human beings, fellow travelers whom their respective authors seek to depict without embellishment in an attempt to capture a certain essential humanity. Thus, for all her extraordinary self-sacrifice at the end of the novel, Mitsu has been painted throughout as an unspectacular “*mii-haa*” (country bumpkin); Miura’s Nobu is a little-known, nondescript figure who, for much of the novel, argues bitterly against Christian beliefs; and Shimaō’s Toshio, for all his determination, at the end of *The Sting of Death*, to return to the living hell of his wife’s psychiatric ward, is depicted throughout the novel as a man struggling with his own inner demons.

There is, however, one important distinction that emerges between the earlier generation of these authors and those writing more recently, particularly in the postwar era that requires acknowledgement: the gradual shift from a Protestant to a Catholic worldview. As Yamane Michihiro argues in his Introduction to this volume, those writing between the 1880s and the start of World War II were largely drawn to the Protestant emphasis on individual freedom, though many of them eventually rejected sectarian affiliation. Since 1945, on the other hand, Catholicism has nurtured the majority of religiously committed authors, led by figures such as Endō Shūsaku, the most popular and influential Christian writer in Japan to date.

The authors discussed in these essays have contributed in a variety of ways to the indigenization of the imported religion. And, while all too often subsumed under a category of minority Christian authors, their overall contribution, not simply to the *bundan*, the literary scene of the era, but to the Japanese cultural scene more broadly cannot be overestimated. To be sure, some of the authors discussed here may not have made it into the pantheon of world

literature.<sup>5</sup> There are others, however, including Shimazaki Tōson, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Dazai Osamu and Endō Shūsaku, whose works are known well beyond the confines of Japan and which have contributed in a variety of ways to depictions of Japanese culture. And yet it is as a group of authors—and several others who might well have been included in this volume—committed in their literary oeuvres to the depiction of a series of human beings, created in the image of God and yet retaining their identities as “fallen” individuals, that this category of “Christian writers” is perhaps best encapsulated.

In compiling a volume of this nature, one inevitably incurs a series of debts—and we are happy to acknowledge these here. In particular, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the willingness of so many scholars to write original pieces for this volume. Read as a whole, we feel that one of the salient features of the collection is the wide variety of approaches taken in the individual chapters—and this is, in no small measure, a consequence of having a good mix of Japanese and non-Japanese contributors. We would also like to offer our sincere thanks to Mark Gresham and his team at MHM Limited for believing in this project from the outset—and for their support throughout the editorial process. We are also painfully aware that, in devoting time to this work, we have been derelict in other duties; our particular thanks go to our colleagues and family members who have provided us with the space to complete this work.

Finally, in the composition of this volume, we have decided on a series of conventions. The first is the decision to follow customary practice in listing Japanese names in the Japanese order (i.e., family name followed by given name); the one exception is in cases when Japanese have been writing directly in English where, again in accordance with convention, we have listed them as given name followed by family name. To assist those readers who do not have access to Japanese originals, we have tried to indicate those works for which an English translation is available; the translated titles of such works are followed by an asterisk. However, for those readers who are seeking more detail about works available in translation from the authors included in this volume (including for translations into languages other than English), we would refer you to the Japanese Literature in Translation Database compiled by the Japan Foundation. The homepage for this is available at <https://jpf.org.au/japanese-studies/resources/japanese-literature-in-translation-database/> and individual items can be searched at [https://jltransopac.jpf.go.jp/Opac/search.htm?s=1C9\\_d6JaCdalK1PL70dQQk8Nhhb](https://jltransopac.jpf.go.jp/Opac/search.htm?s=1C9_d6JaCdalK1PL70dQQk8Nhhb). Finally, in light of the fact that so many of our citations are drawn from the (multi-volume) *Collected Works* of that author, we have adopted a series of abbreviations to reference these *zenshū*. A list of these abbreviations can be found on page xiii.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Boxer, C. (1951) *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549–1650*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press.

<sup>2</sup> Strictly speaking the first missionaries returned even before the fall of the shogunate—with the story of the French priest, Fr. Petitjean, being approached in 1865 by a group of elderly *Kakure* (Hidden) Christians often cited as the moment when the attention of the world was first drawn to the existence of some tens of thousands of *Kakure* believers who had been obliged to practise their faith in complete secrecy over the previous centuries.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.news-postseven.com/archives/20120604\\_113430.html?DETAIL](https://www.news-postseven.com/archives/20120604_113430.html?DETAIL). The eight 20th-century prime ministers cited in this article are Hara Takashi, Yoshida Shigeru, Katayama Tetsu, Hatoyama Ichirō, Ōhira Masayoshi, Hosokawa Morihiro, Asō Tarō and Hatoyama Yukio.

<sup>4</sup> “Katorikku sakka no mondai” (The Problems confronting the Catholic Author), in *ESBZ* 12: 18–56.

<sup>5</sup> This is, in part at least, due to the vagaries of translation.

# Introduction

*Yamane Michihiro*

*Translated by Sachiko Hamada*

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*Given that only about one percent of the Japanese population is Christian, how is one to account for the preponderance of “Christian authors”? Where did they come from? Here I examine the Protestant tradition that influenced so many prewar authors—and the Catholic tradition that was more influential on the postwar generation. In so doing, it offers a comprehensive examination and discussion of those authors who interacted with the faith.*

## **Introduction: Where did Japan’s Christian writers come from?**

Included in the category of “Japanese Christian writers” here are writers who were baptized as Christians, along with those who, though never baptized, were deeply interested in Christianity and wrote works of literature influenced by the faith. This Introduction covers those authors who were baptized during their youth and yet whose faith and literature would gradually grow apart; those whose baptism generated a creative relationship between their faith and literature; and even those who kept their faith hidden in the innermost depths of their work and who came to baptism later in life. For each of these, the year of baptism will be noted alongside the dates of birth and death for each writer. In this sense, this *Handbook* will be dealing with a wide range of Christian writers who played an active role in modern Japan.

From the beginning of the Meiji period (1868–1912), many missionaries came to Japan. This resulted in vigorous missionary work, and yet, to this day, the number of Christians in Japan has never exceeded one percent of the population. However, as Dazai Osamu, who remains one of the most popular modern writers in Japan, expressed in *HUMAN LOST*, “with the Bible alone, Japan’s literary history has unmistakably split into two with unprecedented clarity” (cited in Endō T. 1994, 363). That is, when we survey the more than one thousand years of Japanese literary history, it can be said without hesitation that, starting from the Protestant missions in early Meiji, the vibrant works of writers who engaged with the Bible held an important place within modern Japanese literary history. As for the sheer number of books written by writers who were influenced by Christianity in Japan, this can be observed from the existence of publications such as *Kindai Nihon kirisutokyō bungaku zenshū* (The Collected Works of Modern Japanese Christian Literature, 1974–1982), which comprises fifteen volumes, and *Gendai Nihon kirisutokyō bungaku zenshū* (The Collected Works of Contemporary Japanese Christian Literature, 1972–1982), comprised of eighteen volumes.

As noted above, modern Japanese literary history embarked on a new relationship with Christianity during the Meiji period, and the critic Sasabuchi Tomoichi has offered a wide-ranging perspective by dividing modern Japanese literary history into four periods (see

Sasabuchi 1963, 153–58). Building on his idea, in this Introduction, I will present a slightly modified version of this division into four periods.

The first period (1868–1890) starts from the beginning of the Meiji era and ends in the twenty-third year of Meiji. During this period, translations of the New and Old Testaments were made and various Japanese hymnals were created, laying the foundations for Protestantism to influence Japanese literature.

The second period spans the years from 1891 to the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, the twelfth year of the Taishō era (1912–1926). During this period, many writers were inspired by Protestant Christianity. The literary coteries, *Bungakukai* (Literary World, 1893–1898) and *Shirakaba-ha* (White Birch Society, 1910–1923) are representative of this influence. The former's romantic ideology and the latter's humanitarian vision were influenced by the formation of a modern individualism espoused by the new Christian missions. However, while these writers took inspiration from Christianity, as their literary works took form and matured, they gradually distanced themselves from the faith and began to embrace a more idealistic, humanist stance.

The third period (1923–1945) begins after the Great Kantō Earthquake and concludes with the end of the Second World War. Faced with a distressing loss of optimistic faith in humanity and the downfall of idealism, the writers of this period began to take a deeper interest in Christianity as they pursued their literary endeavors. Despite this, Christianity had yet to become a definitive factor in saving those who had lost their way.

The fourth period constitutes the postwar era. In contrast to the second period, this period saw a movement away from humanism towards Christianity and, at long last, in this period, Christianity played a vital role in the rebuilding of broken humanity. It was during this time that a fully-fledged “Christian literature”—one in which Christianity and Japanese literature creatively complemented each other at a fundamental level—was born. Whereas the writers who were involved in Christian literature before the War were mostly Protestant, these postwar Christian writers were mostly Catholic.

Given this background, I would like to direct our attention to the question of where these Christian writers, many of whom represented the driving force of modern and contemporary Japanese literary history, came from. Unlike Christian writers in the Christian West, these Japanese Christian writers would not have been raised in Christian homes. In which case, when and where did these writers come into contact with, and find themselves influenced by, Christianity? By focusing on the Protestant tradition (spanning the first to the third periods) which influenced the writers before the War, and the Catholicism espoused by the postwar writers, let us briefly discuss the writers who engaged with Christianity from Japan's Meiji period and thereafter.

## Christian missionaries and literature at the dawn of the Meiji era

For over 250 years until the early 1870s, Christianity was forbidden because it was regarded as a heretical religion that threatened to undermine the power of the shogunate. Here I will examine how Christianity was introduced to, and favorably received by, young people in the midst of Japan's modernization.

In the year following the Japan-US Treaty of Amity and Commerce signed in 1858 (which heralded the end of the Tokugawa shogunate), a group of French Catholic priests from the

Paris Foreign Missions Society arrived in Japan, having been commissioned by the Pope. Unlike the earlier missions carried out by the Jesuits in the 16th and 17th centuries, which had focused on intellectual dialogue with the elite class and adaptation to the culture, the French Catholicism of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, which shared Rome's opposition towards modern values, had little in common with the Meiji government. As a result, mission work focused on educational activities for young intellectuals was sidelined, while more effort was poured into charity work and social welfare services, which meant that their work was mostly carried out among the people of the lower classes. Many Protestant missionaries also came to Japan, taking advantage of the opening of the ports in the year following the signing of the Treaty, and, while they contributed to the cultural enlightenment of Japan through their teaching of foreign languages and the practice of medicine, they directed their mission, through education and translation of the Bible, towards young intellectuals who would lead the modernization of Japan.

Many of the young men who discovered Christianity during the Meiji era were from the samurai class of the former so-called *Sabaku* group (supporters of the shogun who lost against the Satsuma-Chōshū powers). These were young men who, while feeling indebted towards their nation, resented the Satsuma-Chōshū powers taking office in the new government and hence studied western sciences in order to play an active role in politics and to devote themselves fully to their country. Therefore, rather than for the religion itself, they looked to the Christian missionaries for acquisition of knowledge of the western sciences, or the practical sciences, especially foreign languages, along with the culture, practices and customs of the West that they had come to highly esteem. Although it was for this purpose that they approached Christianity, nevertheless, in time, many were drawn to the teachings of Christianity, especially to the new perspective that viewed all human beings as equal before God, which stood in opposition to the long-established Japanese class structure. Eventually, Japanese Christian leaders emerged who, having committed themselves to the new faith, would aspire to serve their country by ushering in a spiritual renewal of Japan through religion and education. These leaders would have an immeasurable impact on the following generation of young intellectuals.

Seen thus, it was the Protestant religious leaders who greatly influenced the birth of writers who were connected to Christianity. Of those leaders, Uemura Masahisa (1858–1925, baptized 1873) and Uchimura Kanzō (1861–1939, baptized 1878) were the most gifted in literary talent and both exerted monumental influence. Within the three major original groups of Japanese Protestants—the so-called Yokohama, Sapporo and Kumamoto “bands”—Uemura was an exponent of the Yokohama band and Uchimura represented the Sapporo band.

### ***The origins of modern Japanese Christian writers—Band 1: The Yokohama Band and Uemura Masahisa***

In Yokohama in 1859, an American Presbyterian medical missionary, James Hepburn, later recognized for working as a medical doctor and his association with the “Hepburn” system of Romanization of the Japanese language, arrived in Japan. In 1867, with the help of Samuel Brown, a missionary of the Reformed Church in America who arrived later, he published *Wa-Ei rinshūsei* (Japanese-English and English-Japanese Dictionary), which became the basis for today's Japanese-English Dictionary, thereby substantially contributing to the study

of English in Japan. Hepburn opened a clinic while his wife taught English in their home, founding the Hepburn School. This school was later relocated to Tokyo and developed into Tsukiji Daigakkō, the forerunner of Meiji Gakuin University. It fostered writers such as Shimazaki Tōson, Togawa Shūkotsu and Baba Kochō. These writers played their part as pillars of the pre-romanticism movement in the *Bungakukai* coterie.

In addition, in 1872, some students who studied at a school founded in the Yokohama Foreign Settlement by James Ballagh, a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, were baptized after being inspired by Ballagh. These students formed a non-denominational group called the *Nihon Kirisuto kōkai* (Meeting of Christ in Japan), which was renamed the Yokohama Kaigan Church in 1975. Many of the members joined the Brown School and studied theology and English in the Christian missionary training class that was made available to them. Graduates from this class included various figures who played a large role in the formation of the Protestant church in Japan and in developing Christian education, including Uemura Masahisa, who laid the theological foundations for an orthodox evangelistic faith; Ibuka Kajinosuke, who served as president of Meiji Gakuin University; Honda Yōitsu, who served as president of Aoyama Gakuin University; and Oshikura Masayoshi, who served as president of Tōhoku Gakuin University. This Christian group, which was built upon the achievements of these Yokohama missionaries, is what is called the “Yokohama Band.”

Most influential on modern Japanese writers among the members of this group was Uemura Masahisa. Uemura was the son of a vassal of the Tokugawa shogunal family, which had met its downfall at the start of the Meiji Restoration. Aspiring to restore his family name, Uemura sought to gain knowledge of English by studying at Shūbunkan in Yokohama and also at the school run by Ballagh. Inspired by Ballagh, Uemura was baptized by him in 1873. He then graduated from the school run by Samuel Brown and the Tokyo Union Seminary, the first seminary in Japan, and became a pastor, establishing Shitaya Church in 1879 and Ichiban-chō Church in 1887. Ichiban-chō Church developed into Fujimichō Church in 1906 and Uemura devoted the rest of his life to evangelism as a pastor there. Meanwhile, in 1880, along with Kozaki Hiromichi and others, he formed the Tokyo Young Men’s Christian Association, the Tokyo YMCA. And by making use of this as a platform, he began publishing the Christian general-interest magazine, *Rikugō zasshi*. With the goal of freeing Japanese Christianity from the clutches of the foreign missionary associations and securing its evangelical foundations, Uemura dedicated himself to training Christian evangelists through the newly founded seminary, Tokyo Shingakusha, and making literary contributions to Christian publications like *Fukuin shimpō*, ultimately reaching a large audience inside and outside of the church.

Uemura especially excelled in the literary sphere, and his majestic and refined translations of the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and the Book of Isaiah from the Old Testament (*Kyūyaku zensho*; The Complete Texts of the Old Testament, 1888) are regarded as masterpieces of translated literature from the early Meiji period. At the same time, the elegant lyrics for the new translation and newly composed hymns for *Shinsen sanbika* (The New Collection of Hymns, 1888) overflow with poetic sensitivity. The basis for Christianity’s influence on Japan’s modern literature was founded on such translations of the Bible and Japanese hymns, and these greatly influenced the lyricism of the new style of poetry, *shintaiishi*, written in the Meiji period by such authors as Shimazaki Tōson and Kunikida Doppo.

Furthermore, Uemura produced excellent introductions and analyses of European writers and poets, such as Browning, Wordsworth, Dante and Milton in journals such as *Nippon*

*hyōron*. As for the relationship between Christianity and literature, he asked writers to be reformers of life (*Bungakusha to tokugi*; Writers and Morality, 1890, cited in Endō T. 1994, 85) and, while allowing writers the freedom of imagination when creating and enjoying literature, he stood by his position that it was a mistake to assume that literature has nothing to do with ethics and morals. Touching upon the complementary relationship between literature and religion, he argued that to have these two sides turn their backs on each other would be “due to the lack of having no virtuous intermediary to understand the proponents of both religion and literature” (*Shūkyō to bungaku*; Religion and Literature, 1893, cited in Endō T. 1994, 86).

Uemura was a lover of literature and a voracious reader, and many young men flocked to hear his sermons which were well informed by his wide-ranging education. Such was the case with literary young men such as Kunikida Doppo (1871–1908, baptized 1891) and Masamune Hakuchō (1879–1962, baptized 1897), both of whom came to Tokyo from the countryside, attended Tokyo Senmon Gakkō (modern day Waseda University) and were baptized by Uemura. Also emerging from under Uemura’s wings were prominent Christian English literary scholars, such as Saitō Isamu.

In 1885, Uemura and his followers founded Meiji Jogakkō, the first High School for girls in Japan, with pastor Kimura Kumaji as the principal, assisted by his wife Tōko, who was baptized by Uemura. Kimura, another vassal of the former shogunate, went to study in the United States at the beginning of the Meiji period, became a Christian during his stay abroad, and returned to Japan in 1882 as a missionary. He took over the role of pastor of Shitaya Church from Uemura, where he baptized the prominent advocate of women’s education in Japan, Iwamoto Yoshiharu. Kimura went on to become the pastor for Daimachi Church, where he baptized Shimazaki Tōson. Those who taught at Meiji Jogakkō include Wakamatsu Shizuko (1864–1896, baptized 1877), who was baptized at Yokohama Kaigan Church and became Iwamoto’s wife, and, subsequently, Kitamura Tōkoku and Shimazaki Tōson. After Kimura, Iwamoto succeeded in the role of principal of Meiji Jogakkō. In 1885, he started publishing the magazine, *Jogaku zasshi*, one of the earliest specialist women’s magazines in Japan. These achievements demonstrate the significance of the role that Iwamoto played in advancing the recognition and social standing of women in Japan. Other graduates from Meiji Jogakkō include Nogami Yaeko, who later became a writer under Natsume Sōseki’s tutelage, Yamamuro Kieko, who was baptized by Uemura, worked as a social worker and married Yamamuro Gunpei, the first Japanese officer of the Salvation Army, and Hani Motoko, Japan’s first female journalist and the founder of Jiyū Gakuen (Freedom Academy).

Of particular interest in this regard is Wakamatsu Shizuko, who contributed actively to *Jogaku zasshi* and translated Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *Little Lord Fauntleroy* as well as numerous other works of British and American religious and children’s literature into an easy-to-understand and elegant colloquial Japanese. This made her the first female Japanese Christian writer.

Furthermore, Kitamura Tōkoku (1868–1894, baptized 1888), who started his career as a critic by submitting his articles to *Jogaku zasshi*, surprised contemporary young readers with his *Ensei shika to josei* (Pessimistic Poets and Women, 1892), which opens with the memorable phrase, “Love is the secret key to human society” (cited in Endō T. 1994, 164). When Tōkoku fell into a state of spiritual crisis stemming from the failure of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement, he was rescued by the love and guidance of Ishizaka Mina, a member of the Yokohama Kaigan Church, who led him to becoming a Christian. In 1893, in his article



entitled “Jinsei ni aiwataru to wa nan no ii zo” (What Does “Relevant to Life” Mean?) published in *Bungakukai*, Tōkoku attempted to criticize the utilitarian literary theory that had been put forward by the critic, Yamaji Aizan, based on the philosophy of the Min’yūsha that had been founded by Tokutomi Sohō. Tōkoku further argued that literature was “a kind of undertaking that studies humankind and eternity” and that humankind “wanders about in between the finite and the infinite” (“Meiji bungaku kanken”; A Personal View of Meiji Literature, 1893, cited in Endō T. 1994, 165). That understanding enriched Japan’s spiritual soil, and presented literature with a new topos—that of opening up a new metaphysical horizon. But that task would be left unfinished, to be inherited by the postwar Christian writers such as Shiina Rinzō and Endō Shūsaku.

### ***The origins of modern Japanese Christian writers—Band 2: The Sapporo Band and Uchimura Kanzō***

In 1876, W. S. Clark, who was President of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, was introduced to the Japanese government by prominent Protestant educator, Nijijima Jō, and was invited by the Japanese government to become the first vice-principal of the Sapporo Agricultural College (present-day Hokkaidō University), which was founded by the Hokkaidō Development Commission. When director Kuroda Kiyotaka asked Clark to provide the students with moral education, Clark asserted that instruction in Christian ethics taught through the Bible represented the only way to achieve such education. Thus, while the Sapporo Agricultural College was a secular, public school, the Bible was handed out to be used as the foundation of its moral education program. The first student intake of the Sapporo Agricultural College signed the pledge, “Iesu o shinzuru mono no keiyaku” (“covenant of those who believe in Jesus Christ”), that had been drafted by Clark. Even though Clark left Japan after his eight-month stay, in the following year, the new class of students, who were also influenced by Clark, signed the covenant, and these students were baptized by the Methodist Church missionary, Merriman Colbert Harris. In 1881, these members, influenced by Clark’s non-denominational attitude, established the non-denominational Sapporo Independent Christian Church. The members of this church were called the “Sapporo Band.” One member of the inaugural class was Satō Shōsuke, who would become the first President of Hokkaidō University. In the class of the following year were Uchimura Kanzō and Nitobe Inazō. Nitobe later took on significant roles, such as the principal of the First Higher School of Japan, professor at Tokyo University and the first president of Tokyo Woman’s Christian University, thereby exerting a huge impact on the younger generation. Furthermore, Nitobe, as Under-Secretary General of the League of Nations and as an internationally-minded Japanese citizen equipped with Christian faith and a cultivated mind with wide-ranging knowledge made significant contributions to world peace and Japan’s enlightenment. It should be noted that the author Arishima Takeo was another who, inspired by Uchimura Kanzō, came under the influence of Clark, graduated the Sapporo Agricultural College in 1901, and joined the Sapporo Independent Christian Church.

Of the Sapporo Band members, it was, however, Uchimura Kanzō who had the greatest impact on Japan’s modern writers. Born in Edo (modern day Tokyo) the son of a samurai of the Takasaki domain, Uchimura pursued his English studies at the English Department of Arima Private School and at the Tokyo School of Foreign Studies and, in 1877, he entered

the Sapporo Agricultural College as one of the college's second class of students. He signed Clark's "Covenant" and was baptized by Harris in the following year. When he graduated in 1881, Uchimura made an oath with his fellow classmates, including Nitobe, that they would dedicate their lives to the "two Js": Jesus and Japan. After making his way to Tokyo, working at the Fishery Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, Uchimura moved to the United States in 1884. He initially worked at the Elwyn Institute for mentally disabled children, after which he was admitted to Amherst College, where he underwent a religious conversion, having been inspired by President Seelye. When he graduated from Amherst College, he entered Hartford Theological Seminary but left without finishing and returned to Japan in 1888.

On his return, Uchimura took the position of Vice President at a private school, the Hokuetsu Gakkan, but due to a dispute with a missionary, he left for Tokyo where he took up a part-time teaching position at the First Higher School of Japan. However, in 1891, he had to leave that post on account of causing a "lèse majesté" incident when he refused to participate in the ritual whereby students and faculty at all schools were required to recite the Imperial Rescript on Education. Thereafter, he worked as a teacher at Taisei Gakkan in Osaka, Kumamoto English School and Nagoya Eiwa School. While teaching, Uchimura published several of his representative works, such as *Kirisuto shinto no nagusame* (The Christian's Consolation, 1893) and *Kyūan-roku* (A Record of Seeking Solace, 1893), *Chirigaku-kō*, later renamed *Chijin-ron* (A Geographical Analysis / A Geo-humanitarian Theory, 1894), alongside English-language publications such as *Japan and the Japanese* (1894) and *How I Became a Christian* (1895). Starting from 1897, he became the lead writer for the English column in the newspaper *Yorozu chōhō*. The following year, he started issuing, and became the lead writer for, *Tokyo dokuritsu zasshi* journal and provided social commentary and cultural critique from a Christian perspective. In 1900, he began publishing the monthly magazine *Seisho no kenkyū* (Studies on the Bible). After participating in the protest movement against the Ashio copper mine pollution incident<sup>1</sup> and speaking out against the Russo-Japanese War in 1903, Uchimura resigned from his position at *Yorozu chōhō*. From that day on, Uchimura's lifework consisted of publishing *Studies on the Bible* and holding Bible study sessions that adhered to the principles of his *mukyōkai* (Non-church) movement. What Uchimura aspired to achieve through Non-church Christianity, was the establishment of a brotherhood, an Ecclesia, akin to a home for those who did not have a church to which to belong. The movement aimed at developing a uniquely Japanese form of evangelical Christianity which focused solely on the Bible and faith in Christ's atonement on the cross, emphasizing love of the "two Js," thereby connecting Japan to Christianity and also to humanitarian and universal values. In this way, he succeeded in exerting an immense impact, not only on the Japanese Christian community but on the Japanese philosophical community at large. And his prophetic words and conduct, as evidenced in his many writings, his Bible study sessions, summer lecture events, alongside the summer camps and lectures hosted by the Young Men's Christian Association, left a deep and wide-ranging impression on the hearts of the young men of the age. Among Uchimura's students were a number of Christian urban intellectuals, including Yanaihara Tadao, who would later serve as President of Tokyo University, as well as the disciples he taught in rural areas.

Uchimura possessed literary talent and the numerous works he wrote in Japanese and in English can, in a broad sense, be considered as "Christian literature." Moreover, Uchimura's interest in literature was specifically concerned with "Literature" with a capital "L." In

his 1895 treatise, “Naze ni daibungaku wa idezaru ka” (Why Great Literature Has Not Been Made), Uchimura argued that “Literature” could not be produced in Japan because there was no grand vision to serve as the foundation of Japanese literature, that writers in Japan were caught up in fostering narrow-minded patriotism and disinterested in world literatures that would cultivate a world-spirit, that creativity was considered dangerous, and that the members of the various literary circles were leading corrupt lives. Having made this point, Uchimura proposed methods for creating “great literature.” In order to build a foundation for the structuring of fine language, the nurturing of a rich mind, and attaining an expansive global sense, he proposed familiarizing oneself with some of the classics of world literature, such as the Bible, Homer’s two major works, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Shakespeare’s plays, Goethe’s *Faust*, and others. In “Ika ni shite daibungaku o en ka” (How are We to Attain Great Literature?; 1895), he also recommended observation of nature and cultivation of character.

Due to his ethical standpoint on literature, Uchimura detested reading novels and watching plays, believing that they exerted a bad influence on families; and yet he embraced poetry. Indeed, he published *Aigin* (Selected Poems, 1897), in which he broke down the works of various western poets into easy-to-understand translations and introduced Walt Whitman to Japan as a religious poet. He also published works by Japanese poets, such as Kanbara Ariake, in *Tokyo dokuritsu zasshi*. This journal was read widely by young men all over Japan and, when it was discontinued, Uchimura held summer colloquia for its readers for the following three years. Osanai Kaoru, Shiga Naoya and Arishima Takeo—all of whom later became writers—participated in these sessions. In addition, in January and February of 1898, Uchimura conducted literary seminars every Monday. These lectures were later compiled and published as *Getsuyō kōen*, later republished as *Shūkyō to bungaku* (The Monday Seminars / Religion and Literature, 1898). The author Masamune Hakuchō, who did not miss any of these lectures, later commented that, with regard to Christian literature, he held Uchimura’s works in the highest regard and that, if one were to discuss Christian writers from the Meiji period onward, one only need mention Uchimura (“Meiji no kirisutokyō bungaku” (Christian Literature of the Meiji Era, 1926), cited in Ōnuki 2002, 37).

There are many young writers who were drawn to Uchimura’s works and were thereby stimulated both in a religious and in a literary sense, but who ended up distancing themselves from Christianity as they entered into the world of literature. For all this, one can still observe from the works of these writers the traces of their ties to Uchimura. One such example is Osanai Kaoru (1881–1928) a producer and playwright who was a pioneer of modern Japanese theatre and is often referred to as “the father of new theater.” During his high school days at the First Higher School of Japan, Osanai attended Uchimura’s summer seminars, became an impassioned member of his Bible study group and helped in editing *Studies on the Bible*. However, despite his closeness to Uchimura, Osanai drifted away from Uchimura as he entered the Humanities Department of Tokyo Imperial University, choosing rather to focus on his plays and to immerse himself in the world of the theatre. His novel, *Haikyōsha* (The Apostate), serialized in the *Asahi shinbun* newspaper in 1923, tells the story of the young men who spent time together with Uchimura throughout the three years of summer colloquia.

Arishima Takeo (1878–1923, baptized 1901), a representative writer of the *Shirakaba* (White Birch) society, was influenced by Uchimura from his time at the Sapporo Agricultural College. He attended the Sapporo Independent Christian Church, became a Christian, attended Uchimura’s summer colloquia, and was expected to become Uchimura’s successor; but, following his return from the United States, Arishima withdrew from the Christian

realm and immersed himself in the literary world. In Arishima's novel, *Aru onna* (A Certain Woman,\* 1919), Uchimura makes his appearance as a character named "Uchida," and in *Oshiminaku ai wa ubau* (Love Freely Takes, 1920), Arishima expresses his sharply critical opinion of Christian theologians who viewed God as a tyrannical ruler.

Shiga Naoya (1883–1971), a central figure of the *Shirakaba* society, often referred to as "*shōsetsu no kamisama*" (the god of the novel), participated in Uchimura's summer colloquium when he was a student at Gakushūin Boys Junior High School, and thereafter, for the next seven years, he attended Uchimura's Bible study group. Shiga wrote in his diary on 22 May 1904 that Uchimura's Christianity "was truly mighty and, as frightening as it feels, it is pleasant" (cited in Endō T. 1994, 275). However, when Shiga was accepted into the Department of English Literature at Tokyo Imperial University, he began writing fiction and, as his path toward becoming an author began to open, he stopped living his life as a Christian under Uchimura's tutelage. In "Uchimura Kanzō-sensei no omoide" (Memories of my Teacher, Uchimura Kanzō, 1941), Shiga states that, of all those who had influenced him, the one he considered as a mentor was Uchimura Kanzō. In his novellas *Nigotta atama* (Murky Mind, 1911) and *Ōtsu Junkichi* (1912) a character who is clearly based on Uchimura appears, along with another character, a young Christian, onto which Shiga projects his younger self; the latter struggles with bodily desires that come into conflict with the commandment against adultery.

Nagayo Yoshirō (1888–1961), another writer and playwright of the *Shirakaba* society, was also deeply moved by Uchimura's works during his days at Gakushūin Boys High School. He enthusiastically attended Uchimura's Bible study group for a year; but, as his interest in writing grew and he joined the *Shirakaba* coterie, he turned his back on Uchimura, entered the Department of English Literature at Tokyo Imperial University, and ventured into the world of literature.

Another writer, Masamune Hakuchō, whose unique brand of nihilism enabled him to create works depicting life in a cool-headed way, making him a central figure for naturalist literature, was poor in health from a young age and was filled with a deep fear of death from his childhood. When he was thirteen years old, he read the journal, *Kokumin no tomo*, and learned about Christianity, in which he sought salvation. He also became an ardent admirer of Uchimura's works and, after entering Tokyo Senmon Gakkō, he enthusiastically participated in the summer schools and Monday seminars where Uchimura was the lecturer. On Sundays, Masamune would listen to Uemura Masahisa's sermons and was subsequently baptized by him. However, by the time Masamune graduated university, he had decided to divest himself of his Christian faith for various reasons, including his perception that the religion he sought to be freed from the terror of death was, in fact, a cruel religion which would force its followers to become martyrs. He also acknowledged that he lacked the ability to love his neighbor, a core tenet of Christian teaching (while he was in fact full of hatred for his neighbor), and went on to become a prominent naturalist writer. Although Hakuchō felt conflicted and alternated between a state of disbelief and belief, in the last years of his life, in his essay "Bungaku hachijūnen" (Eighty Years of Literature, 1959), he stated that "ultimately, Christ embraces us much like a hen protects her chicks. I am constantly thinking about such things" (Masamune 1983–1986, 30, 137). However, he renewed his Christian faith just before his death. One can view this as an example of a life in which Hakuchō, in his youth, faltered in front of a terrifying God of staunch paternal principles; he seems to have cowered and run away from this situation, when in reality, he was not running away but rather, in the

depths of his heart, ardently searching for a maternal God. Approximately fifty years after meeting Uchimura, Hakuchō wrote his critical biography, *Uchimura Kanzō: Ika ni ikubeki ka* (Uchimura Kanzō: How should One Live?, 1949).

Yagi Jūkichi (1898–1927, baptized 1919), often referred to as the first and best Christian poet in Japan, also sought out faith due to the concerns he had surrounding life and death. He was greatly influenced by the Non-church branch of the faith and the view of God that evinced strong paternal principles, with which he came into contact by reading Uchimura’s works and by attending his lectures during his time as a student at the Tokyo Kōtō Shihan Gakkō. Under such influence, he wrote poetry while practicing his faith centered on the Bible within the confines of his own household. However, gradually, Yagi departed from Uchimura’s view of God with its intensely paternal principles and deepened his faith in a direction that supported his own view of a more maternal God. By combining his new view of God with his literary process, Yagi became a representative Christian poet in Japan. He only had four years of working on his poems, while teaching English on the side, before he departed this world at the young age of 29, leaving behind approximately three thousand drafted poems.

Uchimura’s influence on writers who had a connection with modern Christianity does not end here. Prominent writers who are categorized into the third time period mentioned in the beginning of this Introduction, authors such as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927) and Dazai Osamu (1909–48), were also the recipients of Uchimura’s influence, albeit indirectly. In Akutagawa’s “Haguruma” (Cogwheels,\* 1927), which he worked on until the very end of his life, we can see clear echoes of Uchimura in the depiction of the elderly Christian man who enters the great teacher’s house and goes on to lead an intense religious life under his guidance. On the other hand, Dazai was greatly influenced by *Uchimura Kanzō zuihitsu-shū* (The Collected Essays of Uchimura Kanzō) and subscribed to the journal, *Seisho chishiki* (Bible Knowledge), whose lead writer was Tsukamoto Toraji, a student of Uchimura. Unlike writers who were closely involved with Christianity in their youth but left Christianity as they immersed themselves in the world of literature, both Akutagawa and Dazai maintained their interest in Christianity throughout their lives as they continued their struggles with life; they read the Bible thoroughly as they pursued their writing endeavors and awakened in themselves a renewed spiritual interest in Christianity. However, Akutagawa expressed his conviction that “to believe in a God—to believe in a God’s love, that was impossible” (“The Life of a Fool,”\* in Akutagawa 1987, 134), and Dazai stated that “I was frightened even by God. I could not believe in His love, only in His punishment” (Dazai 1958, 117). These are the words left in their posthumous works and, by considering these words—and the fact that both these writers took their own lives—we can come to an understanding that a Christianity that harnesses strong paternal principles was not able to play a crucial role in regard to the problems confronted by the souls of these tormented writers.

### ***The origins of modern Japanese Christian writers—Band 3: The Kumamoto Band and Dōshisha University***

In 1871, in response to Kumamoto falling behind the Satsuma and Chōshū domains as the Meiji Restoration progressed, the Kumamoto School of Western Studies, a boarding school aimed at educating young men for government service through western learning, was

established. L. L. Janes, a retired American military captain, provided the young men, who had lost the focus of their loyalty following the dissolution of the feudal domain system, with an all-encompassing education to nurture them holistically. The students, moved by Janes' passion and faith, found a new sense of purpose, and in 1876 they gathered at Mount Hanaoka, just outside Kumamoto Castle, where they signed the "Hōkyō shuisho," their pledge to propagate the gospel of Christ in Japan, and became Christians. These members were called the "Kumamoto Band." In response to these activities, an anti-Christian movement evolved, and the School of Western Studies was closed. At this point, Janes entrusted his students to Dōshisha English School, a school that had been opened by Nijima Jō in Kyoto the previous year. Dōshisha was inspired by the arrival of these students and the first class of graduates of the school in 1879 included the members of the Kumamoto Band. Dōshisha quickly fell under the influence of liberal theology and produced men such as Kozaki Hiromichi, who would become one of the pillars of the Japanese Congregational Christian Church, which argued for the autonomy of the church and valued the spirit of cooperation; Ebina Danjō and others who would become the Christian leaders who played important roles in Meiji Japan; and those who would actively contribute to Christian media, such as *Rikugō zasshi*, *Shinjin* and *Kirisutokyō shinbun*. An especially noteworthy figure in this regard is Ebina Danjō (1856–1937, baptized 1876), who established a unique Christian philosophy based on the particular religious experience he underwent during his youth. Alongside his mission work and educational activities, he published the magazine, *Shinjin*, and gained a reputation in the intellectual community in Japan; in this way, Ebina emerged as one of the representative thinkers in the early Japanese Christian community, alongside Uemura and Uchimura. The Christian critic, Tsunashima Ryōsen (1873–1907, baptized 1887), who had his faith restored through his relationship with Ebina, also exercised a huge impact on the younger generation when he published "Yo ga kenshin no jikken" (My Experiment in Perceiving God) in *Shinjin*.

Abe Isoo (1865–1949, baptized 1882), who studied at Dōshisha and was baptized by Nijima Jō, went to the United States in order to study theology and social issues. After returning to Japan, alongside his educational activities at Waseda University, he worked as the lead writer of the journal *Rikugō zasshi* and started publishing a new Christian socialist magazine, *Shin kigen*, with Christian socialists such as Kinoshita Naoe, and promoted Christian socialism. Kinoshita Naoe's novel, *Hi no hashira* (The Pillar of Fire,\* 1904), which depicts a Christian socialist protagonist and is imbued with anti-war sentiment, appealed to many readers and came to be considered as one of the representative socialist novels of the Meiji period. Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960, baptized 1904), who read and was influenced by the works of Abe and Kinoshita, was sympathetic to the cause of Christian socialism and sought to become an evangelist. He graduated from the theological preparatory course at Meiji Gakuin and Kobe Theological Seminary, and worked in the Kobe slum area of Shinkawa in Kobe serving the poor by doing mission work among them. Based on his experiences there, he wrote his autobiographical novel, *Shisen o koete* (Beyond the Line of Death, 1920), which became a huge best seller. Thereafter, Kagawa continued to publish many novels and poems while dedicating himself to evangelism and the social movement, and used the manuscript fees and his considerable royalties to support the social movement. Kagawa became widely known around the world and was twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

So far, we have considered the origins of the modern Japanese writers who had a connection to Christianity in the first to third periods, delineating the three main backgrounds of such writers. It can be said that the emergence of these writers can be traced back to the

process of modernization at the beginning of the Meiji period in which Protestant missionaries and educators moved the hearts of their listeners at a fundamental human level and planted the seeds from which several trees flourished in the Japanese spiritual soil. In this sense, it can be said that these writers, variously connected to Christianity, emerged as the branches of such trees.

Unlike these three traditions, during the postwar period, the writers who found interest in Christianity turned overwhelmingly to Catholicism. Let us now turn our attention to where such Catholic Christian writers came from, and when and where they encountered and were influenced by Catholicism.

## The origins of the postwar Christian writers: Focusing on Catholicism

When examining the cultural terrain which facilitated the emergence of the Catholic writers who flourished after the War, it is important to note that, while the influence of the Japanese Catholic church on the spheres of higher education and the publication industry lagged considerably behind that of the Protestant church, following the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the monopoly of the Paris Foreign Missions Society began to unravel and a succession of missionary societies from countries such as Germany, Spain, Canada and Italy started to arrive in Japan, beginning with the Jesuits but followed in quick succession by other orders such as the Dominicans, the Society of the Divine Word, the Franciscans and the Salesians. As a result, Catholic influence on education, which until then had been limited largely to the primary and secondary sectors, also came to be seen in the field of higher education, leading to the founding of Sophia (Jōchi) University in 1913 and of Seishin Joshi Gakuin Kōtō Senmon Gakkō (Sacred Heart Professional Training College; now Seishin Joshi Daigaku (Sacred Heart Women's University)) in 1916. Significant in this regard is the contribution of the prewar writer, Iwashita Sōichi (1889–1940) who was baptized in 1901 during his second year of middle school at the Catholic Gyōsei Junior High School. When he entered the First Higher School of Japan, Iwashita formed a group of fellow Catholic graduates of Gyōsei that developed into a Catholic youth association, thereby spawning an intellectual youth movement. This activity by Iwashita can be seen as the inspiration behind the emergence of a succession of Catholic authors in postwar Japan.

Another prominent Catholic intellectual who succeeded Iwashita was the philosopher, Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko (1904–1945, baptized 1927). Yoshimitsu left Uchimura Kanzō's group while studying at Tokyo University and, under Father Iwashita's guidance, he converted to Catholicism, and studied abroad in France under the philosopher Jacques Maritain, who, through his interactions with writers and artists, spoke widely on the problems surrounding Christian writers. After returning to Japan, Yoshimitsu taught at Sophia University and Tokyo University, and became the warden at the St. Phillip's dormitory, which had been renamed as the Shirohato (Dove) dormitory during the War. He also supervised the Catholic Students' Union. In addition to writing for the publications he started, *Sōseiki* and *Katorikku kenkyū*, Yoshimitsu also made contributions to general magazines, and endeavored to ensure that Catholicism would gain credibility in the intellectual community of Japan as something that could overcome modernity and spread its influence among young intellectuals. Being well-versed in literature, Yoshimitsu enjoyed close relationships with literary figures such as Hori Tatsuo and, through the new publication of *Gendai katorikku bungei sōsho* (Library of

Modern Catholic Literature) and his work, *Shi to ai to jitsuzon* (Poetry, Love and Existence, 1948), he argued for a Catholic literary philosophy in which religion and art/literature were interrelated. This argument greatly influenced young men such as Endō Shūsaku (1923–1996, baptized 1935), the poet Nomura Hideo (1917–1948, baptized 1943), the critic Tsujino Hisanori (1909–1937, baptized 1937), Ochi Yasuo (1911–1961, baptized 1953), and Katō Shūichi (1919–2008, baptized 2008), and thereby prepared fertile ground for postwar Japanese Christian literature to flourish.

Most prominent among those who were influenced by Yoshimitsu was the most significant postwar Catholic writer, Endō Shūsaku. When Endō entered the preparatory course of the Literature Department of Keiō University in 1943, he moved into St. Phillip's dormitory, where, as he notes in his essay "Yoshimitsu-sensei no koto" (About Professor Yoshimitsu, 1975), he was advised by his mentor that "you are more cut out for literature than philosophy" (ESBZ 13: 209) and was introduced to Hori Tatsuo. After this introduction, Endō studied under Hori, majored in French literature and, building on the Catholic philosophy focused on Jacques Maritain that he learned from Yoshimitsu, he wrote his senior thesis, "Neo-Tomizumu ni okeru shiron" (Poetics in Neo Thomism) and his first serious literary criticism, "Hori Tatsuo oboegaki" (Memorandum on Hori Tatsuo, 1948), which set him on the path of literary criticism. Endō was also the inheritor of Yoshimitsu's literary philosophy as encapsulated by the latter during his participation in the *Bungakukai* symposium, *Kindai no chōkoku* (Overcoming Modernity), where he stated that "overcoming the modern spirit" was "a problem of the soul" and praised Dostoevsky's work as "essentially a theological evaluation of the living human being."<sup>2</sup> When Endō became a writer, he came to perceive exploration of the human soul as the ultimate mission for a writer and strove to create a literature that dealt with the problem of the inner being. In addition, because Yoshimitsu did not conform to the booming voice of Japanese nationalism during the War but argued for the need to recover medieval humanism which acknowledges both God and humans, Endō became intensely conscious of his identity as a Japanese who does not possess such a medieval history; this encouraged him to consider the theme "Nihonjin to kirisutokyo" (the Japanese and Christianity). It can be argued that the literary soil cultivated by Yoshimitsu's Catholicism is what nurtured Endō's creation of Christian literature, offering him the basis for his literary endeavours.

### ***And one by one, the writers became Catholic—the "Endō and Inoue Mountain Ranges"***

In 1950, Endō went to France with the aim of studying Catholic literature. And it was on the ship to France that he met his lifetime fellow comrade with whom he shared a common cause, Inoue Yōji (1927–2014, baptized 1948). From towards the end of his middle school days, Inoue suffered from a sense of emptiness and anxiety about death. When he read Thérèse of Lisieux's autobiography, *Chiisaki hana* (L'histoire d'une âme / The Story of a Soul, 1898), he saw the light in the "childlike" nature of her spirituality and was baptized during his first year at Tokyo University. In 1950, he graduated from the department of philosophy and left for France in order to join the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, the same order as Thérèse. In the fourth-class cabin of the ship bound for France, he met Endō Shūsaku, and there they found a kindred spirit and became soul mates, praying for and supporting each other. During the summer following their arrival in France, Endō



visited Inoue who was undergoing rigorous training, and, as he noted in his diary entry for 27 August 1951, he thanked God for his meeting with Inoue and prayed that he would also be bestowed with a rigorous faith (ESBZ 15: 134).

Following this visit, despite feeling suffocated by his theological studies in Catholic universities in places such as Lyon, Rome and Lille, programs which had become rigidly rooted in western ethics, Inoue's attention was drawn to the important role exercised by culture. At the same time, he discovered that the Eastern Orthodox church has its own understanding of Christianity different from the West—as can be observed in Russian Orthodoxy—and this led him to the belief that Japan should also be allowed to have its own understanding of Christianity. He subsequently left the Carmelite Order in 1957, and returned to Japan, transferring to a theological seminary in a Japanese parish. On his return, he immediately visited Endō. Upon meeting, the two discovered that they shared the same concerns regarding the issue of the Japanese approach to Christianity, and together they decided to devote their lives to tackling the important task of discerning the way forward—of providing stepping stones for the next generation.

As Endō deepened his thoughts on this topic, first by focusing on the distance between the Japanese and Christianity and then on the issue of how to close that distance, his tuberculosis recurred in 1960, and he had to spend time in hospital, coming close to death. It was in this same year that Inoue's ordination to the priesthood was confirmed, and Endō sent him the gift of a chalice from the hospital. As a newly ordained priest, Inoue supported Endō through prayer. In 1963, Inoue published his first essay “Kirisutokyō no Nihonka” (The “Japanification” of Christianity), and Endō, having recovered from illness, argued a similar line in his essay, “Watashi to kirisutokyō” (Christianity and I) where he wrote that the Japanese “are to continue to carry the culture of Japan with them and absorb Christianity” (ESBZ 12: 309). In his 1964 essay, “Sei-Terejia to gendai Nihon no kyōkai” (Thérèse and the Contemporary Church in Japan), Inoue wrote of “Christianity that has become one with western culture and western sentiments of everyday life,” arguing that it was like “someone else's clothes that do not fit” the Japanese (Inoue 1981, 152). Two years later, Endō also used this analogy in his essays, “Watashi no bungaku” (My Literature, 1967) and “Awanai yōfuku” (Western Clothes that do not Fit, 1967).

In 1965, Endō went on a trip to Nagasaki to research his novel, *Chinmoku* (Silence,\* 1966), and he invited Inoue to accompany him. During this trip they had a discussion on Judas. Inoue shared his thought that Jesus Christ must have forgiven Judas and, upon hearing this, Endō expressed his earnest wish for Inoue to be a Catholic priest who would help those who are weak, like his fictional character, Kichijirō. Endō's classic novel, *Silence*, represented a portrayal of a maternal Christ who shares in the pain of the weakling, and Inoue rejoiced at the publication of this first work aimed at the “re-tailoring of western clothes” and praised it as a superb masterpiece. The novel received much criticism from others in the Christian community in Japan, but this gave Endō the impetus to commit himself to gaining a deeper understanding of the New Testament. In 1976, Inoue published *Nihon to Iesu no kao* (The Face of Jesus in Japan\*) in which he articulated his efforts, spanning over twenty years, to bring the Japanese cultural sensibilities to bear on recapturing the New Testament with a renewed focus on the love and forgiveness of the maternal Christ. At the time, Endō was struggling as his works seemed to go against the conventional theological orthodoxy, making him feel isolated; but Inoue's unflinchingly supportive theological arguments gave him

“enormous comfort” and “encouragement” (ESBZ 13: 255), and he eagerly introduced Father Inoue to his circle of literary friends.

In his essay, “Tsugi-tsugi to yūjin ga jusen suru no o mite” (Watching My Friends Get Baptized One after Another, 1977), Endō recalls that, in the 1950s, when he began writing his novels, there were barely any Christians in the literary world and how specially moving it was to see his writer-friends, Takahashi Takako (1932–2013, baptized 1975) and Ōhara Tomie (1912–2000, baptized 1976), being baptized by Father Inoue. Following her baptism, Takahashi explored a new territory of spiritual literature that focused on an approach to God achieved by passing through the dark night of the human soul. In addition, Yasuoka Shōtarō (1920–2013, baptized 1988), one of the *Daisan no Shinjin* (Third Generation of Postwar Writers) who Endō had predicted would be baptized in his aforementioned essay, was also later baptized by Father Inoue, with Endō as his godfather. Furthermore, Endō and Inoue were surrounded by Catholic literary figures, such as the writer Miura Shumon (1926–2017, baptized 1963), the playwright Yashiro Seiichi (1927–1998, baptized 1969), and the literary critics Takeda Tomoju (1931–1991, baptized 1953) and Kazusa Hideo (1931–2001, baptized 1957). The religious scholar Toda Yoshio called this literary state of affairs “the Inoue Mountain Range” (Toda 1982, 17), but it is more accurate to call it the “Endō and Inoue Mountain Range.” In 1981, Endō, Inoue and others opened the *Nihon kirisutokyō geijutsu sentā* (The Japanese Center for Christian Arts), where writers, musicians, artists, religious people and theologians who were connected to Christianity could come together to discuss religion and art and learn from one another. Among the writers who gathered at the Center were Kizaki Satoko (1939–, baptized 1982), who wrote *Aogiri* (Bronze, 1984), a work dedicated to Father Inoue for which she received the Akutagawa Prize, and Kaga Otohiko (1929–, baptized 1987), a psychiatrist and writer who was baptized through the influence of Endō.

### ***Writers who received Catholic education and were baptized***

Beside these Catholic writers, it is worth mentioning the writers who were educated at Catholic mission schools where they were impressed by the clerics and religious who demonstrated an unchanging faith during and after the War; many of these were baptized following the War, when the value systems of the nation were dramatically changing, and went on to play active roles in the postwar period. First to be noted in this regard is Sono Ayako (1931–, baptized 1948), who began writing during her studies at the University of the Sacred Heart and who continues to write novels and essays, such as *Kami no yogoreta te* (lit. God’s Dirty Hands, 1979, translated as *Watcher from the Shore*\*), inspired by her religious faith, as well as Suga Atsuko (1929–1998, baptized 1948), who was a graduate of the inaugural class of the same university and who was active as a scholar of Italian literature while searching for spirituality. Suga went on to win the “Joryū bungaku-shō” (Women’s literature prize, awarded by Chūō Kōronsha) for her *Mirano—kiri no fūkei* (Milan: City of Fog, 1990) in her later years, as well as producing a series of full-length essays. Also to be acknowledged here is Watanabe Kazuko (1927–2016, baptized 1945), who was Suga’s peer at Sacred Heart and who became a Catholic nun and authored essays underpinned by her faith, including the million-seller essay collection, *Okareta basho de sakinasai* (Bloom where you’re Planted, 2012). Also, there are writers such as Ariyoshi Sawako (1931–1984, baptized 1947), who graduated from Kōen Girls School, and wrote works such as *Kōkotsu no hito* (lit. The Enchanted Person, 1972;

translated as *The Twilight Years*\*), which focused on affirmation of humanity based on her Catholic faith; and Tsushima Yūko (1947–2016, baptized 1987), who graduated from Shirayuri Women's University and who, through writings such as *Hi no yama: Yamazaru-ki* (The Mountain of Fire: Records of a Mountain Monkey, 1998), examined questions of life and death in depth. Many of these female writers who held Catholic values practiced social activism and were devoted to educational activities that were motivated by their religious faith.

Men who belong to this group of writers include the writer and playwright, Inoue Hisashi (1934–2010, baptized 1950), who lived in, and was baptized at, Hikarigaoka Tenshien, run by the de la Salle Brothers, and graduated from Sophia University. Through his works, such as *Mokkinpotto-shi no atoshimatsu* (Settling the Affairs of Father Mockinpott, 1972), Inoue asserted the defiant spirit of the vulnerable, supported by the love of God. Another such writer is Moriuchi Toshio (1936–, baptized 1951), who studied and was baptized at the Meisei Catholic School, and who illustrated the soul's yearnings through his writing of existential realism in works such as *Hone no hi* (Fire in the Bones, 1986) which questioned the possibility of human salvation from original sin.

There are other notable Catholic writers who were active after the War, such as the playwright, Tanaka Sumie (1908–2000, baptized 1951), who wrote works such as *Garashia Hosokawa-fujin* (Lady Hosokawa, 1959); her husband and playwright, Tanaka Chikao (1905–1995, baptized 1988), who wrote such works as the play *Maria no kubi* (The Head of Mary,\* 1959) which dealt with the atomic bombing of Nagasaki; the medical doctor and essayist, Nagai Takashi (1908–1951, baptized 1933), who was exposed to radiation in Nagasaki himself but continued to write while undergoing medical treatment, leaving such works as *Nagasaki no kane* (The Bells of Nagasaki,\* 1949); the writer Shimaō Toshio (1917–1986, baptized 1956), a suicide squadron leader who wrote works such as *Shi no toge* (The Sting of Death, 1960–1977) in which he depicted the pathway to redemption in the hope of his wife's recovery from mental illness, which he attributed to his own sinful nature; and the writer Ogawa Kunio (1927–2008, baptized 1946), who wrote works such as *Aru seisho* (A Certain Bible, 1973) and other stories inspired by images of the Biblical world.

## Postwar Protestant Writers

So far, we have taken a brief look at Catholic writers and positioned them as the leaders of postwar Christian literature in Japan. However, there are some Protestant writers who cannot be overlooked when discussing postwar Christian literature, including Shiina Rinzō and Miura Ayako.

Shiina Rinzō (1911–1973, baptized 1950), was arrested during the War for joining the Communist Party. During his imprisonment, he came across Nietzsche's work and renounced communism. He then read Dostoevsky and aspired to become a writer, making his debut with "Shin'ya no shuen" (Midnight Banquet,\* 1947), which has been seen as the first work of Japanese existentialist literature. Shiina is regarded as a representative writer of the first generation of postwar writers. However, he reached an ideological impasse, out of which he came to see no choice but to trust Dostoevsky and be baptized, placing all his reliance on "the light behind the contradiction" (cited in Endō T. 1994, 67). Through his works such as *Kaikō* (The Encounter, 1952) a work that focuses on a desperate Christian protagonist, his autobiographical novel, *Jiyū no kanata de* (In a Place Beyond Freedom, 1954), and *Utsukushii*

*onna* (A Beautiful Woman, 1955), a novel for which he was awarded the “Minister of Education Award for Fine Arts,” Shiina portrayed in his own way the Christian freedom made possible by the resurrection of Christ. In addition, in 1960, Shiina formed the Protestant literary group *Tane no kai* (Seed Society) along with the critic, Sako Jun’ichirō (1919–2014, baptized 1948), the writer Abe Mitsuko (1912–2008, baptized 1926), and the playwright and essayist, Takamizawa Junko (1904–2004, baptized 1938) among others. The writer Mori Reiko (1928–2014, baptized 1947) and the playwright Takadō Kaname (1932–2001, baptized 1950) were also nurtured in this group.

Miura Ayako (1922–1999, baptized 1952) was an elementary school teacher during the War. But with Japan’s defeat, Miura came to question Japan’s militaristic education, in which she had been complicit, and decided to leave her job. While suffering from the sense of meaninglessness, she contracted tuberculosis. In 1948, at the sanatorium, Miura had a chance meeting with her childhood friend, Maekawa Tadashi, a Christian, who led her to be baptized. Miura, who found salvation through Christ during her time of struggling with illness, started writing novels out of her desire to share the gospel. With her novel *Hyōten* (Freezing Point, 1964), which tackled the theme of original sin, Miura became a best-selling author, and thereafter she continued to write novels on the theme of faith, including *Hitsuji gaoka* (1966) and *Shiokari tōge* (Shiokari Pass,\* 1968). Through her autobiography, *Michi ariki* (lit. There is a Way, 1969, translated as *The Wind is Howling\**), which was her testimony of faith in Christ, and through her essays, Miura spread the gospel to many of her readers.

## Conclusion

In the aforementioned essay, “Watching my Friends Get Baptized One and Another,” Endō Shūsaku writes as follows:

*In Europe prominent Christian writers such as Mauriac and Bernanos have passed away, Graham Greene and Julien Green have grown old, and we don’t hear of notable achievements of Christian writers. In this sense, Christianity may be waning there. By comparison, in Japan, a place once considered far removed from Christianity, novelists and playwrights are converting one by one. There was a time in the Meiji period when many Japanese writers became Protestant Christians; but many of the writers converting today are becoming Catholic. Many of the writers of the past abandoned their faith after a time, but the Christian writers of today did not come to be baptized because of the atmosphere of the moment or on a momentary whim. They were baptized after having fully grasped the reasons why their forebears had abandoned their Christian faith. I cannot imagine a day when they will abandon their faith. (ESBZ 13: 264).*

These words of Endō can be understood as an expression of his appreciation of the emergence of a cadre of postwar writers who would create literature in which Christianity and Japanese literature were joined in a mutually reinforcing relationship. This was possible because they had received baptism as witness to the knowledge that Christianity had played a decisive role in restoring broken humanity, deepening their understanding of the synergies between faith and literary creativity. They were obviously different from those young

Protestant writers of the Meiji and Taishō periods who had abandoned the faith as they continued to pursue their literary endeavors. In addition, it should be said that these postwar Japanese Christian writers were ideally situated to build on the contribution of authors like those already mentioned, including Mauriac, Bernanos, Graham Greene and Julien Green, i.e. the group of European (predominantly French) Christian writers, and the Russian Orthodox writers such as Dostoevsky who had given birth to a modern Christian literature in which faith and literature were established as mutually reinforcing pillars in the search for a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the human soul.

Already in the prewar Shōwa period, those in the literary community who found themselves in ideological confusion as a consequence of the trend towards modern individualism that derived from the Protestantism that had prevailed from the Meiji period onwards, were beginning to turn their spiritual attention to Christianity. Influenced by French literature, while they may not have emerged as baptized Christians, many shared a strong affinity towards Catholicism. Significant in this regard are the following prophetic words left behind in his posthumous work, “Zoku Seihō no hito” (The Man from the West: The Sequel,\* 1927), by one of the most prominent authors of the period, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke: “People have had to take lessons from Mary, more so than Christ, to find the way that leads to peace” (Akutagawa 2011, 275). Akutagawa here seems to be suggesting that there was something in the maternal aspect of Catholicism born of the traditional veneration of the Holy Mother and to which these various artists gave expression that responded to the religious yearning of the Japanese. Among such writers who were drawn to Catholicism through their interest in French literature were Akutagawa and his pupil, the writer, Hori Tatsuo (1904–1953), the critics Kobayashi Hideo (1902–1983) and Kawakami Tetsutarō (1902–1980), and the poet, Nakahara Chūya (1907–1937). These writers and the previously mentioned Catholic philosopher, Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko, being of the same generation, would have been mutually stimulated by one another, thereby cultivating the literary soil of Japanese Catholicism from which the Catholic writers of the fourth postwar period were nurtured.

Lastly, by way of overall summary of this discussion, I would like to return to the initial question: Where did Japan’s Christian writers come from?

First of all, where did the Protestant writers, who were active from the second half of the Meiji period to the Taishō period, come from? During the first period, the early Meiji period, many young men from the former samurai class who were active in the context of education which was linked to the process of modernization received baptism, having come under the influence of the mostly Protestant American missionaries and educators. Within this group of young men were figures such as Uemura Masahisa and Uchimura Kanzō, who were blessed with literary talent and matured into Protestant leaders, and who built on these samurai spiritual foundations with their stringent paternal ethics. Through their writings and lectures, these leaders cultivated the soil for the next generation of young men under the influence of Protestantism. As such, in the period spanning the latter half of the Meiji period and the entire Taishō period, those who were touched by the Protestant influence of such leaders during their youth were nurtured as writers. However, having come under the sway of modern individualism as a result of their affiliation with Protestantism, when they ventured into the world of literature and deepened their search for the sense of self, these writers began to distance themselves from this vision of Christianity with its strict paternal ethics.

The question that has to be asked next is: Where did the succession of writers who were baptized as Catholics and actively contributed after the War come from? In the prewar

Shōwa period, when respect for humanity was all but destroyed, a renewed spiritual interest in Christianity was awakened. In the search for an ideology that could serve to “overcome” the faltering progress towards modernity, as evidenced in the trend towards individualism, with the arrival of Catholic leaders of literary talent, scholarly knowledge and rich cultural accomplishments, such as Iwashita Sōichi and Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko, a Catholicism that would truly overcome such modern ideology was positively acknowledged by the Japanese intellectual community. The writings of these leaders helped prepare the way for the next generation of young men. And, after the War, Endō Shūsaku, who had been nurtured by these authors, combined with Inoue Yōji to further cultivate this terrain in a way that would appeal to the cultural sensibilities of the Japanese with their strong leaning towards an understanding of God as maternal principle. The Christianity prepared and cultivated in this way played a vital role in the endeavors of these writers to rebuild broken humanity. It was this development, in turn, that led to the birth of a generation of Christian writers who would produce a genuine Christian literature in which Christianity and Japanese literature stand in a mutually complementary relationship.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This was the site of Japan’s first major pollution disaster in the 1880s and the scene of the 1907 miners’ riots. The pollution disaster led to the birth of the Japanese environmental movement.

<sup>2</sup> The original “Overcoming Modernity” debate was published in *Bungakukai* (October 1942). These quotations are taken from Yoshimitsu 1984–1985, 1: 184 & 205.

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