

【論文】

Endo Shusaku's *To Aden*

LOGAN, Richard

遠藤周作の「アデンまで」

リチャード・ローガン

Abstract: Endo Shusaku's first work of fiction was published in 1954 and describes a journey by ship from the French port of Marseilles to Aden on the Arabian Peninsula. The main character muses on his inability to bridge the racial and cultural gap between Japanese and Europeans.

Key words: Endo, *To Aden*, racial discrimination, inferiority complex

Endo Shusaku's first novella *Aden Made* (To Aden) was published in *Mita Bungaku*, a literary journal of Tokyo's Keio University in its November 1954 issue. (1) This short work of fiction describes a journey by ship from the French port of Marseilles to Aden on the Arabian peninsula. The story is told by a man named Chiba, who is being forced to return home to Japan due to a lingering chest ailment after studying in France for three years. The beginning finds Chiba in a Marseilles hotel with a woman:

Tomorrow I leave Europe and the woman has come to see me off at Marseilles. We stay in a small tavern in front of the wharf. It is dusk. When I look out the window of the room the sun shines on the quay clustered with small brown boats resembling Chinese junks and the cries of the boatmen are unintelligible to me.

"What do you suppose that is? "

"A ship selling oysters and seaweed," answers the woman as she puts her palm to her temple and throws herself on the bed.

The afternoon sun flowing from the window lights up the face of the woman without pity.

"Shall we go out to eat oysters?" I ask, but the woman remains motionless like a fossil. (2)

They spend the night in their room and get up early the following morning. Chiba asks the woman (who we only learn at the midpoint of the story is named Maggie) what she will do and she replies vaguely that she will get by. He holds her hand and then departs for his ship, which is an old freighter. On board he is directed to the fourth class quarters at the bottom of the ship. He finds a black woman there who will be sharing the quarters with him as far as Aden. She is lying on her bunk and does not respond to Chiba's greeting. Chiba lies down on his bunk for a while but finds it too hot and dark and goes back up on deck. Chiba overhears two crew men mentioning that the black woman is sick but they don't seem to give the impression that it is any of their business to concern themselves with her. Chiba collects a plate of food for the woman but she silently waves him and the food away.

The woman's sickness reminds Chiba of his own illness, which is forcing him to return to Japan. He sinks into a reverie about the time he spent in hospital and was visited by the French woman, Maggie who became his friend and lover. He lived in the rooming house where she lived and they became very close. Chiba delighted in showing her the Japanese knickknacks in his room and going to the local art museum with her and explaining the religious and cultural meanings of Buddhist statues and other Asian art. This pleasant state of affairs was sometimes

disturbed by some of Maggie's friends who expressed distaste for Japan and its wartime activities. Chiba heard them talking in the next room in the rooming house one time and was embarrassed by Maggie's defense of the Japanese and Chiba in particular:

"However, the Japanese are ferocious. I read in a magazine that they murdered several thousand Chinese in Nanking."

But as I listened to the painful words of these male students, I heard the eager gesture of the woman to excuse me.

"Well, France has done that. We killed blacks in North Africa. We do not have the right to judge Chiba. All human beings are the same."

The young men seem to be overwhelmed by the anger of the woman, and answer in a feeble voice that they do not "understand what those fellows think" about.

"All the races are the same." The woman is irritated and cries. "Even as for the black, even as for the yellow person, even as for the white man, all are the same". (3)

Chiba understands that while the French do discriminate against non-whites, they still usually treat him quite decently as an individual. But Chiba himself seems to be consumed with doubts about himself, which he puts down to the racial differences between him and white people. He wonders how Maggie can tolerate his yellow skin and he seems awed by her white skin. He describes the time that they "showed skin and skin to each other for the first time." (4) Chiba admits to himself that when he embraced his white woman, their bodies seemed to create a harmonious figure:

"But it was different in front of a mirror. She was pure white, and my body

sank into the light of the room in a dark yellow shade unlike the brightness of the shoulder and breast of the woman. From my waist to stomach was not so bad, but around my chest and neck the luster of my yellow skin was dull. And the two colors of our entangled bodies had no beauty, no harmony. Rather it was ugly. It was like a yellow ground beetle clinging on to a pure white flower. (5)

Chiba comes out of his reverie and notices that the black woman in the cabin with him is lying on her back and has not moved for a while. He goes up to the deck and mentions to a crew member that the black woman seems to be sick. The crew member insists it has nothing to do with him. Chiba returns to the cabin and gazes on the woman's dark-skinned body and thinks how ugly the color of her skin is. He feels a surge of self-pity as he feels his skin color is also ugly:

Both I and this black woman belong to the ugly races eternally. Why do I think that white people's skin is the foundation of beauty? I don't know. Why do I accept that the standard of human beauty in sculpture and paintings originated with the white bodies of the Greeks? But certainly whatever we say neither I nor black people can forget our miserable inferiority complex in front of the human beings who have white skin.(6)

These thoughts lead Chiba back to his memories of Maggie. He remembered walking hand in hand with her through a snow-covered town on an overnight vacation trip. He could not rid himself of the thought that his skin color was more repulsive than hers and was extremely self-conscious about it. Maggie noticed that something was bothering him, but Chiba could not find the words to express what he was feeling. In addition, he realized that it was unworthy of him to have feelings of disgust for himself when the woman accepted him so unconditionally as a lover. She suggested that they visit an old friend of hers who lived in the

neighborhood. Upon arriving at the door of the apartment, they found a lively party in progress. Maggie is greeted with delight and is asked when she arrived in town. She replies that she came the night before. Did she come by herself? Suddenly she realizes that she must explain who Chiba is and her relationship to him. Stumbling a bit in embarrassment she says that Chiba is her fiance. Chiba feels that all the people in the apartment are eyeing him with suspicion.

For all his self-conscious paranoia, he is in fact treated politely by Maggie's friends. They make small talk with him but Chiba continues to feel extremely awkward and the awkwardness is soon felt by Maggie as well. She tries to dispel it by insisting that Chiba dance with her when someone puts on a record. All the while, Chiba is imagining that all the people there are thinking contemptuous thoughts about him and his relationship to Maggie. After awhile, one of the young people in the apartment addresses Chiba:

A student without a necktie who held a drink in one hand came to my side.

"Monsieur, you are Chinese, I think?"

"No, I am a Jap. We have the barbaric custom of hara-kiri."

The student faltered. I felt a sudden twinge of sympathy for this man.

"You know," he said, and put a hand on my shoulder. "I am not a racist by any means. Yes, I have a lot of friends at the university who come from Indochina and Africa. "

("But you aren't engaged to a girl from Indochina! You'd never do that, right?") I thought in my heart, which bubbled blackly.

"Actually, you and I are not different," he said in a patient tone.

"Face and form are not so different."

"Is it so?" By all odds I think the Japanese face to be barbaric." I answered with irony.

"I never think of Japan as a barbaric country. In particular after the war, it's

American culture...”

“Not at all. Japanese are barbaric”. This impulse toward masochistic self-torture shook me intensely. I couldn’t help it. “We attacked Pearl Harbor. We used kamikaze airplanes. We did what we did in Nanking. You should know this, right?”⁽⁷⁾

The student continues to try to communicate with Chiba, but Chiba finds himself thinking that this student cannot possibly understand how different they are and feels the student is just giving him lip service to liberal ideals. He feels irritated that the student is bending over backwards to “understand” him. Later, Maggie comes up to Chiba and says:

“I love you, Chiba. Isn’t that enough. You aren’t the only one who feels pain.”

“It’s not enough. It’s really not enough. You can love me. You are white. However, the pains that I feel as a yellow man do not torment you. You cannot know what I feel.”⁽⁸⁾

This reverie is broken when the ship’s doctor and a nurse come down to the cabin to check the condition of the black woman. The doctor asks Chiba how long the black woman has been motionless. Chiba realizes that he hasn’t been paying any attention to the woman at all. The doctor grumbles that he doesn’t have time to bother with this situation, while the nurse puts a thermometer in the black woman’s mouth. The woman throws up. The doctor and nurse become irritated with the black woman who is not cooperating with them. The doctor lets out a bitter laugh and says something to the effect that she hardly deserves the medical treatment he is giving her:

“You must never be soft with these blacks. Although they are more cunning

than a mouse, these people are more stubborn than a cow. These people pay no attention to what we say. They do not benefit at all. Look. Even in Morocco and Tunisia we build schools. We build hospitals for them, but they refuse to use them. They don't get it." (9)

The black woman is by this time clearly very ill and the nurse asks the doctor if she can be moved into the sick bay. The doctor replies that the crew won't like to see a black person so near their own quarters. Chiba asks what her sickness is and the doctor replies that it is jaundice. Chiba wonders whether it is contagious. The doctor says it isn't and gives Chiba a small bottle of medicine and tells him to have her take a tablet before each meal. The doctor and the nurse get up and leave Chiba and the black woman.

Chiba starts to think about the black women he had seen in France in the red light districts. He remembers a sordid sex show he had witnessed with some other foreign students. When they paid the women, the money was divided unequally, with the black women getting much less than the other women. One of the foreign students questioned this, and a black woman answered with a resigned voice that it was because she was black. Chiba recalls this incident as he looks at the sick black woman in the ship's cabin:

As for this sick black woman and those women of the streets, they knew it by instinct, too. Black is the color of sin. Blacks know that before whites, under any circumstances, in any world that they must receive a punishment. Anything whites do is good and holy. Therefore you must give up and accept the pain. Because the color of my skin is black, and black is the color of sin. (But doesn't the yellow person also have the same meaning as the black person?)" (10)

Chiba tries to get the black woman to take her medicine but she refuses it. Suddenly, Chiba slaps her face but the woman barely reacts. Chiba wonders shamefully why he feels the same irritation with the sick woman as the white doctor had exhibited. The ship enters the Suez Canal in the night and the next morning finds them at Port Said waiting for an Egyptian pilot to come aboard for the journey through the canal. Chiba looks at the barren brown landscape of Egypt and remembers that on the trip through the Suez Canal on his way to France several years before he had looked at the scenery as part of the exotic Middle East and himself as a Japanese gentleman with more in common with Europeans than with the local people. He had sipped glasses of absinthe on deck with white people while idly watching Egyptian workers unloading and loading cargo on the quay. But now he no longer thinks in terms of nationalities and political philosophies but sees people only according to their skin color.

The black woman dies during the night and at 10:00 the next morning the captain and crew prepare her body for burial at sea. It is clear to Chiba that the captain does not want to bother with the bureaucratic details of bringing her corpse to the port of Aden, so her body is tipped over the side into the Red Sea after a short religious service. Afterwards, Chiba stands at the railing of the deck looking at the passing coastline of Egypt and Arabia. He notices that the land is the same yellow-brown color as his skin. He has left the white world and is now on the way home to his own people.

Seisen Women's University Professor Takeda Tomoju claims that *To Aden* contains all the concerns that would appear in Endo's literary output: a sense of isolation from Japan, racial discrimination, and the problems of love and sin. (11) Takeda points out that along with the obvious inferiority complex that Chiba exhibits in describing his "ugly" yellow skin compared to the pure white skin of

his lover Maggie, Chiba also makes a point of contrasting France's pure white winter snow with Egypt's dull yellow brown sand. This adds to Chiba's feeling that white is good and beautiful while yellow and brown are ugly and bad. Chiba hardly sees black people as human and sees black as the ugliest and worst color, the absolute opposite of white.

Chiba's isolation and alienation from Japan is seen in his preemptive mention of Japan's world war two atrocities when talking to the French student at Maggie's friend's apartment. Chiba does also briefly recall the hospital visit of a Japanese official (presumably from the embassy) who cursed Chiba for some reason (perhaps for causing trouble for Japan's image with his chest ailment, which would have been contagious if it were tuberculosis). (12)

Another critic, Ferris Women's University Professor Miyasaka Satoru points out that while Chiba doesn't care to dwell on the fact, he is basically accorded the same social status as the black woman on the ship by the white crew members. (13) Chiba is treated with the same disrespect as the woman he shares a fourth class cabin with by the captain, the ship's doctor and even the crew who load the freight onto their ship. Chiba does not identify himself with black people, though. He looks at himself entirely in terms of white people and sees himself as something lower than whites, as for example a yellow bug next to a white flower. He sees black people not as individuals at all but adopts the attitude of whites, even going so far as to physically hit the sick black woman the way the white doctor had done verbally.

Professor Takeda Hidemi of Seibigakuin Junior College mentions that Endo wrote in a 1956 article about colored people and white people that French people on the ship he took to France called him a dirty yellow man. (14) Endo did experience racial discrimination and he used it in his fiction, especially where he

uses his character named Chiba. It is hard to understand how Chiba (or Endo himself) can be so unmanned by the discrimination he faced. But as Professor Tokunaga Michio of Kyoto Women's University wrote in 1989:

It was a time when Japan was still struggling for recovery from the lost war, and it must have been such circumstances that greatly affected Endo's mind upon encountering the West. A sort of inferiority complex, which the youth of contemporary Japan may not be able to imagine, must have been formed in his mind, for when he struggles with the problems of the Japanese mentality, he always uses the standard as seen in the West, the Christian West. (15)

Dr. Emi Mase-Hasegawa mentions in the preface of her book on Endo Shusaku, that as a convert to Christianity herself she felt that she was turning her back on Japan and the culture she grew up in. Therefore she feels she understands how Endo must have felt when he went to France and discovered that he didn't fit into their culture even though he'd accepted their religion. The question then revolved around where he belonged when he was alienated from both the culture he grew up in and the culture he found himself excluded from. (16) Dr. Mase-Hasegawa quotes from an essay which points to the trip from France to Aden as a despairing journey away from the center of Christianity to a dry miserable desert area estranged from Christianity:

Two years ago, on my way back from the West, I was on the ship crossing the Red Sea. Standing on the corner of Arabian desert that was on the point that divides the West and Asia, I felt pain inside. This is no longer the World of White that represents clarity and extremes. I had to return from them to the World of Yellow that is the color of chaos, dim, and without clear division. Yet, my skin is yellow, never white. Thus, I thought I should start everything not

from mixing but confronting this yellow world and the white world. (17)

Where does this leave a non-white in his search for a place in the world of Christianity? If he wasn't going to get much encouragement or help in coming to terms with his Christian faith in France, Endo must have felt that he would have to find his own path as a Japanese Christian on his own. Endo had great respect and sympathy for the *Kakure Kirishitan* (hidden Christians) of Kyushu who had converted to Christianity in the sixteenth century and then kept their faith in secrecy for several centuries when the Japanese authorities persecuted and tried to weed out the Christians. The hidden Christians stubbornly held on to their beliefs even though they had to suffer alienation and isolation from both Japanese society and the European Christian missionaries who had introduced them to their faith. Endo's subsequent novels go on to deal with this issue.

(1) Endo Shusaku o Yomu, *Aden Made*.

<<http://www.ensyu7.blog100.fc2.com/blog-entry-8.html>> retrieved on July 16, 2008.

(2) Shusaku Endo, *Aden Made (To Aden)*, in *Shiroi Hito, kiuro Hito, Hoka Nihen*, Kodansha Bunko, 1971, page 153.

(3) Endo, page 158.

(4) Endo, page 159.

(5) Endo, page 160.

(6) Endo, page 161.

(7) Endo, pages 166-167.

(8) Endo, page 168.

(9) Endo, page 169.

(10) Endo, pages 173-174.

- (11) Takeda Tomoju, *kaisetsu in Shiroi Hito, kiiro Hito, Hoka Nihen*, Kodansha Bunko, 1971, page 199.
- (12) “I remembered the hateful Japanese official who once came to see me at the Jordan Street Hospital and cursed me.” Endo, page 167.
- (13) Miyasaka Satoru, *Aden Made, kiiro Hito, Shiroi Hito* in *Endo Shusaku: Sono Bungaku Seikai*, edited by Yamagata Kazumi, Kokken Shuppan, 1997, page 19.
- (14) Takeda Hidemi, *Aden Made: Futatsu no Shiten* in *Sakuhinron: Endo Shusaku*, edited by Kasai Akio and Tamaki Kunio, Sobunsha, 2000, page 11.
- (15) Tokunaga Michio, “A Japanese Transformation of Christianity”, *Japanese Religions*, Volume 15, No. 3 January 1989: 45-54, quoted in Mase-Hasegawa Emi, *Christ in Japanese Culture: Theological Themes in Shusaku Endo's Literary Works*, Brill, 2008, page 62.
- (16) Mase-Hasegawa Emi, *Christ in Japanese Culture: Theological Themes in Shusaku Endo's Literary Works*, Brill, 2008, pages xxi – xxii.
- (17) Endo Shusaku, “*Kirisuto-kyo to Nihon Bungaku*”, *The Tokyo* 4.13. CSEL 12:205–208, quoted in Mase-Hasegawa Emi, *Christ in Japanese Culture: Theological Themes in Shusaku Endo's Literary Works*, Brill, 2008, page 71.