Globalism and Liberal Expansionism in Meiji Protestant Discourse

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This essay discusses the domestic moral and cultural reformism and the liberal expansionist discourses of leading Japanese Protestant journalists at the turn of the 20th century. It gives special attention to Uchimura Kanzō and examines his important theoretical relationships with the leading proponents of imperialism at the time, such as Tokutomi Sohō, Yamaji Aizan, and Takekoshi Yosaburō. Although it is important to consider Uchimura’s religiosity and intellectual biography because they are essential to his resistance to imperial Japan, it is also necessary to compare Uchimura’s journalistic writings with those of his friends and contemporary rivals and consider them together in the context of the intellectual currents of the time. As I argue, amid developing imperialism in East Asia at the turn of the 20th century, Protestant intellectuals overall championed cosmopolitanism, promoted liberal education and international comity and ethics over jingoism, and urged sophisticated cultural development comparable to that of the West. Uchimura and other Protestants, moreover, supported liberal expansionism, that is, Japan’s expansion through peaceful and economic means in tandem with British and American imperialism and emigration overseas. Furthermore, liberal expansionism was inspired by a historicist view that the development and expansion of liberalism and capitalism would inevitably lead Japan and the rest of the world to peaceful coexistence and higher moral civilization.

Keywords: liberal expansionism; imperialism; Meiji Japan; Protestant Christianity; Uchimura Kanzō.

Each nation is given a so-called ‘destiny’ and a ‘calling’. One can understand such a calling by delving deeply into the geography and history of a nation. The Japanese should in their hearts accept their calling, and therefore should not unreasonably attempt to carry out what is impossible to achieve. The Japanese should pursue expansion (bochō) within the range of what they are capable of.

So wrote Uchimura (1903c), the prominent Meiji Protestant, in an article in Yorozeu Chōhō titled “The Spirit of Resolving the Manchuria Question”. The Manchuria question concerned the possibility of Japanese expansion into northeastern China, which was a matter of intense interest after Russian expansion into that region on the pretext of helping quell the Boxer Uprising in 1900. With regard to this heated issue, Uchimura denounced the public’s focus on mere ‘strategy’ and ‘policy’ and instead stressed the importance of understanding international ethics and ‘historical laws’. A patriotic nation cannot be conquered by the sword, which, he said, was proven ‘in world history’ and was a ‘law that controls the universe’ (1903c). As shown by the quotation above, Uchimura’s foremost concern was with defining Japan’s ‘national mission’ and its ‘historical destiny’. How did Uchimura and his fellow

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Protestants see Japan’s mission? What was Japan’s mission? What was its historical destiny? And what were their views of expansion?1

Uchimura’s article on the Manchurian question reflects his views about the First Sino-Japanese War, which he had laid out in English in 1894 in the well-known ‘The Justification of the Korean [sic] War’. In this article, he had defended the war in a progressive and providential discourse predicting Japan’s victory as a historical inevitability and a sign of humanity’s expanding virtue:

A smaller nation representing a newer civilization lying near a larger nation representing an older civilization—was there ever such a situation in History without the two at last coming to life-and-death struggle with each other? . . . [I]n the upward progress of the human race, Providence hath always willed that the newer be represented by the smaller . . . . And in the conflict between two such nations, after all vicissitudes of fortune, the palm of victory fell always upon the newer and the smaller . . . . The Corean war is to decide whether Progress shall be the law in the East (1894: 33–34).

For Uchimura, the vice of China was not a temporary moral lapse but derived from China’s ‘national character’. In contrast, Japan, Britain, and the United States had already proved their moral uprightness in ‘loving liberty and equality’. He called China’s recent interference in Korea ‘ridiculous’ and a ‘mean international policy’ that would keep Korea ‘ignorant and defenseless’. The new Japan must therefore make China ‘come to consciousness of her own worth and duty, and to friendly cooperation with us in the reformation of the East’ (1894: 35–36). Uchimura (ibid 34) claimed that Japan’s victory would lead to ‘free government, free religion, free education, and free commerce for 600 million’ Asians. In short, Uchimura explained the rationale of the Sino-Japanese War as a historical necessity for the advance of liberalism.

I. Tokutomi Sohō: The Expansion of Great Japan

Uchimura’s article was published in the Kokumin no Tomo (Nation’s Friend) by Tokutomi Sohō, a prominent journalist who had once belonged to the Kumamoto Band of Protestants. Around the same period, Tokutomi ([1894] 1978) also wrote a series of influential essays that were collected in Dai-Nippon Bochoron (The Expansion of Great Japan). Although Tokutomi had by this point abandoned his Christian faith, his social and political thought during the mid-Meiji period were important in setting the tone for many Protestants who would become prominent after him.

Interestingly, Uchimura’s ‘Justification’ and Tokutomi’s Expansion have significant similarities as well as obvious differences. Both are characterized by a distinct progressive historical position and argue that the Sino-Japanese War was a unique moment in Japanese history. Like Uchimura, Tokutomi was hazy when it came to providing a concrete blueprint for a Japanese expansionist program, but he stressed the

1. Clearly reflecting Uchimura’s enormous national standing in post-World War II Japan, there is a large body of biographical studies about him, which mostly focus on his pacifist ideas and the religious movements he organized. Most recently, Howes (2005) has published a thoughtful and comprehensive biography, Japan’s Modern Prophet: Uchimura Kanzō, 1861–1930. However, very few examine Uchimura’s expansionist discourse and his attitude toward imperialism or his connections with other intellectuals. Beyond the early postwar works by those who had personal connections with Uchimura, a number of insightful and critical intellectual biographies have been written by Japanese scholars: Dohi (1962); Ohara (1976); Shibuya (1988). For a short overview of Japanese Christians’ attitudes in the era of nationalism and imperialism, see Ion (2003). For a thorough list of studies on Uchimura, see Fujita (2003).
significance at this historic juncture for a national awakening to Japan’s global mission. This was a mission of active expansion into the world (not merely into Korea and China) by popular colonization overseas.

In contrast to Uchimura’s view of expansion, Tokutomi’s view was devoid of moralistic or altruistic implications for war, national development, and colonization. Tokutomi asserted that war and expansion were ultimately an expression of self-interest and the establishment of Japanese interests in the world. He further argued that the Sino-Japanese War would ‘restore’ among Japanese the authentic attitudes of a colonial and expansionist nation and would help recover lost cultural prestige by ‘purging’ the past humiliations of opening to the West incurred by the Tokugawa shogunate (Tokutomi [1894] 1978: 246–255 passim). To realize this program, the Japanese would first have to go through a mental transformation, shedding their ‘slavish’ mentality and inferiority complex and breaking away from their own ‘contractual history’ as well as from the influence of Western discourses that valorized the superiority and ultimate triumph of Europeans ([1894] 1978: 246).

Such a historical claim was not limited to Tokutomi. For example, Taguchi Ukichi, a fellow liberal, Christian, and follower of Jiyū Minken (the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement), had earlier argued in a similar fashion in influential works promoting ‘domestic mixed residence’ (naichi zakkyo) with foreigners as a necessary condition for the revision of the unequal treaties forced on Japan. In one tract, Taguchi ([1893] 1992) chided the opponents of mixed residence and urged them to overcome the late-Tokugawa and early-Meiji mindset of joi, or territorial defensiveness, and instead to encourage a world-scale Japanese expansion through achievements in commerce, agriculture, and manufacturing. Taguchi raised a question about biases lying at the base of Western historiography while promoting a progressive agenda of modernization and expansion at the same time:

European histories claim that the Asian race can never rival the Aryan race and cite the Greek [conquest] of Persia and the British of India and Burma. Nonetheless, look at the history of the Turkish invasion of Europe and the Hungarian colonization of Austria. Such facts have been ignored in European historiography, but these peoples established their lands and confronted the Aryans with [the spirit of] independence. Europeans are infiltrating Asia but they have never become such forces. I have studied ancient histories and discovered that the Japanese race indeed has ancestors related to the Turks and Hungarians. There is much evidence for this ... In short, our Japanese race has no reason to fear the Aryan race when it comes to skills, academics, industry, and agriculture. Therefore, the strategy that the Japanese race should adopt in earnest is to overwhelm the world with our own kin groups based on the method of progressivism ([1893] 1992: 21).

Tokutomi and Taguchi shared many views about history and politics and, like Uchimura, considered that particular Japanese moral and racial traits they observed in Japan’s (or Asia’s) history suited it for colonial ventures.2

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2. Tokutomi stressed that external expansion, however, had already been envisioned by kaikoku (opening-the-country) alarmists and revolutionaries stirred up by the West’s threat, such as Fujita Tōkō, Sakuma Shōzō, Hashimoto Sanai, and Yoshida Shōin. Tokutomi noted that the early eruption of the sei-Kan-ron (the ‘subdue Korea’ debate) and the fervent popular call for establishing Japan’s own foreign policy should be interpreted as manifestations of the expansionist vigor of the Japanese. While Tokutomi ([1894] 1978: 261) emphasized the imperialistic character of the early Meiji, Uchimura (1894: 26–27) emphasized its moralistic side. For example, he described the sei-Kan-ron as illustrating Japan’s historical moral rectitude and pacifism in providing assistance to Korea.
2. Uchimura Kanzō: Populist, Nationalist, Independent Christian

After years of hardships and anti-Christian attacks following the well-publicized *les majesty* incident in which Uchimura as a public school teacher was accused of not paying obeisance to the symbols of the emperor, he returned to Tokyo in 1897 to become an English-language columnist for the popular newspaper *Yorozu Chōbo*. After its launch in 1891, the newspaper had gained readership through its exposés of various political and business scandals. Within a few years, the *Yorozu*’s circulation surpassed that of the leading Tokyo dailies, including *Asahi*, *Hōchi*, and *Nichinichi*. The hiring of Uchimura as an English-language writer (a first for a Japanese newspaper) was an important part of the owner’s attempt to improve the ‘character’ (*hin'i*) and intellectual stature of the paper. After about a year of working at the *Yorozu*, Uchimura had become confident and ambitious enough to start his own magazine, the *Tokyo Dokuritsu Zasshi* (*Tokyo Independent Journal*).

Around this time, Uchimura began his criticism of Tokutomi. Tokutomi had returned from his first tour of the West and began to associate himself with oligarchic politicians, especially Okuma Shigenobu and Ito Hirobumi. Uchimura vilified Tokutomi as turning away from the very principle his publishing firm (Minyūsha, or ‘People’s Friend’) had represented and becoming instead a *kanyūsha* (‘friend of the government’). Uchimura continued to advocate the *heiminbugi*, or democratic populism, that Tokutomi had abandoned, emphasizing its moral aspects. Uchimura focused on criticisms of the oligarchic government and called himself a ‘moral watchdog’ and a fair-minded, ‘honest’, and ‘fearless’ critic of national and imperial conditions.

Though he advocated populism, Uchimura was also a staunch nationalist. As one of the few Japanese writers in English, Uchimura was able to level his criticisms against Westerners residing in Japan—particularly those living in port cities under the protection of extraterritoriality. Because of the Meiji government’s conciliatory policy, the media generally avoided criticizing resident foreigners. Uchimura also criticized the commentaries in Japan-based foreign-language (mostly English) papers, which the Meiji government often financially assisted because it believed they influenced Western governments’ views of Japan.

For Uchimura (1898a), at least during this period, Christianization did not mean becoming a literal believer in the Christian Bible, much less attending a Christian church. Instead, he considered Christianization as a broader learning process through which an individual could internalize and perhaps ‘re-experience’ the development of the historically important ‘intellectual and moral characteristics’ of the West, a process that he alternately called ‘Hellenization’, ‘Romanization’, ‘Lutherization’, ‘Hegelization’, and ‘Puritanization’. Uchimura was, after all, a religiously inspired, independent, and...

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3. Besides Uchimura, owner Kuroiwa Ruiko brought to his paper writers of various stripes, including Taoka Reiun, Saitō Ryōku, Naitō Konan, Kōtoku Shūsui, Yamagata Isoo, and Sakai Kosen.


5. Most of the Meiji Protestants’ lives seemed to require a constant balancing of the religious and the scientific or academic, a requirement born out of their struggle with the powerful influence of Darwinism. Uchimura said, for example, in 1902: ‘When I first read Darwin, I encountered the difficulty that everyone would face. It is true that our faith was shaken at its foundation. Once, I thought that I had better abandon Christianity, being overwhelmed by Darwinism. This experience was a positive one for me. Some say that religion must always be rationalistic... [The experience, however,] taught me that one cannot believe in only scientific theories and that *truth lies in between religion and science*’ (1902: 221) (emphasis in original).
humanistic critic of society, and an educator.\textsuperscript{6} Asked about the ideology of his new magazine, Uchimura said:

> Our principle? Shall it be Nationalism or ... Universalism? Or shall it be Buddhism ... or Christianism [sic] of some very orthodox kind? In this country, ‘principle’ of some sort is needed to make a paper a success, as much as signboards are needed for a salesman for his success. Neither a Government nor a Mission Board will subsidize any journalistic enterprise unless it is advertised with a fixed ‘principle’ as a guarantee of its genuine loyalty or orthodoxy (1898: 428).

Although his Christian identity was often emphasized, Uchimura never was an ‘orthodox’ Protestant. His theology was certainly comparable to that of his Western contemporaries, but throughout his life he interpreted and preached the religion freely, in particular in terms of Japanese cultural and social contexts. As I have argued elsewhere (Nirei 2007), Meiji Protestants were ‘modernists’ who were keenly interested in Liberal Theology and were also committed to modernization of Japanese society and supported the theories of secular social and historical progress in close cooperation with the reformed religion. One of the most important modernist Japanese theologians was Ebina Danjō, who influenced many social reformers and progressives including Christian socialists like Kinoshita Naoe and Ishikawa Sanshirō and leaders of the Taishó democratic movement like Yoshino Sakuzó, Suzuki Bunji, and Uchigasaki Sakusaburō. Uchimura often expressed his dislike of Liberal Theology and criticized Ebina. In the 1910s and 1920s, Uchimura would become more theologically conservative, espousing the Second Coming of Christ, and retreat from social activism and reject modern civilization and the individualism of the West or Japan. However, at the turn of the 20th century, Uchimura was still a historically forward-looking modernist and a progressive active in social reform who shared much intellectually and theologically with other liberal Protestants.

### 3. Takekoshi Yosaburō: Japan for the World

The turn of the 20th century was a peak of Protestant journalism and moral reform movements. When Uchimura wrote the statement quoted above about his magazine’s ideology, there were already many intellectual journals espousing the ‘isms’ Uchimura mentioned. The Rikugo Zasshi (Cosmic Journal, as then rendered in English) was one of the oldest magazines published by Protestants; begun in 1881, it continued to be highly influential among educated elites and offered critical space for the

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\textsuperscript{6} In this sense, Howes’s (1978) description is apt: ‘If there is any one element that pervaded the whole of Seisho no Kenkyū [Uchimura’s textual praxis of Christianity], it is the conviction that Christianity is the sum total of man’s attempt to live the faith. In this way, Uchimura’s Christianity may be called existential, though with a small e, since he did not try to develop a philosophy [or theology] but instead concentrated on the problems of the faith faced by those who took on its obligations’ (95). In his more recent study, Japan’s Modern Prophet, Howes (2005) reconstructs Uchimura’s biography and the development of his faith as a Mukyōkai (No Church) Christian. Howes explains ‘existential’ as the translation of the Japanese word jikken, which means both an actual ‘experience’ (of the individual) and, for Uchimura, ‘experiment’. This meaning is related to Uchimura’s appreciation of natural science and his identification of its method with ‘the way of religion’. Moreover, it also helps us understand the Mukyōkai principle, which evolved out of Uchimura’s lifetime pursuit of independence and his study of and longing for the grace of God and Jesus (Howes 2005: 167–68, 215–216 passim). Howes (2005: 363–379) also discusses Mukyōkai and the complexity of Uchimura’s relationship with his disciples in relation to Mukyōkai thought. Uchimura’s development of Christianity has been explored as an important case of religious indigenization by Mullins (1998).
Meiji intelligentsia to intervene on a wide range of social, moral, religious, and literary subjects. Besides Rikugō, the magazine most representative of the intellectual and journalistic atmosphere after the Sino-Japanese War was Takekoshi Yosaburō’s globalist magazine Sekai no Nihon (Japan for the World). In the first issue of that journal, he wrote:

Japan is absolutely not a nation standing alone; rather it is among the nations in the world connected by the great principle of coexistence and cooperation. Just as the tide in the Tokyo Bay and the Golden Gate will come in and retreat together, the lives and ideas of all nations must mutually interact and impress each other... The ideas of ‘Japan for the Japanese’ (Nihonjin no Nihon) are bigoted and parochial... the call for ‘Japan for Asia’ (Toyo no Nihon) is still only halfway sufficient... We must go beyond the ‘Japan for the Japanese’ and recognize a Japan standing in the world. [We must] ponder policies from a global perspective and mediate between nations with global minds ([1896] 1985: 339–340).

Takekoshi grew up with the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement, and during the period of Ōkashugi (Westernization), he joined Tokutomi’s Minyusha and was baptized by the Congregationalist minister Kozaki Hiromichi. Throughout the 1890s, Takekoshi was influenced by Liberal Theology and took an interest in becoming an active politician, affiliating with oligarchic politicians such as Mutsu Munemitsu, Saionji Kinmochi, and Itō Hirobumi. Indeed, Mutsu, Saionji, and other elite bureaucrats assisted with the publication of Sekai no Nihon. As the name of the journal suggests, Takekoshi (1896: 3) espoused universalistic and cosmopolitan values and criticized the authoritarian, nativist discourse of ‘pseudo-national history’ and the calls for imperial loyalty and patriotism.

Miyake Setsurei (1913: 67) pointed out that the idea of sekai no Nihon, or ‘Japan for the world’, became widespread only when victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) brought greater confidence in Japan’s ability to play an international role, and that until then the idea had been largely discredited as a ‘schoolboy’s prank’ (shosei no itazura). This view, however, should not be accepted uncritically; as a member of the rival ‘nationalist’ journalist group, Seikyōsha, Miyake could have been particularly cynical about the ‘globalism’ of Protestants and Minyusha writers.

When Takekoshi attacked the ‘Japan for the Japanese’ school, he obviously had in mind the intellectual opponents of Protestants like the Seikyōsha nationalists (kokusushugi) as well as statists (kokkashugi) of the Imperial University. Most Seikyōsha intellectuals disliked the post-Sino-Japanese War ‘globalism’, which they saw as support for Westernization. Many other prominent journalists supported a kind of globalization and Westernism with a strong consciousness of imperial rivalry with the West. Tokutomi’s Expansion of Great Japan was the most significant manifesto of contemporary expansionism, and Takekoshi, who was then close to Tokutomi and others in heiminshūjī liberal circles, took a serious academic interest in Japan’s colonial enterprise and became a leading Meiji theorist of colonialism. It was liberals and Protestants who spearheaded the renewal of national identity in the postwar period by combining the imperative of Westernization with the encouragement of expansionist activities overseas.

Concerning Takekoshi’s activity during this period, what perhaps most disturbed conservative statists within the government and popular critics like Takayama Chogyū was his attempt to revise the...

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7. The Chūo Kōron, for instance, which grew out of the Buddhist journal Hansei Zasshi, joined other liberal expansionistic papers such as Jiji Shinpō in calling for a ‘Japan in the world’ (sekai no Nihon), ‘expansive Japan’ (bochoteki Nihon), and ‘bold Westernism’ (daitan nam Seiyoshugi) in place of ‘exclusive Japan’ (chokkoteki Nihon). The Toyo Keizai Shinpō (Oriental Economic News) was also concerned with Japan’s control over trade in the East Asia (Kano 1971: 288).
Imperial Rescript on Education in collaboration with his benefactor Saionji Kinmochi. When Saionji became education minister in the Itō cabinet in 1898, Takekoshi joined the government as Saionji’s adviser and secretary. In the context of postwar concerns with socioeconomic modernization and national education, Saionji won the approval of Emperor Meiji and then worked with Takekoshi on the project of writing a new educational rescript. When Saionji made a presentation to the headmasters of teacher’s colleges, however, his view of a new national principle shocked educational circles and resulted in widespread criticism of him as a ‘globalist’ (sekai shugisho). Soon after, the proposal for a new rescript was crushed by conservative bureaucrats and oligarchs within the government; Saionji was then forced to resign from his cabinet position. The actual contents of the proposed educational rescript were not known, but some years later, under Saionji’s auspices, Takekoshi published Jinmin Dokuhon (People’s Reader), modeled after the civics textbook Citizen Reader in Britain. In this work, Takekoshi advocated the idea of the ‘free citizen’ (jiyu komin) and discussed the emperor’s ‘limited’ status as a ‘constitutional monarch’, freedom of faith, and the balance of nationalism and universalism. Many pro-Western reformists, from Protestants like Uemura Masahisa to Kotoku Shūsui, praised its ‘radical’ and ‘progressive’ contents (Nishida 1985; Takeda 1987: 77–80; Takekoshi 1901).

Although Uchimura did not share Takekoshi’s affiliation with oligarchs, he was no less cosmopolitan than Takekoshi in his worldview and no less elitist in terms of political and social reformism. Moreover, Uchimura and many other Protestant journalists clearly found themselves in agreement with Takekoshi’s critique of xenophobic nationalism and misplaced patriotism. In a famous essay, ‘An Observation of the Trends of the Times’ (Jisei no Kansatsu), written with Carlyle’s (1843) work, The Past and the Present in mind, Uchimura (1896) sarcastically attacked his opponent Inoue Tetsujirō, who led the polemic against him after the lese majesty incident. When he was in Japan, Inoue championed a xenophobic view of the ‘conflict of religion (i.e. Christianity) and education’, but when abroad, he would shamelessly disparage the ‘traits’ of Japanese women in public as ‘despicable’. In contrast, Uchimura said, if the pride of the Chinese in their culture and traditions had become the world’s embarrassment, the Chinese would, nonetheless, remain comfortably Chinese and continue to display their culture wherever they went in the world. The many self-proclaimed Japanese ‘patriots’ should stop acting like a ‘haggard dog in front of the house’, behaving arrogantly toward their compatriots while groveling to foreigners. Uchimura wrote that a similarly gutless attitude also characterized both the government and the people. Many Japanese, from popular politicians to village assemblymen, criticized the government’s lack of an independent foreign policy. But the problem, Uchimura (1896) argued, fundamentally derived from the lack of ‘moral consciousness’ (dotokunen) among the politicians and among Japanese in general. To establish Japan’s independent ‘national policy’ (kokuze) and counter the West, Japanese people should not resort to xenophobia, superficial patriotism, and imperial loyalty but should instead fearlessly support global justice and universal reason.

4. Uchimura and ‘Little Japan’

Importantly, in ‘Observation’, Uchimura (1896) claims that instead of the popular call for ‘greater Japan’, he would prefer a ‘little Japan’ (shō-Nippon), which, he says, is a much more realistic assessment. Uchimura scathingly observes that ‘the great Japan that we are proud of is merely the size of Idaho, one of the states in America, and Texas can almost engulf two Japanese Empires’. For Uchimura, the role of Japan was not simply a geographic or economic question; like most other
Protestant intellectuals, Uchimura considered the problem as ultimately one of national culture. Despite the West’s recent acclaim for ‘things Japanese’, Uchimura continues, Japanese cannot but be ‘artistically small, poetically small, ethically small, and religiously small’:

Japan did not produce a great literature like Greece; Japan did not create a great code like Rome; Japan did not have a great explorer like Spain; Japan did not fight for human rights and freedom like Holland; Japan does not have a high mountain like Peru; Japan does not have a great plain like Russia. Alas, what can we ever boast of? Beauties in Higashiyama? Or sycophants in the east? (1896: 319–320).

Uchimura goes on and on, sarcastically pointing out Japan’s ‘smallness’. However, he seems obsessed with the greatness of other nations.8 In ‘A Great Nation’, Uchimura (1897a: 341) drawing on Carlyle, says that ‘the greatness of England lay more in her Shakespeare than in her Indian Empire’.

The post-Sino-Japanese War period witnessed rising concern with establishing a ‘national literature’ (kokumin bungaku) through the publication of new journals such as Waseda Bungaku and Teikoku Bungaku. Quoting Tokutomi’s Kokumin Shinbun, which claimed, ‘The uproar of the renaissance of Italy produced Dante and Ariosto ... Will a single great man of letters not appear during the great expansion of Japan?’ Uchimura asked, ‘Why did great literature not emerge?’ Because, he responded, ‘Japan does not nurture a global spirit’ (sekaiteki seishin) but only a parochial patriotism, and its intellectuals are opposed to humanism and philanthropy.9 To produce a great literature, Uchimura argued, one must appreciate nature, study great Western literature, and ultimately ‘cultivate character’ (hinsei no shuyo). ‘What makes great literature is mettle (kigaï)’, Uchimura (1895a: 278) proclaimed, arguing in a Carlylean and Emersonian manner that the Japanese had to themselves become ‘heroes’ and ‘great men’ to produce a great literature.

For Uchimura in the postwar period, literature was as important as history, which constituted part of the larger cultural and educational reform movements Protestants led during the period. Protestant liberals were at the same time deeply alarmed by the rise of popular militaristic and expansionist sentiments and the outright calls for aggression in Asia at the turn of the 20th century. Their push for cosmopolitan moral education and Japan as a ‘cultural’ nation-state further intensified after the Russo-Japanese War. And as Uchimura’s assertion of ‘little Japan’ shows, the Protestants’ moral, cultural, and cosmopolitan discourse overall developed in the context of the larger public concern about Japan’s raison d’etre in the age of high imperialism.

8. Divergent attitudes toward ‘little Japan’ and ‘great Japan’ among the elites might have something to do with their varying experiences of travel abroad. Uchimura’s abundant experience of living abroad (namely in the United States) can be contrasted with Tokutomi’s lack of such experience. Although Tokutomi had never traveled abroad when he proudly called for the rise of a great Japan, Uchimura had traveled through and lived in the United States. After returning from his study in the United States, however, he never again had a chance to go abroad, much to his regret.

9. Uchimura (1895b) detested the ‘youth literature’ (seinen bungaku) popular in those days, which he called the ‘rubbish of slumbering lazy students’, and he vilified traditional Japanese literature as trivial and of feminine insignificance. Lack of temperance and immoral descriptions in literature were to him unacceptable.
5. Advocating Liberal Imperialism

At the turn of the 20th century, teikokushugi, or imperialism, was more than hyperbole. Although there were still lingering concerns about ‘mixed residence’ with foreigners at home, much public interest focused on the outcome of the Triple Intervention and the anticipation of a war of revenge against Russia. Contemporaneously, imperialist thought was valorized by the social-Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest and the statism advocated by Imperial University academics like Inoue Tetsujiro and Kato Hiroyuki.10 Furthermore, the popular literary figure, ethicist, and anti-Christian/anti-Western ideologue Takayama Chogyu changed his watchword from kokkashujji (or statism, carried over from his teacher Inoue and other Imperial University professors) to Nihonshujugi (or Japanism, originally propounded by Seikyōsha intellectuals such as Miyake) and teikokuslnicji (or imperialism). Nihonshugi was distinct from previous brands of nationalism, particularly the Seikyōsha version, which, Takayama noted, had been characterized by xenophobia and a myopic focus on domestic problems like the impact of mixed residence and the unequal treaties. Instead, Takayama ([1897, 1898] 1905) stated, Nihonshugi would aim at Japanese expansion overseas and achieving a ‘moral standard’ in tandem with the ‘spirit of the age’ and the ‘world-historical’ development of science and human races.

Besides the looming war with imperial Russia, the emergence of American imperialism on the Pacific stage and Britain’s reinforcement of its colonial presence and imperialist consciousness significantly affected Meiji Protestant intellectuals’ pacifism and liberal and moralistic views of international relations. Tokutomi ([1901] 1915), the leading expansionist, said in 1901 that the new imperialism encircling Japan, which was then developing its own combination of economic liberalism and militaristic expansionism, was ‘bizarre’. Takayama ([1899] 1905), perhaps under the influence of the contemporary English literary debate on empire, argued for an ‘Anglo-Saxon style’ of imperialism as appropriate for Japan’s expansionist worldview. Despite his criticized ‘statist’ turn, Tokutomi’s sympathies were more with other liberals and Protestants than with prominent Imperial University statist. He derided the excessive anti-Western (or Darwinian and anti-Christian) rhetoric of both intellectuals and the public and welcomed overtures for an Anglo-Japanese alliance. Tokutomi’s interest was more soberly in the political-economic success of Japan within the new paradigm of imperialism in Asia and the Pacific. Tokutomi began to vocally represent a movement for nationwide mobilization for expansion, building up the country’s military and industrial might to confront Russia and assert Japanese interests on the Asian continent. A greater part of the public criticism of Tokutomi’s ‘defection’ was directed at his domestic political orientation—that is, his close association with the oligarchy—rather than his support of colonial expansion and hardline diplomatic policy. In response to the public outrage, Tokutomi (1898) claimed that his ideology was ‘liberalism

10. The Japanese equivalent of the theory of the survival of the fittest, jakuniku kyōdoku (the strong devouring the weak), was popularized by the Japanese social Darwinian Katō Hiroyuki.
at home and imperialism overseas'. Similarly, Takekoshi also argued for a ‘liberal imperialism’ (although he would be more critical of the use of the military for expansionist goals later on). In reference to the changing configurations of British liberal politics, Takekoshi also welcomed the Kenseitō Party’s transformation into a national-collaborationist party in the Diet.

6. Yamaji Aizan: ‘Tactics of Sengoku and Reading Machiavelli’

A fellow Christian and Minyusha journalist, Yamaji Aizan made the most earnest effort during this period to elucidate Tokutomi’s thought and his own imperialist turn. Significantly, Yamaji’s imperialist ideas were constructed in relation to Uchimura’s criticisms of Tokutomi. Uchimura was by far the harshest critic of Tokutomi, but his criticism was also directed at Tokutomi’s abandonment of heimin-shugi populism and his collaboration with the oligarchic government. Yamaji published an article in defense of Tokutomi in Takekoshi’s Sekai no Nihon and said that his argument would also apply to Takekoshi. Having long aspired to be a journalist, Yamaji served first as editor of the Gokyo (Guarding Faith), the organ of the Methodist church he belonged to, and then joined Tokutomi’s Minyusha. He was influenced by Liberal Theology and distanced himself more from religious commitments as his journalistic work took hold. Chiefly through Tokutomi, Yamaji was influenced by the liberalism of J. S. Mill, Richard Cobden, and John Bright, as well as the liberal political history of Thomas Macaulay. The writings of the Oxford historian John Robert Seeley also evidently influenced both Yamaji and Tokutomi. Defending Tokutomi against Uchimura, Yamaji argued that Tokutomi’s


12. As a historian, I use the term ‘liberal imperialism’ as an ideological position specific to the turn of the 20th century in Japan, which was articulated by intellectuals such as Takekoshi who were influenced by the discourse of the British Liberal Party articulating its commitment to the empire and the protection of British overseas interests. As was conceived originally, imperialism was more closely identified with the Conservatives, but amid the intensified conflict in Asia and Africa with other powers since the late 1880s, Liberals such as A. P. P. Rosebery began to embrace the term and general attitudes behind it. As I explained at the outset, I apply the term ‘liberal expansionism’ to the case of Meiji intellectuals like Uchimura who more broadly conceived and supported Japan’s overseas expansion chiefly through popular emigration and peaceful development and competition in commerce and trade. In short, the liberal expansionists envisioned Japan’s growth and expansion in accordance with the liberal world order dominated by the British Empire and the United States. In this sense, one might argue that the liberal expansionists in the Meiji period were upholders of ‘informal imperialism’ or ‘imperialism of free trade’, which was the first stage of Western penetration into East Asia in most of the 19th century. However, it is, I think, still relevant to keep the distinction between liberal (or pacifist) expansionism and liberal imperialism in the case of Uchimura because, as I discuss in the following, unlike Takekoshi, Uchimura remained critical of imperialism as a concept while embracing economic expansionism. For ‘informal empire’ and ‘imperialism of free trade’ in East Asia and Meiji Japan, see Duus (1995: 2–11).

13. Tokutomi and Takekoshi both clearly desired to expand the political (and constitutional) basis of the empire; in 1910, they likewise supported universal suffrage. However, as is often pointed out, there were certainly important differences between the two. Tokutomi’s initiation of friendship with the Katsura-Yamagata faction, as well as his stress on military buildup during this period, contrasts with Takekoshi’s alignment with Ito, Mutsu, and Saionji. Over the course of his life, perhaps in a conscious attempt to rival Tokutomi, Takekoshi adhered more firmly to a program of peaceful economic expansionism and the vision of a southward advance, so he was therefore more conciliatory to the West. Nonetheless, at the turn of the century, Tokutomi was still a pro-Western liberal and expansionist. Obviously, his earlier discourse of heimin-shugi (democratic populism) did not contradict his espousal of external expansion. See also Swale’s (2003) suggestive study ‘Tokutomi Sohō and the Problem of the Nation-State in an Imperialist World’. Although it does not examine the ideas of imperialism or empire, Doak’s (2007) recent work on Japanese nationalism sheds light on liberal nationalism prevalent in Meiji Japan.
transformation did not merely mean his surrender to the ban-clique government but also essentially reflected the imperialist turn of both British liberal ideology and historiography. Yamaji concluded:

> The Japanese people now need most urgently a pilot [ideology] .... The Japanese people are indeed now about to doubt their destiny. Will the Yamato race become losers in the racial competition? Or should they begin a great competition for civilization along with a renewed hope in our national prospect? The nation will desire the advent of something that provides a shape and a voice to its demands. In this sense, we cannot but return to the academic discourse of politics. The Diet has become a soulless mass. The politicians have been severed from the sentiments of the nation. It is only academic discourse of politics that we can now depend upon. Japan was once influenced by Mill’s political discourse .... The youth in Japan have learned from the late Professor Seeley’s history The Expansion of England. The development of the Anglo-Saxon race that Professor Seeley depicts is immediately relevant to instruct the future of the Japanese race. But that is like counting melons planted in strangers’ fields. The Japanese people need their own ‘Mill’ and their own ‘Seeley’, written in their own national language (Yamaji 1903a: 340, emphasis in the original).

As Yamaji noted, the expectations for and enthusiasm about constitutional politics in the Diet had substantially faded by this period, and many saw the problem as fundamentally the lack of moral uprightness among the elites. This drove critics like Takayama to search beyond liberal politics for a new theoretical remedy for Japan’s reform. For Yamaji, Tokutomi represented the new ideological leader Japan needed in order to break away from the stalemate of domestic politics and moral decline. Yamaji (1898) claimed that although Tokutomi had originally argued for ‘liberty’ and the ‘happiness of the cultured individual’ (karuchua seraretaru kojin no kofuku), now, with the ‘shift of the center of the balance of power toward the Far East’, Tokutomi, as a journalist and opinion leader, realized that the question of national survival had become more important than individual fulfillment. Referring to Seeley’s writings, Yamaji (1897: 372) claimed that one could not disregard the state as the ultimate guarantor of liberty, and in times of intensified international struggle, individual freedom must necessarily be subordinated to national goals.

Yamaji (1903b: 331) now argued that ‘cosmopolitanism’, which he said had originally been propounded by the Stoic philosophers at the apogee of the Roman Empire, was a concept of hegemonic peoples. Therefore, the ‘cosmopolitanism’ advocated by Cobden and Bright, including free-trade pacifism—a position famously supported by Tokutomi earlier—was indeed an ideology of the British Empire that emerged as the nucleus of global trade in the first half of the 19th century. Moreover, in ‘Tactics of Sengoku and Reading Machiavelli’, Yamaji (1897: 372) claimed that international politics is ultimately determined by the ‘naked truth’: military superiority. In this theoretical shift, Yamaji argued that Tokutomi’s ‘mental preoccupation’ had shifted ‘extremely’ toward the ‘problem of external independence’. Nonetheless, Yamaji at the same time stressed that Tokutomi was still convinced of the necessity of ‘liberty at home’. Yamaji ultimately positioned himself somewhere between Tokutomi and Uchimura, emphasizing his agreement with Uchimura. He denounced the popular obsession and Tokutomi’s concern with imperial prestige and territorial ambition as the ‘tactic of Southern men’ and ‘Kyūshūite policy’. Despite his recognition of imperialism, Yamaji (1898:423) said he was still a proponent of ‘little Japan’ (shō-Nippon).

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14. Yamaji came from Shizuoka. Uchimura often disparaged ‘Kyūshūites’, including Satsuma officials and militarists, utilitarian ideologues of wealth and material civilization like Fukuzawa and Ōkuma, and ‘philistine’ Kumamoto Christians for having misled the Japanese and ‘vulgarized’ their minds. For Yamaji’s biography, see Sakamoto (1988).
Like Yamaji, at the turn of the century in the context of emergent imperialism and tensions with Russia, many Protestant intellectuals were forced to question moralistic assumptions of power, history, Western liberalism, and the nation-state as the necessary embodiments of modern civilization. Concerning the Russo-Japanese War, not long after Yamaji’s articles on imperialism appeared, Uchimura (1903a) publicized his view, which came to be known as his ‘absolute pacifism’. It was meant not only to counter Yamaji but also the rising jingoistic atmosphere of the day, which was fostered in particular by a group of prominent Imperial University professors who were pressing the Meiji government to immediately enter the war against Russia.

7. Uchimura’s Pacifism and Tolstoyan Pacifism

The question, however, is not simply about Uchimura’s normative/categorical turn from a pro-war to an antiwar ideologue. As Uchimura discussed, there were historical reasons to oppose war. Many contemporary pacifist discourses were profoundly influenced by the ideas of Leo Tolstoy, particularly his doctrines of nonresistance and religious-literary humanism. A brief but important comparison of the two men is useful. It is not clear when Uchimura came into contact with Tolstoy’s work, but at the turn of the century, specifically in the rising antiwar movement itself, he became deeply conscious of Tolstoy. Nonetheless, the literary Uchimura was thoroughly Victorian, and his critical and rhetorical style primarily derived from Carlyle. In addition, because Japanese Tolstoyans, such as the Christian academic Abe Isoo, were at the same time looking toward socialism, it is plausible that Uchimura, who often voiced criticism of socialism, consciously avoided engagement with Tolstoy. However, Uchimura and Tolstoy distinctly resemble each other as religious-literary figures and prophetic humanists; both grew to be conscious bearers of universal culture, representatives of national conscience, thinkers of the historical present, and critics of the bourgeois modernity of the West. Moreover, both upheld the teachings of Jesus Christ, deeply deplored and criticized their respective national conditions, and called for a spiritual metanoia—a change of heart—of the nation-state (beyond that of individuals, as Jesus had preached).

While revering Tolstoy, Uchimura claimed that Tolstoy’s Christian pacifism was merely a reiteration of the Ten Commandments and not sufficiently grounded elsewhere in the Bible. This criticism of Tolstoy was not unique to Uchimura but was a charge commonly leveled at Tolstoy. Tolstoy persistently spoke of the ‘law’ of Christ. Nonetheless, as Greenwood (1975: 129–130) has pointed out, Tolstoy’s lifelong quest was for Jesus, to uncover his ideas and inspiration and ‘the message which would destroy all evil in men and give them universal welfare’. Human ‘welfare’ (or eudaemonism), Tolstoy considered, was an essential part of Jesus’ teaching: that goodness will be rewarded by happiness in the end. Indeed, as Arthur Schopenhauer noted, simple moral rigor or Immanuel Kant’s exaltation of the unconditional ought that does not consider reward as well as punishment is absurd. For Uchimura as for Tolstoy, what matters is not a categorical obligation but the fiducia, the biblical promise of happiness and trust in God: ‘He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it’ (Matthew 10:39).

However, there seems to be a clear and interesting difference between the two men. As Greenwood has pointed out, Tolstoy had a nearly categorical aversion to ‘historicism’. Although Tolstoy was concerned with the ‘progress of humanity’ and also revealed what Greenwood (1975: 58–59) describes as ‘Deistic providentialism’ (i.e. naturalistic and mechanistic conceptions of divine intervention and omnipresence in all times and places), Tolstoy argued that when the law of progress or perfectibility for individuals ‘is transferred to history, it becomes an idle, empty prattle, leading to the justification of
every insipidity and fatalism’. For him, non-resistance was a law of God, and only through following Christ was reward and personal happiness dispensed. Uchimura would have concurred with Tolstoy, but he was more culturally complex and, as I argued at the outset, much influenced by progressive liberal history. The age difference between Tolstoy and Uchimura also should not be disregarded. Notwithstanding his outspoken criticism of the immorality of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s economic pragmatism (as ‘mammonism’), Uchimura showed less antipathy than did Carlyle or other popular evolutionist moral critics like Benjamin Kidd toward the ‘dismal science’ of Victorian liberal political economy or its ‘bourgeois morality’, as Tolstoy would have put it. For Uchimura, liberal historical development, it can be argued, was the visible reward and happiness bestowed by God on humanity. In fact, as I will explain, Uchimura’s moral call against war was still historicist, compounded by many of his writings on the liberal economic vision of Japan’s development.

8. Uchimura’s Pacifist Expansionism

As I discussed at the outset, Uchimura called for a peaceful and internationalist solution to the Manchurian crisis and had become increasingly suspicious of Japan’s expansion into the region. Nonetheless, he was still pondering whether Japan would be able to govern Manchuria and lead it toward civilization, and he certainly did not deny the necessity of Japan’s political economic expansion there. Uchimura (1903c: 284) suggested the ‘restoration’ of the status quo ante of Manchuria, which meant the power structure that existed before the Boxer Uprising; this would allow Japan, Russia, and others to freely export capital, knowledge, and willing individuals to ‘develop’ Manchuria. In his next essay, titled ‘Actual Profits of Peace’, Uchimura (1903b) suggested explicitly that Japan concentrate on Korea and colonizing lands outside Asia instead of expanding into Manchuria:

Hypothetically, if Japan declares war against Russia because of the Manchurian question, the amount of expenses that Japan will have to spend as a result will at least reach 400 million yen. Moreover, unlike the case of the Sino-Japanese War, even if Japan wins the war with Russia, it does not have a prospect of getting an indemnity from Russia. Hence, the 400 million yen would be a complete loss.

Now suppose Japan spends 400 million yen on peaceful enterprises; this effect is indeed immeasurable. First, we can administer Korea with 50 million yen and construct railroads from Seoul to Gishū via Pyongyang and from Seoul to the mouth of the Tōmankō River via Ganzan. Moreover, with another 50 million yen, we can plan an emigration of Japanese farmers to sparsely populated areas like Keishodo and Chushindo and construct Japanese societies at numerous locations throughout the peninsula. There is nothing superior to this for forestalling the intrusion of the Russians.

Make Korea virtually a Japanese possession with 100 million yen. And invest another 100 million yen to expand Japan’s commercial rights at numerous locations in northern China, build factories, and create the basis of turning the Chokurei Bay into a Japanese lake. In addition, by spending a remaining 100 million yen on agricultural reform inside Japan, [we could] produce fertilizers and thus double or triple today’s

15. Like Uchimura, Tolstoy revered chivalrous spirits. But for Tolstoy, it was bourgeois ‘manners’ that had replaced ‘chivalrous honor’ in the West (Greenwood, 1975: 52–53).

16. Uchimura also characteristically added that Japan’s expansion was ultimately to achieve the ideal of Ajia no okuō no kaimei or the ‘enlightenment of hundreds of millions and trillions of Asians’. Uchimura expressed this vision of Japanese leadership in the Asian enlightenment as early as 1891 when he used the phrase. This statement indeed resonates with the ‘Asianist’ views of the early Tokutomi and other minken (popular rights) activists in the early Meiji period. See also Uchimura (1903d).
agricultural outputs. And with the last 100 million yen, [we could] design a large-scale emigration of our nation to Texas, Mexico, and South America. And, in the end, we can establish a great scheme of making the Pacific Ocean a Japanese lake (1903b: 285-286).

Even after the Russo-Japanese War, Uchimura continued to press for pacifism as a method of expansion that was justified in terms of moral, historical, political-economic, and educational reasons. In ‘Peace Achieved: Special Discussion of Peaceful Expansionism’, Uchimura (1905) made this explicit defense:

The last war was waged in the name of defense, but in fact [it] was carried out for the sake of expansion. However, expansion itself is never evil. Growth means expansion. Therefore, wherever there is life, there is expansion. It is never wrong to put forward expansionism. I only oppose the scheme of expansion using armed force ... . The expansion made by armed force is equivalent to wealth gained by plunder. That is not a genuine expansion or genuine wealth. This is all clear (1905: 376).

Uchimura’s discourse of ‘pacifist’ expansionism continued. In perhaps the most famous piece, ‘The Principle of the Discourse of No War’ (Hisenron no genri), Uchimura (1908: 399–402) defended his proposition as a genuinely ‘academic’ one. In order to win the minds of the intellectual elite, he even conceded that he was not claiming pacifism as an ‘absolute truth’. Uchimura said that there were theoretical problems with pacifism in light of the ‘cause of universal evolution’ (uchū shinka no ri). But perhaps more importantly, he found logical contradictions in many of his other positions. Although his argument for economic expansion endorsed the practical justice of Japan’s pursuit of its national interests and development, he refused to compromise his ‘absolutist’ standpoint concerning the validity of war. Uchimura claimed that pacifism was still the best policy because it was ‘intellectually the most reasonable, ethically the most noble, and politically the wisest principle’. The pacifist claim, he said, was verified by history because ‘[w]ar will become obsolete. It will definitely become obsolete. This happens not because we pacifists call for pacifism. God ordains this, and Nature demands this; therefore it will eventually be abolished. Unless the law of evolution comes to naught immediately today, as long as man and universe progress in the course that they have advanced so far, war will inevitably be abandoned in the end’ (Uchimura, 1908: 408). The Jews are ‘great’, he quipped, noting that after a history of persecution, they had forever given up the idea of ‘land grabbing’ and had scattered throughout the world. Because of this, they had become a powerful and intellectually capable people. The Jews would prosper even after the English, French, and Germans all had perished. The Chinese, furthermore, said Uchimura, were similar to the Jews. Although they were not as great as the Jews, he maintained, the Chinese were characteristically averse to war and would not resist foreign encroachment. But their population was steadily multiplying and was ‘disposed to usurp the world’. Although Western powers had tried to divide China, they were in fact being taken over by the Chinese. As capitalist peoples, the Chinese and Jews would empower themselves, Uchimura (1908: 407) predicted, and ‘the world will increasingly be handed over to the people who were averse to war’.

17. Uchimura (1908: 405–407) commented: ‘In Yokohama, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, etc., while the British demand rights and interests and the Japanese care about names and morals (meijii), Chinese are increasingly gaining real power. The Chinese do not fight for a national flag; they fight for profits. Therefore, they do not use a sword but an abacus. They are contemptible, if you will. But at the same time, they are clever. Whatever the case may be, the abacus is a weapon mightier than the sword. The abacus will keep men in charge for generations after the demise of swordsmen’.
9. Conclusion

A strain of liberal expansionism was apparent among early liberal economic thinkers and Westernizers such as Taguchi Ukichi, Tokutomi, and Fukuzawa Yukichi during the 1880s and the early 1890s. Amid the heated debates over the revision of the unequal treaties, they argued for commercial development and the industrialization of Japan together with the promotion of free trade and Japanese emigration overseas. At the turn of the 20th century, it was once again liberal Westernizers like Tokutomi and Takekoshi who first discussed imperialism in connection with capitalist development. Takekoshi was an imperialist and took active interest in the question of Japan’s colonial policy, but often disagreed with Tokutomi, who supported statism and militaristic expansionism and remained a cosmopolitan critic and reformer of domestic politics and social morality. As I discussed, Takekoshi and Uchimura in fact shared much in their support of liberal expansionism and criticisms of xenophobia, militarism, and the political backwardness of the Japanese, as well as their love of English culture and literature. However, there was one important difference between the two: in Uchimura’s vision, global economic development and imperialism were not identical. The concept of imperialism was definitely negative for Uchimura. Significantly, imperialism was not immediately tied with nationalism in Meiji thought (although liberalism was often wedded to nationalism). Although he had once endorsed the expansion of the United States into the Pacific, Uchimura (1899) wrote of imperialism as a totalitarian integration of all people and systems that is the categorical opposite of liberalism. In writings such as his foreword (Uchimura 1901) to Kōtoku Shūsui’s pioneering work *Imperialism: The Specter of the Twentieth Century*, Uchimura primarily identified imperialism with militarism and statism.

By contrast, Yamaji came to embrace imperialism in a more or less positive sense as a national solution and a method to promote further domestic development. For Yamaji, it was fundamentally the question of social inequity and economic problems of the Japanese populace that drove him closer to the state and imperialism in the 20th century. Indeed, Yamaji and other Protestants like Ukita Kazutami advocated ‘social imperialism’ from the perspective of national welfare, and they promoted socialist policy at home along with imperialist activities overseas. Uchimura and Yamaji had much in common as democratic critics of Meiji bureaucratic officialdom, although differing on their stances toward the Russo-Japanese War. Nonetheless, despite the dialogue with Yamaji, Uchimura did not accept Yamaji’s statism and rejection of free market economy and cosmopolitanism as a mere ideology of the British Empire.

Uchimura was, after all, a classic liberal, an individualist, a Carlylean elitist, and a universal nationalist. His earlier defense of the Sino-Japanese War had been elaborated in terms of the certitude of the Victorian world order, the historical progress of liberalism, the rhetoric of civilization, and Japan’s national mission toward Asia, which assumed the existing political and cultural hierarchy of nations in the world and the transmission of advanced knowledge and morality to the backward peoples. Uchimura eventually turned to pacifism, but liberal expansionism was an important component of his pacifist vision. Moreover, his views of political economic expansion, world peace, and domestic reform were supported by his historical belief in the progress of liberalism and capitalism. It is important to note that after the Russo-Japanese War, Uchimura increasingly retreated from his commitment to secular criticism. Likewise, his confidence in capitalism and his modernistic assumption of historical progress and universal social and cultural development waned, and, especially against the backdrop of World War I, they were replaced by an eschatological hope for man’s future marked by his movement for the Second Coming of Christ. For his part, Uchimura’s fellow liberal and globalist Takekoshi did not call for a religious redemption of the world. But as Japan penetrated farther into Korea,
he importantly predicted and criticized Japan’s assimilation policy as ineffective because Korea, he claimed, had a cohesive nationhood capable of resisting Japanese colonialism.

The Meiji Protestant ideas of Japanese expansion represented by Uchimura and Takekoshi resemble those of later liberal economists and proponents of ‘little Japan’ associated with the Tōyō Keizai Shinpō, such as Ishibashi Tanzan, as well as those of the prominent academic critics of Japanese colonialism Yoshino Sakuzō and Yanaihara Tadao, who were also Protestants. These writers not only considered Japan’s relationship with Western imperialism as important, but also, like Takekoshi, they eventually developed a better understanding of rising nationalism in East Asia. None of these critics repudiated Japanese imperialism in toto nor did they uphold ‘absolute pacifism’ as Uchimura did. Nonetheless, they all managed to level strong criticism at Japan’s imperial megalomania, militarism, and ethnocentric colonial policy toward Asia and to advocate peaceful economic expansion. And their liberal developmental vision, national universalist position, and espousal of ‘little Japan’ prevented them, like Uchimura, from fully embracing imperialism or Japan’s imperial project.

References


18. Because of their deeper understanding of Asian nationalism, they can be perhaps distinguished from the other mid-20th century liberals and international accommodationists who emphasized the role of the League of Nations for ‘world peace’. The term ‘international accommodationists’ is Burkman’s (2008, xi–xiv, 55, 97–99 passim). In *Japan and the League of Nations* he refers to central figures who participated in Japan’s work for the League of Nations, such as Deputy Secretary-General Nitobe Inazō, Makino Nobuaki, Ishii Kikujirō, and many more of the Anglo-American faction within the Foreign Ministry. Truly, most Protestant intellectuals during the Taisho period, such as Yoshino, his mentor Ebina Danjo, as well as Nitobe, were passionate supporters of the League. Nonetheless, the liberal expansionists I mentioned here, including Yoshino, are distinct from the international accommodationists of the League, who did not overall consider Japan’s coexistence and relationships with Asia—in particular, China—as seriously as those with the West.


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