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Shoko Yamada, *Dignity of Labour for African Leaders: The Formation of Education Policy in the British Colonial Office and the Achimota School on the Gold Coast.* Cameroon: *Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group*. 2018. 314 pp. ISBN: 10:9956-550-00-0.

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This book analyses the discourse of education in British West Africa with special reference to the Gold Coast, now called Ghana. The increasing demand for education in West Africa in the early 20th century provides the catalyst to analyse how diverse actors were motivated to map out policies to establish the first school in the Gold Coast that is known as the Achimota School, which was founded in 1927. The book's objectives are to analyse the inter-related constructs of the discourse; these included its structures, actors and norms as well as the politics of transferring foreign educational ideas to Africa. As this policy was taking shape, several questions preoccupied the mind of the policy makers; they were with regards to the kind of leadership attributes that the educational system intends to produce. This culminated in proposing diverse theories to shape Gold Coast's educational system. The American progressive and black industrial educational philosophies were some of the examples that were employed (p.199). British Victorian moralism was yet another philosophical construct that was borrowed and that underpinned the need for physical activities and sports to promote obedience.

While the progressive philosophy of education saw education as a site of self-motivated learning to lead the way in transforming society to become more democratic and to lay emphasis on 'learning by doing", black industrial education intended to prepare students to accept the existing socio-political structures and low position in the capitalist economic hierarchy. Black industrial philosophy further emphasised the importance of vocational and agriculture education (pp.131-199). These ideas, in the Yamada's view, cannot be seen as exclusive but they mutually reinforced and reflected the adaptive character training that was pursued in the Achimota School. Methodologically, the author utilised archival sources from the Phelp-Stoke Foundation, the British Colonial Office. The author also made ample use of oral narratives extracted from pioneering educationists and students of Achimota.

The book was structured in three parts consisting of ten chapters. For the sake brevity, I, however, limit my review to the thrust of Yamada's argument. Chapters Seven and Eight constitute the core of her analysis. Central to her argument was that while these models of education were transplanted to Achimota School, actors picked these ideas to reinforce their opinions without regard to the advocates' original formulations. This highlights how these philosophies were considered relevant; they offered useful policy direction to produce unique models of education that took into account Gold Coast's general socio-political and economic context. Yamada argued that while Europeans adapted the education curriculum by incorporating the perceived positive aspects of African tradition and eliminated the perceived evil ones, African elites, both the intellectuals and traditional chiefs, differed among themselves on how education should be adapted.

In this work Yamada made use of two major sites for her analysis; she, on the one hand, extracted ideas from the *Memorandum on Education Policy in British Tropical Africa* and, on the other, she concentrated on the Achimota School. She demonstrated how ideas were generated from different sources; ones that highlighted the intention of actors, norms and the

politics of decision making. These two foci, in fact, provided the basis for her to analyse global and local discourses on the educational system viewing them as seamless and mutually reinforcing. She made perceptive observations regarding the dominant narratives that projected British colonial educational policy in West Africa; it was a system that required it to be adaptive as compared to the French assimilative approach.

Yamada opined that neither the British nor French policies were that strict; however, their ideas collectively addressed emerging (socio-educational) challenges in their respective colonies. She offered one illustration in which the school assimilated African students according to English public school's norms; it projected its objective by adapting its educational system to be in line with the African tradition. This process, according to the author, led to an outcome which she described as 'the *creation* of new culture.' While Yamada's observation is fascinating, what is missing in her analysis is the appropriate designation of the new culture. It would have been appropriate if she had termed it as a 'hybrid culture'; one which was a mixture of the assimilative and the adaptive methods.

She has, indeed, written an outstanding text because it contributed to our understanding of educational philosophies; these not only guided the colonial education system but they too were transferred to the African educational setting that has been overlooked in African historiographical educational writings. She further highlighted the background of the diverse actors and their motivation in education, by suggesting that schools were rarely established in the colonial period to offer intellectual satisfaction. She brought to the fore the void that existed in previous scholarship; she, for example, made reference to the terms such as adaptation, character training and morality that were employed and circulated in the colonial educational system. According to Yamada, these terms in their original usage were differently appropriated in African context. She, for instance, showed that learners were expected to internalise the dignity of labour through vocational practices, while agriculture and industrial education were intended to produce sources of income and make students self-reliant. She added that sporting codes contributed to discipline the learner, train the learner morally and instil positive personality attributes (p.138). And she further showed to what extent their application became pervasive in the Gold Coast colony and this, I argue, constituted the hallmark of her contributions.

Yamada's unique approach emanates from the fact that she analysed the global discourse of education that was championed by the British colonial officials and the mission societies, on one hand, and the extent to which this educational agenda resonated with the interest of the local actors, both the traditional chiefs and African intelligentsias, on the other hand. She discounted the view that policies on education formulated from metropole were transposed holistically into the colony. Instead, stakeholders in the Gold Coast took major decisions when they tackled these issues at the Achimota School. Thus the colony was independent in taking decisions even though it had outside support (p.145) and this demonstrated the consensus that the diverse actors namely; the colonial officials, the missionaries, African intellectuals and traditional chiefs' in education pursued to adapt the educational philosophies to provide leadership training for African leaders.

Based on my assessment, I wish to state that the book should be of interest to scholars in religious studies because it contributed to our understanding of the protestant missionaries' role in the Gold Coast's education development; one that has been enduring in modern Ghana. The author particularly illustrated how the first World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh during 1910 provided the framework to integrate views in the educational arena and the need to collaborate with the British colonial office. It is opined that prior to the early 1920s the missionaries pioneered education in the Gold Coast colony; during this period they produced the first African intelligentsias to challenge colonial rule and the ones who eventually demanded self-rule. As a result, nationalists' activities became the source of concerns for the

colonial officials, travellers and businessmen since the type of education that the missionaries offered was perceived to be bookish and had the tendency to de-nationalise Africans.

The 1910 World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh offered not only an opportunity to re-examine the role of mission societies in education to satisfy colonial apprehension but it provided the catalyst for collaboration with the state. This created an understanding of the missionaries' influence in education.

As an outcome, the International Missionary Council collaborated with the Phelps-Stokes Fund, an American philanthropic organisation, to set up a commission to investigate educational conditions in parts of Africa led by A.G. Fraser in 1914. Interestingly, Fraser later became the first principal of Achimota School. In Yamada's view, the Phelps-Stokes Fund provided the basis of ideological penetration of American black industrial education philosophy in the Gold Coast colony. This insightful analysis underscored how Christian missionaries identified a particular form of education that they considered was suitable for African elites; a system that connected race and class respectively. This was a radical departure from the previous form of education; the one that was offered by the missionaries.

Yamada systematically outlined the sources of the educational ideas which shaped the colonial educationists' agenda in Chapter Five. The progressive and black industrial educational philosophies in the 20th century were experimented in the Gold Coast. She argued that theories and philosophies were referred to only to the extent of policy measures that they intended to promote (pp.131-199). This underlined the discretional appropriation of relevant ideas that shaped education in the Gold Coast.

In Chapter Eight, Yamada identified the objectives of colonial education which characterised the debates as adaptation and character training (p 199). She argued that these terms could not generate any consensus regarding their meaning and as a consequence the educational actors in the educational field differed among themselves on how they should be applied. She pointed out that tension emerged and shaped the relationship among the various actors. While Africans revivalism was an ambiguous term, it clashed with the Europeans' civilising missions. At the same time, the interest of traditional chiefs differed with that of the intelligentsia. In spite of this, one way through which these terms took shape in the Gold Coast was the extent to which the content of education was connected to life outside the school environment. In other words, the type of education offered must lead to societies' challenges being immediately addressed. This brought into focus to what degree adaptation – as a method - was applied in the Gold Coast. Yamada thus put forward the view that the concept of character training became inseparable from that of adaptation to transform personality of traditional communities.

Actors in the educational field colony were of the consensus that schools can serve as important sites for socialisation for students with norms, values including the ideal type of character to be inculcated. However, they differed among themselves on which norms and values students should be socialised. This is where adaptation, according to the author, changed its meaning to define social norms which shaped the students' background. The debates on what type of character traits shaped education in the Achimota School were identified by the author; these consisted of five traits, namely, efficient workmanship, leadership, Christian character, citizenship (patriotism) and follower of African tradition and custom. The educational actors were unanimous on the need to link education with traditional society's values. Interestingly, the debates on the role of African tradition in education attracted conflicting expectations among the various educational actors. While British colonial officials were keen to adapt education to the African context to avoid de-nationalising educated elites, African nationalists advocated for the training of African leaders to have pride in their culture. At the same time, traditional authorities also held the view that African youth ought to be educated to appreciate their tradition and they remain under the influence of traditional institutions. Traditional chiefs

further encouraged the teaching of African history and tradition. Conversely, nationalists conceived tradition in the sense of Africanisation; by this they implied that African manage their schools and localize the curriculum. These conflicting perspectives underscored how these actors viewed education; they saw it as means to adapt to African tradition according to their expectations.

However, to what extent do these diverse educational actors have a common understanding of African tradition? This was the major ambiguity that was illustrated by the author. This arose from the fact that Gold Coast's people in general and Achimota School's students in particular came from different ethnic backgrounds and their cultures and traditions differed. Besides the raging debates as to which aspects of African culture and traditions should be preserved or discarded, they also argued about whether Christian or European culture should be adopted; in the end, these debated were narrowed down to three R's and these included the rejection of obnoxious cultures, the retention of useful traditions as well as the rejuvenation of the old by implanting Western culture (p 212).

The unique background of Achimota School was its integration of extra-curricular in its teachings programmes; ones that were borrowed from American black industrial Education. The programme emphasised the study of, among others, woodwork, bookbinding, printing, weaving, and music. Though viewed as hobbies, these courses were considered as the dignity of labour and constituted parts of the character training. This was to enable students to internalise a sense of appreciation for their handwork (p.224).

Apart from the wealth of knowledge that Yamada's book imparted, there were certain issues that negatively affected some of her arguments and ideas. Originally, she stated that the book's focus was going to relate to the educational discourses from the 1910s until the1930s. A close look, however, revealed that its analysis extended far beyond this period and covered the entire colonial period to 1957; this included the postcolonial education developments. While Chapter Nine attempted to discern the influences of global factors on vocational education across different postcolonial regimes, Yamada's analysis was rather poorly presented; it tended to confuse rather than clarify the ideas for readers about the book's purpose. One would have expected that she deal with the postcolonial policies on education as a separate theme since she demonstrated her extensive knowledge about Ghana's educational politics. And since she stressed religion's importance within Achimota School's educational structures, she overlooked the Muslim factor in her analysis for these indeed impacted upon the colonial and missionary education debates. She en passant mentioned about the school's Muslim students (p.236) but she failed to situate the Muslim students' position in it.

Yamada did identify students from Northern Territories whose background she indicated as Hausa as well as students from Yoruba backgrounds. Though they constituted the minority of the various ethnic groups, it would have been extremely informative to understand whether they were Muslims and how they navigated their religious identity in colonial religious education policy. Since she made much use of the extant archival records that were kept at the British office and the Phelp-Stoke Funds' office, then surely she had come across lots of material that covered the input of Muslims in these on-going educational debates. It is in fact known to many researchers on religion in Ghana that prior to the colonial education adventure in the Gold Coast, Muslims were already settled a century earlier from 1835-1865 in the area of Accra. Extant scholarship has further highlighted the formation of Muslim spheres in the colonial sphere, albeit their activities did not generate reaction from Christian missionaries.

In spite the few challenges enumerated above, this book should be of interest to scholars of religion and other social sciences including educationists. As indicated previously, the uniqueness of this book is the fact that it brought to focus the educational philosophies which guided the founding of the pioneer education, the Achimota School in the Gold Coast. I encourage readers to pay attention to this valuable resource.

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