

## **Bridging Divides between Theological Studies and Feminist Studies**

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While feminists within the field of gender studies challenge the capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism that they identify in the field of theological studies, theologians argue that approaches such as Marxist feminism cannot be applied to theological teaching principles. As a result, these two academic fields are treated as mutually exclusive. In order to bridge the divide between these two disciplines, this paper engages in an interdisciplinary study between theological and feminist studies. I intend to conduct archival and library research on the overlap between Christian missionary history and Chinese and Japanese women's history. Evidence of this overlap can be found in the memorandum *The Story of Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries* published by Toyo Eiwa Girls' Academy in 2010 in memory of Methodist women's missionary work in Japan. Annual reports housed in the United Church Archives clearly document the history of how Canadian home missions rescued Chinese slave girls and received Japanese picture brides upon their arrival in Canada, and of how Canadian foreign missions spread Christian teaching abroad. In contrast, Tani E. Barlow – a Chinese feminist critic – in *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism*, explores the history of Chinese feminism and its connection with Japanese and western feminism. In 1975, a Japanese countryman whispered the story of Yamada Waka (1878-1956) to Tomoko Yamazaki, a researcher of Japanese women's history, and in 1978, she wrote in Japanese *The Song of an Ameyuki Girl: The Vicissitudes of Yamada Waka's Life*. Moving beyond a literature review of these

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primary and secondary sources, I aim to unearth a common culture between theological studies and women's studies in China, Japan, and North America. I argue that finding the common culture between theological studies and women's studies can bridge the divide between these two disciplines. The interdisciplinary study reveals that these two disciplines can mutually benefit one another in regard to their knowledge production and knowledge mobility.

### ***Historiography of Missionary Work in Japan***

In the mid-sixteenth century, Jesuit missions to Japan were initiated by Francis Xavier. In addition, Portuguese Jesuit Luís Fróis was influential in these missions insofar as he laid the groundwork for translation as a skill to spread the teaching of Christianity. Fróis documented his accounts in *The History of Japan* and oversaw a golden age of Jesuit missionary work from 1569 to 1582. However, as soon as the general who supported Christians – Oda, Nobunaga – died, all Jesuits were suppressed by two other generals: Toyotomi, Hideyoshi and Tokugawa, Ieyasu. Finally, after the Shimabara Rebellion (1637-1638), Christianity was banned from Japan despite the attempt of Correa, a Portuguese Jesuit, to refute the idea that Christianity had been the peasant rebellion's instigator.<sup>1</sup>

### ***The Rise of Christian Women in Church Organizations***

After the Jesuits – whose missions were largely successful prior to Japan's seclusion circa 1640 – were driven out, religious feminism within Christianity emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. The feminization of the Christian religion seemed to be a catalyst for more women to engage in the work of social gospel.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, the Methodist women at the Woman's Missionary Society (hereafter WMS) began working with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and took an interest in women's social gospel issues. Institutionalizing Christian female leadership, the WMS of the Methodist Church of Canada (hereafter MCC) was established in 1881. Subsequently, more Christian women rather than solely Christian men were sent to Japan to engage in missionary work. For example, in 1884, the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada (WMSMCC) sent the first Protestant woman missionary – Martha Julia Cartmell (1845-1945) – to Japan.<sup>3</sup>

***Protestant Women Replaced Jesuit Men in Japan at the End of the Nineteenth Century***

Cartmell managed more than \$400,000 of the WSMCC budget at the time and further had an impact on Japanese female populations in the late nineteenth century. Just like Fróis, Cartmell learned the Japanese language in order to communicate directly with the Japanese people. Before long, Cartmell was able to interpret at the Sunday school, attend women's associations, and visit Japanese patients at hospitals. Consequently, Cartmell provided Japanese students the job skill of translating English texts into Japanese texts and influenced her Japanese students to engage with literary feminism. At the time, some Japanese girls did not go to school because their education was not considered important by their parents. Cartmell advocated gender equality and self-esteem for Japanese girls through her education at the missionary school. In particular, two well-known graduates from Toyo Eiwa Girls' Academy testify to Cartmell's legacy: Muraoka Hanako (1893-1968) who translated Lucy Maud Montgomery's 1908 Canadian novel *Anne of Green Gables*, and Kata-yama Hiroko (1878-1957) who translated many pieces of Irish literature.<sup>4</sup>

***Historiography of Missionary Work in China***

Just as the principals of the Toyo Eiwa Girls' Academy had inspired their Japanese students, North American missionaries also had an impact on Chinese female populations from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Minnie Vautrin (1886-1941), an American missionary, played a pivotal role in rescuing many Chinese during the Nanjing Massacre in 1937. She dug trenches, performed air raid drills, set up shelters, got ambulances for the wounded, and visited the injured in hospital.<sup>6</sup> Born to United Church missionary parents in China, Katharine Boehner Hockin (1910-1993) was among a number of Anglo-American student volunteers for overseas missions. With the formal ordination of Christian women at the United Church in 1937, Hockin did not purposefully pursue ordination but simply aimed to be as competent as her male colleagues. She went to China in 1940 as a Canadian foreign missionary and left China in 1951; on her return to Canada, she took the initiative to reassess the home and foreign missions of the church in her advocacy for multicultural approaches to ministry in the context of a new global outlook. At the time, this multicultural approach was termed "pluralism"

in theological studies. Hockin contributed to the embodiment of a theological feminism whose goal of religious equality was informed by biblical insights.<sup>7</sup> As a result, one of the Chinese girls, Sophia Zhang, was influenced by Christian missionaries in China and became, according to Ying Hu, an iconic premodern Chinese feminist just like Mulan.<sup>8</sup>

***Sophia Zhang/Zhang Zhujun (1867-1964): The Mulan Archetype in 1911***

Hua, Mulan (386-581) has been a figure for feminism in classic Chinese literature since the fourth century. However, Mulan was thought to be a merely fictional character in *The Ballad of Mulan* in the collection of the Music Bureau (*Yuefu*). In order to obtain archeological evidence to prove the historical existence of Mulan, Xinlu Zhang collected archival data and engaged a field study at Mulan's birth place of Wuhan Huangpi. In North America, the 1998 and 2004 Disney cartoons, the 2018 or 2020 Disney film, and Maxine Hong Kingston's 1976 *The Woman Warrior*, represented Mulan as an icon of women's power and an embodiment of Chinese feminism. Even now, the phrase of "*jinguo burang xumei*" (women will not concede to men) reminds us of Mulan's bravery in going to the battlefield.<sup>9</sup>

Just like Mulan, an iconic premodern Chinese feminist, Sophia Zhang is a Chinese feminist. Hu suggests that after Mulan's military achievements, she returned to the spindle to weave and served as a good daughter. After Sophia Zhang completed her Red Cross missions on the battlefield of the 1911 Revolution to take care of the wounded revolutionary soldiers, she returned to her normal life as a lady doctor.<sup>10</sup> Having been treated in an American missionary hospital after she contracted polio as a child, Sophia Zhang later studied western medicine at the Hackett Women's Hospital. Eventually, she opened her own hospital of western medicine in Guangzhou City of Guangdong (Canton) Province circa 1900.<sup>11</sup> It was said that she did not charge medical fees to any poor patients. In addition to having established the first Chinese girls' school, she was also involved in an anti-Qing revolutionary association (*Tongmenghui*). Subsequently, she organized the Red Cross to rescue injured revolutionaries such as the *Huanghuagang* martyrs and became a heroine herself in the Chinese 1911 Revolution. Zhang set up makeshift chapels in her hospitals in order to spread the teaching of Christianity.<sup>12</sup> For her Christian evangelism and her medical aid work in China, Zhang was

respected as a religious feminist. However, despite recognizing Sophia Zhang's female power, Barlow does not classify Zhang as a Chinese literary feminist figure.

***Ding, Ling (1904-1986): the Progressive Chinese Feminist of the 1920s-1930s***

Tani Barlow claims that she cannot write about the progressive Chinese feminism of the 1920s-1930s without referring to the work of Ding, whose feminism embodies Maoist revolutionary theory.<sup>13</sup> Following Maoist revolutionary theory, Ding supports neither non-communist Chinese nor Soviet communist politics. In China, Sophia Zhang was well-known for her heroic deeds in the Chinese Revolution of 1911. In Russia, Sophia Perovskaya was famous for her heroic deeds in the Russian Revolution. Because Ding does not recognize the 1911 Chinese Revolution or Soviet Revolution as Maoist revolutions, she created characters named Sophia in her stories to present non-revolutionary womanhood. The Sophia character in Ding's stories often represents a merely unstable, deficient, and regrettable female subject.<sup>14</sup> Following Ding's formulation of Chinese feminism, Barlow emphasizes Maoist theory and, therefore, does not acknowledge Sophia Zhang as a Chinese literary feminist.

***Chinese Feminist Sexual Conduct***

As a Chinese literary feminist, Ding poses a question about the nature of women's social problems in her story "In a small room on Qingyun Alley." When a young prostitute needs to decide between continuing in sex work and accepting a marriage offer, the prostitute chooses the former and explains why she makes the choice. Because she considers that there is no difference between marriage and prostitution, she chooses sex-work, which can give her freedom to experience sexual variety, over marriage. Barlow represented Ding's paradigm as individual sexual freedom.<sup>15</sup> While Ding might have written this story to express her sexual fantasy as a feminist, this individual sexual freedom can be seen as secular feminism.

As a Christian feminist, Zhang would make a distinction between marriage and prostitution based on the sexual morality commanded by Scripture. For a devout Christian, a marriage is about mutual trust and cooperation between two partners who can lie naked together without

feeling ashamed. Prostitution is merely a bodily sexual transaction between two unrelated persons who do not commit to partnership with each another. People who participate in this immoral sexual behaviour cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.<sup>16</sup>

Adhering to Scripture, the Christian feminist group opposes absolute freedom for prostitution but espouses disciplined freedom for the forming of a family. However, according to today's definition of secular feminism, everyone is entitled to claim their individual sexual freedom: sex workers can opt to stay or leave the sex trade of their own free will. Nevertheless, according to Scripture, once prostitutes confess and pray, they will be forgiven for their sins.<sup>17</sup>

#### ***Li, Xiaojiang: the 1980s Market Feminist***

In the field of Chinese literature, women's studies began with the creative work of another Chinese literary feminist Li, Xiaojiang in the 1980s. Barlow contends that Li's 1980s feminist discourse of the "sex gap" addresses the difference and inequality between men and women. Li's market feminism takes economic reform and macroeconomics concerning surplus labour into account. Similar to Marxist feminism, Li's "sex gap" theory is not entirely "essentialism," a kind of feminism based on the sexual differentiation of men and women. It also addresses the capitalist exploitation of the working class and advocates for social responsibility, including caring for the poor. Therefore, Barlow suggests that Li's "sexualist" theory intervened in the national economic development debates that culminated in June 1989 and predicted the establishment of Chinese neoliberalism. Opposed to Chinese neoliberalism, Li's "sexualist" theory belongs to the theory stream of Ellen Key, who advocates for state financial support of "professional" mothers, and whose theory was still Christian-based in 1873.<sup>18</sup>

Parallel to Li's "sex gap" theory, Zhang requested that all of her twenty adopted children call her "father."<sup>19</sup> Owing to the fact that she preferred to remain celibate and was dedicated to her Christian preaching mission, she adopted children instead of getting married. However, she also believed that children could not be well disciplined without a father; therefore, Zhang asked her children to call her "father." Subsequently, Zhang aspired to take over the father's traditional duties in order to better educate her children as a single mother.<sup>20</sup> Even though she was "merely a woman," Zhang wanted to be as powerful as a man. This was Zhang's way

of fighting for gender equality. Similarly, Li used her theory of the “sex gap” to invite public acknowledgement of women’s double burden of having to do both unpaid house work and paid work.

***Dai, Jinhua: the 1990s Chinese Poststructuralist Feminist***

In her book on the history of Chinese literary feminism, Barlow refers to the catachresis of women: she cited Ding’s work as the foundation of a progressive Chinese feminism that reflects Maoist nationalism.<sup>21</sup> Ding had drafted Chinese feminism in a way that suited Mao’s political project; however, as soon as Ding questioned Mao’s definition of “woman,” Ding was jailed for two decades. After all, gender equality and women’s freedom were not seriously addressed in China before 1966, the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, women lost their sexual identity as “women” when they tried to behave like “men.” The argument of Meng, Yue, cited by Barlow, seems to echo the research of Min, Dongchao, the director of the Centre for Gender and Cultural Studies at Shanghai University, on Chinese feminism.<sup>23</sup> Min critiqued the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) for intending to achieve the aims of “feminism” by taking part in the Communist Party – Chinese Marxism. To the great disappointment of the Chinese Marxist feminists, the national interests had switched to a neoliberal agenda.<sup>24</sup>

Barlow compares the Mulan archetype expressed by Dai, a 1990s Chinese feminist critic, and Huang, Shuqing, a filmmaker. Dai interviewed Huang in 1993 about Huang’s 1987 film – *Woman, Demon, Human* – in which the female protagonist, Qiu, Yun, plays herself, a woman who plays male characters in Beijing opera performing masculinity. In 1995, Dai published a book called *Breaking out of the Mirror City* arguing that disguising a woman as a man does not make her a feminist. No matter what gender women intend to perform, they will find it hard to be able to break through the simulacrum of the symbolic man. Dai often presents herself as espousing 1990s Marxist feminism, which is both her “basic position and research method.” Dai argues that Huang’s film depicts the impossibility of using the performance of “man” to “liberate” a woman who cannot be seen “as a real man” by a “real” man.<sup>25</sup>

Even though Barlow saw Huang trying to reconfigure the Mulan archetype in her film, I contend that Mulan did not try to liberate herself to be a feminist or to be as strong as man. Mulan disguised herself as a

man and went to war because she did not want her aged father to fight in the battlefield. However, Mulan demonstrated herself to be as strong as a man: no one was able to distinguish Mulan from a man on the battlefield. Huang's reconfiguration of the Mulan archetype in her film failed to represent Mulan's agency in her desire to save her father. Mulan's filial piety is reminiscent of the family values espoused in much of Christian Scripture, distinguishing itself from Huang's feminist advocacy of essentialism and Dai's anti-essentialist poststructuralism.

### ***Comparison between Dai's Poststructuralism and Hockin's Pluralism***

In many ways, Dai's poststructuralism parallels Hockin's pluralism. Similar to Susan Strega's feminist poststructuralism, which deconstructs binaries, Dai encourages an approach that eschews the blind belief in Maoist structuralism that prevailed for a long period of time. Dai supports Marxist feminism or social economic theories to shorten the economic distance between the poor and the rich. She fights against capitalism and neoliberalism, which only make the poor poorer and the rich richer. Dai pursues ideas that foster sharing economic profits among the poor. While Dai's poststructuralism focuses on social economy, it shares with Hockin's pluralism an attention to the need for diverse approaches to social issues. In addition to caring for Church finances, Hockin envisioned a multicultural Church foreign ministry that would care for the multiple ethnicities attending the church.<sup>26</sup> The pluralism that Hockin advocates was desperately needed to deal with the Asian child prostitution problem in Chinese communities in the early twentieth century.

### ***Chinese Slave Girls***

In Sophia Zhang's time, many young girls who were sold into slavery by their parents to relieve financial burdens were called Chinese slave girls. Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack's interlocking analysis explains the race, class, and gender perspectives that shaped these Chinese slave girls' demography.<sup>27</sup> These intersecting factors construct their respective social group, which interdependently coexisted with the economic and political forces in China. China was the victim of foreign colonization, and its economic resources were squeezed dry by multiple colonizers. Impoverished Chinese families had no other option but to sell their daughters. In regard to this gender discrimination, I contended that



rather than the teachings of Confucianism, the contemporary feudal system in China from the end of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century placed women beneath men in terms of their social class.<sup>28</sup> Some Chinese slave girls were either trafficked or kidnapped by the secret society in China and taken to brothels on the west coast of North America, specifically in San Francisco, California or Victoria, British Columbia.

***The Oriental Home (a.k.a., the Methodist Chinese Mission) in San Francisco***

Reverend Otis Gibson and Mrs. Eliza Chamberlin Gibson brought Methodist women to work at the Oriental Home to rescue Chinese children and women.<sup>29</sup> John Endicott Vrooman Gardner (1863-1943) first volunteered at the Oriental Home in San Francisco and later came to Victoria in January 1885. He saw the plight of the Chinese slave girls who were trafficked. Gardner then appealed to Methodist women, such as Cartmell, to make them understand the need for a home mission and advocated for the establishment of the Oriental Home in Victoria, British Columbia.<sup>30</sup>

***The Oriental Home (a.k.a., the Chinese Rescue Home) in Victoria***

Other than Christian teachings of moral standards for family formation and sexual conduct,<sup>31</sup> the Home instructed its girls in the skills they needed to make a living without returning to prostitution. Following the policy of the Home in San Francisco, the Home in Victoria made its residents defray their living costs by sewing and cooking; the Home also taught its girls how to read and speak English and Chinese as extra living skills. Because these Home girls needed to work in order to stay at the Home, they were required to declare whether they wanted to stay at the Home or continue their lives as prostitutes. The majority of those who chose to stay at the Home were encouraged to establish their own Christian families; some of them were offered opportunities to enter public schools in order to be trained to serve as a home or foreign missionary.<sup>32</sup>

Having been given the opportunity to train as a missionary, Victoria Cheung (1897-1966) escaped gender discrimination that limited access to higher education for women and broke through racial discrimination characterized as the “yellow peril.” In 1931, 98.2% of the women admitted to nursing schools in Canada had Caucasian ancestry. This was a “white

world” phenomenon, and Cheung would not have been able to pursue her studies had she not joined the missionary program at the Home. Cheung’s parents were devout Christians who immigrated to Canada in the 1880s. Her mother, a Bible woman and a doctor, taught at the Home, often brought her friends to the Home church, and left her two children with the daycare at the Home. Cheung graduated from Medical school at the University of Toronto in 1922 and went to the Marion Barclay Hospital in China as a foreign missionary in 1923. Knowing that the Great Depression halted many church programs, in 1930 she gave back her scholarship to the WMS in order to make it available for someone who needed it more than she did. When Canadian missionaries were not allowed to stay in China during the Second World War, the civil war, and Mao’s rule, Cheung became an invaluable WMS missionary in China. She obtained more funds from the WMS to better manage her Kongmoon project. After the war, although she was wrongfully accused of working as a foreign spy to steal funds, she was later exonerated by the government. She then donated the fine she paid, returned by the state, to her project. The state named her a working-class model and national heroine even though she refused to join the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to Cheung, Agnes Chan came to the Home as a slave girl from China but eventually shared the same glory as Cheng’s colleague. Chan returned to China as a medical foreign missionary.

In addition to having overcome racial and gender discrimination similar to that faced by Cheung, Agnes Chan (1904-1962) also faced class discrimination. Chan was sold by her impoverished parents to Canada as a Chinese slave girl. She also helped her sister escape the fate of prostitution so that her sister too could live an honourable life. Having escaped to the Home, the Home secured financial aid from Manitoba to pay for her boarding fees from 1908 to 1911. Chan excelled in her studies and scored the highest mark on the provincial high school entrance exam among the other 346 successful students who passed. In 1917, the WMS of the Presbyterian Church in Toronto lent her money to rescue her sister who was sold as a slave girl and placed her sister in a school in China while she interpreted for the missionaries in Chinatown. She received training as a nurse in Toronto in 1921 and graduated from the Women’s College Hospital in Toronto in 1923. As the number one student of the Obstetrics Department, later in 1924, Chan went to China as a nurse missionary and in 1929 attended an International Congress of Nurses in Montreal. She established the Springfield orphanage in Fatshan, China and rescued many

abandoned children. Agnes was fond of saying, "I wish to have 24 hours instead of 12 hours; I wish to have 10 hands instead of 2 hands to work every day."<sup>34</sup> Chan's name was also mentioned at Denise Chong's 2013 book launch in the Chinese community by one of her adopted children. Chan accepted Christian feminism by using her intellectual abilities to spread the teachings of Christianity.

Chan, Cheung, and Zhang all challenged the Christian tradition of male leadership and are rightly remembered as a group of religious feminists who lived up to Christian values.<sup>35</sup> Cheung broke through race and gender inequality; Chan broke through race, gender, and class inequality after she was sold as a slave girl from China to Canada and again overcame discrimination in her early life in Canada; and Zhang broke gender inequality barriers in her time in China. This same interpretive lens can be applied to Japanese child prostitutes.

Sidney Xu Lu posited that the nation-building project of Japan and its accompanying transition from the Tokugawa *bakufu* (Shogunate) to the Meiji era impoverished its populace.<sup>36</sup> To relieve the economic hardship experienced by the populace, organizations involved in the Japanese sex trade expanded into the overseas markets. The fate of child prostitutes can be explained by Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack's interlocking theory of gender, race, and class. Japanese young girls were burdened with the baggage of Japanese culture and social structure. Born female in impoverished Chinese and Japanese households, young girls were sold into prostitution to save their families from financial ruin.

### ***The Anti-Prostitution Program by Christian Organizations***

Tomoko Yamazaki, a Japanese researcher who wrote the history of Japanese overseas sex workers, exposed the hidden truth that Japanese child prostitutes were sex-trafficked from Japan to the South Pacific in the early twentieth century. Sidney Xu Lu further reported how Yamamura Gumpei (1872-1940), a Japanese Salvation Army leader, strategized a social-reform program to replace Japanese sex workers with Japanese *tairiku* (continental) brides. Gumpei placed Japanese sex workers in the homes of Japanese families in Manchuria or American families in California to perform domestic work. In addition to addressing the shortage of housemaid services in Manchuria or America, this change in work helped alleviate the spreading of venereal disease in the Japanese communities.<sup>37</sup> Yamamuro even went one step further to propose

transforming Japanese prostitutes in North America by classifying them as Japanese picture brides. This is where Canadian Christian home missions – the Oriental Home – came into play: to promote the program of Japanese picture brides.<sup>38</sup>

***The Cameron House: From Prostitution to Salvation***

The picture bride program, under the auspices of the Christian organizations, had the unintended effect of pioneering feminist thought at the turn of the twentieth century in the Japanese communities on the west coast of North America. As an anti-prostitution social reform movement, it provided an escape from the sex trade, allowing sex workers to present themselves as picture brides. It also allowed pimps to abduct or trap young Japanese women. Waka Yamada, a young woman who met the wife of a successful Japanese business man, was impressed by the riches in America described by the woman, and crossed the Pacific Ocean sometime after 1895. Having arrived in Victoria, Yamada was taken to Seattle and worked as a prostitute. In 1903, she escaped to the Donaldina Cameron House (sometimes referred to as the Chinese Missionary Homes) in San Francisco. The Cameron House was operating during the same period as the Oriental Home in San Francisco and Victoria. Here she learned the language skills necessary for economic independence: speaking and writing English. Then, she married Kakichi Yamada in either 1904 or 1905. After the earthquake in 1906, Waka left for Japan with her husband.<sup>39</sup> Yamada's experience unexpectedly served as a catalyst for her becoming a Japanese literary feminist.

***From Salvation to Feminism***

From the perspective of feminist thought, Yamada opted to follow the Christian teachings on sexual behavior and moral standards for forming family. Because she had benefited from being rescued by the Cameron House, Yamada applied the Christian teachings that she had learned there to the women in need in Japan. Yamada was one of the leaders of the Japanese feminist movements from the 1910s to the 1930s. Soon after Yamada returned to Japan, she joined the *Seito* (Bluestocking) group (1911-1916) with other prominent Japanese feminists such as Hiratsuka Raicho and Yosano Akiko. Following the demise of the Bluestocking magazine in 1916, Yamada participated in the Association

of New Women in the 1920s, continuing to fight for women's rights, social reform, and childcare. She wrote as a columnist for the *Asahi* Newspaper's "personal advice columns," similar to the popular "Dear Abby" column, in order to help Japanese women solve their personal problems including what to do if you were raped by a burglar and got pregnant. She also increased the newspaper's circulation to two million.<sup>40</sup>

Yamada was influenced by the theory of protective motherhood and childcare advocated by Ellen Key (1849-1926), a Swedish feminist. Key considered that motherhood should be professional and proposed public financing for women to raise their children.<sup>41</sup> Key's paradigm of "maternalism" can be seen in the memorandum that she wrote in 1893: "if he (Jean-Jacques Rousseau) raised his own five children, he would not have written *Emile*." Ronny Ambjörnsson, a Professor Emeritus in History of Ideas and Science at University of Umeå Sweden, commented on Key's statement: "The books became Rousseau's children. One could probably say the same of Ellen Key." Based on his comment, Ambjörnsson seems to hint that neither Rousseau nor Key had a child.<sup>42</sup> Key further wrote about Rousseau that "the absence of venting" his "feelings in action made the feeling of the ideal so passionately intense."<sup>43</sup> This explains why Key, unable to have a child, desired one. Similarly, Yamada was unable to conceive and desired to have a child. Therefore, Yamada agreed with Key's "maternalism" and advised the pregnant woman to keep her child regardless of the circumstances in which it was conceived. In this way, I argue that Yamada supports Key's advocacy of state financial support for professional motherhood.

### ***The Transnational Feminism in China and Japan: The Maternalism***

Similarly, Ambjörnsson's words can also explain why Yamada adopted her niece and her husband's nephew as her own children.<sup>44</sup> Chan adopted many children at the Springfield orphanage; Cheung adopted one son to continue her family-line; Zhang adopted 20 children even though she never married.<sup>45</sup> Everyone in this Christian feminist group adopted children and seemed to be invested in Key's paradigm of "maternalism."

However, Yamazaki points out a dispute between *Seitō*'s members regarding Key's "maternalism" while Barlow treats Hiratsuka Raichō and Yosano Akiko's theories as belonging to the same stream. Relying on Key's concept of "maternalism," Yosano urged Japanese women's absolute economic independence while Hiratsuka defended her interpreta-

tion of Key's "The Renaissance of Maternity," as a state sponsorship for Japanese "professional" motherhood. As a consequence, Kikue Yamakawa accused Hiratsuka of communist revisionism and Yosano of being a capitalist unconcerned about the plight of poor mothers.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile Barlow made no distinction between Key, Yamakawa, and Yosano's theoretical approaches. Barlow pointed out that the progressive feminism of Gao Xian and his contemporaries established interlocutory relations with Key, Yamakawa and Yosano. And by translating Yamakawa and Yosano's literatures, Chinese theorists effectively treated Yamakawa and Yosano as though they were part of the same school.<sup>47</sup>

Although Yamada concurred with Key's "maternalism," Yamada also advocated a women's right to live an independent life away from prostitution by establishing the Hatagaya School. After her school was burned down during an air raid in 1945, the Hatagaya Girls School was rebuilt in 1947. Yamada aimed to have women learn skills that would make them employable, such as dressmaking or knitting, to start a new life. However, some Hatagaya women surrendered to their material desires and dropped out of the school. Some of them stole from the school, taking sewing machines, which were hard to replace. According to the Welfare statistics, 92 women in 1948 were admitted but only 21 resumed an "honest" life. Nevertheless, her school successfully converted Noda Ineko, a Japanese girl who was arrested a number of times after being forced into prostitution, into a bride after three years in the program.<sup>48</sup> Yamada espoused the prohibition of prostitution and established a rescue home for mothers and children in Tokyo, similar to the Cameron House, to provide a way for women to avoid prostitution.

### **Conclusion**

Key's maternalism was influential for the foundation of Chinese communist progressive feminism and Japanese socialist feminism in the 1920s and 1930s. According to Barlow and Yamazaki, Key's feminist idea of motherhood was welcomed by the members of Japanese feminist group *Seito*, including Yamada.<sup>49</sup> Yamada distinguished herself as a Japanese literary feminist. After World War II, she also set up facilities to limit prostitution and help children and their mothers. According to Hu, Zhang was seen to follow a Chinese primordial Mulan archetype, despite the fact that American missionaries had travelled to China to convert Zhang to Christianity. After embracing Christianity, Zhang asserted her female

power in the 1911 Chinese Revolution. Chan and Cheung continued to demonstrate Chinese filial piety toward their natal families.<sup>50</sup> Initially, Chan and Cheung had travelled to Canada and experienced cultural contacts with Christians. Eventually, both of them repatriated to China as Christian missionaries. Moreover, all of them followed Christian teaching on family formation and sexual conduct. Although none bore their own children, they all endeavoured to play a role of quasi-or ersatz- mother. These liberated Chinese and Japanese women, in turn, influenced women's rights in China, Japan, and North America. Through their feminisms, they rescued Asian people in China, Japan, and North America and gave them the chance to enjoy a better life and equal opportunities transnationally.

In the high middle ages, many devout Christian women addressed Jesus as a mother in their feminine imagery.<sup>51</sup> The maternal quality of this earlier Christian devotion is paralleled by the Protestant women missionaries who protected Asian victims of sex-trafficking and led them to a life of Christian faith. These rescued women expressed their gratitude by sharing this piety with their respective societies and communities in Asia, acting in maternal figures. In this way, North American missionary societies contributed to the formation of international maternal feminism as it was established by Chan, Cheung, Yamada, and Zhang.

Without understanding the context of Christian missionary history, the feminism of Christian women such as Chan, Cheung, and Zhang might be difficult to understand inasmuch as it does not conform to the model of literary feminism. Chinese Christian feminists were not considered Chinese literary feminists because they did not participate in the theorization of Chinese feminism and were not recognized by subsequent Chinese literary feminists, despite their contribution to their local communities through their social work.

Although Makau W. Mutua, a Kenyan-American law professor, argues that a human rights movement cannot succeed unless it stops working with the savage-victims-saviors (SVS) metaphor, matrons at the Cameron house and the Oriental Home seemed to reproduce the salvation model.<sup>52</sup> The church organizations in San Francisco, California and Victoria, British Columbia not only spread Christian teachings but also rescued many Chinese and Japanese women from sex-slavery, undoubtedly helping those destitute and abused women.

Canadian foreign missionaries initially established women's education to foster self-respect among local Chinese and Japanese women in Japan and China. Also, home missionaries in North America instructed

Home girls in living skills and the moral standards derived from denominational teaching so that the Home girls did not have to depend on prostitution to survive. Repatriated foreign missionaries such as Chan and Cheung were able to receive Canadian funds to continue their missionary projects in China when all of the Canadian foreign missionaries were driven out of China. Meanwhile, local orphans, refugees, and patients in China benefitted from the repatriated Canadian foreign missionaries through their medical expertise and familiarity with specific Chinese dialects. After all, foreign and home missions proved to be fruitful in the fostering of Chinese and Japanese feminists and established good examples for others to follow.

The institutional principles of Yamada's Hatagaya Girls School, the Oriental Home, and the Cameron House parallel Hockin's pluralism in its employment of a diversity of approaches for serving the multiple ethnicities who attend church. The legacy of Chan's orphanage, Cheung's Kongmoon project, and Zhang's big family of 20 adopted children also parallel Hockin's pluralism. Moreover, Hockin's pluralism parallels Dai's Chinese Marxist feminism (poststructuralism), grounded in social economic theory. Thus, a common culture of transnational feminism existed in Asia in the 1920s and 1930s defined by a motherly love that nurtured the generations to come. These historical examinations of gender studies have also benefitted theological studies by providing additional accounts that nuance an understanding of church history. The feminism that Chan, Cheung, Zhang, and Yamada promoted, rooted in home or foreign missionary teachings, demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between theological studies and women's studies.

### **Endnotes**

1. The Board of Editors of Toyo Eiwa Girls' Academy, *Kanada Fujin Senkyōshi Monogatari [The Story of Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries]* (Tokyo: Toyo Eiwa Jogakuin [Girls' Academy], 2010); Tomoko Yamazaki, *Ameyukisan no Uta: Yamada Waka no Sūkinaru Shōgai [The Song of an Ameyuki Girl: The Vicissitudes of Yamada Waka's Life]* (Tokyo: Bungeishunjū, 1978); Tomoko Yamazaki, *The Story of Yamada Waka: From Prostitute to Feminist Pioneer*, trans. Wakako Hironaka and Ann Kostant (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985), 24-159.
2. Ellen M. Umansky, "Women in Judaism: From the Reform Movement to Contemporary Jewish Religious Feminism," in *Women of Spirit*, eds. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster,



- 1979), 334; Beth Profit, "Christianizing the Social Order: The Roles of Women in the Social Gospel Fiction of Nellie McClung and Ralph Connor," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 12, no. 2 (1996): 201-3, 205; Phyllis D. Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: Revivalism, Progressivism, and the Methodist Tradition in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 10, 21, 124, 126, 186; Diakonia of the United Church of Canada, "The Martha Cartmell Story," <https://www.ducc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/The-Martha-Cartmell-Story-founder-of-Methodist-school-in-Toyko.pdf>; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1881-2*, 30.
3. Vera Mackie, *Feminism in Modern Japan: Citizenship, Embodiment, and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29-30, 59, 63, 100, 107, 111, 205, 208. Phyllis D. Airhart, "'Sweeter Manners, Purer Laws': Women as Temperance Reformers in Late-Victorian Canada," *Touchstone* 9, no. 3 (1991): 22; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1881-2*, 30.
  4. Board of Editors, *Kanada Fujin*, 18, 22-23, 26-27, 51. *Anne of Green Gables* is well known for its use of scriptural references.
  5. When Hanako Muraoka studied at the Toyo Eiwa Girls' Academy, she was under the supervision of Blackmore, the school principal at the time. Muraoka was also with Hiroko Katayama at the Toyo Eiwa Girls' Academy. See Board of Editors, *Kanada Fujin*, 40-51.
  6. Suping Lu, ed., *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing: Diaries and Correspondence, 1937-38* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), xix-xxi, xxiii-xxxvii, xxvii-xxviii.
  7. Phyllis D. Airhart has documented Hockin's achievements as a theological feminist. See Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 69, 99, 241, 254; Katharine Hockin, "My Pilgrimage in Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 12 (January 1988): 23-28, 30. Linda Ambrose also considers women in Pentecostalism in her new book with Michael Wilkinson *After the Revival: Pentecostalism and the Making of a Canadian Church* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).
  8. Guangzhou Shawan Ancient Town Tourism Development Co. Ltd., "Famous Figures in Shawan," <http://www.shawanguzhen.com/en/content/?161.html>. Ying Hu, *Tales of Translation: Composing the New Woman in China, 1899-1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 150.

9. Xinlu Zhang, *Detailed Explanation of the Mulan Poem* (Taipei: Zhizhi Xueshu Chubanshe, 2015), 13, 16-7, 35, 42, 52-3, 168, 177; Qing Yang, "Mulan in China and America: From Premodern to Modern," *Comparative Literature: East & West* 2, no. 1 (2018): 49-50, 55-6.
10. Hu, *Tales of Translation*, 147, 150.
11. Guangzhou Shawan Ancient Town Tourism Development Co. Ltd.
12. Hu, *Tales of Translation*, 145-8. Lily Xiao Hong Lee and A.D. Stefanowska, eds., *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: The Qing Period, 1644-1911* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 310-3.
13. Tani E. Barlow, *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 357.
14. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 150.
15. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 133.
16. *The Harper Collins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (San Francisco: Society of Biblical Literature, 1989), 1938-9; Lee and Stefanowska, *Biographical Dictionary*, 312.
17. *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, 2055; Jas. 2:25-6, 5:15-6 NRSV; Lisa C. Ikenmoto, "Reproductive Rights and Justice: A Multiple Feminist Theories Account," in *Research Handbook on Feminist Jurisprudence*, eds. Robin West and Cinthia Bowman, (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019), 249-263.
18. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 282, 295-7, 302; Yamazaki, *The Story of Yamada Waka*, 120, 122-3, 129; Barbara Miller Lane, "An Introduction to Ellen Key's 'Beauty in the Home,'" in *Modern Swedish Design: Three Founding Texts*. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 19-31.
19. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 296, 302, 307, 355, 357. Lee and Stefanowska, *Biographical Dictionary*, 313.
20. Lee and Stefanowska, *Biographical Dictionary*, 311.
21. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 127-252.
22. Ding was incarcerated for questioning the subject of women in Chinese feminism, charged with political crimes in 1958, and held for twenty years. See Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 189, 194, 253-4.
23. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 275; Yue Meng, "Female Image and National Myth," in *Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism*, ed. Tani E. Barlow (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 118-36.

24. Dongchao Min, "Toward an alternative traveling theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 39, no. 3 (2014): 586-7.
25. Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 302, 335-9.
26. Peter S. Li, ed., *Race and Ethnic Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1990), 6; Airhart, *A Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 69, 99, 241, 254; Phyllis D. Airhart, Marilyn J. Legge, and Gary L. Redcliffe, eds., *Doing Ethics in a Pluralistic World: Essays in Honour of Roger C. Hutchinson* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002).
27. Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, "The Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations among Women," *The Journal of Gender, Race & Justice*, 1 (Spring 1998), 335-6, 339, 352.
28. Gender inequality existed everywhere, especially in the feudal society, which placed women beneath men. This phenomenon is represented in the *The Book of Poetry* as it depicts the customs of feudal society. Gender inequality had nothing to do with Confucianism, which only made up a small part of academic thought in Confucius' time. See Barlow, 87-9; Xinlu Zhang, *Detailed Explanation of the Mulan Poem*, 177; and Benson Tong, *Unsubmissive Women: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 41.
29. Jeffrey L. Staley, "'Gum Moon': The First Fifty Years of Methodist Women's Work in San Francisco Chinatown, 1870-1920," *Journal of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society* 16, no. 1 (2005): 1-2, 5, 15; and Tong, *Unsubmissive Women*, 62, 73, 188.
30. S. S. Osterhout, *Orientalism in Canada: The Story of the Work of the United Church of Canada with Asiatics in Canada* (Toronto: General Publicity and Missionary Education of the United Church of Canada, 1929), 76; Ngai, *The Lucky Ones: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 250; Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, ed., *The Life and Letters of Annie Leake Tuttle: Working for the Best* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999), 66; and Rosemary R. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
31. Gen. 1.27, 2.18, 2.24, 2.25 NRSV; Lev. 18:1-30 NRSV.
32. Jeffrey L. Staley, "'Gum Moon': The First Fifty Years of Methodist Women's Work in San Francisco Chinatown, 1870-1920," *Journal of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society* 16, no.1 (2005): 4-25; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist*

*Church in Canada for the Year 1888-1889*, 54-5; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1908-1909*, lxxvii; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1910-1911* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), lxxxv; and United Church of Canada Pacific Mountain Regional Council Archives, Oriental Home and School fonds, Box 563, file4a (1-2), "The Story of Miss Agnes Chan, R.N."

33. Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1898-1899*, lxxxix-xc; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1899-1900*, xcii; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1901-1902*, xcvi; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1908-1909*, lxxvii; *The Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada, The 16th Annual Report, 1940-1941* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1941), 183-5; Woman's Missionary Society, *The Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada, The 18th Annual Report, 1942-1943* (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1943), 16; Donna Sinclair, *Crossing Worlds: The Story of the Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1992), 6-8, 10, 40-72. Airhart, *Church with the Soul of a Nation*, 67, 97; Katie Daubs, "'They Said I was too Tall, too Big . . .' – How Three Nurses Broke through Nursing's Starched-White World," *The Toronto Star*, May 5, 2019; and John Price and Ningping Yu, "A True Trailblazer: Victoria Chung Broke the Mould for Women and Chinese Canadians," *Times Colonist*, 23 October 2011.
34. Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1910-1911*, lxxxv. Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1912-1913*, viii; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1913-1914*, xcvi, xcix; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1916-1917*, xcix; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1920-1921*, cxxiv. Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1922-1923*, cx; United Church of Canada Pacific Mountain Regional Council Archives, "The Story of Miss Agnes Chan, R.N.," 2, 3, 5.

35. Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, "The Race to Innocence," 335-6, 339, 352.
36. Sidney Xu Lu, "Good Women for Empire: Educating Overseas Female Emigrants in Imperial Japan, 1900-45," *Journal of Global History* 8 (2013), 436, 440.
37. Venereal disease was a health threat to Japanese soldiers and settlers in Manchuria. Ofumi, a fellow sex-worker of Osaki, died from syphilis. Although she never forgot to clean herself with disinfectant solution each time she completed her business with her customers, the bacteria penetrated her body and broke out decades after she contracted it. See Tomoko Yamazaki and Karen F. Colligan-Taylor, *Sandakan Brothel No.8 Journey into the History of Lower-class Japanese Women* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 127-8; and Lu, "Good Women for Empire," 437, 443.
38. Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1903-4*, lxxvii; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1904-5*, lxxxiv; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1905-6*, lxxxvii-lxxxviii; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1908-9*, lxxvi; Woman's Missionary Society, *Annual Report of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church in Canada for the Year 1914-5*, xc; and Lu, "Good Women for Empire," 437. Yamazaki and Colligan-Taylor, *Sandakan Brothel*, 127-8.
39. Tomoko Yamazaki, *The Story of Yamada Waka: From Prostitute to Feminist Pioneer* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985) 53, 75-6, 96, 102-4, 158; Ronald Suleski, "Ameyuki-san no Uta: Yamada Waka no Satsuki naru Shogai," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 12, no. 3 (1980): 66-7; David Slater, "Yamada Waka and Japanese Feminism, by Rika Saito, Sophia U., June 23," Humanities and Social Sciences Online, J-Japan, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/20904/discussions/127952/yamada-waka-and-japanese-feminism-rika-saito-sophia-u-june-23>; and Shelly Ikebuchi, *From Slave Girls to Salvation: Gender, Race, and Victoria's Chinese Rescue Home, 1886-1923* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015).
40. Pauline C. Reich and Atsuko Fukuda, trans., "Japan's Literary Feminists: The 'Seito' Group" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2 (1976): 281, 284, 286; Yamazaki, *The Story of Yamada Waka*, 118-121, 124-5.

41. Torborg Lundell, "Ellen Key and Swedish Feminist Views on Motherhood," *Scandinavian Studies* 56, no. 4 (1984): 352-3; and Lane, "Introduction," 19-31.
42. Ronny Ambjörnsson, "Ellen Key and the Concept of Bildung," *Confero* 2, no. 1 (2014): 150.
43. Ambjörnsson, "Ellen Key," 150.
44. The child of Waka's adopted child refused to admit Waka's past experience as a prostitute; he felt the shame even though his adoptive grandmother was forced to do prostitution. See Yamazaki, *Story of Yamada Waka*, 40.
45. Ambjörnsson, "Ellen Key," 160; United Church of Canada Pacific Mountain Regional Council Archives "The Story of Miss Agnes Chan, R.N.," 2, 3, 5; Price and Ningping, "True Trailblazer," n.p.; and Yamazaki, *Story of Yamada Waka*, 40. Lee and Stefanowska, *Biographical Dictionary*, 313.
46. Yamazaki, *Story of Yamada Waka*, 128-9.
47. I assume that Barlow's Chinese stream of sexuality theory is about heteronormativity because she thought that "woman's contribution to national development is her reproductive labour" and Barlow questioned whether women and men's "drive to bisexual species propagation [could] be blunted." See Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 66, 85-7, 101.
48. Yamazaki, *Story of Yamada Waka*, 155-7.
49. Torborg Lundel, "Ellen Key," 352; Yamazaki, *Story of Yamada Waka*, 120, 122-3, 129; and Barlow, *Women in Chinese Feminism*, 64-6, 86, 114, 145.
50. Daubs, "They Said I was too Tall"; and Price and Ningping "A True Trailblazer . . ."
51. Professor Phyllis D. Airhart was sympathetic in her understanding of the difficulty of doing research during the COVID-19 pandemic. She was kind enough to make her personal collection at Emmanuel College available to me. Among the books obtained from Professor Airhart for this paper was Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
52. Makau Mutua, "Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphors of Human Rights," *Harvard International Law Journal* 24, no. 1 (2001): 245.