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Abstract

Religious Thought of Teiho Oyama: An Attempt to Self-Transcendence

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Teiho Oyama (1879–1919) is a Japanese journalist, sociologist, educator, politician who played an important role from the late Meiji period to the early Taisho period. He is a Christian who gets baptized by Rev. Danjo Ebina (1856–1937) in Hongo Church.

This article is aimed to examine and clarify his religious thought from a standpoint of self-transcendence, employing partly the idea of the ‘immortality of the soul’ that which Reinhold Niebuhr had critically analyzed. Starting with an overview of his life and taking up his response to criticism of Ebina, this article considers the development of his thought from the idea of ‘Zen-jin’ (Person of Wholeness) to veneration for Buddha and Christ.

In his thought the problem of the divided self is pursued to the last, and Christ is not much more than the activator of his ideal self. Besides, for him the triune God is extremely spiritual. This article also points out that his ideal self becomes enlarged illimitably but it has little reality, and is almost impersonal in the sense that it is devoid of the mutuality.