CONFUCIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN MEIJI JAPAN: THE CASE OF KOZAKI HIROMICHI

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The path followed by Protestant Christianity in Meiji Japan (1868–1912) has frequently been viewed as an index to the general process of Japanese development up to World War II. The beginnings seemed promising. According to the accepted picture, the early converts included a significant number of young ex-samurai whose clan had not supported the winning side in the Meiji Restoration. The new regime dismantled the feudal order which had given their lives purpose and meaning, and they felt alienated and rejected as a result. They first came into contact with Christianity from a desire to study Western learning and thus make a new start in life; they were indifferent, or even hostile, to the Western religion itself. The early missionaries and foreign teachers who led them to Christianity in spite of such initial attitudes seem to have been, if not men with actual military experience, people of strong personality and puritanical ideals. Matching samurai stereotypes of courage and single-minded determination as they therefore did, they attracted the admiration and loyalty of their lordless pupils, who pledged themselves, through their teachers, to Christ. Conversion was often accompanied by the discovery of a new purpose in life, the task of spreading the new religion. This was a restatement of the samurai obligation to set a spiritual example to others, and also represented a patriotic mission to save the nation both morally and materially, through providing the proper basis for the adoption of Western civilization.¹

Missionaries were both surprised and delighted by the appearance of such educated and high-ranking converts, for in other parts of Asia, such as India and China, it was primarily the low-ranking and uneducated who showed interest in Christianity.² More recently, scholars of Meiji Christianity have made similar observations and linked this phenomenon to the general early Meiji openness to change. Just as Christians in the West had been in the vanguard of movements for individual freedom and social welfare, they have portrayed early Meiji

Christians as the potential leaders of a radical defeudalization and liberalization of Japanese society.³

This general framework does much to explain why the most famous and well-studied Japanese Christian in Japan today should be Uchimura Kanzō 内村鑑三 (1861–1930).⁴ His fierce independence of spirit and willingness to speak out in opposition to both government policy and public opinion, for example against the Russo–Japanese War, make him seem like a realization of the ideal Protestant leader. In fact, however, as is generally acknowledged, Uchimura was an exceptional figure who stayed outside mainstream Protestant circles and was very critical of them. By the end of the Meiji period it was clear that Christianity was not going to be a force for radical change in Japan, and the middle class “intellectual” pattern of membership which still characterizes Christianity in Japan today had become firmly established.⁵

Christianity is part of a general feeling that the Meiji modernization process somehow “went wrong”. Japanese scholars have tended to see Christianity as surrendering to pressure from a reactionary, absolutist state and failing in its mission to reform the feudalistic, non-democratic elements in Japanese society.⁶ This interpretation seems questionable for two, related, reasons, however. First, even granted that Christianity consistently acted as a positive liberalizing and reforming influence in the Christian West, it is surely unrealistic to expect it to have acted in the same way in a predominantly non-Christian country, and in such a short space of time.⁷ The second reason concerns the effect such


⁵ Sumiya, Kindai Nihon no Keisei, pp. 137–140.

⁶ See, e.g., Sumiya, Kindai Nihon no Keisei, pp. 131–33; Takeda, preface pp. 4–5, p. 24. Such assumptions are also apparent in more recent works such as Dohi Akio 土肥明夫, Nihon Puotesutanto Kirisutokyōshi 日本プロテスタントキリスト教史, Tokyo, 1980, and Kudō Eiichi 工藤英一, Nihon Kirisutokyō Shokai-Keizaishi Kenkyū: Meiji Zenki to Chūshin to shite日本キリスト教社会経済史研究: 明治前期を中心として, Tokyo, 1980.

expectations have had on the study of Christianity in Meiji Japan. Interest has been focused on “liberal” elements, in particular on evidence of attempts to challenge the Meiji state, leading to an enormous amount of work on Uchimura Kanzō, as mentioned above, and an emphasis when examining other figures on this aspect of their activities. There has been comparatively little written on those whose Christianity was more overtly “nationalistic” and who avoided such confrontations. This focus on “liberal” elements seems misleading, and may well have distorted understanding of the nature of Christianity in Meiji Japan.

The aim of this article is therefore to examine Kozaki Hiromichi 小崎弘道 (1856–1938), a more mainstream Christian than Uchimura Kanzō, through an analysis of his first major literary work, Seikyō Shinron 政教新論 (A new examination of the relationship between religion and government). Seikyō Shinron was widely read by Christians and non-Christians alike, and has been described as one of the two main works of early Meiji Christianity along with Shinri Ippan 真理一群 (A general outline of the truth) by Uemura Masahisa 植村正久 (1858–1925). In it we can see Kozaki’s early view of the political role of Christianity, a theme of significance in terms of the expectations about Meiji Christians outlined above, and the way in which he related Christianity to Confucianism, and to the past, present, and future of Japan, topics of great interest to Japanese Christians. Seikyō Shinron has been praised for its understanding of the idea of the individual and its thorough criticism of the traditional Japanese ethos, but these aspects should be put into perspective.

Kozaki’s approach to Confucianism will therefore be compared with the attitudes shown both by non-Christian Japanese intellectuals of the time, and by contemporary Western writers.

Kozaki and the background to Seikyō Shinron

Kozaki’s conversion to Christianity fits neatly into the pattern outlined above. Born in 1856 and having received an initial training in Chu Hsi Neo-Confucianism (shushigaku 朱子学), Kozaki entered the newly-established school of Western learning at Kumamoto in 1871, at the age of 16. At this stage he intended to follow a political career. He had been exposed to Buddhist and Shinto beliefs as a child, but his Confucian training had led him to reject religious

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8 This point has also been made by Yoshinare Akiko 吉野明子, Ebina Danjō no Seiji Shisō 海老名彈正の政治思想, Tokyo, 1982, pp. 3-4.


belief as non-rational. The school authorities were hostile to Christianity and intended that students should obtain moral sustenance from jitsugaku 実学, a form of Confucianism developed by Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809–1869) which combined elements of both Chu Hsi and Wang-Yang Ming Neo-Confucianism (yōmeigaku 陽明学). Kozaki eagerly attended the lectures on jitsugaku, and was so convinced of the moral and spiritual supremacy of Confucianism over the irrationality of Christianity, that he even saw it as his duty to preach to Captain Janes, the American teacher at the school. While increasing numbers of students slowly began to show interest, and then belief, in Christianity, Kozaki remained outspoken in his opposition. Even when drawn to study Christianity seriously, by the arguments and evident sincerity of his friends, and by Janes's earnestness in prayer, questions such as the divinity of Christ caused him much difficulty. At the end of one and a half years of spiritual and intellectual torment, he eventually came to belief and was baptised by Janes in 1876. Looking back, however, and this is important, Kozaki felt that Confucianism had in fact been a help rather than a hindrance. For him, as for many of his fellow Christians, particularly those who formed the Kumamoto “band”, conversion had not involved the rejection of Confucianism.11

In the year of his baptism, the twenty-one-year-old Kozaki left Kumamoto and, in company with most of the other students who had become Christians, entered the Dōshisha, the school founded in Kyoto by Nijjima Jō 新島襄 (1843–1890) in association with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He entered the theological section and on graduation in 1879 went up to Tokyo, where young Christians from various parts of Japan were beginning to gather. Here he became involved in various activities involving evangelism, journalism, and the general spreading of knowledge about Christianity. In later years he was a controversial President of the Dōshisha and one of the leading members of the Kumiai Kyokai 組合教会, the Japanese equivalent of the Congregational Church.12

Seikyō Shinron initially began in 1884 as a series of articles in two Christian newspapers with which Kozaki was closely involved, and was published as a whole in a revised and enlarged version in 1886. As the title suggests, it was primarily concerned with the relationship between religion and the state, but

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12 See Kozaki, passim.
Kozaki's interests lay in examining the actual Japanese situation rather than in a theoretical discussion. While criticizing Confucianism, both with regard to its ideological role in pre-Meiji Japan and with regard to its possible role in the future, Kozaki argued that some form of religion was essential to political stability. Comparing Confucianism with Christianity, he presented the latter as the ideal religious basis for the new Japan.

It is not surprising that Kozaki chose to write about Confucianism and Christianity from the point of view of their relationship with government and society. As he himself pointed out, Japan—like China—had a long tradition of political manipulation of religion; this tradition doubtless influenced his lifelong interest in the relationship between religion and government.\(^\text{13}\) Although he did not make this explicit, it was of course a tradition which, at least in the past, had very much affected attitudes to Christianity. More immediately important to him than this, however, was the unsettled atmosphere of the mid-1880s during which he was writing. Christianity itself was enjoying an unprecedented boom, accompanied by a renewed enthusiasm for Western customs as a fresh round of negotiations for revision of the "unequal" treaties began. Political tension was extremely high, however. In 1881 Okuma Shigenobu 大隈重信 (1838–1922) had been ousted by the government, which had then taken steps to strengthen limits on freedom of speech and of the press, and to introduce the teaching of Confucian ethics into the educational system. The people's rights movement, which had responded to the promise of representative government in 1890 by eagerly forming opposition parties, was riven by internal dissension, and the more radical elements were responding to government suppression by planning armed risings.\(^\text{14}\) Kozaki himself clearly felt that the situation was very precarious. As he stated in the first chapter of Seikyō Shinron, "Today a Period of Reform", the country was in a delicate period of transition between the "old" and the "new" Japan and nowhere was this truer than in the areas of government and religion. The old Asian-style despotism had gone, but civilized democratic government had yet to be established and people had very little idea of what it involved even though parliamentary government was soon to be started. Religious affairs were in a similar state. Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism had lost their influence and clearly could not survive along with Japan's new


\(^{\text{14}}\) For the 1880s as a period when clear differences were emerging in the ideology of government and opposition, see Maruyama Masao 丸山真男, "Meiji Kokka no Shisō" 明治国家の思想, pp. 216–20, in idem, Senchū to Sengo no Aida, 1936–1957 戦中と戦後の間, Tokyo, 1978, pp. 202–50 (first publ. 1949).
civilization, but there was nothing to take their place. He was particularly worried by the general obsession with political affairs, especially since it was accompanied by a lack of concern for religion and morality.\textsuperscript{15} As he declared later on in a direct criticism of the people’s rights movement, politics and freedom had no meaning as ends in themselves, but only when they were understood as means to bring about human happiness.\textsuperscript{16}

He did not, however, agree with the solutions proposed by other concerned Meiji intellectuals. He criticized those who felt that the cold moral philosophy of the West could provide a satisfactory ethical basis for society, presumably a reference to “enlightenment intellectuals“ (\textit{keimō shisōka 启蒙思 想家}) such as Nishi Amane 西 周 (1829–1897). On the other hand, here presumably aiming at figures such as Motoda Eifu 元田 永 学 (1818–1891), Lecturer on Confucianism to the Emperor, he equally took issue with those who thought that worthwhile ethical values were to be found only in the East, and who were therefore working for the revival of Confucianism.\textsuperscript{17} According to Herbert Spencer, the period between the disappearance of one ethical order and the arrival of a new one was the most dangerous time for any society. It was to this crisis that Kozaki intended to address himself.\textsuperscript{18}

As the above reference to Spencer suggests, another important influence on Kozaki’s outlook in \textit{Seikyō Shinron} was the idea of evolution, in the sense of an ordered process of unilinear development in the general direction being taken by the industrialized societies of the West. For Kozaki, as for Meiji thinkers of a variety of political persuasions, a correct understanding of this process was meant to provide the key to Japanese development: failure to follow the process correctly would result in social collapse and disaster. In Kozaki’s case, however, there was a close and explicit identification between the process of evolution and God’s plan for the world, with evolution and Christian revelation ultimately “coming out on the same track”.\textsuperscript{19} As I hope to make clear, the idea of evolution influenced not only his interpretation of Japan’s path of development but also his understanding of the relationship between Confucianism and Christianity.

\textsuperscript{15} SS, pp. 288–303.
\textsuperscript{16} SS, p. 344. For an analysis of Kozaki’s general attitude to the people’s rights movement, see Dohi, “Kozaki Hiromichi”, pp. 51–9.
\textsuperscript{18} SS, pp. 304–5.
\textsuperscript{19} SS, pp. 394–5. For a general survey of Meiji interpretations of evolution, see Funayama Shin’ichi 船山信一, \textit{Zōho Meiji Tetsugakushi Kenkyū 増補明治哲学史研究}, Tokyo, 1965, pp. 294–349. For a recent English-language article on the influence of Spencer, see Yamashita
The ideal relationship between religion and government

Kozaki approached his solution to Japan's present crisis through a critical examination of the relationship between religion and government in pre-Meiji Japan. As in China, government had always been the dominant partner. Learning had been reserved for potential holders of political office and thought irrelevant to the lower classes of society or to women. It was therefore natural that the lower classes of society had been reduced to the level of slaves or beasts, purely passive members of society who had no other object than to live out their lives. Only the samurai were qualified to be citizens and to form the life of the nation, but their loyalties were focused on the emperor rather than on the nation as a whole. It was Confucianism which had brought about and sustained this type of society. The most important element of Confucianism here had been chūkō 忠孝 (loyalty and filial piety), which had been of great influence throughout the East, and an important factor in the Meiji Restoration. This teaching of Confucianism had, in fact, made Japan what it was.20

The main object of Confucianism was peaceful government; its rituals were designed to benefit the state. It sought to produce peaceful government through a hierarchical structuring of society in terms of the first four of the five relations (ruler–subject, father–child, man–wife, older sibling–younger sibling) in a pyramid (piramiddo). This pattern was appropriate to primitive or half-civilized societies, but not to the situation in which Japan now found itself. People in a Confucian society had no individual rights and therefore no freedom; no power to make their own decisions and therefore no true morality. It was impossible for a society in this state to progress, as could be seen in the case of China. Neither was it possible to separate the ethical teachings from the rest of the Confucian system and operate them side by side with political and other structures of Western origin, as some proposed.21

While Confucianism had no relevance to the new Japan, however, something had to be found to replace it. Government alone could not support a country; without morality and religion nations could not survive, as could be seen in the case of Greece and Rome. Neither was knowledge in itself sufficient, as the advocates of theories of civilization liked to suggest. In fact, since the power of customs and superstitions tended to weaken the more a country advanced, the


20 SS, pp. 306–12.
bonding power of religion and morality actually increased in importance. Religions, moreover, acted as a sort of social “safety valve”, giving dissatisfaction with society a way of escape. There was therefore a danger that, without religion, the increased self-awareness which inevitably accompanied better educational opportunities would encourage interest in socialism and communism, causing grave political destabilization. This was so because, however free a society, discontent caused by inequalities of ability, and therefore of prosperity, was inevitable in this world. Such discontent would be cleared away, however, if people believed in Christianity, which taught man to regard this world not as the place where he should seek to fulfil his desires, but as a place of preparation for the world to come.\(^{22}\)

Christianity’s role in society was not, however, confined to such stabilizing activities. It also provided the vitality which had made possible the sustained progress of Western civilization. In non-Christian civilizations any progress soon lost momentum. Growth in knowledge led to contempt for traditional religion, resulting in the moral corruption which had led to the downfall of Greece and Rome. A rich country (fukoku 富国) would not provide the basis for a strong army (kyōhei 強兵) (as was implied by the Meiji slogan fukoku kyōhei), but would undermine it by leading to extravagance and a loss of courage and the simple customs of old. In any case, non-Christian countries lacked any idea of eternal progress to a future, perfect society; according to them, the perfect society lay in the past, and the future held only decay. Christian nations, on the other hand, were full of life; they valued the individual and had the spirit which made sustained progress toward an ideal future society possible. It was Christianity which provided this spirit in a society just as it made individual Christians into the “salt of the earth”.\(^{23}\)

This spirit provided by Christianity had three main elements. The first of these was the value given to the individual. This arose from the Christian view of men as all possessing eternal souls and being equally sinners in the sight of God. No one man should therefore be despised more than any other, nor treated merely as the tool of someone in power. The second was the high position given to women, which ensured the purity of the family, the basis of any state. Third came the Christian stress on high standards of morality and social welfare, as seen in the movement for the abolition of slavery. The motive here was not to gain merit, which was the goal of humanitarian work in Buddhist countries, but to express the Christian love of mankind. All the good points of Christian countries had been nurtured either directly or indirectly by Christianity. It had acted as a


\(^{23}\) SS, pp. 365–71.
“conscience”, without which they would not have reached their present level of development.24

To import the machinery and customs of the West without its life and spirit was thus to court disaster. Only if Japan accepted Christianity could it “gain equal footing with the countries of Europe and America and be able to shed the light of the new Japan over the world”. Those who hesitated over this had two main fears of what Christianity might do to Japan. The first of these was that it would bring religious discord. It was true that no other religion could survive alongside the ultimate truth of Christianity, and that there would be some conflict, but this was inevitable in any revolution. In any case, any conflict was unlikely to be serious either at a popular or at an élite level, both because the level of attachment to existing religions was so low, and because knowledge of the bloodshed caused by religious wars in Europe had made Japanese politicians very wary of interfering in religious disputes. As long as this was so, Japanese religions would be replaced by Christianity “through the workings of natural selection”, and with the minimum of upheaval. The second fear concerned the possibly destructive effect of Christianity on Japanese culture.25 Kozaki’s method of dealing with this will be looked at in more detail later.

In his penultimate chapter, Kozaki at last got down to discussing the ideal relationship between religion and government. Peaceful government was impossible without religion, which provided the basis for family and society. Without it people could not preserve their rights and freedom, or achieve true happiness. The actual relationship between the two differed among the countries of the West, but all agreed on their mutual importance. Kozaki’s ideal was the situation found in the United States, where church and state were institutionally separate, but politics was greatly influenced by religious principles. This both ensured individual religious freedom and encouraged an independent and vigorous church. The United States was in fact both the freest and the most religious country in the world. Kozaki was glad that, after the early attempts of the Meiji government to make Shinto part of its organizational structure, the present trend in Japan was for separation between religion and government. He earnestly desired that the Emperor and all those involved in political affairs would become Christian and govern with a Christian spirit, but without directly interfering in religious matters, in accordance with Christ’s message of rendering unto Caesar that which was Caesar’s.26

In his final chapter, “The Individual and Society”, Kozaki put his discussion into a broader national and theological perspective. While Japan could not neglect military matters or disarm herself, she should ignore foreign affairs and

26 SS, pp. 386–94.
concentrate on internal reform, with Christianity in the one hand and learning in the other. By gaining a position of equality with the West and becoming a leader of civilization in the East, Japan would be fulfilling the divine mission with which she had been entrusted. Although the day of world peace was far away, the Kingdom of Heaven would finally be achieved, at the point where “evolution and Christian revelation came out on to the same track”. Here religion and government could at last be truly linked, in unity under Christ.27

The one remaining question was the relationship between the individual and society. What was our final purpose? The enlightenment of the country? The progress of society? Did the individual exist for society or society for the individual? Kozaki’s answer was that “Man cannot find satisfaction in the reform of society and the progress of civilization alone; he must have a higher purpose than this. . . . Man is made of both spirit and flesh . . . he belongs half to this world and half to a world which we cannot see.” Only when seen from this viewpoint was it clear that society was a training place for the individual in which family, state, and church all had their role to play. This was a teaching unique to Christianity.28

Kozaki therefore ended what I have presented as a primarily political argument on a more religious note, and even pointed out that he had “stressed the necessity of faith in Christianity . . . not only because it is essential to society and civilization, but because I believe it is the authentic religion, the eternal truth . . .”29 Moreover, parallel to this discussion he had also pursued a more explicitly religious line. In the next two sections I will examine this, and the way in which he linked the political and religious levels of the work.

Kozaki’s analysis of Confucianism

Kozaki’s main outline of Confucianism itself came in chapter three. He described it as a form of social law or civil religion (gensei no shūkyō 現世の宗教). While Confucianism was not without religious features, such as the special place given to God (Jōtei 上帝), mountains, rivers and the ancestors, its real object was peaceful government. The hierarchical structuring of society by which this was achieved was upheld mainly by ethical teachings, and by rites and ceremonies. Vital to the Confucian system was the ruler. As the representative of heaven he held extraordinary responsibilities, and had in effect to be both ruler and Pope. The main requirement of the ruler was virtue. Confucianism was further characterized by its image of the perfect society. All religious and philosophical systems had some such image, but Confucianism was

29 SS, pp. 399.
unusual in that its ideal did not lie in the future or in life after death, but had already existed and needed to be restored from the past.\textsuperscript{30}

Confucianism was therefore a simple, rather arid, teaching, which could not satisfy man's questions about the deeper meaning of life. In spite of this, however, it had clearly wielded great influence. This, Kozaki felt, could only be explained by the fact that it contained some "fragment of the truth" (shinri no ittan 真理の一端) which had enabled it, however slightly, to sway men's hearts. Kozaki mentioned three elements to support this assertion. First, Confucianism was extremely practical and matter-of-fact in its attitude to life and so provided a relief from the excessive metaphysical speculation indulged in by other Asian religions. Second, and again in contrast to other Asian religions, it was optimistic both about life and about human nature, and world-affirming rather than world-negating. Finally, there was the identification of religion with government. This provided the outside support needed to make Confucian ethical teachings effective, through the authority of the state and, ideally, through the example set by the virtuous ruler. While not effective on a purely human level, the ideal of a state ruled justly by a perfect ruler, with government and religion as one, was in accordance with the Christian teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven.\textsuperscript{31}

In practice, Confucianism had clearly failed to bear out its optimistic view of the world. As he had already explained, Confucianism required a perfect ruler, but the optimism which such a requirement implied revealed an ignorance of human nature. Sin was not caused simply because people were unaware of the difference between right and wrong; the teaching of moral rules was not sufficient to keep man from evil. Even on the rare occasions when a virtuous man such as Confucius himself did come to life, he did not necessarily gain, or even have the talent for, political leadership. Moreover, the Confucian structure of society had hindered progress.\textsuperscript{32}

Confucianism stressed almost exclusively the duties of son to father and subject to lord. The individual was swallowed up in society; he belonged to his lord or to the government and had no individual rights or freedom, either to act or think. In more advanced societies, relationships were reciprocal. The ruler–subject relationship was replaced by one between government and people with duties on both sides, and narrow loyalty to a ruler became love of one's country. This shift to a more reciprocal relationship was especially marked with respect to husband and wife and the family system. While the object of a Confucian marriage was the production of an heir, the Christian ideal was a perfect union between marriage partners.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} SS, pp. 315, 318–21. As we have already seen, Kozaki later states that all non-Christian countries locate the perfect society in the past (SS, p. 367).
\textsuperscript{31} SS, pp. 322–30.
\textsuperscript{32} SS, pp. 331–3.
\textsuperscript{33} SS, pp. 334–9.
It was impossible for Confucianism to develop in this direction, however. Lacking the spiritual support which was available to Christianity, Confucian morality could only function successfully in a rigidly structured, hierarchical society, and relied heavily for its influence on the identification of political rulers with moral teachers. Since this was the only type of society in which it could survive, it inevitably formed a barrier to intellectual and technological change. This criticism could even be levelled at the apparently noble virtue of loyalty and filial piety, which in fact devalued man by setting unquestioning respect for parents and ruler as the main objects of life. Man in a Confucian society was therefore little better than a slave, and did not have the opportunity to develop an individual will or sense of moral responsibility.34

As a philosophical teaching only, divorced from society, there was no reason for Confucianism to continue to survive, and it could even have a harmful effect, by leading people to despise morality. It was not, however, necessary for it to disappear completely, and some of its teachings, for example on the importance of sincerity, would be of value for later generations. Kozaki therefore hoped that study of Confucianism in Japan would come to occupy the place held by Greek and Latin in the West, both as a key to the thought and ethos of old Japan and to help improve them.35 He also had another, more important and more surprising, role for it in mind, which he introduced in chapter nine. This was nothing less than as a preparation for Christianity.

The relationship between Confucianism and Christianity

Kozaki saw Confucianism as an obstacle to Christianity in that although people were gradually coming to have a more favourable attitude to the latter, many were prevented from actual conversion by their attachment to Confucianism. It was, however, possible to make Confucianism into a "go-between" (baikai 媒介) to faith in Christianity.36

There were many religions in the world, but they could all be divided into two types: "natural" (shizen 自然) and "revealed" (ienkei 天啓). The first group had been developed by man in his search for God; they were particularist and imperfect, though possessing something of the truth. The second group, which contained only Christianity, had been revealed by God in his search for man. Christianity was of universal relevance and free from imperfections. The natural religions were in fact only temporary affairs, "ladder preparations" (kaitei junbi 梯級準備) for Christianity. While Judaism was the direct preparation sent by God to his chosen people, the Israelites, he had also prepared for Christianity

36 SS, pp. 358.
indirectly, through the philosophers and sages of the world who discovered religious truth through their own powers of thought. Kozaki therefore quoted the words of Christ in Matthew 5:17: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am come not to destroy but to fulfil.” This, he declared, referred not to Judaism alone, as the context might suggest, but to other religions as well. All were being fulfilled (mattojaju seraruru 全ぶ/成就せらるる) through Christianity. He further supported this by quoting Paul in Athens, Acts 17:28–27, to the effect that men had been created to “seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him”, and by referring to the similar view held by Clement of Alexandria with regard to Greek philosophy.37

Kozaki saw Confucianism, along with other religions, as preparing the way for Christianity both negatively and positively, and compared it in some respects with Judaism. In a negative sense, its strong emphasis upon morality made it superior to many other natural religions in producing an awareness of sin and of the need for salvation, although it could not of course satisfy this need, or aid man to reform. As with Judaism, and all ethical teachings which stressed self-improvement, there was always, moreover, a danger of producing self-righteousness and hypocrisy. In a positive sense, and again like Judaism, Confucianism looked forward to the coming of Christianity with its idea of a perfect society ruled by a just leader. Although limited in time and place, and by its stress on an elitist hierarchical structure, this view contained elements of Christ’s teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven.38

The last element of preparation referred to by Kozaki lay in the ruler–subject and father–son relationships. While these were vertical relationships involving benevolence in return for duty, however, Christianity saw man as tied to God purely by the bond of love. This difference contained the essential clue to the inferiority of Confucianism to Christianity. Few rulers were worthy of the loyalty which Confucianism claimed for them, while ordinary men were robbed of personal moral responsibility by the requirement for unquestioning loyalty. Yet if the Confucian ideal of chūkō were transferred to God, it would become a truly high morality, worthy of being seen as a teaching which could lead the East to Christ, just as Greek philosophy had led the Greeks. Ordinary people as well as sages would be motivated to behave well, taught not by fallible men but by God and by the example of Christ; the rules guiding men’s actions would come not from outside, but from inside, from the heart. All those who had been sincere followers of Confucianism should therefore find themselves abandoning their former beliefs and following Christ.39

37 SS, pp. 358–9.
38 SS, pp. 360–1.
39 SS, pp. 362–4. As was mentioned before, this is precisely what seems to have happened to Kozaki and other early Meiji Christians with a samurai upbringing.
Later on in his argument, in chapter eleven, Kozaki expanded this general evolutionary picture of Christianity as fulfilling, rather than destroying, pre-Christian elements, from a religious to a national level. This was how he answered the fear referred to earlier, that Christianity would rob Japanese culture of its distinctive beauty and goodness. Far from doing this, Christianity would actually support and develop such qualities, for Christianity refined countries just as it did individuals. All that was evil was swept away, but that which was worth keeping was assimilated; Christianity would reveal and fulfil (mattō suru) its true value. The Christianity which developed in Japan would therefore be as characteristic of Japan as the Christianity found in Germany, Britain or the United States was of those countries. As specifically Japanese virtues he selected, as well as the patriotic loyalty engendered by Confucianism, the integrity and constancy of the samurai and the bravery and fortitude which were called the “Japanese spirit” (Nihon damashii 日本魂), none of which were seen in other countries. These were in danger of being swept away by the frivolity and lightheartedness that were entering Japan along with Western culture, but Christianity would preserve and perfect them.40

Seikyō Shinron in perspective

In Seikyō Shinron, Kozaki contrasted Christianity and Confucianism, particularly with regard to the position of the individual, and presented a strong argument for the former as the essential basis of a politically stable new Japan. This is, perhaps, a natural apologetic stance, but there are some interesting aspects to the way in which Kozaki presented his argument. Through skilful use of the related ideas of evolution and fulfilment, he was able to portray Christianity as both the progressive antithesis of Confucianism and the old Japan which it had supported, and as their ultimate saviour. Continuity and discontinuity were two sides of the same coin.

It is possible to compare Kozaki’s viewpoint in Seikyō Shinron both with that of non-Christian Meiji intellectuals, and with that of contemporary Western Christian writers. As he himself realized, Kozaki was responding to a common Meiji concern for Japan’s future stability. His “first acquaintances and friends” on coming to Tokyo had been former members of the Meirokusha 明六社 (the Meiji Six Society), the group of distinguished pioneers in Western learning formed in the sixth year of the Meiji period.41 Like Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901), its most famous member, in particular, Kozaki’s main criticisms of Confucianism were directed at the fact that it was a barrier to Japan’s progress. His argument that by robbing people of personal responsibility for their actions

41 Kozaki, Reminiscences of Seventy Years, p. 364.
Confucianism produced weak individuals, which in turn impeded national development, is highly reminiscent of Fukuzawa’s *Gakumon no Susume* 学問のすすめ (An encouragement of learning, 1872).\(^{42}\) Missionaries and other Western Christian writers, like Kozaki, saw Christianity as the basis of Western civilization; they too emphasized the backward nature of Confucianism. Again like Kozaki, they criticized its hierarchical views and over-optimism with regard to human nature.\(^{43}\) It was also argued that since non-Christian religions were bound to disappear as a country advanced, Japan was in danger of falling into a spiritual vacuum, with all the social and political unrest which that would entail.\(^{44}\)

The more positive side of Kozaki’s appraisal of Confucianism also had its parallel in writings by Western Christians, some of whom believed, on the basis of serious study, that Confucianism could be used as a bridge to Christianity.\(^{45}\) Kozaki would certainly have been familiar with *Tendō Sakugen* 天道邏輯 (Evidences of Christianity) by W. A. P. Martin (1827–1916), the American Presbyterian missionary to China, which portrayed Christianity in terms which emphasized its points of contact with Confucianism. This had appeared in several versions in Japan and was widely referred to as the most influential apologetic work on Christianity in Japan at the time.\(^{46}\) If anything, Kozaki was more critical of Confucianism than Martin.\(^{47}\) The only Western work to be

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\(^{45}\) Notably at this time, Joseph Edkins, James Legge, and William A. P. Martin. All three of these were missionaries to China whose Chinese writings were available in Japan. See Ozawa Saburō 小沢三郎, “Chūgoku Zairyū Yasokyō Senkyōshi no Nihon Bunka ni oyobosero Eikyō” 中国在留邦教宣教師の日本文化に及ぼせる影響 in idem, *Bakumatsu Meiji Yasokyōshi Kenkyū* 幕末明治邦教史研究, 2nd ed., Tokyo, 1973, pp. 177–203.


actually mentioned – and quoted – in the text of *Seikyō Shinron*, however, was not by a missionary, but a *Jukyōron* 儒教論 (Discussion of Confucianism) by someone whom Kozaki refers to as “the British scholar Matheson” (*Eikoku no gakushi Mashison 英国の学士マシーソン*). Although no previous attempt to trace it appears to have been made, this work is clearly a little-known lecture on Confucianism given in a series on “The Faiths of the World” in Edinburgh in December 1881 by the famous blind Scottish Presbyterian preacher and Edinburgh minister, George Matheson (1842–1906). Although Matheson’s understanding of Confucianism is naturally inferior to Kozaki’s, there are intriguing points of similarity between the arguments which the two employ.

The first major such similarity occurs where Matheson, like Kozaki, asks why Confucianism has been so influential despite its shallowness. Where Kozaki talks of a “fragment of the truth”, Matheson mentions “some truth of the doctrine”, and gives very similar positive aspects in evidence, including the similarity between the Confucian ideal of perfect government and the Christian idea of the Kingdom of Heaven. While Kozaki saw the weaknesses of Confucianism in primarily social and political terms, however, Matheson was more interested in moral and spiritual issues. For him, the similarity between the Confucian ideal of perfect government and the Christian idea of the Kingdom of Heaven did not result from the actual political structure of the Confucian state, which Kozaki emphasized, but from the fact that through seeing God’s nature reflected in the world order, Confucianism invested the secular word with a sense of the divine. Again, both felt that Confucianism produced weak individuals, but where Kozaki ascribed this to the excessively hierarchical Confucian social structure, Matheson pointed to a defect in Confucian morality. Good behaviour in Confucianism was not an end in itself, but an essentially self-centred means of gaining secular advancement; China was weak because it lacked a high moral ideal, and was made up of selfish, and therefore weak, individuals.

The other major similarity between the two lies in their agreement that Christianity could be approached through Confucianism. Like Kozaki, Matheson here mentioned Confucian morality and its positive orientation to the world, with the accompanying idea that “the goal of a perfect civilization is the foundation of a kingdom of God”. He did not go so far as to talk of Christianity

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48 SS, pp. 314.
as the fulfilment of Confucianism, but even so, Kozaki was not the first to interpret Matthew 5:17 as referring to all non-Christian religions. His reference to Clement of Alexandria and Greek philosophy shows that he was aware of this; what is not clear is whether he was in any way influenced by the resurgence of the idea of fulfilment among late nineteenth-century Western writers under the stimulation of evolutionary thought and improved knowledge of non-Christian religions, in particular of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Most missionaries in Japan at the time seem to have taken a rather negative attitude towards Japanese religions. Even so, Kozaki may have been under missionary influence. He uses the phrase “ladder preparations” (kaitei junbi), and it seems significant that in 1877 we find Atkinson, an American Board missionary to Japan, describing his preaching methods and noting that “whatever is good in the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism I do not hesitate to praise; but according to my illustrations they are ladders too short for man’s absolute need.” Kozaki actually accompanied Atkinson on an evangelizing trip in 1878 while he was a student at the Dōshisha and apparently thought highly of his preaching ability, so he may well have been influenced by him.

It also seems significant that in August 1883 Uemura Masahisa, one of the young Japanese Christians with whom Kozaki became closely associated after going up to Tokyo, had published an article on Japanese religions which explicitly introduced fulfilment theory, quoting Matthew 5:17 and saying that just as Judaism had prepared the way for Christianity in the West, “the religions of Japan are ladders (kaitei) for the true religion of Christianity placed here in advance by God as preparations (junbi) for the spreading of Christianity”. He did not go into as much detail as Kozaki, however, saying that in their positive aspects Japanese religions had nurtured a religious sense, and in their negative

52 Later in his life, however, he did come to support the idea of fulfilment. See Macmillan, esp. pp. 279–81.
55 “Pioneer work – a most interesting tour”, p. 373, Missionary Herald (Nov. 1877), pp. 372–9 (emphasis in original).
aspects made clear man’s spiritual weakness and his need for the true religion of Christianity.57

It is not clear how Uemura and Kozaki arrived at these ideas. They may have discussed Atkinson’s phraseology together or developed the theory independently, possibly separately, possibly together, from their interest in the idea of evolution, through analogy with the attitude of early Christianity, of which they were both aware, and because of the nature of their own conversion experiences.58 The major difference between the two is that Uemura, like Western writers on fulfilment theory, limited its application to religions and did not extend it to Japan on a national level.

Conclusion

Fulfilment theory appealed to other Meiji Christians besides Kozaki and Uemura, and to other non-Western Christians, for example in India.59 While for Western theologians and missionaries, appreciation of non-Christian religions and the idea that they were preparations for Christianity represented a move towards universalism and greater appreciation of non-Christian cultures, however, for those, like Kozaki, who were from such cultures, the theory seems likely to have had a more particularist significance. By giving intellectual and theological support to the existence of positive links between Christianity and other religions, it allowed a convert to demonstrate, both to himself and to the world outside, that admitting the superiority of a foreign faith did not involve a total switch in cultural loyalties. In Kozaki’s case in particular, the extension of the concept from a purely religious to a national level, and the vision of a specifically Japanese Christianity which would preserve and perfect the “Japanese spirit”, provided him with evidence not only that conversion to Christianity did not represent rejection and betrayal of Japanese culture but that it could, in fact, be seen as an expression of ultimate loyalty.

The dual commitment to both Christianity and Japan which Kozaki was able to bring together on a conceptual level through the use of fulfilment theory can

58 For Uemura on his conversion experience, see Saba Wataru 藤原貞, ed., Uemura Masahisa to sono Jidai 植村正久と其の時代, II, Tokyo, 1938, p. 687 (extract from Fukuin Shinpō 福音新報, no. 115).
also be seen in his more specific discussion of Japan's future path of development. On the one hand, as we have seen, his outlook in *Seikyō Shinron* had much in common with that of the contemporary Western missionary or Christian writer, in seeing Confucianism as backward, Christianity as the sole basis of Western civilization, and a modernized Japan without Christianity as spiritually empty and therefore dangerously unstable. Thus Kozaki opposed not only traditionalists who wished to revive Confucianism, but also secular reformists, who did not realize the importance of religion to all levels of civilization. He also made it clear that man's true purpose in life was to be found not in this world but in the next, and looked forward to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

On the other hand, *Seikyō Shinron* is undisputably the work of someone greatly concerned with the political and social, as well as the moral and spiritual, welfare of Japan. Missionaries believed that Christianity was the basis of Western civilization, and linked Japan's progress in adopting Western civilization to the likelihood of its becoming Christian, but as missionaries their primary concern lay with Japan's spiritual development. For Kozaki, however, as one might expect from the circumstances of his conversion, the adoption of Western civilization was an end in itself. During large parts of *Seikyō Shinron*, the desire to ensure that this would take place smoothly and successfully even seems to be the main reason for his advocacy of Christianity. Moreover, while his long-term picture was very different, his short-term picture of the future of Japan reveals concerns which were equally deeply held by his more secular Japanese contemporaries, who were themselves looking for ways to reconcile cultural borrowing with national pride, and worried about its possible disruptive effect.

Sharing their anxiety about Japan's international position, he warned that a wealthy Japan (*fukoku*) without Christianity was likely to be too corrupt to have a strong army (*kyōhei*), and that Christianity was also essential if Japan was to gain recognition as an equal with Europe and America and become a leader of civilization in the East.

On this more concrete level too, Kozaki was able to bring together his two commitments. He clearly saw no conflict between his long- and short-term pictures of Japan's development, and in fact described the achievement of equality with the West and leadership in the East as part of God's plan for the country. If one agreed with Kozaki's argument in *Seikyō Shinron*, it was clear that all patriotic Japanese could do nothing better than become Christians.

The extent to which Kozaki's vision agreed with other views of Japanese development is, however, somewhat disturbing if one expects Christians to have

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60 See, e.g., Scheiner, pp. 28–30.

had a distinctively defeudalizing and democratizing influence, particularly when one considers his references to social order and the importance of civil morality. Kozaki did provide an effective critique of Confucianism and exhibited an understanding of the way in which Christianity had helped to mould Western concepts of the moral responsibility and rights of the individual. But he did this in the context of an attempt to show that Christianity was an integral part of a successful new Japan, and in no way a challenge to it.

The theoretical basis to his argument was evolution as a unilinear process of development in the direction of an idealized Western-style, Christian, liberal-democratic society. Yet it is not clear how far Kozaki himself was truly committed to this ideal. His criticism of the people's rights movement apart, he seems to identify himself with the ruling élite which was trying to change Japan from above, rather than with the ordinary Japanese who were presumably waiting for his dual message of spiritual salvation and secular enlightenment.\(^6^2\)

In a way, such an outlook was only the logical result of his stress on the importance of Christianity to Japan's success in adopting Western civilization; this naturally encouraged him to follow an élitist evangelistic strategy which placed the priority on influencing the upper echelons of society, through his base in Tokyo and literary work. In Seikyō Shinron we therefore find him looking forward to the time when the Emperor and all the high officials of the government would be Christian.\(^6^3\)

Other elements of his élitism, however, suggest that it also has origins in his Confucian upbringing and consequent initial desire for a career of political leadership. He clearly places a high value on the national role of the samurai, as opposed to the other three Confucian classes, and emphasizes how Christianity can help to avoid breakdowns in social harmony and stability. Connected with this tendency to identify with the élite is a basic optimism about the Meiji government, and a belief in the unlikelihood that it would make any further attempts at political interference in religious affairs, which seems surprising in view of future events. Although one could perhaps argue that the situation was still fairly open in the mid 1880s, throughout his career Kozaki continued to stress the constructive role which Christianity had to play in producing a strong and stable Japan and in developing, not destroying, Japan's national characteristics. The most obvious change in his argument was a shift away from advocating the

\(^6^2\) Ohama characterizes this as an attitude of Meiji Japanese church leaders in general. See "Nihon Kirisutokyō ni Kansuru Danshō", p. 25.

\(^6^3\) This is also a point made by Takenaka Masao 竹中正夫, "Kozaki Hiromichi ni okeru Kokka Shisō no Tenkai: Meiji Zenhanki o Chūshin ni" 小崎弘道における国家思想の展開：明治前半期を中心に, pp. 271-6, in Dōshisha Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo 同志社大学人文科学研究科, ed., Kumamoto Bando Kenkyū: Nihon Purotesutantisumu no Ichigenryū to Tenkai 熊本バンド研究：日本プロテスタンティズムの一覧流と展開, Tokyo, 1984, pp. 259-78.
American system of separation between church and state, to an emphasis on the role of religion in fostering loyalty to the throne as in European monarchies such as Britain and Germany. Towards the end of his life he was welcoming the fact that successive governments had gradually come to see the importance of religion in fostering morality.64

In Seikyō Shinron, fulfilment theory had enabled Kozaki to strike a reasoned balance between his commitment to Christianity and his commitment to Japan. The ideal expression of this balance was a relationship of mutual harmony and institutional independence between religion and government. Later in his life, Kozaki was to put more stress on the mutual harmony than on the institutional independence, but this did not really represent a retreat from his earlier views. His commitment to Christianity was clearly linked to a desire for change to a degree which involved more than the introduction of the material aspects of Western civilization, but was both shaped and motivated by a prior commitment to Japan. To the extent that all Meiji Christians, even Uchimura Kanzō, shared in these two commitments and wished above all to reconcile them, it was clearly going to be difficult for them to act as a consistently radical and liberalizing force, and unreasonable of us to expect this of them.