

**Susan C Townsend.** *Yanaihara Tadeo and Japanese Colonial Policy: Redeeming Empire.* Richmond and Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000. vii + 296 pp.

**Reviewed by** Tom Mayock

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## Colonialism with a Heart

The Chair of Colonial Policy at Tokyo Imperial University was established in 1908. An unintended consequence came a generation later with the incumbency of Yanaihara Tadeo, a persistent, principled, Christian scholar alive to the empire's injustices who eventually was fired for his attitude on the war with China. Susan C. Townsend, lecturer at the University of Nottingham, takes us through the Yanaihara legacy and does a first rate job of it in *Yanaihara Tadeo and Japanese Colonial Policy: Redeeming Empire*.

Son of a doctor in a small town on Shikoku, Yanaihara early embraced the personal Christianity of the No-Church sect and so became afflicted with the irreconcilability of his God and the Japanese God-Emperor, although along with other Japanese Christians he came to believe that Japan might produce a superior morality by combining the best features of Protestant Christianity and Bushido. No-Church topics constitute a major part of his published works and his Christian principles carried over to his thinking on colonies.[1]

Yanaihara was appointed in 1923 after a two-year research tour spent mostly in the Reading Room of the British Museum. He based his model of successful and moral colonialism--redeeming empire--on the wisdom of nineteenth-century Britain in sponsoring capitalism and granting autonomy in Canada and Australia, its English-

speaking dependencies. He was confirmed in his faith by studies of, and visits to, Japanese territories from Taiwan to Korea, the South Sea islands and the occupied parts of China. Ms. Townsend follows him all the way, dealing with multiple theories of colonization and actual theory and practice in the empire. By no means a simple task.

To a military historian, such as the reviewer, the expansion of Japan appears as a defensive reaction to the western penetration of East Asia. To some Marxists it appeared as a function of surplus capital. Yanaihara sometimes used the Marxist theory, but the author believes that he was only pushing his Christian principles in the fashionable language of science and scholarship. He really harked back to Adam Smith. Implementation of capitalism would clear the path to the optimum solution: a free and equal association of Taiwan and Korea on the basis of separate polities. Yanaihara had to be careful to express this explicitly. Nor did he stress the evils of racism, but he deplored deliberate efforts to assimilate peoples of different language, background and culture, and warned that such policies led to bloodshed and ultimate failure.

Taiwan, Japan's first colony, was its most successful, becoming self-supporting and ending the metropole's dependence on foreign sugar. Its Chinese inhabitants nevertheless resented pressures of Japanisation, and during Yanaihara's lectures there in 1927, he was heckled by indepen-

dence-minded nationalists while being simultaneously monitored by the police; his advocacy of a degree of self-government not being particularly pleasing to either.

The Japanese fought two wars over Korea before formally annexing it in 1910. They attempted to assimilate the people, who they widely regarded as inferior, and use the place to resettle surplus population from the home islands. In neither were they successful and Yanaihara unhesitatingly condemned the repressive regime.

Another Christian critic of Japanese colonial practice, although not going so far as Yanaihara, was Nitobe Inazo (Yanaihara's mentor and predecessor in the Chair of Colonial Policy). Nitobe served in the secretariat of the League of Nations and was regarded as pro-American, having organized the Japanese Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations. The JIPR commissioned Yanaihara to visit the South Sea islands, the colonies seized from the Germans during the Great War. Beyond evaluating the performance of the local administrations, Yanaihara would hopefully dispel the American Navy's suspicions that the Japanese were fortifying the islands in violation of their obligations under the League of Nations mandate. He visited during 1934 and 1935 when tensions in the Pacific were fairly low and found no fortifications and a well-meaning administration whose programs had made little improvement in the lot of the islanders.

Franklin Roosevelt and the United States Navy had been outraged that Japan had been awarded the South Sea islands by secret treaties among the Allies before the Americans entered the war. FDR never forgot it. He had Sumner Welles grill Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Foreign Office representative at the Argentinia conference in 1941, as to whether the British had committed themselves to any more covert arrangements. Earlier, he had sent his friend Vincent Astor, thinly disguised as an ichthyologist, with his yacht to reconnoiter the Marshalls.[2] Part of the Ameri-

can suspicions grew out of the interminable red tape involved in requests to visit the Mandates. Yanaihara encountered similar delays.

Yanaihara believed that Chiang Kai-shek would be able to unify and modernize China, and that this would be to Japan's advantage. He voiced his criticism of the expanding war in September 1937, and for this was compelled to resign. He was lucky to avoid jail. Tokyo Imperial University operated after the German model. Its experts were supposed to further the interests of the state. The Education Ministry and the Japanese right wing had increasingly attacked academic freedom, notably in the Minobe affair, when a professor was dismissed for saying that the Emperor was an organ of the state, instead of the state itself. Other dismissals followed and Yanaihara's works were banned because he subscribed to Minobe's views. Yanaihara eked out a living by lecturing and writing on his No-Church beliefs, until he was rehabilitated in 1945 and restored to his old university.

Yanaihara was tall for a Japanese and was teased about his long head and prominent non-Oriental features, which may have helped him to the realization that there was no such thing as a pure Japanese race. He was a man of great earnestness and self-importance. Townsend found out by talking to his son Isaku that he demanded quiet in his household while he pondered. The fire-bombing of Tokyo destroyed much of the material he had collected on colonies and colonization. Personally the reviewer would have liked to have found something more on his post-war career, but this was beyond the author's brief.

The work offers interesting glimpses into Yanaihara's career at a time when Wiksonian idealism was gradually overtaken by militarism. It is well organized and written with clarity, great assets when the author ventures into the thickets of colonization theory. The book itself is admirable: light, easy to handle, with notes at the back of chapters where you can get at them, and a sophisticated bibliography.

## Notes

[1]. Nanbara Shigeru, et al, eds., *The Collected Works of Yanaihara Tadeo*. 29 vol., Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1963-1965.

[2]. Welles memo of conversation with Alexander Cadogan, August 9, 1941 in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1941; Derek Wilson. New York, St. Martins Press, 1993, p. 306.

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