

書評

Review of Kijuro Kondo's *Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*.

(近藤喜重郎『在外ロシア正教会の成立. 移民のための教会から亡命教会へ』

成文社、2010。278pages.)

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Dr. Kondo's book on the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and in Exile is in fact an extended version of his doctoral dissertation that was successfully defended at Tokai University in 2005. As the title indicates, the theme of the book deals only with the narrow segment of the Russian Orthodox Church history. That is why one should not expect to purchase a compendium of the historical events related to Russia and to her representative church. The book under review stands for a scholarly endeavor that was crowned by the doctoral degree in the Graduate School of Civilization Studies. Its content is, therefore, less accessible to a common reader who may be looking for more general information about the Russian Orthodox Church. Nonetheless, the book has its undeniable merits, as it is a comprehensive study of a rather significant political problem that had an important impact on the further social development of Russia in the twentieth century.

Since the book is methodologically based on the concept of cultural semiotics, as defined by Yuri Lotman, Dr.Kondo has chosen to provide a concise excursus of those semiotic and structural theories that are immanently related to Lotman's thought. The scope of the information provided in the book is, indeed, broad enough so as to satisfy the curiosity of those who may have no knowledge of semiotics or structuralism. In this respect, the author has masterfully solved the major problem of the book, i.e., its scholarly narrow facet that may discourage some readers to plough through the text. Dr. Kondo also provides a rather concise survey of historical events, as they pertain to Russia and, of course, to her Orthodox Church. Again, the author has kept in mind that the topic, he is about to discuss in the book, might pose certain difficulties of comprehending the complex issue of the Orthodox Church, exiled in Europe and America, and the Orthodox Church, as it had existed outside of Russia for at least a couple of centuries.

The contents of the book shows that the book is literarily filled with original research data that the author obtained during his research sojourn at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and at the Russian Orthodox monastery at Jordanville in New York State. The focus of Dr.Kondo's semiotic analysis is the textual aspect of the vast religious problem that

kept the Russian Orthodox Church existing abroad ideologically divided for decades. Proclamations, ecclesiastical circular letters, agreements, and politically designed texts have become the primary source of the semiotic textual interpretation that the author has innovatively performed in the book. He points out in his explanation that the long-lasting dispute that kept the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and in Exile split and in discord, was primarily due to the Soviet government surveillance of the Orthodox Church in the communist Russia. The subordination of the Church to the State has been a perennial problem in European history. That is why it should come as no surprise that the Soviet authorities in a way repeated the same mistake as did many European crowned heads in the past. As commonly known, the Orthodox Church has managed to survive in its pristine form despite all the political machinations and ideological suppression. As Dr.Kondo emphasizes in his book, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and in Russia has reconciled its differences, and proliferates in the present Russian Federation, whereas the former Soviet power dissipated and disappeared from the historical stage.

In a way of conclusion, we can only state that Dr.Kondo's book is a valuable contribution to the study of the Russian Orthodox Church and to the study of semiotic textual analysis. It shows in a concrete way how valuable it is for graduate students to study abroad and do research in foreign university libraries. It also testifies that the knowledge of foreign languages should be a real priority in Japanese education.

End.