

Margaret Prang, *A Heart at Leisure from Itself: Caroline Macdonald of Japan*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995. Pp. xv, 346. Can\$39.95 cloth.

Caroline Macdonald was a remarkable woman. Born in 1874 to a prominent Wingham, Ontario family (her father was a physician and Liberal M.P. [1887–1904]), she was the second woman to receive a degree from the University of Toronto in mathematics and physics. She declined a graduate fellowship in physics to take up a career with the Young Women's Christian Association. In 1904, after three years as YWCA secretary in Ottawa, she went to Japan. There, she helped establish the YWCA but made her name for work with prisoners and the related foundation of a settlement house, Shinrinkan, The Home of the Friendless Stranger. When she died in 1931, Macdonald was known as "the white angel of Tokyo."

Macdonald had a wide circle of friends in Japan and abroad. Indeed, Prang suggests "the definitive factor in her unusual career was her great capacity for friendship" (p. 294). Macdonald believed social and cultural differences must be respected but thought them to be "ultimately of little importance" (p. 294). She moved as easily among the poorest of the poor, prisoners, as among the western community in Japan, Japanese Christians (some of whom held senior positions in the bureaucracy) and the prominent American and European friends and benefactors she visited from time to time. Promoting Christianity—an ecumenical Protestantism—was always a concern. Although not directly in the employ of a church, she considered herself a missionary; a Japanese friend suggested she should "rather be called a friend of humanity" (p. 194).

Macdonald believed "education was the essential foundation for the building of the Christian community in any country" and that "the superiority of Christianity must be demonstrated" (p. 64). Following "Y" tradition, she did not "push" religion but hoped clients would develop an interest in Christianity. For example, she also taught English literature at Tsuda College, a pioneer women's college. She believed the College and the YWCA could do much to change the lives of Japanese women by giving leadership training to young middle-class women.

Macdonald's career in penology began with visits to a former Bible class student who had murdered his wife and two young sons. During these visits, she made friends with other prisoners and prison officials, saw some of them adopt Christianity, and eventually had a vision which convinced her that her vocation lay in work with prisoners. She resigned from the YWCA to become a freelance social worker. As Prang carefully points out, Macdonald soon gained a reputation as an expert in prison reform but drew on the ideas of Japanese Christians who were active in the field and the latest studies in American penology. Her purpose, however, was "not to reform prisons, but to

reform prisoners" (p. 122). Visiting individual prisoners, helping rehabilitate them after their release, and assisting their wives and children increased her concern for the need to change social conditions in Japan. Contact with imprisoned strikers led to her association with Sōdōmei, The Friendly Society Labour Federation of Greater Japan. She even appeared at labour rallies where, using her hard-won near-native fluency in Japanese, she "gave inspirational talks to strikers and their families" (p. 242).

Macdonald's ideas for reform extended beyond economic issues; she saw better education for the working classes as an essential precursor of social reform. Men, she contended, must learn that women were "not slaves, not mere playthings and conveniences for men" (p. 160); women must know of their legal right to live independent lives and have the economic means to do so—they must not be content with simply being a "good wife and a wise mother" (p. 161). Such education could take a very practical turn. The wives of some men jailed for strike activities asked her to teach them knitting so they might help support themselves by selling knitted garments. While the women were knitting, Macdonald led discussions on the need to stand by the men and the causes of strikes. At the request of some women strikers, Shinrinkan established a night school where women workers could acquire a high school education or learn knitting and other crafts and cooking. Not only would the women acquire skills but Macdonald expected that the classes, by improving "their sense of individual dignity and their group solidarity," would begin making them into citizens (p. 231) and might lead them into Sōdōmei's educational programme, where they could learn principles of trade unionism.

Prang has been informed by feminist theory and scholarship but sensibly subordinates theory to telling a fascinating life story, providing necessary background about contemporary trends in theology, and nicely sketching social and economic conditions in Japan. This book brings a Canadian heroine to life and offers an attractive introduction to some aspects of Japanese society in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

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Gordon Johnson, ed. *University Politics: F. M. Cornford's Cambridge and His Advice to the Young Academic Politician Containing the Complete Text of Cornford's "Microcosmographia Academia."* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Pp. vii, 112. US\$12.95 paper, US\$29.95 cloth.

It is the rare scholar's bookshelf that does not boast a copy of Francis Macdonald Cornford's masterly translation of Plato's *Republic*. Completed shortly