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Yokoi Shonan through the Eyes of his Son: An Analysis of Three Letters by Yokoi Tokiwo and their Influence on the Writings of William Elliot Griffis

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1. Introduction

The extensive Griffis collection at Rutgers University houses some 29 boxes of notes, papers, letters and other writings by, to, and concerning William Elliot Griffis—missionary, writer and Japanologist. Among them lies a little-noticed file of letters from Yokoi Tokiwo, son of the well-known Bakumatsu scholar and statesman Yokoi Shonan—a set of 18 letters spanning 25 years from 1890 to 1916. Although Griffis never met Yokoi Shonan, who was assassinated in 1869 before he arrived in Japan in 1871, he was extremely interested in this man and his life, and wrote about him extensively. He most likely heard much about Tokiwo's famous father from students and friends while teaching in Fukui, where Yokoi Shonan was (and still is) highly respected. Shonan was assassinated by people who believed he was a Christian. Although Shonan actually never converted, Griffis seemed to want very much to believe that he was a Christian at heart and repeatedly requested information from Tokiwo regarding his father's views of Christianity.

Takagi (2004) argues that Griffis' image of Yokoi Shonan as “essentially a Christian” (Griffis, ca. 1899) and a national leader of epic proportions came partially through his correspondence with Yokoi Tokiwo, his son. He further argues that Griffis' portrayal of Yokoi Shonan as a follower of the Oyomei (Wang Yangming) school of Confucianism and as liberator of Eta people is at odds with the research of Japanese academics, and attributes the latter image to Tokiwo's letter about his father. Takagi's work, however, concentrates only on the first letter written by Tokiwo, and compares it with what Griffis wrote some 25 years later. The present study aims to fill in the gaps between these two events, during which Tokiwo wrote two more letters with further information about Shonan, and at least 8 of Griffis'

writings also mention Tokiwo's famous father. We concentrate specifically on three of Tokiwo's 18 letters (nos. 1, 17 and 18) with detailed information about Shonan, which seems to have been provided in response to Griffis' requests.

These three letters were written 11-13 years apart: in 1890, 1904, and 1915 respectively. Conveniently, they represent 3 distinct periods in Tokiwo's own life, as a minister, politician, and journalist. The present research concentrates on the portrait of Shonan gleaned from these three letters: it compares both their content and their tone, and draws conclusions with respect to Tokiwo's attitude and vision of his father over the years. It will also compare the image of Shonan in the three Tokiwo letters with Griffis' portrayal of Shonan in seven of his writings, shown in Fig. 1. Special attention will be paid to the following:

1. Diachronic change of Shonan in Tokiwo's letters, and how these changes are reflected in Griffis' writings
2. Tokiwo's portrayal of his father with respect to the three characteristics discussed in Takagi (2004): Christianity, liberation of the Eta, and the Oyomei School of Confucianism.

GROUP	YEAR	LETTERS by Tokiwo	WRITINGS by Griffis
Group 1	1889	Letter 1 (probably June 3, 1889, Boston)	
	1890		<u>The Mikado's Empire (revised from 1876)</u>
	ca.1891		<u>Honda the Samurai</u> <u>New Japan and the Gospel</u>
Group 2	1904	Letter 2 May 26 th 1904 Tokyo (Koishikawa)	
	1904		<u>Dux Christus: An Outline Study of Japan</u>
	*1907		<u>Japanese Nation in Evolution: Steps in the Progress of a Great People</u>
	1910		<u>The Oyomei Philosophy: or Japanese Pragmatism in The North American Review</u>
Group 3	1915	Letter 3 24 th January 1915 Tokyo, Sendagaya	
	1915		<u>The Mikado, Institution and Person</u>
	1916		<u>Rutgers Graduates in Japan (revised from 1885)</u>

*The 1907 article was mentioned in Takagi 2008, but not used in the present study.

Fig. 1. Timeline of Writings about Shonan by Griffis and Tokiwo.

2. Biographical Background: Griffis, Shonan and Tokiwo

In this section the lives of and relationships between Griffis, Shonan and Tokiwo are discussed. We begin with Yokoi Shonan and William Elliot Griffis, in order to uncover the reasons for the high level of interest of the latter in the former. Yokoi Shonan was born Yokoi Tokiari in 1809 in Higo (today Kumamoto) as the second son of a local samurai. In 1858, he was invited to Fukui to be councilor to the local daimyo Matsudaira Shungaku, a powerful and forward-thinking leader. He left Shungaku's service in 1863 to return to Kumamoto as punishment for running off (to get his sword) during an assassination attempt. He was pardoned and appointed *Sanyo* (Minister) by the Imperial Government in 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration, but was assassinated in Kyoto in 1869 by a group of bakufu loyalists who were dissatisfied with the new government.

Griffis is connected with Shonan in many ways. William Elliot Griffis, born in 1843 in Pennsylvania, was a prolific writer, minister and Japanologist. He served in the Civil War and then attended Rutgers University, graduating in 1869. During this time, Griffis tutored several Japanese students, including Shonan's nephews, Saheita and Taihei (known in the US as Sataro Ise and Saburo Numagawa). He also taught Kusakabe Taro, a student from Fukui, where Shonan had acted as councilor in the late 1850s. It was Kusakabe, who unfortunately died of tuberculosis just before he would have graduated from Rutgers College in 1870, who was most likely the inspiration for Griffis to accept Matsudaira's invitation to come and teach modern western education in Fukui in March, 1871.¹⁾

Griffis writes about Shonan several times in his books, always in glowing terms. However, as Takagi (2004) argues, his image of Shonan is quite different from that which Japanese scholars know. Specifically, Shonan is portrayed as a Christian at heart, a liberator of the Eta class, and a follower of Oyomei. Takagi (2004, p.144-145) provides this quote by Griffis as evidence:

1) At the same time, a similar school had been established in Kumamoto at the urging of Taihei, who had returned on account of illness. However there was no foreign teacher there until L. L. Janes arrived in September of the same year. The Kumamoto Yogakko, as the school was called, was in existence for 5 years; during which time Janes taught 212 students and produced 22 graduates, including Shonan's son Tokiwo.

Heishiro Yokoi (Yokoi Shonan) [was] an ardent disciple of the Oyomei philosophy... and at heart a Christian. He was assassinated in Kioto, in 1869, for proposing the toleration of Christianity and the elevation to citizenship of the Eta or social outcasts. (Griffis, 1916, p.16)

Further, Takagi (2004) argues that at least the first two aspects (that is, Shonan's purported Christian leanings and support of the Eta) were derived based on information from his son Tokiwo, quoting from Tokiwo's 1890 letter as follows: (pp. 164-165, underlines added)

When the Mikado was restored, my father was called to become a member of his Cabinet, and he was the most aged member being at the time sixty-one, and his relation to others I believe somewhat like that of Franklin to his colleagues. I think he first moved that the destruction of "Yeta" a class of people regarded to be below human beings, be abolished. ... In regard to xty he read the Scriptures in the Chinese translation. Did not like some of the forms it took. But speaks in one place in his writing in high terms of the good results of xty and bewails the bad religious condition of the Japanese. He once told in plain terms in a letter to a friend that xty will come + win the hearts of the best young men in a few years yet to the end of his life never became a xtian.

Takagi (2004, p.153) concludes that Tokiwo, a Christian who had excellent English but uncertain memories of his father, had the greatest, but not necessarily most accurate, influence on constructing Griffis' image of Shonan.

Actually, however, Tokiwo writes about his father in not only one but (at least) three of his letters, and Griffis discusses Shonan in not one but several of his writings (cf. Fig. 1). Moreover, Griffis' publications all appeared shortly after one of Tokiwo's three letters. It is likely that this timing is not coincidental, but that Griffis requested the information provided by Tokiwo in order to reconfirm and supplement his own image of Shonan. We therefore divide Griffis' publications into three groups, each of which can be assumed to have been influenced by the content of Tokiwo's respective letters.

Next, we provide a brief introduction of Yokoi Tokiwo's own life. The following epithet written by his friend and fellow Christian Uchimura Kanzo upon Tokiwo's

death in 1927, sums it up aptly:

Yokoi-kun, after you passed on, I read the following critique about your life in a certain Osaka newspaper: *Mr. Yokoi was as failure as a scholar, a failure as a man of religion, and a failure as a politician. He ended his life without having been able to succeed at anything.*

But Yokoi-kun, you could have been a success at any one of these—scholar, minister, politician—if you had so desired. You had just as much talent as any Japanese in the entire Meiji Era. But you were not able to devote yourself to any of these. It was your personal characteristics that brought you to such a state.

First and foremost, you were born honest. Secondly, you carried within you a strong genetic inheritance of patriotism. Third, you came to know Christ quite early in life, and became a devout believer. Honesty, patriotism, and faith—these were your inherent personal qualities.

From: 「故・横井時雄君の為に弁ず」 (Discussions for the Late Tokiwo Yokoi, Uchimura Kanzo, April 1928, translation by the author)

Uchimura goes on to explain the connection between Tokiwo’s personal qualities and the changes in his life, saying he could not accept the life of a professor because of his devotion to the Christian faith, he could not stay a minister because of his patriotic desire to save the nation, and that he failed as a politician due to his honesty and personal integrity.

This epithet describes the flow of Tokiwo’s life well, as shown in Fig. 2. His childhood was shaped by his studies at the Kumamoto Yogakko, where he and other students converted to Christianity, forming the Kumamoto Band under the influence of Captain L.L. Janes. Thereafter he was sent to Tokyo to study at Kaisei Gakko,

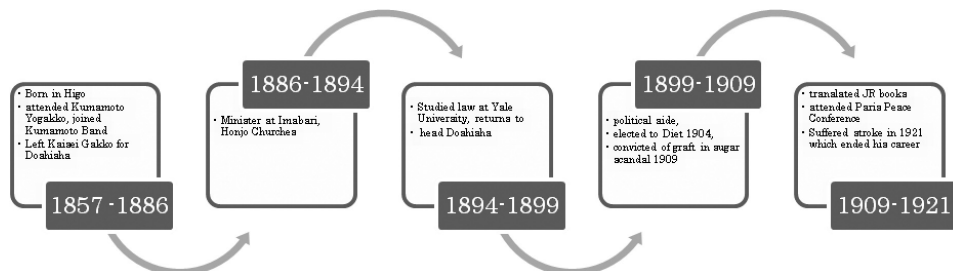


Fig. 2. The Flow of Tokiwo’s Life as a Minister, Scholar and Politician

the elite school of the era, but instead went to join his fellow students at Doshisha in Kyoto, graduating with a degree in theology. He then practiced quite successfully at Imabari Church in Shikoku and Hongo Church in Tokyo.

Takagi (2004, p. 149) claims that Tokiwo and Griffis first met in 1889 in Boston, when Tokiwo came to the United States to solicit funding for a building for Hongo Church, where he was working as pastor. Griffis' journal entries during this period show that they met over several days between Sept. 10 and 19, and that Tokiwo helped him read contemporary Japanese books including Basil Chamberlain, Suematsu and *Takano Choye Den* [Life of Takano Choye] (Takano 2004: 150). However, it is possible that their first meeting may have occurred much earlier, in May, 1871 in Fukui. Griffis writes in his journal on May 20, 1871:

Four students arrived from Higo to-day, having come here to study, on the recommendation of my former pupil in America, Numagawa, a young samurai of Kumamoto. (The Mikado's Empire, 1876)²⁾

Saburo Numagawa was one of the brothers (interestingly, the older brother Sataro Ise is not mentioned) whom Griffis tutored when he was at Rutgers University in the late 1860s. As previously mentioned, they were the aliases of Yokoi Shonan's two nephews, Saheita and Daihei³⁾, who arrived clandestinely in the US to study in 1866. The four boys from Higo, as Kumamoto was then called, came (bearing eggs) to thank Griffis for his kindness towards their cousins in America. Unfortunately, he does not name the cousins, but it is not difficult to imagine that Tokiwo could have been one of them. He would have been 13 years old at the time.

After returning from his meeting with Griffis in America with the funds for a new Honjo Church building, Tokiwo spent the years between 1890-1894 ministering there. Although his church was quite successful, the country was going through a period of backlash against the previous decades of hasty Westernization. The *Kyoiku Chokugo* (Imperial Rescript on Education) had been promulgated in 1890, and stressed the importance of loyalty to the Emperor. How seriously this Rescript was

2) In *The Mikado's Empire* (1876) Griffis also writes about Higo students in Echizen as follows:

One I call "Bearded Higo," for he wears what is rare in Japan, a full beard. The Higo family is connected by marriage with the house of Echizen. My prince's beautiful wife is a Higo princess. Her face is of a perfect Yamato type.

3) Or Taihei, according to historian and English teacher Nishi Tadaomi (personal communication, 2012).

taken can be seen in Christian teacher Uchimura Kanzo's famous failure to bow deeply enough to the Emperor (*fukei jiken*) in early 1891, which resulted in his dismissal from the First Higher Middle School.

The Rescript and resulting conflict between Christianity and patriotism certainly must have affected Tokiwo as well, who published a book titled *Wagakuni no kirisutokyomondai* 『我邦の基督教問題』 [Our Country's Problems with Christianity] in 1894. It was certainly this personal crisis of "the two Js" (Jesus and Japan) that led Tokiwo to return to the US, where he was studying law and ethics at Yale University by May, 1894. Until 1897, he seemingly tried to blend these two now-contradictory objects of his devotion. He wrote and published several essays and gave lectures about morality and education in new Japan. Upon returning from his studies, he took up a position as the third headmaster of Doshisha University, which was going through a similar crisis due to lack of students and problems with the American Board.

Tokiwo resigned as dean in 1899, and decided to enter the political world, a step that Uchimura Kanzo (1928) bemoans and insists never should have been taken. Tokiwo still publishes articles in English during this period, appearing in 1899 in the *Contemporary Review* and 1901 in the *International Journal of Ethics*. In 1902, his letters to Griffis (one of which was written on his way to Bombay, India) focus around a request for help with publishing a magazine article solicited by Tsuruhara Sadakichi, mayor of Osaka to publicize the Fifth National Industrial Exhibition in 1903. Although this plan seems not to have come to fruition, it may have been through these political associations that Tokiwo was elected as a Diet member in 1904, serving under Katsura Taro. However, he became involved with a series of sugar scandals in 1909 and was convicted of graft, resigning as a result.

After this, Tokiwo seems to have disappeared from the Japanese public eye, and we discover from his 1915 letter that he was busy translating a series of Japan Railway (*Kokutetsu*) travel books. He resurfaces on the international stage thereafter, publishing several articles in England in 1917-18 to explain Japan's policies in World War I. He was also present as a spokesman for Japan at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. It seems that he was planning to attend the Washington Arms Limitation Conference in 1921 as well, but he suffered a stroke in 1920, which effectively ended his active career. A friend who visited him before he passed away in Beppu in 1927 reports that Tokiwo was interested in little else besides reading his Bible.

Thus, Tokiwo's life alternates between education, religion and politics,

reflecting Uchimura Kanzo's comments about how his conflicting personality traits of religious faith, patriotism and honesty continually drove him to search for the best way to satisfy all of those passions. The fact that his search brought him to the international stage during and after World War I is especially interesting, as we may well see it as an attempt on Tokiwo's part to fulfill his father's admonition to "spread *taigi* throughout the world."⁴⁾

3. The letters about Shonan: Mirrors of Tokiwo's life

But how did Tokiwo see his own father? Takagi (2004) argues that Tokiwo probably had few direct memories of Shonan, and relied on indirect input from people surrounding him as a child. We will see, for example, that Tokiwo attributes his "knowledge" of his father's dealings with the Eta class to hearsay from his mother and his uncle. This section discusses Tokiwo's writings about Shonan through three letters, which were written in three distinct periods of Tokiwo's own life. We also attempt to see if his own differing circumstances over the three periods color the way the son sees his father.

3.1. Letter 1: 1890 (from Tokiwo the minister)

The first Tokiwo letter in the Griffis collection (undated, ca. 1890) gives a brief overview of Shonan's life, concentrating especially on his political activities and his attitudes towards Christianity. It was evidently written as a response to a request from Griffis for information to help solicit donations for the new church building for Hongo Church, as the material within it was used shortly afterwards for a pamphlet written by Griffis (ca. 1891) to that effect. The letter begins with this caveat:

I wrote the account of my father etc. as you directed me... It is not Japanese fashion you know to speak much of oneself. But I have been told since coming that I must speak of myself that that would be better. So I got to speaking of myself. Anything and everything that will tend to further my object which I believe firmly is that of Christ.

4) *Taigi*, loosely translated, means "great duty" or "lofty responsibility". "*Spread taigi to the four corners of the earth*" is part of a poem that Shonan wrote for his two nephews Saheita and Daihei as they left Japan to study in America.

This final line demonstrates Tokiwo's fervor as a man of religion in this period of his life. Yokoi Shonan is famous as being a teacher of "practical scholarship" (*jitsugaku*), and this belief comes through quite clearly in Tokio's initial description of him:

He was a scholar by profession but disdained the work of a scholar in the prevalent conception of the time, which was to write essays + poems and expound the writings of the Ancients. He said the real task of a scholar was to understand the course of human events, read men + human society, through if need be the medium of books. He taught that "the aim of knowledge + wisdom was to choose the good."

Tokiwo also writes about his father having suffered persecution for his desire to open the country and learn from foreign experience. This attitude, akin to heresy at the time, won Shonan many enemies:

"Two or three years after the Comm. [Perry] made his first appearance in the Bay of Uruga, he [Shonan] openly espoused the cause of foreign intercourse, not he said because it was unavoidable but because it was in accordance with the course of nature. . . . He thought the people of the West were men like ourselves and nothing need be feared if we acted in a true and reasonable way. He was looked upon as the chief advocate of foreign intercourse and was consequently hated and persecuted.

He elaborates on the reasons for his father's persecution and ultimate assassination as follows:

He taught that King was King not because of his connection with the royal house, but because of his supposed virtue + wisdom. And he only is a true King who conforms to the thought of Heaven. Men said he was a democrat and meditated revolution. But he was reverential to the Mikado and nothing was further from his thought than this imputation.

The letter contains only one specific date—that of Shonan's birth in 1808 (which is wrong; it was actually 1809). Similarly, the year Shonan went to Fukui to serve as counselor for Matsudaira is given as "1858 or thereabout." We can see in this

letter, then, that Tokiwo was not especially concerned with getting facts straight. Moreover, he does not make mention of the fact that Shonan was returned to Kumamoto in 1864 as a punishment, perhaps because putting his father in such a detrimental light might have mitigated his chances of receiving donations. Instead, he speaks of this period as a sort of hermitage:

my father came home + spent 5 years of quiet life, seeing people who came to see him, corresponding extensively with the prominent men of the time. He encouraged the cultivation of tea + mulberry tree, with the view to the foreign export of tea + silk.

In this first letter, Tokiwo especially stresses his father's belief in the importance of acting in conjunction with nature:

[Shonan believed] there was divine wisdom in man which wells up like springs and if we cast away all artificialness and conform to nature and the reality, our vision will be expanded so as to take in the past, the present + the future.

This is interesting in light of Tokiwo's own spiritual crisis a few years later, in which he himself seems to have tried to cast away the artificiality of the organized Christian religion. He explains Shonan's connection with Christianity as follows (quoted also on p. 44 of the present study):

he read the Scriptures in the Chinese translation. Did not like some of the forms it took. But speaks in one place in his writing in high terms of the good results of xty [Christianity] and bewails the bad religious condition of the Japanese. He once told in plain terms in a letter to a friend that xty will come + win the hearts of the best young men in a few years yet to the end of his life never became a xtian.

Here, we see that Tokiwo makes a clear disconfirmation of Shonan as a believer in Christianity, even if he might have admired its results. In his pamphlet, however, Griffis seems to have added a bit of wishful thinking to his own portrayal of Shonan as a "essentially a Christian" (Griffis, ca. 1899), perhaps to make the donation

campaign more successful.

In the same letter, Tokiwo also adds his belief that his father “first moved that the destruction of “Yeta” a class of people regarded to be below human beings, be abolished.” However, as to be seen in future letters, this recollection seems to be more on hearsay than on fact. In spite of this, it is often “quoted” in Griffis’ writings as will be discussed.

Finally, we find a reference to Shonan’s writings that would be published almost 10 years later in 1899 by Tokiwo (*Shonan Iko*, Minyusha):

His works all in manuscripts never yet published, are 1. a collection of his Chinese poems, 2. How to meet the foreign nations 3. On the wealth 4. on the navy 5. On the army 6. On the method of education, etc. These are to be collected with his letters + published in a short time.

Griffis’ immediate response to the content of this letter can be found in his small tract entitled “New Japan and the Gospel” (ca. 1899). It begins by introducing Tokiwo and his appeal for funding for a new church building, but soon turns to a glorious description of his father Shonan:

...this admirer of the American constitution, government, and people obtained from missionaries in Shanghai a copy of the Bible in Chinese, and reading it, was convinced of its truth. Though disapproving of some of the forms which Christianity had assumed in the history of Europe, we may say truly that ...Yokoi was essentially a Christian. In a letter to a friend he wrote, “In a few years Christianity will come to Japan, and capture the hearts of the best young men.”

Arriving promptly in Kioto, Mr. Yokoi, then sixty years of age ...proposed at once the elevation to citizenship of the degraded Yeta class, who, though human beings, had been treated for centuries as beasts. He pled for freedom of speech and the press, the equalization of taxation, and for the grand ideas which, on the 11th of February, 1889, were settled in the present constitution of Japan.

Underlined above, we see here the two interpretations of Shonan (as “essentially a Christian” and proponent of the Yeta) described in Takagi (2004). Both were clearly

inspired by the content of Tokiwo's letter.

However, no mention of these two traits is found in his revised edition of *Mikado's Empire* published in the same year, 1890, in which he includes Shonan as one of the “noble morning-stars of reformation” (Griffis 1890a, p.608). He does, however, mention Shonan's political influence: “the five principles of the new government which form this Constitution of 1868 and the basis of New Japan—expressed in their verbal form by Yuri Kinmasa, a samurai of Echizen, and pupil of Yokoi Heishiro [Shonan]—were published and established” (ibid, p.610).

On the other hand, in *Honda the Samurai*, also written by Griffis in 1890 to introduce Japan to younger people, the character “Dr. Koba”, seems to have been modeled at least in part on Shonan. He says:

“And now my good friends, this I must declare: To the moral improvement of my country I have devoted my life. For the elevation of the eta to the level of humanity and citizenship ; to the abolition of gambling ; to making it legal for students to go abroad to Europe to learn, and for the liberty of intelligent men to choose Christianity as a religion, I have devoted myself.”
(Griffis, 1890b, p.254)

Here, Griffis portrays Shonan (through Dr. Koba) as a proponent of Eta rights and, if not a believer, a proponent of the right to religious freedom and to believe in the Christian faith. This semi-fictional portrayal of Shonan may have lead Griffis to develop his own romanticized version of the man in later works.

3.2. Letter 2: 1904 (from Tokiwo the Politician)

Letter 2 was written 14 years after Letter 1, on May 26th 1904, just before Tokiwo left on a trip to China “on board the recently captured steamer Manchuria for the seats of warfare—on the Yellow Sea + the neighboring coasts of the Liao-tung, with a party of some ten members of the Diet, scores of foreign navel + military attaches and newspaper correspondents.” It also seems to be in response to a request from Griffis for information about his father, as Tokiwo writes: “I hasten to reply, because I can give you the information you require without much trouble and also because I expect to go away for a month...”

This second letter is somewhat more detailed than the first. However, he mentions only two dates in connection with his father's history, and one mistakenly.

He writes that Shonan was in Matsudaira's employment from "1878 to 1863" (which should have been 1858, of course), and that in 1862, Matsudaira presented a "memorial" formulating Shonan's political ideas when the former began to serve as *sosai*. (Tokiwo translates this term as *premier* in his 1890 letter and *prime minister* in 1904, both a bit hyperboloid. He uses the term *minister* in his 1915 letter).

In 1904, Griffis was probably busy writing *Dux Christus: An Outline Study of Japan* (1904), in which he introduces Shonan as a liberal teacher and thinker who was "(p)romptly assassinated in Kioto for such liberalism, rightly suspected to be Christian, Yokoi belongs in the roll of martyrs for God's truth in Japan" (Griffis, 1904, p.138). Here we note that Griffis has embellished his image of Shonan as a "Christian at heart" by adding "rightly suspected."

Griffis' queries to Tokiwo in this letter seem to have been concerning 1) Shonan and the Eta, 2) Shonan's activities in Matsudaira's service, 3) Shonan's contributions to national politics, and 4) Shonan's followers. Interestingly, Tokiwo does not bring up the issue of Shonan's thoughts on Christianity at all in the letter, suggesting that Griffis either did not ask, or Tokiwo deferred to answer.

As seen above, the Eta question was specifically first discussed by Tokiwo in Letter 1, but he addresses it again in this second letter as follows:

1st in regard to the Eta....I do not know who is to be especially credited for drafting the legislation in 1871 which abolished the Eta. My father was dead then as you know. But I heard from my maternal uncle that he heard Mr.Iwashita Hohei, a Kagoshima statesman of the Restoration time + raised to peerage (Viscount), say since that he (Iwashita) got the idea of equality between the Eta + other respectable classes from my father. I heard my mother tell that once my father went shooting, several years before the Restoration, he was eating luncheon in the wood, when a beggar (himin, a gypsy, considered you know even below the Eta) offered him a cup of tea. My father told my mother that he tested the strength of the prejudice when he accepted the cup by the momentary hesitation he experienced.

This second mention of Shonan's connection with the Eta suggests the possibility that Griffis' question was posed based on the information in Tokiwo's earlier letter, 15 years before. The fact that Tokiwo "cites" his uncle and mother as sources

(underlined above) also reinforces Takagi's (2004) conclusion that Tokiwo's claims were based more on hearsay than on direct knowledge.

In answer to Griffis' second question regarding Shonan's activities under Matsudaira in Fukui, Tokiwo writes:

He taught the statesmen of Echizen not to stick to the names + artificial distinctions to strictly understand the reality + reason of things; to introduce European science and arts; in government, to entrust responsibility to the most fitted irrespective of rank or class; to encourage industry + products with a view to foreign commerce, in distinction to the old + prevailing idea of negative economy, e.g. prohibitions against use of silk fabrics +c. I believe the recent wonderful growth of Habutaye industry⁵⁾ of which Echizen is the chief centre, can be rightly attributed to my father's teaching + inspiration.

In response to the third query, Shonan's political activities are summed up as follows:

In national politics my father's greatest contributions were probably two, e.g. the opening of the country to foreign influence and the formulation of the truly national and democratic platform finally adopted by the Restoration government in 1868.

Tokiwo goes on to explain the role his father played in the 5 articles that formed the basis of the Meiji government, which were "drafted by Mitsuoka (Uri) in 1868 a few months before my father arrived in Kyoto from Higo" and "embodied my father's ideas, which were once formulated in a different form + under a different circumstance – in 1862." He reviews Shonan's principles as follows:

- 1 . The generalissimo of the Empire (e.g. Shogun) shall pay a visit to the Emperor in Kyoto and make apology for the long-standing neglect of

5) Around this time, Fukui gained fame for Habutae silk, which made up some 10% of the entire Japanese export industry in 1903 (Hashino & Otsuka 2013). However, the industry only began in 1887 in Fukui, so it is a bit of a stretch to attribute it directly to Shonan's influence over 20 years earlier, as Tokiwo does here.

- duty (e.g. toward the Emperor)
- 2 . To abolish the regular service in Yedo of Daimios (by alternate stay of 3 years in Yedo + provinces) and substitute instead a visit to Yedo for making report of government.
 - 3 . Allow the ladies of the Daimios + home establishments to be sent back to the provinces (The System was a hostage under a different name.)
 - 4 . To appoint to government posts (e.g. national government then represented by a Shogun's government) men of abilities without distinction from all provinces throughout the country. (Till then men from Tokugawa clan + a few favored clans like Ii-kamon-no-kami were only eligible).
 - 5 . To take away all restrictions against public opinion + conduct national government on the basis of practical democracy.
 - 6 . To create the navy and strengthen the defenses of the Empire.

These six principles are contained in Shonan's now-famous *Kokuze shichijo* or seven principles of government. Shonan's final formulation of these was presented to Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the last Shogun, in 1867 in the form of 12 principles which, in addition to the first seven, also included respect for the bakufu, creation of schools, and *fukoku kyohei*, or rich country, strong military. The 7th principle, missing from Tokiwo's list, was to leave trading to the bakufu government.

Yuri's (Mitsuoka Uri in the letter) five principles were created in 1868, after the shogun stepped down from power and returned the government to the Emperor, certainly "under a different circumstance." Yuri's principles, refined by Kido Koin and used as the basis for the initial oath of the new government, were as follows:

- 1 . It is requested that a system be established under which common people may be permitted to pursue their respective callings so that there may be no discontent.
- 2 . It is necessary for the samurai and common people to unite in carrying out vigorously the administration of economic and financial affairs (*keirin*).
- 3 . Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to widen and strengthen the foundations of imperial rule.
- 4 . The term of office held by qualified men (*koshi*) must be limited.

Thereafter they must yield their positions to talented men.

5. All matters of state must be decided by open discussion (koron) and must not be discussed privately. (Lu, 1997, p. 307)

Although there are similarities, it is clear that Shonan in 1862 was trying to work with the shogunate whereas Yuri in 1868 was working with the new government that had just overthrown the shogunate.

As a short digression, we can see even more influence of Shonan's 7 principles on Sakamoto Ryoma's Eight-Point Plan (船中八作), written in 1867. Ryoma met Shonan in 1863, introduced by Katsu Kaishu. Fig. 3 shows Shonan's 7 principles in comparison with Ryoma's 8, Yuri's 5 and Koin's 5 principles. Although there was a 5-year gap between Shonan's and Ryoma's versions, there are clearly more similarities between them than the latter two. It is interesting that Tokiwo did not mention this, although at the time the letter was written, Sakamoto Ryoma probably did not have the legendary romantic hero status which he enjoys today.

Tokiwo names "Uri" (Yuri Kimimasa) as his father's most famous student. As other followers of Shonan, he mentions Katsu Kaishu who "always called himself my father's disciple", Baron Matsudaira "now in St. Louis", and "viscounts + barons without number who however have no prospect of being historically known."

In this second letter, then, we see an emphasis on the political and economic effects of Shonan's thoughts which is missing in the first letter. It is difficult to determine whether this is simply due to the questions asked by Griffis, or if the fact

PRINCIPLE	Shonan (1862)	Ryoma (1867)	Yuri (1868)	Koin (1868)
Learn from world	x	x	3	4,5
Restore Emperor	1	1	3	5
Create congress	x	2	4	1,2
Common people	5	3	1	2,3
People of talent	4	3	4	x
Open discussion	5	2	5	1
Abolish old customs	2,3	3,5	x	4
Revise trade	7	4,8	x	x
Naval power	6	6	x	x
Imperial guard	x	7	x	x

Fig. 3. Comparison of 4 versions of the Principles for New Government by Yokoi Shonan (7), Sakamoto Ryoma (8), Yuri Kimimasa (5) and Kido Koin (5)

that Tokiwo was in the political arena at that time may have influenced the answers. At any rate, the possibility of mutual influence is high.

There is no mention of Christianity or Oyomei in connection with Shonan anywhere in the letter. However, in the same year that this letter was written, Griffis wrote this about him:

Matsudaira, the feudal lord of Echizen, had made his own city of Fukui a model of decent government. He was backed by his teacher of ethics, the reformer Yokoi, who, having a copy of the Bible in Chinese, taught Christian doctrine in the guise of lectures on Confucianism. Yokoi predicted that the bright young men of the country would accept Christianity. (Griffis, 1904, pp. 78-79)

Here, Griffis seems to have made a somewhat unreasonable leap from the Shonan as “a Christian at heart” through “rightfully suspected to be Christian” all the way to “a teacher of Christian doctrine”. Considering the fact that Christianity is not mentioned at all in this second letter, it must be concluded that Griffis either developed this concept in his own imagination, or heard of it from someone other than Tokiwo. He goes on to discuss the Shonan and the Eta as follows:

The eta and hi-nin, human beings not hitherto counted as human, the victims of Buddhist fanaticism, were elevated to citizenship. This measure, first advocated by the man, suspected to be a Christian, Yokoi, who paid for his liberality with his life, was an act of the emperor of Japan as morally noble as the emancipation edict of Lincoln or the edict of Alexander which freed the serfs. (Griffis, 1904, p. 88)

Here, the portrayal of Shonan as a “suspected” Christian and a liberator of the Eta people is not supported by the content of Tokiwo’s second letter. Again, it is likely that Griffis has become somewhat carried away with his own built-up image of Shonan. His juxtaposition of Shonan with Lincoln and Alexander further indicates how far his romanticization of Tokiwo’s father had gone.

As *Dux Christus* (1904) was published in the same year as the letter was written, it is possible that the content of the letter was read only AFTER the book was published. However, we see Griffis continuing his portrayal of Shonan as liberator

of the Eta in 1907:

It was in Fukui that the famous reformer Yokoi Heishiro, the William Lloyd Garrison of Japan, lived, who studied the condition of the Eta, pondered upon their elevation, proposed their enfranchisement, and finally lost his life as a martyr to the assassin's sword for championing the freedom of the Eta and the rights of conscience. (Griffis, 1907, p.110)

The daring man who in Kioto, in 1869, at cost of his life at the hands of assassins, first proposed in the Government Council the elevation of the Eta to citizenship was Yokoi Heishiro, formerly ethical teacher and adviser of my employer, the Lord of Echizen, and friend of the Mazzini of Japan, Hashimoto Sanai. A mighty master of the Oyomei Philosophy, a reader of the New Testament (in the Chinese version), he sent his nephews to America—the first of a continuing host of students. (Griffis, 1907, p.112-113)

He proposed the elevation of the outcasts to citizenship and was the first to plead for freedom of conscience—two of Japan's grandest moral triumphs, now incorporated in the constitution of 1889, in which she leads some European nations. (Griffis, 1907, p.322)

Thus, Shonan is emphasized as an Eta liberator three times in the 1907 book, and is compared to William Lloyd Garrison (editor of an abolitionist newspaper). On the other hand, we also see from wavy underlined phrase in the second quote that Griffis has toned down his image of Shonan as a Christian, even a “suspected” one. Shonan is now portrayed simply as a reader of the Bible, not as a believer or a teacher as was previously written.

3.3. Letter 3: 1915 (Tokiwo the Translator and journalist)

The final letter under discussion was written on 24th January 1915, when Tokiwo was in the final stage of his career. He was out of the political limelight, having resigned after being tried and found guilty of graft due to a sugar scandal in 1909. His interest had turned to world affairs, possibly because of the beginning of WWI in Europe. He writes in the letter that he was busy translating a series of travel

guidebooks for Japan Railways into English. It is probably during this period that he also worked as an editor at *Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun* (now *Mainichi Daily Newspaper*).

Griffis, at this time, was working on a revision of his 1885 publication *Rutgers Graduates in Japan* as well as one of his more important works, *The Mikado, Institution and Person*, both published in 1915. This final letter, then, seems to again be in response to requests for historical information from Griffis.

This time, Tokiwo's explanation about his father begins with "Mr. Harada says that you want to to [sic] know the time when my father began to be interested in the Bible." Harada Tasuku was a colleague and fellow Kumamoto band member who had just published an English work entitled "The Faith of Japan" in 1914. The book discusses the attitudes of the Japanese elite at that time towards Christianity, and perhaps led to discussions between the author and Griffis, in which the question of Shonan's introduction to Christianity may have come up. Tokiwo answers this question as follows:

I am sorry to say however that I can fix no date except an indefinite one, say 1861-1865, a period which he spent partly in Fukui and partly in Kumamoto. It is also hard to say that in what lines of thought he was particularly influenced by Christianity, though I have no doubt he was greatly influenced in a [sic] general. He was familiar with some religious tracts—of semi religious nature—in Chinese. He read also [sic] Wheaton's International Law in Chinese.

Note that in this letter, he does not even mention that his father read the Bible in Chinese, only that he read some "religious tracts of semi-religious nature". In this final letter, Tokiwo also provides a timeline of "chief events in Yokoi Shonan's life" including specific dates, as follows:

1809 Y.S. was born.

1839 Visits Yedo in order to attend the University (Shoheiko)

1840 returns to Kumamoto.

1840-1850 He devotes himself to studies in Chinese classics and in researches concerning the Path for humanity to follow. He gradually becomes known widely.

1851 Makes journeys through Chugoku, Kinki and visits Fukui, where he is highly honored and entertained.

1858 Invited to Fukui, to be the teacher and counselor of Prince Shungaku

1863 Leaves the service of Prince Shungaku who was then the Prime Minister of the Shogun's Government

1864 Y.S. was punished, for not resisting by force an assassin a few years ago in Yedo, with the deprivation of privileges as Samurai and of family stipend (150 koku of rice).

1868 April appointed Sanyo (Minister) by the Imperial Government
January 5th 1869 assassinated.

Here, we see the first mention of his father's punishment in 1864, which had been portrayed as a "rest" in the first letter 25 years previously. The year of Shonan's birth is also written correctly, and a clear date, January 5th 1869, is given for his death⁶⁾. Through these hints, we may surmise that Tokiwo's outlook on his father had mellowed with age, and he had become able to judge both his strengths and his weaknesses with more clarity. Through his work as translator and journalist, Tokiwo would have become more attuned to looking for factual errors and hyperbole. This may also be due to the fact that Tokiwo himself had suffered a scandalous and degrading "punishment" himself in his fall from political power in 1909.

The information in this final letter does not seem to have been implemented in either Griffis' revision of *The Rutgers Graduates in Japan* or *The Mikado, Institution and Person*, both published in 1915. Instead, we see the continuing image of Shonan as a "Christian at heart" and "liberator of the Eta." In the former, Griffis writes:

He [Ise Sataro] and Numagawa were both nephews of Heishiro Yokoi (Yokoi Shonan), an ardent disciple of the Oyomei philosophy, lecturer at Fukui, and at heart a Christian. He was assassinated in Kioto, in 1869, for proposing the toleration of Christianity and the elevation to citizenship of the Eta or social outcasts.

6) It should be noted that this date is not the one officially accepted today of Feb. 15, 1869 (by the solar calendar); this is because Tokiwo probably "translated" the date into the lunar calendar as was the practice at that time. Tokiwo's own birthday is also given in two versions: Oct. 17, Ansei 4 and Dec. 3, 1857.

The latter contains this information about Shonan:

Of Yokoi, lecturer on the ethics and philosophy of Confucianism.... Yokoi had, through the medium of a Chinese version of the Gospels, discovered ... Jesus in history... With quick decision, he became at once His secret and unquailing follower. He predicted that the bright intellects of Japan would, when they knew him aright, accept the Christ. In the Council of the new government at Kyoto, in 1869, Yokoi pleaded for and secured not only freedom of conscience, but also the uplift of the Eta, or social outcasts to citizenship, as great a work, morally, as Lincoln's; and, like the American, he was assassinated for his pains. A noble record! (Griffis, 1915, p. 77-78)

In the latter we see Griffis at the peak of his admiration for Shonan, again equating him with Lincoln in the US. Comparing the above two passages, however, it is evident that Griffis is somewhat confused. Tokiwo's information clearly states the date of Shonan's assassination as January 5, 1869 (on the lunar calendar, Feb. 15 on the solar calendar), and yet Griffis has him proposing that the Eta be given citizenship in that same year at the Kyoto Council, after he was already dead! The legal liberation of the Eta was actually put into effect with the Emancipation Declaration of 1871, and "A Proposition to abolish the Eta" was put forth to the Assembly of Peers in Kyoto on April 18, 1869 by Hiroyuki Kato (Neary, 1989, p. 31). Nevertheless, Griffis insists on his own interpretation, even though Tokiwo does not mention his father's stance on the Eta at all in this letter.

4. Conclusion

Yokoi Tokiwo's descriptions of his father over the three letters seem to subtly alter with the changing conditions in Tokiwo's own life. Comparing the three letters, letter 1 (1889) is unclear with dates, emphasizes Shonan's spiritual ideas, and (perhaps deliberately) glorifies his thinking and downplays his weaknesses. It was written with the clear intention of soliciting donations for what Tokiwo no doubt considered a great cause, the building of his new church. Therefore, naturally, Tokiwo would have stressed his fathers' study of the Bible and inclination towards viewing the Eta with respect and fairness, and downplayed his fondness of drink and other weaknesses that had been punished by the Bakufu.

Letter 2 (1904), on the other hand, concentrates on Shonan's political policies and contributions, and answers specific questions by Griffis in a direct and businesslike manner. Here we see Tokiwo the politician, perhaps finding his own political inspirations in the teachings of his father. Moreover, it must be remembered that Tokiwo had finished compiling and published his father's works in 1898; therefore this letter shows renewed objective familiarity with the subject of his father.

Finally, letter 3 (1915) shows the most organization and clarity of the three. It is in this letter, the shortest, that Tokiwo seems to find a balance between his early glorified and idealized image and his later respectful but slightly cool portrayal of Shonan as political hero. It is mostly in the form of a simple timeline. It mentions Christianity, law, and education in conjunction with his father, and in most "correct" in terms of factuality.

Turning our attention to Takagi's (2004) assertion that Griffis' image of Shonan as a (1) Christian at heart, (2) liberator of Eta and (3) follower of Oyomei was at least partially a result of the writings of his son, we can supplement it by concluding the following:

- 1 . In none of the three letters does Tokiwo ever state that his father was a Christian, even at heart. His first letter mentions that he read the "scriptures" in Chinese, but was critical of some forms of Christianity, and that never became a Christian. He reiterates this in his second letter, and in the third he downgrades the "scriptures" to semireligious tracts.
- 2 . Tokiwo's first letter intimates that there was a connection between his father and the Eta; however he denies it in his second letter, relating only a few episodes about his father's personal experiences based on hearsay. There is no mention of it in his third letter. It seems that Griffis, however, continued to embellish his own semi-fictionalized image (Dr. Koba, 1890b) of Shonan as "the Lincoln of Japan" throughout his later writings.
- 3 . Tokiwo never portrays his father as a follower of the Oyomei School, so this image must have come from another source. Of the writings reviewed in this paper, Griffis himself mentions it first in 1910.

Regarding this third point, the question of whether Shonan was indeed a follower

of the Oyomei school seems to be under debate even today. Benesch (2009, 442-443) writes that “the Nihon Shiso Taikei edition containing the essential works of Sakuma [Shozan] and Yokoi describes both as working within the theoretical boundaries of the Zhu Xi tradition” but that also “there is also a considerable group of currently active scholars who continue to place both Sakuma and Yokoi firmly in the Yomeigaku tradition.” De Bary and Dykstra (2005, p. 554) also list Yokoi as a follower of the Oyomei school. Harootunian (1970, p. 338), however, may have the best solution to the question. He writes that “... too much is made of the pedigree of bakumatsu intellectual positions. All thinkers, and Yokoi in particular, had available the different forms of Confucianism; in the new environment after 1853 they used whatever worked.” Ballhatchet (1988, p. 352) concurs, explaining Shonan’s *jitsugaku* as “a form of Confucianism developed by Yokoi Shonan (1809-1869) which combined elements of both Chu Hsi and Wang-Yang Ming Neo-Confucianism.” Takagi argues (2004, p. 162) that it is probably appropriate to attribute Griffis’ image of Shonan as a follower of Oyomei to a blend of the Japanese understanding of Confucian history of the time and Griffis’ own interpretation of Japanese history.

Thus it is concluded that seeds of Griffis’ image of Shonan as “Christian at heart” and “Eta liberator” may have been planted by the content of Tokiwo’s first letter, but were not backed up by either of the two later ones. Moreover, the image of Shonan as a Oyomei follower seems to have come from somewhere else, perhaps from another of the Kumamoto band such as Harada Tasuku.

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