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Abstract

This paper will address the historic ecclesiology of the *Nippon Seikōkai* (NSKK) up to the present by reflecting on the historical Anglican missionary movements in Japan over the same time period. In particular, focus will be on Anglicanism's initial forays into new territory compared with the developments toward a common Anglican identity, all while addressing the peculiar circumstances of Japan.

Introduction

Anglican ecclesiology in the Japanese context is a multifaceted topic needing examination from many different angles in order to bring it into proper focus, given its rich and complex history. While the picture is one that at times appears at odds with itself, these seemingly internal contradictions are illustrative of an indigenous church attempting to find its own place within the context of global Anglicanism today. Thus, just as Anglicans around the globe are constantly seeking to define what Anglicanism is and how to best express it, the *Nippon Seikōkai* (日本聖公会, NSKK) is but one branch of Anglicanism seeking its inculturated witness to Christ. The NSKK maintains its diversity of perspectives, especially when it comes to its ecclesiology and Anglican distinctives, which in turn allows it to claim its Anglican heritage while standing within the unique Japanese cultural context (39 Articles 24; Cranmer 1549).

This paper will address the historic ecclesiology of the NSKK up to the present by reflecting on the historical Anglican missionary movements in Japan over the same time period. In particular, focus will be on Anglicanism's initial forays into new territory compared with the developments toward a common Anglican identity, all while addressing the peculiar circumstances of Japan. To begin with, ecclesiology needs to be defined in some essential way to speak of it. By ecclesiology, I mean the gathering which is the Body of Christ as understood by the Greek term *ἐκκλησία* (ekklesia). The Greek

term, as used in the early church, harkens back to an understanding of those followers of Jesus Christ as a body gathered together, which is the root of the usage of *ἐκκλησία* in biblical texts. Thus, when we speak of ecclesiology, at least within the Japanese context, we need to take into consideration how the Body of Christ is constituted within Japanese culture and society

In the Japanese context, the *ἐκκλησία* is perhaps best captured by the term 聖公会 (*seikōkai*), which is the East Asian adaptation of the moniker for the Church and is expressed through the English ecclesiastical tradition (i.e., Anglican; Mammana 2012). In its literal sense, the Anglican Church in Japan is the “Holy” (聖 *sei*) “Catholic” (公 *kō*) “Church” (会 *kai*) that embodies the real sense of being a “set-apart public gathering” (聖・公・会) of Christ’s Body. Thus, when we consider the ecclesiology of Anglicanism in Japan, we must first understand how the Church is being made incarnate within the Japanese socio-cultural structures through the gathering of its people who identify as Christians and, more specifically, as Anglicans.

Emergent Anglicanism in Japan

Anglicanism first entered Japan in 1859 with the arrival of the Protestant Episcopal Church USA (PECUSA) missionaries John Liggins and Channing Moore Williams. Both graduates of Virginia Theological Seminary and missionaries to China with the Board of Foreign Missions PECUSA, the two men were pioneers in many ways, not the least because they were sent to Japan and entered the country at a time when Christianity was still outlawed (Yazaki 1988). Williams arrived around July 1859, just months after Liggins, but it is Williams who is remembered as the sole regular Anglican minister in Japan after Liggins’s return to the United States in early 1860 following an illness. Upon entering through Nagasaki on Kyushu, Williams settled into a rhythm of prayer in which he quickly sought to find a Japanese expression. Although his public aim was to minister to foreigners in Japan—principally trade and diplomatic delegations under the waning Tokugawa bakufu (shogunate-centred government) of the mid-nineteenth century—he saw his status as a sent minister of an Anglican foreign mission arm as one which drove him to an increasing care for and eventual love of the Japanese people and culture. To this end, since Williams saw Morning and Evening Prayer as the cornerstone of Anglican liturgical worship, he translated them into Japanese along with relevant passages of the Bible (Yazaki 1988).

What started as a personal project for Williams began to grow. As he moved and settled in Osaka, and later Edo (known today as Tokyo), Williams’s project that began

out of necessity to pray the daily offices in Japanese—accompanied by Japanese scriptural readings and sermons—grew into something more significant. Within five years, Williams was attempting to lead communion and other services in Japanese and had baptized his first Japanese convert by 1866 before being made missionary bishop later that year (Drummond 1971). With the arrival of the British CMS missionary delegations in 1868, headed by the Reverend Ensor, the Anglican landscape in Japan began to take on new dimensions (Kimura 2017). As Ensor and others also began seeking to minister in Japanese once the anti-Christian laws were relaxed from 1862 and lifted from 1873 (Drummond 1971), the variety of existing Anglican patrimony and ecclesiology from around the world began to creep in as well. The British, using the authorised 1662 edition of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), undoubtedly found variation with Williams’s use of the American 1789 edition of the BCP, which diverged notably in areas such as prayers for the sovereign and in the adoption of more of the Scottish eucharistic forms from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, the translation efforts begun in parallel between the British and Williams’s own work were a microcosm of the greater Anglican ecclesiological picture of the age. While this could have been cause for consternation between the two groups, this was not to be the case.

It is possible, at this point, to examine this as a pure liturgical or linguistic concern and consider the question from either of those angles; however, if we take a step back to consider the broader ecclesiastical picture, what might be called “emergent Anglicanism” is prudent to posit at this juncture. In 1861, the first calls began to go out for some sort of collective meeting or other recognition of the evermore sprawling Church of England and its various offshoots around the globe—both those directly inheriting the tradition of the Church of England and others, such as the PECUSA, who indirectly had received their Anglican lineage from several lines. By 1865, the South African affair was coming to a head (the Bishop of Cape Town, Robert Gray, attempted to denounce and eventually excommunicate the Bishop of Natal, William Colenso, for heresy, failing jurisdictional and legal tests before the Privy Council; Draper 2003), with the Bishop of Ontario weighing in that a gathering of the “Anglican communion” was necessary to resolve the matter (Davidson 1889). While this proposed gathering did not attract wider support from Anglicans around the world nor was seen as particularly necessary, there was nonetheless momentum building from many quarters to gather as a communion and seek a more formal understanding of how the multitude of English and English-heritage churches around the world might better relate to one another and work together. Thus, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the first of what came to be known as the Lambeth Conferences was held in 1867.

Williams, who had been made missionary bishop of China and Japan just the year prior, had since taken up residency in Japan and attended the first and subsequent Lambeth Conferences (Yazaki 1988). Bishop Bickersteth, who was the British missionary bishop sent to Japan from the Church of England in 1886, was also present from 1888 at Lambeth (Davidson 1889). Thus, in the small microcosm of budding Japanese Anglicanism, the emergence of Anglicanism on a broader, more global scale was partially mirrored in the early years of the NSKK. That recognition, at least at the episcopal level, of both PECUSA and English missions in Japan as equal members of a gathering of Anglicans globally meant that the Anglican presence could rightly be claimed as active and real in Japan by the nineteenth century, much as it could be claimed in British colonial frontiers such as India or Oceania as well. Furthermore, Williams and Bickersteth began to work together around the same time, moving their initially independent missions into a closer working relationship that centered around cooperation in missionary realms as well as shared work toward a common BCP liturgy in Japanese. The cooperation of British and American missions first led to the production of working texts by 1879, with the Williams-Bickersteth mission inheriting the mantle and helping establish the NSKK (日本聖公會 *Nippon Seikōkai*) in 1887 and adopting the working texts by the newly-formed NSKK as its official liturgical texts. After further revision, these texts were published as the first NSKK prayer book under the title 祈禱文 (*Kitōbun*) in 1895 (Yoshida 2006).

During these thirty years, in which the NSKK formed and Anglican liturgies in Japanese were published, other groups entered the scene. In 1887, the Church of England in Canada established a mission in Japan, further nuancing the growing Anglican mosaic and contributing to the already present American, English, and Japanese Anglican expressions. In addition, over the years, Anglicans and other Protestant missionary movements in Japan continued to expand beyond pure evangelism and church planting/growth to areas such as medicine and education. With the founding of hospitals like St. Luke's in Tsukiji, Tokyo (Kawasaki 2018) and schools like St. Mary's in Osaka, as well as care centers like the leper colony in Kyushu (Tobimastu 1937) and the poor house also in Tsukiji, Anglicans in Japan began to see themselves as much participants in Japanese society as Christians who gathered to worship in the BCP tradition and learn from the Bible through prayer meetings, sermons, and other study groups. Japanese Anglican Christianity was off to a good start by the end of the nineteenth century despite the Meiji religious laws that established Shinto as the official state religion which imposed newly developed and reorganized State Shinto practices (attached to the emperor as cultural and social expectations for the whole of Japanese society) upon Christians while allowing for the freedom of

religion practices.

Thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Anglicanism was poised to expand further and cement its foothold in Japanese society as one of the significant Christian groups in play. By the late nineteenth century, Williams had successfully overseen the establishment of the NSKK, the finalization and publication of the *Kitōbun*, and the establishment of a visionary future of the Church in Japan through a Bible training school for young men. He intended that this school would form future clergy and leaders within the NSKK. Founded in Tsukiji as the St. Paul School in 1874 (today: 立教大学 Rikkyo University), by the early twentieth century, this institution became a staple of the Anglican missionary effort to domestically reach the Japanese people. From its simple origins as a Bible training school with five pupils, it grew to the status of the NSKK theological college. By 1920, it was established as an Anglican university in Japan in its present-day location in Ikebukuro. Williams had thus cemented himself into the very foundations of the NSKK as its founding father, so eager to see the success of this endeavour that he lived at the school and oversaw its growth until retiring from his episcopal ministry in 1889. After the consecration of his successor in 1893, Williams returned to Japan in 1895 to take up residence in Kyoto until his final return to the United States in 1907 (Yazaki 1988).

Alongside the establishment of the St. Paul School, other educational endeavours took place across the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. St. Anges School of Osaka—later St Agnes University in Kyoto (平安女学院大学 Heian Women’s University)—and St. Andrew’s School in Osaka—later University (still in Osaka, 桃山学院大学 Momoyama University)—were established and grew into great centers of learning within Japanese Anglicanism as well as for the country. Furthermore, early childhood and primary education offered by Christians in Japan began to grow in prestige among the general population, and the NSKK was no exception to this. Especially after World War II, nurseries and primary schools run by Christians multiplied rapidly in Japan, and the NSKK had some of the fastest-growing schools of any Christian denomination in the country by the 1960s. The early twentieth century was a boon for Christianity in Japan in many ways, including an increased capacity as a trusted means of education within Japanese society.

The early successes of Anglicans and other Christians in Japan do not mean there were no difficulties or other concerns among Christians, especially from the 1920s onwards. On both the education and ecumenical witness fronts, Christians—including Anglicans—encountered several challenges. To the educational witness of the Church, an increasing imperialization of Japanese society at all levels drew greater scrutiny to

the established educational institutions that Christians ran and how Christian educators presented themselves in society. In one famous example, Kanzo Uchimura refused to properly reverence the imperial decree scroll presented to and read at his Imperial upper school, leading to his censure and ultimate removal from the school (Shibuya 2013).

Similarly, Christian witness in Japan came under increasing public scrutiny as the numerous denominations pursued unity in mission. The Japan Federation of Christian Churches (日本キリスト教会同盟 *Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai Dōmei*) was formed in 1911 as an effort to formalize what had been varying degrees of cooperation among Christian missionaries and later locally-grown Japanese churches across a variety of fields such as education, medicine, and social services. While the group saw positive growth, especially in the 1920s, once reorganized under the new name, the National Christian Council (NCC, 日本キリスト教連盟 *Nihon Kirisuto-kyō Renmei*), it also became an easy target for the Imperial government as it sought to exert further control on the churches (Drummond 1971). As a Protestant interdenominational body focused on ecumenical cooperation, the complexities of theological, missiological, and ecclesiological dynamics among the members, and the imposition of a state seeking conformity to control religious groups and enforce state-sponsored Japanese social norms, presented a challenge to Christian witness. Japanese Anglicans were no stranger to these pressures, though their lack of full participation in the Kyōdan meant they felt these pressures in parallel to the organization rather than exclusively as part of it.

Growth of the NSKK under Imperial Japan

Nevertheless, there were several positive ways in which the NSKK did grow from the 1920s onwards. In response to the first Anglo-Catholic Conferences held in the West between 1920 and 1923, there was an increasingly marked interest in liturgy and liturgical forms among Japanese Anglicans. The Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE), a British and American religious society formed in the nineteenth century from the Oxford and Tractarian Movements, grew and established a branch in Japan along with its sister community of women, the Society of the Nazarene. As a result, various breviaries and other additions and adjustments to the Kitōsho liturgies began to proliferate for private use, with varying degrees of endorsement and usage. Alongside this liturgical growth, the NSKK also increased the number of its dioceses as it sought to become a wholly Japanese-led Anglican province. The newly created dioceses in Tokyo and Osaka, both locations where Bishop William had started missionary work fifty years earlier, had newly appointed bishops drawn from the ranks of Japanese

clergy. This was a significant move as it was a creation of dioceses by Japanese Anglicans for the first time, not founded by missionaries or associated with a particular overseas Anglican body, and formed for large social, political, and ecclesiological centers within Japan.

Through these movements, Japanese Anglicanism began to outgrow its missionary foundations and take on more characteristics of a truly self-governing church, a status that the NSKK had enjoyed on paper at least since 1887. The NSKK also took on an increasing role as not simply being a place where missionaries were sent (though the practice continued for some time and arguably does to this day) but also became a place from which missionaries were sent. The NSKK mission in Formosa (present-day Taiwan) was a Japanese-led effort within the boundaries of Japanese colonial territory. While this and similar efforts to Manchuria and the Korean peninsula certainly carried forward some of the less commendable parts of Anglicanism, particularly from its close colonial ties historically in the British Empire, it was nonetheless indicative of a fully indigenous church (Yano et al. 1991). Although many of the other dioceses outside of Tokyo and Osaka grew out of missionary districts—these two dioceses themselves being inheritors of the missionary endeavors of Bishop Williams and others before their formation—a clear patchwork of interrelated and interconnected Anglican bodies existed throughout Japan, which coalesced together under the ægis of the NSKK to form a thoroughly Japanese Anglican church.

Though still in a period of growth, the NSKK, was arguably at its apex in the two decades leading up to the Pacific War. It was a church of Japanese Anglicans, vibrant and growing despite its small and unique character. This was not a trend that benefited much from the wartime years, nor in the decades that followed. By 1941, the NSKK was forced into the increasingly difficult position of maintaining its independence apart from the state-sanctioned Kyōdan, the inheritors of the NCC, while maintaining a relatively strong and proportionate foreign mission presence. And by 1943, this boiled over to the point that the last remaining foreign missionaries were forced out of Japan, and the NSKK was forced into the decision to join the Kyōdan or fold. As the process of amalgamation into the group began—the unresolved question of bishops and creeds notwithstanding—a champion emerged in the figure of Presiding Bishop Sasaki, who stood up and refused the government's order to finalize the union. And it is arguably because of his example that the NSKK underwent what was effectively a split, with some churches, clergy, and laity joining the Kyōdan and others following Bishop Sasaki in refusing to comply with the government edict (Drummond 1971, Takeda 1996). Like many of the other established denominations in Japan at the time, in the postwar era, the NSKK had to contend with a society ravaged by war and suffering from destroyed

resources. They struggled to remain independent as foreign missions agencies donated much-needed aid and funds, which caused the NSKK to take a step back toward dependency and destroyed their hard-earned three self (governing, supporting, propagating) status (Takeda 1996).

The NSKK stepped into this reality in 1950 when its General Convention faced the upcoming centennial marking Bishop Channing Moore Williams's first arrival in Japan. The difficulties of the war-torn country and church aside, the NSKK decided to appoint a committee to update the prayer book. Having gone through a series of minor edits and revisions in its fifty-five years, including a renaming to the present-day 祈祷書 (*Kitōsho*), the 1895 edition was ripe for an update. In the popular sphere, society had moved on from the increasingly archaic forms and expressions found in the older Japanese BCP being used, with the government propagating a simplified form of Japanese in 1946 that updated spellings, pronunciation, and words, while removing dated characters and expressions (Nomoto 1993). However, the 1895 edition did not reflect many of the liturgical shifts present in Anglican churches elsewhere in the world, despite its long use until after the war. It had glossed over significant revisions to the American, Scottish, and English (proposed) books of 1928/1929, as well as the newly emergent and experimental rites in India and South Africa. Thus, the NSKK commissioned a study in 1950 to ascertain whether a revision to the Japanese BCP would be prudent and what timeframe was to be considered. Early on, the determination was made to proceed with a centennial edition to address these and other concerns with the text, which received approval at the 1953 General Convention. A first reading of proposed texts was given at the 1956 conference.

The ecclesiology of Anglicanism in Japan was set to change once more, however. Having been started as a missionary work by Americans and British in the nineteenth century, the church quickly became a Japanese Anglican community, a benefit for the budding *ecclesia* as questions of Japanese identity within Imperial Japan came to the forefront in the early twentieth century. The NSKK responded by becoming a loyal part of Japanese society and a partner of other Protestant churches in Japan, while maintaining some of its Anglican distinctives, including an apostolic episcopacy. Later on, these distinctives extended to an increased emphasis on its liturgical heritage in the BCP tradition and an appreciation of ritual liturgics well-suited to Japanese societal and cultural norms. This faced a challenge in the pre-war years, especially as Japanese society moved in a more anti-Christian direction, but the NSKK sought to maintain its ecclesiastical distinctiveness while remaining a loyal subject as long as possible—a feat which may have preserved its independence in the end, while undermining its structure during and after the war. Thus, a self-reflection on liturgical grounds was, at least in

part, an introspection inviting the NSKK at this 1950 juncture to consider its Anglican identity and the form the church would take moving forward. At this point, the question of inculturation enters.

Inculturating toward a Japanese Anglicanism

Inculturation, in its modern understanding, owes a lot to the outcomes of Vatican II in the 1960s and subsequent theologizing by Jesuits and other Roman Catholics attempting to update nineteenth and twentieth-century missiological terms in light of mid- to late-twentieth-century global church realities. By inculturation, I mean here that forward-looking perspective on the 1950s in Japan and among Japanese Anglicans that sought a unique indigenous Christian expression of the Anglican tradition in Japan. Inculturation, in general terms, finds its roots in nineteenth- and twentieth-century missiological history—most notably in the work of Roland Allen for Anglicans. It was further adopted in 1988 by the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC), which drew upon Roman Catholic theology of the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, what happens in the 1950s in the NSKK and Japan at large is a type of soul-searching that seeks to find and define a new sense of what it means to be Japanese, especially as Christians, and how to live this out. The NSKK's answer to this was partially undertaken in the foundation-laying 1959 edition of the Japanese *Kitōsho*.

Although the liturgical revisions that the NSKK considers and enacts in the 1950s may not appear foundational for inculturation at a cursory glance, they do set the tone for the church going forward as a thoroughly Anglican body seeking to find its best expression in Japanese and for the Japanese people. The documentary evidence of liturgical revision—particularly from notes and papers of prayerbook committee members like Bishop Mori and Father Sakurai—shows the NSKK inheriting a clear connection to the Anglican liturgical tradition. At the same time, the NSKK of the 1950s is keen on reflecting the current state of affairs in postwar Japan by reducing emphasis on the imperial aspects that had existed in the prior editions of the *Kitōsho* as well as other supplementary prayer texts. Thus, a nuanced variety of prayer forms made their way into the 1959 *Kitōsho*, with some harkening back to pre-Anglican (i.e., Sarum Rite) and later Anglican prayer traditions (e.g., 1662 BCP), and others deemphasizing some Japanese distinctives which were not helpful to the NSKK or its postwar cultural witness (e.g., nationalistic prayers for past emperors on their name days). This brought the Japanese prayer book further into alignment with other major Anglican prayer books of its day and also introduced to it variety and experimentation that sought a new and better understanding for the Japanese context.

At the threat of glossing over a large span of history since 1959, at least until the late 1980s, a few things can be said about Japanese Anglicanism in the interim and how it continued this introspection with various outcomes. On one hand, in the era immediately following Vatican II and the 1967 Lambeth Conference, the NSKK and Japanese Anglicans' relations to the broader Anglican world had shifted. Much in the vein of the Episcopal Church's 1979 prayer book and the Church of England's move toward modern colloquialisms within liturgical worship (vis-à-vis the Alternative Services measure of 1980 and Common Worship of 2000), the NSKK began studying the question of colloquial modernism within liturgical expressions in the 1970s. This led to the publication of the 1990 modern language edition of the *Kitōsho*. So too is identification with the Anglican Communion in its present form of paramount significance within the NSKK from this period onward. It may be equally thought of as the "Anglican Church in Japan" as much as the "Anglican Communion partner church in Japan." The Communion status of the NSKK lends as much legitimacy to the use of the "Anglican" modifier as do its inherited traditions and missionary legacies from other Anglican churches. Thus, in a manner of speaking, the postwar iteration of the NSKK was and is as much the "Holy Catholic Church" in name as well as ecclesiastical polity.

Yet not all of the steps taken since 1959 brought liturgical growth or a constructive inculturation of Anglicanism in Japan. In 1988, after many years of deliberation, the prayers for the emperor and imperial family were officially removed from the 1959 *Kitōsho* in circulation, with many copies receiving pasted-in squares just two years before the modern language edition's release in 1990. Similarly, by following the Church of England's admission of women to Holy Orders (presbyterate), the NSKK kept in step with the "mother church," going so far as to only adopt the allowances or liturgical shifts necessary once the CoE did in 1994 and 1995. The result was that several dioceses and bishops refused to comply initially, though most have conformed over the past thirty years (Cosby 2021). In 2020, the first woman was elected as a diocesan bishop in Hokkaido (HHEB 2022), furthering its mirroring of the CoE. Since the 1990s, breakaway parishes and ministers have joined or affiliated with the Ordinariate out of Australia, the Traditional Anglican Communion, the Church of Nigeria, and, most recently, the Anglican Church in North America as ways of protesting what might be called a liberalizing trend within Japanese Anglicanism, particularly on social and theological fronts.

In response to these trends, as well as a general malaise in membership numbers, the dioceses have strayed from their initial roots in Western Anglican missions organisations (Pelot 2022). On one hand, this can be seen as a positive development in

the direction of inculturation. Despite the compelling factors driving the changes, mergers like the nearly-completed “Diocese of East Japan” (東日本教区 *Higashi Nippon Kyōku*) from the Kita Kanto and Tokyo dioceses are addressing the needs of the twenty-first century NSKK and consolidating the church under a shared missionary oversight and vision for the future. However, these trends can equally indicate a church that, rather than maintaining the inculturating impulse instilled by missionaries and further supported by the 1959 *Kitōsho* revisions, has upset the balance of missionary diversity that gave life to the NSKK. For example, the new Diocese of East Japan, centred in the Tokyo region, combines a High Church, native Japanese diocese (Tokyo) with a more Low Church missionary-founded diocese (Kita Kanto). Several other discussions about further diocesan reductions and downsizings suggest a stagnant church and also threaten to paper over missionary heritages, liturgical practices, and other differences of polity. The dioceses of Central Japan (中部 *Chūbu*, founded by Canadian missionaries) and Kyoto (American) formally began talks toward integration on September 17th, 2025 (Nishihara 2025), and other possible mergers in the near future include Kobe/Kyushu and Hokkaido/Tohoku. (See Figure 1 below).

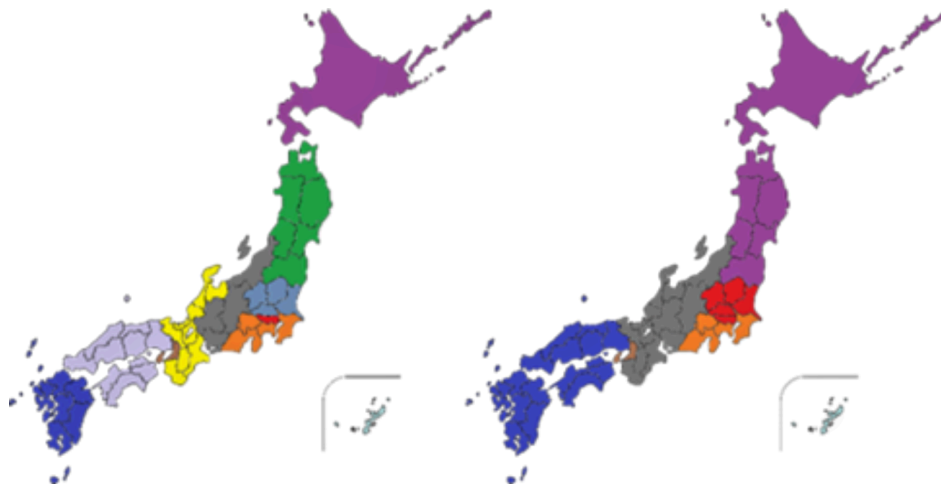


Figure 1 - Comparison of current diocesan prefectures (left) with proposed/posited prefectural groupings post-amalgamation (right). The current diocesan bishop of Tokyo serves as the bishop-in-charge of Kita Kanto and will likely pass to the newly created See in East Japan, hence the new diocese taking on Tokyo’s red colour. Likewise, the Diocesan of Chūbu recently serves in-charge of downgraded Kyoto Missionary Diocese and will likely succeed for the newly yet-named diocese, hence the increase in grey on the right map. As Hokkaido’s bishop is relatively young and female, hence the north amalgamation in purple; and the conjectured southern diocese merger arbitrarily takes on a single character of its constituents (blue).

Where do these trends leave things today? The primary impression of the NSKK today is one of a small church within a populous and modern cosmopolitan country. It faces many of the same difficulties that other churches in Japan and in similar contexts face, particularly as a minority religion and existing within a postmodern society. Nevertheless, there is a staying power to Japanese Anglicanism that has endured 150 years and, despite its small size today, suggests it could last 150 more. While dioceses may shrink and consolidate, parishes close or are sold off, and elderly congregations lose members one by one, there is comfort in knowing that Japanese Anglicanism occupies a particular niche of Japanese Christianity and Japanese society more broadly that will likely see it maintain its share of the market. Christianity in Japan arguably is faced with difficult times ahead as its early missionary successes and subsequent growth through the postwar Reconstruction period give way to a minority position within a postmodern, secular society of deep spirituality but little love for organized religion.

Nevertheless, there is hope for the future, too. Some scholars like Lande (1993) have argued for a wave theory in describing how Christianity in Japan has operated over the course of history, and we are long overdue for a new wave. Perhaps we are even in the midst of the swell of a fourth wave as Japan begins to exit the economic downturn of the 1990s “Lost Decade” and finds new footing in an internationally volatile world (Pelot 2022). Although Anglicanism today faces a modicum of uncertainty as it attempts to find its global footing in the twenty-first century, the seed that Anglican missions have sown over several centuries is starting to sprout and grow toward a new expression of Anglicanism for today’s world. This is an Anglicanism that is global yet traditional, an expression that appeals well to Japan today and hints that Japanese Anglicanism is ready to be weeded and carefully tended in the fertile soil of Japan.

One way to go about this is rooted in the 1980s and 1990s discussions around liturgical inculturation within Anglicanism. Although these were initially dominated by Africans and Westerners, dealing with a superficial understanding of inculturation and its application to lived-out faith, today these are a gift in disguise for Anglicanism (Pelot 2022). By reaching back into Anglicanism’s missiological past and seeing the biblical foundations of Anglican mission acted upon to bear fruit, even an initial misunderstanding or misapplication of liturgical inculturation by Anglicans in the 1990s offers a chance to consider how missiological inculturation occurs when the gospel is preached and faithful witness of Christ lived out. Via inculturation, we can speak ecumenically with our brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic world because we use the same language and terminology, nuancing our understanding as it applies to the whole of Christ’s Church. Likewise, we can connect with Protestant Christians who

favor similar and increasingly analogous terms like “contextualisation” to see that our lived faith can translate across cultures and languages (Pelot 2022). And this is an approach which, despite its fluidity in Anglican applications, can find success in Japan to further the Japanese Anglican witness.

Missiological Approaches to Japanese Anglicanism

Contemporary Japanese Anglicanism stands to benefit from these inculturating practices in a number of ways. First, it can find a small but dedicated number of scholars from both sides of the Western Church who address these questions in Japanese and for the Japanese in order to add Japanese voices to the global Anglican mix. Just as Furuhashi acknowledged inculturation as a type of “cultural incarnation” (文化的受肉 *bunkateki ju'niku*, 2009) and Fukuda (1993) asserted that the gospel must be contextualized if it is to live in the Japanese heart, Japanese Anglicans can help bridge the Roman Catholic-Protestant lexilogical divide by embracing inculturation as “incultural flourishing” (文化内開花 *bunkanai kaika*) while also addressing the gospel to Japanese hearts (Furuhashi 2009, Pelot 2022).

Second, the richness of Anglican liturgical practice and its continuity across the centuries gives Japanese Anglicanism a method to approach its worship that is properly ordered to the right ends yet flexible enough to embrace the needs of the day. The liturgical establishment under Williams embodies the Cranmerian tradition of adapting existing liturgies to practical, everyday needs in the words of the people to create a collective and common worship. Added to this are the foundations of liturgical inculturation—which the mid-century Japanese Anglicans laid in the 1950s by seeking a balance between their Anglican heritage and meeting the needs of the day—and which allow for further innovation of liturgical worship that can put down deep roots. There is potential, for example, as the NSKK proposes further prayer book revisions and publishes trial liturgies, seeking to address real needs for a living faith and to strike a balance between theology and praxis for everyday life in Japan.

Finally, the staying power of the Anglican tradition in Japan is one that seeks to preserve the faith once delivered by the saints through episcopal succession and godly leadership, administration of the sacraments, teaching and preaching of the Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the faithful witness of all believers as the Body of Christ. While Anglicans cannot necessarily make a unique claim to all of these traditions, by the inheritance that we have received over the past 2000 years, we are a people whose search for God and love of Christ has helped us to endure. As a result, the best of the

inherited traditions is distilled for us, from the monasticism of the early Celtic Christians to the ecclesiology of the Romans and biblical witness and attestation of the reformers. We draw upon a lengthy and deep history that engrafts us to Christ when we are faithful to the Word we have received. Japanese Anglicanism is no exception.

Thus, when looking at the state of Anglicanism in Japan today—though many of the trials and hardships give pause and even lament—we can take heart and have faith. Moving forward, there is a need to embrace the faith-culture dialogue that is central to the inculturation process in order for biblical witness in Japan to thrive among Anglicans. Too often, lived faith is seen as an intellectual or social exercise, divorced from theological orthodoxy, rather than the natural witness of the gospel faithfully lived. Yet, an appraisal which honors the inherited traditions of Japanese Anglicans and missionaries to Japan, and which seeks to inculturate and incarnate our faith to the Incarnate Christ who is as indigenous to Japan as He is to all places, times and peoples, might just lead to a fuller understanding of what it means to be Christian in Japan and how one can be both Christian (or even Anglican) and Japanese.

The ritual traditions of the West, including those in Anglicanism and others inherited from the Anglo-Catholic movements of a century ago, are also rich avenues by which Japanese Anglicanism can express itself and find its own footing amidst a Japanese culture that is ritualistic and formal. The ritual practices that Westerners, including Anglicans, sometimes push back against are perhaps the very things that must be taken under consideration in Japan. This does not mean that they need to be adopted *carte blanche* without modification, but these practices and the theology that lies behind them are a good starting point to ask how our bodies, hearts, and minds are positioned in liturgical Anglican worship and what is the best means to go about that in Japan.

In order to better envision what this inculturated Anglicanism in Japan might look like, what follows are some observations on how to practically enact this type of inculturation in such a way that extends beyond theological maxims or liturgical texts and enters into everyday Japanese Anglican praxis.

Embracing silence

The use of silence is not liturgically, rubrically, or otherwise mandated in Anglican liturgy or liturgical texts. In fact, silence is rarely mentioned outside of portions of Scripture read in the liturgy. In some contexts, silence can often be drowned out by music, movement, voices, actions, or other well-meaning yet distracting liturgical

movements which others find innocuous or even conducive to their own liturgical prayer. Anglicanism certainly allows for this breadth of expression, and it should be encouraged where needed. However, a renewed appreciation of silence and intentional use of it within liturgy could go a long way to helping Japanese participants find the space to encounter and worship God.

Sacred space

The consciousness and awareness of sacred space is another point to which Anglicans have a rich history and tradition to draw upon, but which also may not be fully utilized, particularly in a missions context which prioritizes the practical and efficient use of resources over seemingly unnecessary or unwise choices of space. Japan is full of sacred spaces, and the Japanese people are very cognizant of these in their day-to-day lives. This also touches upon an awareness of the spiritual realm, which itself is a type of sacred space and permeates our world as we know it within the Japanese mind. By becoming more aware of these things, and how Anglicans treat and think about sacred spaces and the combined spiritual and physical realities that inhabit them, we can find ways in which Anglicanism offers the right combination of considerations to speak truth into the realities the Japanese people naturally sense.

Liturgical rhythms

While this can certainly take on a musical connotation with a rich Anglican tradition to reinforce it, here I mean simply the daily rhythms of life we find in the Anglican tradition. Just as Cranmer sought to simplify the monastic hours of his day so that the prayer lives of the people—lay and clerical alike—might be edified by simple and accessible rhythms of prayer, so too can this appeal to a Japanese context where an ordered day with its own liturgy is lived out by many. This may have overtones of a daily liturgy by which one keeps life, but it need not be confined in this particular manner. Rather, the rhythms by which we live our lives are the same rhythms that we seek to embody in prayer, worship, and the reading of the Scriptures. Thus, by seeking to achieve harmony in these parts of everyday life, Anglicanism offers the means by which a rhythmic balance might be found that meets the needs of Japanese people while drawing us closer to God.

Recentering Scripture

Finally, the centering of our lives in and around Scripture is essential to our lives as Christians and ought to come naturally to Anglicans, whose liturgical traditions of prayer are rooted deeply in the Bible. Oftentimes, Anglicans want to go straight for the

proverbial three-legged stool of Scripture, tradition, and reason, providing a somewhat intellectually-leaning argument for how one ought to interact with the biblical texts. However, since Cranmer's liturgical tradition and language of worship were so steeped in Scripture, this should encourage more approaches to living this out. By offering a rich prayer tradition that couples well with biblical knowledge and sound preaching, the Anglican tradition offers an attainable and fertile means by which intentional exposure to God's Word can naturally happen, even among the Japanese.

Toward a Japanese Εκκλησια

These suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive, though there is a certain clarity and beneficial quality to them. Rather, they are guiding principles for proclaiming the gospel and living out our liturgy of common prayer. The Anglican tradition, when inculturated well, could potentially be a natural fit in the Japanese context.

In this paper, I have aimed to show an outline of ecclesiological history and the current state of affairs in Japanese Anglicanism that points to an inculturating approach of Anglican missions and the incarnation of Christianity within Japan. The dialogue between Christianity and Japanese culture, as well as between Japanese and non-Japanese Christians, has changed drastically over the past seventy years. This, though not always in a positive growth direction for Christianity or Anglicanism in Japan, has nonetheless provided tools and ways by which the conversation can be carried forward today. By seeing and acknowledging the long patrimony which Anglicanism draws from, we can see how those elements that speak to the hierarchical and ecclesial structures of the Church might find a natural home in Japan. Similarly, the inculturating impulse that lies at the center of Anglican missiology and the proclamation of the gospel as naturally incarnate in all parts of the world applies equally to Japan. Thus, we can lean into our liturgical and prayer traditions to find ways, old and new, of expressing our faith in Japan so that the Japanese people can find their own voice to lift up the name of the Lord, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

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