

RUTH BENEDICT: GUILT AND SHAME

by Dickson Kazuo Yagi, Ph.D.



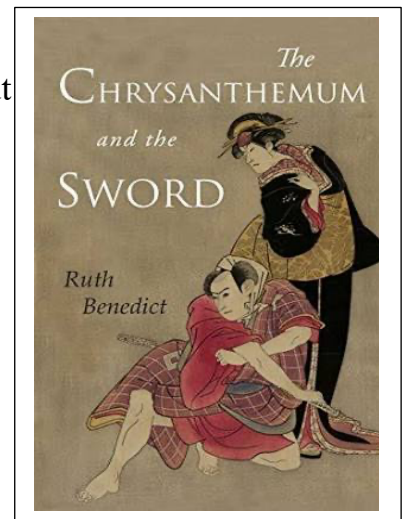
If you don't know Ruth Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), you don't know Japan. Before Gen. Douglas MacArthur became Supreme Commander of the American (Allied) occupation forces of Japan (1945-52), he wisely recruited anthropologist Ruth Benedict to describe the Japanese personality so U. S. troops could more wisely interact in their dominant role as conquerors.

Guilt and Shame:

What Ruth Benedict wrote was so convincing and so inflammatory that it was soon translated into Japanese as *Kiku to Katana* (菊と刀). For decades it was the most read and discussed book among college students and academics. Its main theme was that Westerners were centered on guilt, and Japanese were centered on shame. Guilt anchored in individual conscience was natural to adults. Shame fashioned by group behavior was natural to children. That is, Westerner behavior was of mature adults. Japanese behavior was that of immature children.

Japanese belittled as "children" were moved to deny this theme, but were trapped in the obvious truth that they were a shame driven culture. My university colleagues were embarrassed to be ridiculed by Westerners as "children," but were compelled to admit that they were driven by shame.

Ruth Benedict's discussion of shame and guilt, spotlighted in the massive distribution of her book to the American Occupation forces, raised the discussion as major topics of later international conferences on psychology and anthropology. Through the decades a growing appreciation of the transformative emotional power of shame seem to be acknowledged in the West. Shame may no longer be a sign of immature children, but possibly a more transformative adult emotion than the mental logic of guilt?



New Testament:

Curiously, the New Testament crucifixion narratives strongly center on shame instead of guilt. The soldiers strip Jesus naked of his clothes in contrast to the emperor's magnificent purple robes. They compare the emperor's crown jewels with the crown of thorns they pushed down on his forehead. They spat on him. "Since he is King of the Jews, he should come down from the Cross," they jeered. The crowd taunts his dying thirst in the three hours under the burning sun. The story is all shame. There is one Bible verse relating the Cross to shame:

*Looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its **shame**, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2*

Anselm: The Cross as Repairing Shame:

The atonement theory used by the earliest churches were "ransom theories." By committing sin, all humans became the property of the Devil. Jesus offered himself up in death as the price to ransom the human race from the Devil.

Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury (c.1033-1109), wrote about God being a proud medieval aristocrat (warlord?). By sin the human race disgraced the elevated honor of God, bringing shame. Christ by his death on the Cross restored God's honor, repairing the shame. This medieval theory replaced the ransom theories.

By repairing God's shame and restoring God's honor to satisfaction, it is called a Satisfaction Theory. It was the accepted atonement theory used by the medieval church in feudal society. God's elevated honor in the feudal mentality and the shame resulting from human sinfulness just does not make sense to 21st Century people clinging to "democracy, equality, and liberty."

Sharing the Shame:

The extreme shame in Japanese mentality is being naked before people. It was our first winter in Tokyo in 1961. Still in the process of rebuilding after losing the war, people could not yet afford to build bathrooms in their own homes. Each village had a huge public bathhouse, the most luxurious building in town. Each bathhouse had a wall separating the men's bath from the women's bath. I stood naked before half the men in the village every other day with just a small towel for modesty. There was no shame being naked if everybody else was naked, too. It was the ideal place to meet and

befriend all the men of the village--a social center. I was used to being naked before men, taking daily showers after practice on our Jr. High basketball team.

But Ellen had no such experiences. She washed herself as best she could in the kitchen sink all summer long until the winter cold. She could not bear the thought of being naked in the public bathhouse with other women. But the kitchen sink had become unbearable in the Tokyo winter. One afternoon she simply disappeared with a bath pail.

An hour later she came home so excited and thrilled. The bathhouse was so pleasant, and all the women were so friendly. They washed themselves and hopped into the hot pool. The warmed bathhouse, the large hot water common pool for ladies, and the irresistible joy of joining a company of friendly women!

It is the most shameful experience for Japanese to be naked before others. But even when we are naked before half the village, there is no shame at all if we are all naked together.

Shame Today:

*Illiteracy

In Hawaii one of my grandmothers from Okinawa was illiterate. Women in Okinawa a hundred years ago did not go to school. Then I lived in Calcutta for five months. There was no compulsory public education in India. About a fifth of the population were poor outcastes, mostly illiterate. The newspaper carrier, the taxi driver, many of the ground crew mowing the lawn--they were all illiterate outcastes. As in America, there is shame to being illiterate.

*Caste, Class

All native Indians were divided into 5 castes and hundreds of sub-castes. Lower castes and outcastes were ashamed. In Japan, Burakumin were outcastes and ashamed.

*Single Mothers

In Honolulu a pastor's daughter got pregnant without a husband. Of course, you have to quit school and face the shame. The family bravely faced the community shame. The community was fast to sympathize and support.

*Poverty

There is shame in being poor. Being poor, of course, means struggling in debt month to month. Give up going to college. It takes some money for normal socializing (restaurants, movies, concerts). A family might quit socializing until finances improve. Stop going to church temporarily until there is money for offerings. There is shame in being poor. A large percentage of community college students are homeless, sleeping in cars.

*Stuttering

I stuttered and stammered severely from 1st grade to 12th grade. Then stuttered again for 5 years learning theology and preaching through a new language in Japan. In the middle of preaching Japanese sermons, I gave up and sat down at least four times in church and seminary. Few church members looked at my face. They all stared at the floor while I stuttered. It was shame.

[Some years back there was a lady on staff at Abernethy dining room who stuttered badly. How I wish I could tell her that I stuttered too, sharing her shame.]

*LGBTQ

A close friend's daughter, my daughter's schoolmate, finally had gender altering surgeries. But she/he was in his mid-forties before finally feeling comfortable in his body. Half a lifetime lost to gender confusion and shame.

*Prison

It was the surge of competing "tough on crime" slogans that helped win the election for Bill Clinton. So the prisons were filled with black men. Their drugs of choice were criminalized for prison time. The crack version used by whites was carefully penalized without prison time. Felons could not find work and were stigmatized for shame--institutionalized racism.

*Weight

My overweight friend could not believe how many of his "friends" tease him humorously about being "fat." They actually believe that he would enjoy their clever humor as a "good sport." Have they no clue to the depth of despair and shame his weight problem has caused him for decades!

*Solidarity

The pastor of a church on Lihue, Kauai, shaved his head completely bald. It was in the solidarity of love for his wife who had lost all her hair in chemotherapy. In the guilt obsession of the West, people need someone to suffer in their place--vicarious atonement. But for those East and West stained by shame, what they need is someone to share their shame in the solidarity of suffering love. There is no shame in being naked in public if everybody in the bathhouse is naked with you.

Dickson K. Yagi (屋宜和夫) is a 3rd generation Okinawan-American from Hilo, Hawaii. He graduated George Washington University in D.C. (1959). After a year of language study, he earned Bachelor and Masters degrees at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (1965).

He then earned another Masters degree and a Ph.D. at Southern Baptist Theo. Seminary (Louisville, 1972). He also studied Buddhism at Univ. of Hawaii from David Kalupahana (Theravada), David Chappell, and Alfred Bloom (both Mahayana).

Dickson taught for 27 years at Seinan Gakuin University in Fukuoka, where he is Prof. Emeritus in Christian Studies. He served a term as Head Chaplain of the university. For a decade he was a member of Tōzai Shūkyō Kōryū Gakkai, an advanced level of Buddhist Christian Dialogue mainly by university professors.

Dickson is Chair of the Council for Pacific Asian Theology (CPAT), Nikkei Interfaith Fellowship, and the Religions Committee of Pilgrim Place Retirement Community. He can be reached at dkyagi@icloud.com

THE HARROWING OF HELL

1 Peter 4:6, A Second Chance

Grandfather Seiryu Yagi followed God in Okinawa through indigenous Dozoku Shukyo and Shingon Buddhism, then in Hawaii, through Seicho-no-ie. Like 99% of the population of Japan, he was never within hearing distance of the Good News of Jesus. Less than 1% (0.8%) of the Japan population are Christians!

I asked seven veteran Japanese pastors how they could survive emotionally, 99% of their family and friends being outside the Gospel. They all gave the same answer: 1 Peter 4:6.

"For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead, that though judged in the flesh like men, they might live in the spirit like God," 1 Peter 4:6. RSV "He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison." 1 Peter 3:18, 19. NIV

Those who die without Christ will have a second chance to believe after death. The early church believed in this second chance for hundreds of years, calling it the "Harrowing of Hell." Harrow meant harvesting. I wrote my Master's Thesis on 1 Peter 4:6.

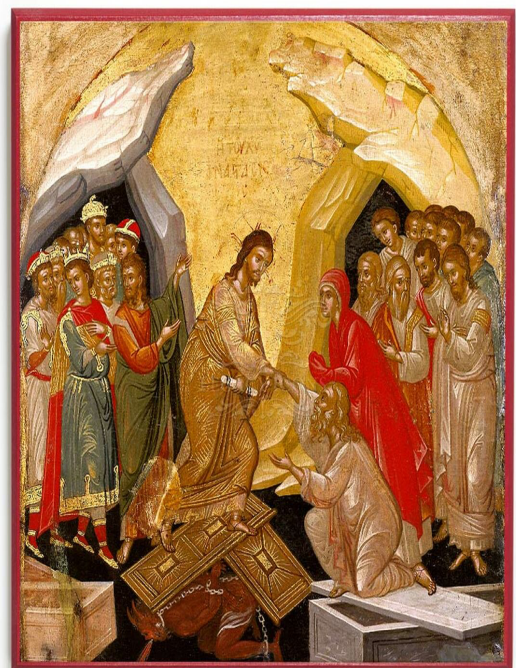
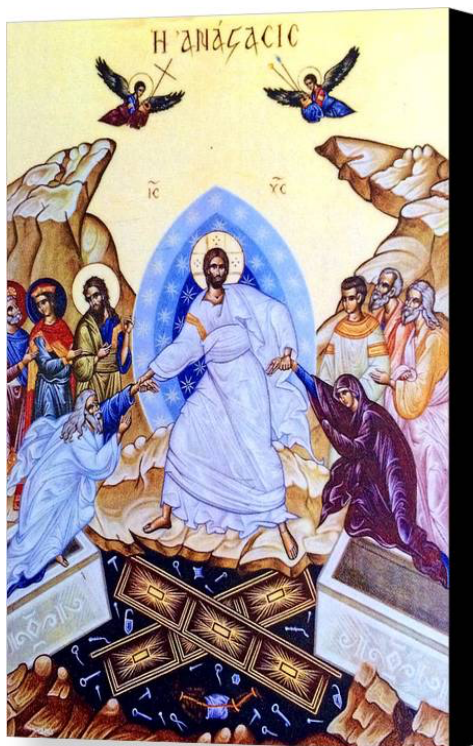
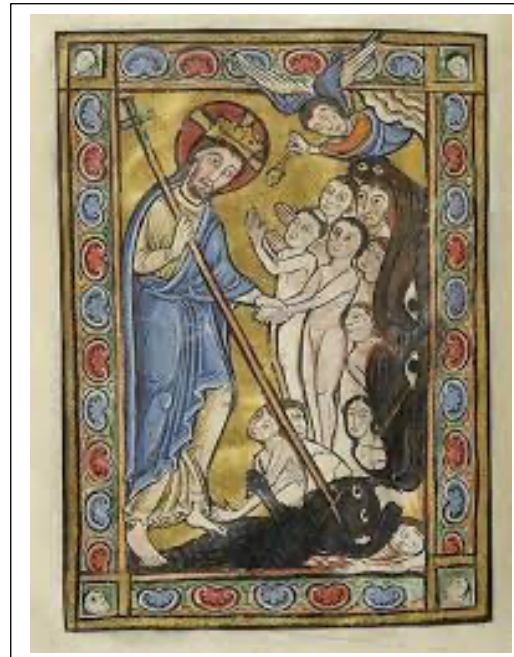
The early church had numerous paintings and carvings (icons) of Jesus preaching to the prisoners of hell and freeing them of their chains. For years I have hung such an icon on my living room wall.

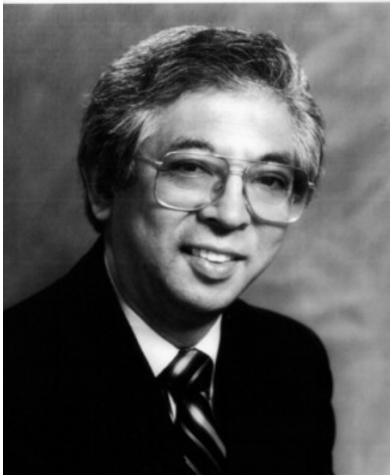
Rev. Dickson Kazuo Yagi

*Exclusive preachers said that the preaching in hell was for **condemnation**. But inclusive preachers pointed out that Gospel means **GOOD NEWS**, and that the purpose was that they might "live in the spirit like God."

*See Wikipedia on "Harrowing of Hell."

HARROWING OF HELL





Yoshitada Nakagawa (Yosh)

December 27, 1932 - January 29, 2022

Yoshitada "Yosh" Nakagawa passed away peacefully on January 29, 2022, surrounded by his family, succumbing to his third battle with cancer. Yosh was born on December 27, 1932, to father Tetsuzo and mother Suyeko. He began school at Bailey Gatzert Elementary until his education was interrupted by his family's imprisonment at Minidoka Prison Camp.

After being freed from Minidoka, the family returned to Seattle where he graduated from Garfield High School. Yosh attended Linfield College before graduating from the University of Washington.

During college, he entered ROTC and was commissioned to the 2nd Lt. Infantry at the rank of captain. In high school, Yosh was the stock boy as well as janitor at Osborn and Ulland Sporting Goods store. Over the next 45 years he worked his way to President of the company and led the expansion from a single store into nine stores in three states.

One of his lasting innovations was a preseason ski sale that evolved into SNIAGRAB, bargains spelled backward, the largest off-site ski sale in the country. Yosh was awarded many honors, a few of these being: Garfield High School "Golden Grads Hall of Fame", Northwest Skier's Hall of Fame, Boy Scouts' God and Country Award, Jitsuo Morikawa ABHMS Healing and Transforming Communities Award, Cora and John Sparrowk Award, and the Head Silver Ski.

Yosh loved his local sports teams; he was a season ticket holder for the Sonics, Pilots, Mariners and Seahawks from each team's inception. He even was chosen to throw out the first pitch as recognition for his lifetime of accomplishments.

Yosh is survived by Sue, his wife of 65 years, his sister Mary (Chuck) Matsumoto, daughter Dr. Lisa (Dr. Alan) Kiyohara, son Mark (Joni), daughter Linda, grandsons Brett Nakagawa, Tyler Nakagawa and Nicolas Kiyohara, sister-in-law Chiyoko Doi, and numerous nieces and nephews.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the staff at Kaiser Permanente Home Services and Interim Healthcare for their compassionate care and kindness, with a special thank you to Rahel and Eden, his caregivers. A more complete biography of Yosh's life can be found at washelli.com

A celebration of life will be held later this year when it can be done so more safely. If you would like more information, please e-mail the family at yoshnakagawaou@gmail.com. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts can be made in Yosh's name to the charity of your choice. Published on February 20, 2022.

DRYagi: Yosh served as **Vice President of the American Baptist Convention** for a term.

Yosh was a perpetual dynamite of enthusiasm for the **Council for Pacific Asian Theology (CPAT)** in the footsteps of Rev. Dr. Jitsuo Morikawa, Rev. Dr. Paul Nagano, Rev. Lloyd Wake, Rev. Dr. Bill Malcomson, Rev. Dr. Grant Hagiya, Rev. Nobuaki Hanaoka, Rev. Dr. Warren Lee, Dr. Yoshihide Sakuragi, Rev. Hope Kawashima, Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, Carole Jan Lee, Dr. Franklin Woo, and a multitude of interfaith and social justice warrior comrades.

**Baya con Dios,
Yosh Nakagawa**

Faithful companion,
Always on fire for Jesus.

ONE EYE ON THE BIBLE; ANOTHER EYE ON THE NEWSPAPER

***Dr. James Heaps, UCLA, \$243.6 million**

The University of California system will pay \$243.6 million to 203 former patients of former UCLA gynecologist, Dr. James Heaps. More than 300 other patients are not included because they are continuing to sue. Richard Winton, LATimes, Feb.9, 2022.

***Moderna Blocking Production of Covid Vaccines**

Moderna is accused of using exclusive rights of their patents **after the pandemic** to stop independent production research **now** in So. Africa. Jake Jackson, Common Dreams, February 14, 2022.

***No Longer Mormons**

Mormons may no longer call themselves Mormons or use the shorthand "L.D.S." They must call themselves "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Or if they wanted a shorter version, "Latter-day Saints". By order of their church officials. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir will be called the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square. Rick Bowmer, Associated Press, Dec.23, 2021. Also New York Times.

Yagi: By eliminating the name Mormon, they hope to slide into mainstream Christianity in the common mind. Protestant and Catholics notice the Mormon rejection of the common confessions of the Ecumenical Councils. This has been the wall keeping Mormons from official identification as mainline Christians. Also the belief that God was once a human being, and that we human beings will become Gods.

ONE EYE ON THE BIBLE: OTHER EYE ON THE NEWS

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Some Core Values of CPAT

Black Lives Matter

Reform Police Brutality. (No choke holds, forbid no knock entries, no quasi police immunity, nat'l data base so convicted police cannot be hired in the next city, no shootings without body cameras, no rubber bullets, no political donations by police unions, no private prisons, social worker specialists to replace police dealing with homeless and mentally ill, no bicycle stops escalating to pointless killings.

Protecting Mother Earth, our only Space Ship

Keep the oil in the ground.
Stop Minnesota portion of Enbridge Line 3, Biden fail to stop.
Protect the Arctic Sanctuary from oil and gas drilling.
Protect National Parks and Monuments (Biden reverses Trump opening Bear Ears and Grand Staircase-Excalante to oil drilling, fracking, and mining,

Gender Equality

Equality for LGBTQ. (Supreme Court ruled LGBTQ cannot be fired from work for being gay. Biden renews LGBTQ in military)
Equal pay for equal work.

Citizenship for DACA. (Biden stopped DACA deportation).

America's Original Sins:

Stealing land from Native Americans by betraying treaties and by genocide.
National economy built on 400 years of Black slave labor and Jim Crow.
Trans-continental railway built on blood, sweat, and tears of Chinese laborers.

Confiscate Ghost Guns.

No Separation of Children from Refugee Parents on Southern Border.

Racial Equality: No White Supremacy

No racial profiling by police stop-and-search (vs. Afro-Americans).
No infiltration of mosques by FBI, CIA, Homeland Security.
No mass incarceration of Afro-Americans through unfair drug laws. (Rehabilitation instead of mass incarceration, fix drug laws.)

Freedom of Religion

Freedom for Uyghur Muslims in Xinjian Province.
Freedom for Tibetans in religion and politics.
Freedom for Rohingyas in Rakhine Province in Myanmar.

Religions waging peace, instead of war.

Preemptive strikes as crimes against humanity. (Iraq invasion)
Nuclear Weapons, Biological Weapons, Chemical Weapons,
Neutron Bombs as Crimes Against Humanity.
Disarmament of Nuclear Weapons (No More Hiroshima-Nagasaki)
Religions networking for social justice in major cities (Jews, Muslims, Christians. Buddhists, and Hindus Together).

Priority of the Poor. (Safety nets for the poor and vulnerable, Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, food banks, health insurance for all, \$15 minimum wage, subsidized child care.)

Vaccines: Israel must provide Coronavirus vaccines to Palestinians in Gaza Strip. Rich Western nations must share supply of vaccines with African nations, Pacific Islanders, and Palestinians in Gaza.

GITMO: Close down Guantanamo Detention Center.

Free Assange as Whistle Blower.

Subscriptions to this booklet, *Pacific Asian Vision*, is free.

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