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## Beyond the Dark Valley

### Reinterpreting Christian Reactions to the 1939 Religious Organizations Law

Widely regarded as a government instrument for the suppression of religious groups, the 1939/1940 Religious Organizations Law has so far been denied a nuanced treatment in historical literature. The complex nature of the law and its consequences can best be estimated when examining the case of the Christian churches, supposedly the foremost victims of suppression by the Japanese state, around 1940. The historical record shows that not all of the implications of the legislation were seen as adverse by the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant groups. This is especially clear if one takes into account transwar continuities at the institutional and organizational levels, although inquiring into writings on the substance of religious teaching can also be illuminating, as changes in Catholic catechisms between 1936 and 1947 demonstrate. I will suggest that the analytical framework of corporatism might be helpful in coming to terms with the Japanese state's religious policy in the 1930s and 1940s.

**KEYWORDS:** Religious Organizations Law—Catholic Church—Protestantism—fascism—religious policy—wartime period

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As HAYASHI MAKOTO pointed out in his recent overview of Japanese religions in the modern period, although academic contributions to the question of State Shinto have been numerous and nuanced since the 1970s, hardly anyone has carried out “in-depth research on State Shinto in the Taishō and Shōwa periods” (HAYASHI 2006, 212). Even studies that have considered the first half of the twentieth century have usually given short shrift to the Religious Organizations Law (*shūkyō dantai hō* 宗教団体法, passed in 1939 and put into force in 1940; hereafter, ROL), often merely noting in passing and as a matter of course that the “notorious” (O’BRIEN 1996, 45) law was the epitome of the State Shinto system, an instrument for controlling and suppressing religious groups (see TAKAMICHI 1965, 46; GONOI 1990, 299–300).<sup>1</sup> Sheldon Garon’s claim that the ROL, enacted at a time when “relations between state and the established religions underwent major changes,” gave “the state unprecedented powers to regulate religious bodies and associations” (GARON 1986, 300–301) thus seems to be uncontested to this day.

There is no doubt that writers who have explored the Christian experience of the reality created by the ROL, often Christians themselves and writing from a denominational perspective, have shared this view. For them, the ROL marks a particularly dark spot in the “dark valley” of the 1930s and early 1940s,<sup>2</sup> a view that was prefigured by the postwar allied occupation, which demanded the law be rescinded in one of its earliest statements on 4 October 1945 (enforcement of this demand followed on 8 December 1945). Accordingly, the occupation authorities saw in the Religious Juridical Persons Law (*shūkyō hōjin hō* 宗教法人法) a comprehensive religion law that finally came into being during GHQ’s tenure in 1951, and the opposite of the ROL in that it guaranteed freedom from state involvement in religious affairs (see WOODARD 1972, 97–98).

While the ultranationalistic and hysterically militaristic nature of the Japanese wartime state cannot be denied, this does not necessarily entail that it sought to achieve its ends by purely repressive means. Wholesale characterizations of Japan as “fascist,” implicitly drawing a parallel to the political structure of 1930s Italy or

1. Helen HARDACRE (1989, 126) mentions only that the law was passed in 1940. In a more recent, admittedly extremely concise, fifteen-page overview of “State and Religion in Japan” throughout history, Hardacre does not mention the law at all (HARDACRE 2006).

2. The “dark valley” metaphor, taken from the Bible’s Psalm 23, has become so pervasive that even non-Christian religious groups in Japan have come to adopt it to describe their fate during World War II. For the case of Tenrikyō, see LAUBE 1978, 54.

Germany, too readily lead to equating the degree of violence the respective state authorities employed in enforcing their policy aims. We should instead question whether it was in the general interest of the authoritarian Japanese state to employ suppressive methods in pursuing its goals, especially in the arena of ideology. The authorities may well have attempted to integrate to some degree elements identified as “ideologically unfit” or even potentially “harmful to the state,” such as certain religion groups, rather than sought to annihilate them. Conversely, religious groups may have valued such an integration highly enough to go along with policies they would otherwise have judged to be detrimental to their cause.<sup>3</sup>

In this article I will pursue two different avenues: to cast doubt on the assumptions that the powers conferred by the ROJ were “unprecedented”; and that the law was a unilateral instrument of suppression against religions, especially Christianity. First, I will argue that the main thrust of the law concerned matters that had been an explicit part of national legislation long before 1940. Second, I will trace changes and continuities in the organizational structure and in the representation of creeds from before the passage of the law to 1941, and then again to after 1945, in order to ascertain to what degree changes were forced upon religious groups. Logically, changes imposed upon a religious group against its will through the passage of the law should have been reversed after the law was abrogated in late 1945. Equally, it is very likely that those 1940 changes which religious groups did not reverse after 1945 had not been effected wholly against the will of these groups. In the latter part of the article, I will therefore analyze in some depth the continuities and discontinuities in terms of personnel, organization, and statement of faith in Catholic and Protestant Christian groups from the 1930s to the 1950s.

In the conclusion I will suggest that the analytical framework of corporatism, while likely not suitable for explaining all policies pursued by a state that embarked on total war, might go a long way towards explaining the dynamics of interior policy, that is, the interrelationship between the state and interest groups in 1930s and early 1940s Japan. Christianity is a particularly telling example of this relationship precisely because it is generally regarded as having been, in a broad sense, “ideologically incompatible” with the predominant state ideology of 1930s Japan. This is certainly also true of some of the more flamboyant new religions, which had already become the target of intense regulation and even suppression by the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Justice from the late 1920s, but after 1937, Japanese Christian groups were even more suspect as their

3. Church historian Dohi Akio has acknowledged that Protestant leaders welcomed the ROJ when it was first promulgated, hoping for better integration into the state’s religious policy. At the same time, he views the law as a pure instrument of wartime policy designed to suppress and control religious groups (see DOHI 1980, 349–51).

doctrines and organization were seen to be influenced by the wartime enemy.<sup>4</sup> Christianity is therefore in a way the most extreme case with the most potential for conflict, and it is thus especially meaningful if a tendency for accommodation and integration can be found even here.

### *Religious Legislation in Japan, 1872–1940*

The ROL (full text in UMEDA 1971, 170–78) gave the state broad powers of control over religious groups. The basic idea behind the law was to legally separate all religious groups in Japan into two categories: religious organizations (*shūkyō dantai* 宗教団体) and religious associations (*shūkyō kessha* 宗教結社). The former were to receive special government protection and to deal with the authorities mainly through the Ministry of Education, while the latter were excluded from receiving privileges such as tax exemption and were administratively dealt with only through regional authorities usually less conversant with religious affairs.

Most of the powers spelled out in the ROL, however, were not new when it came into effect in 1940 but had been in force as part of earlier legislation, often since the Meiji period. In the following passages, I will introduce the most important provisions of the ROL and contrast them with earlier religious legislation in Japan, proceeding along the following subject areas: 1. buildings, 2. registration and reports, 3. leadership, and 4. penal measures.

#### 1. BUILDINGS

In order to erect temples or “churches” (*kyōkai* 教会, a term used in the ROL to refer to all religious buildings other than Buddhist temples), articles 6–12 of the ROL stipulated that the prospective founder had to supply detailed information on doctrine, structures, finances, and maintenance, and apply for permission with the prefectural authorities. Amalgamations or dissolutions of religious buildings or local groups also required permission, first from the group’s overall leader, and then from the prefecture. These permissions were in theory not necessary for the construction of edifices not connected to larger religious groups; in practice, however, the authorities chose to ignore this clause (UMEDA 1971, 181).

Similar provisions had existed since the beginning of the Meiji period. As early as August 1872, the government decided to continue the Tokugawa-period practice of demanding permits for temple or shrine construction. A Home Ministry ordinance from 9 September 1878 clarified the details of how to apply: the application, signed by priests, believers, and the mayor, needed to include infor-

4. On the treatment of new religions and on the dynamics leading to the expansion of the drag-net to include Christian groups in the late 1930s, see GARON 1986 and WATANABE 1979, esp. 152–53.

mation on the financial situation of the community, location of the building, the deities venerated there, the precise nature of the religion to which the building belonged, and the offices of the clergy to be employed there (UMEDA 1971, 107–108). This decree remained valid for Shinto shrines until 1913 (when, as part of its efforts to administratively separate Shrine Shinto from other religions, the Home Ministry passed new regulations); for Buddhist buildings they were in force until 1939. Christian buildings were dealt with in a similar ordinance dated 27 July 1899. In addition to the items already mentioned above, this ordinance demanded applicants prove the ability to maintain the building, and of persons wishing to spread a religious doctrine to register with the prefectural authorities, providing details such as *curricula vitae* as well as an explanation of the method by which the faith was to be spread (UMEDA 1971, 452–53).

## 2. REGISTRATION AND REPORTS

The registration not only of their buildings, but of religious groups themselves, was a key component of the ROL. In order to become a religious corporation, groups had to register with the Minister of Education, supply detailed information about their doctrine, the method of spreading their faith, and descriptions of rituals, leaders, adherents, and finances.

Until 1940, there had been no obligatory registration for religious groups (in contrast to their buildings). Yet such an obligation had existed for those religious groups that had wished to gain recognition as a legal person according to civil law (Article 34 of Japan's 1896/98 Civil Code). Since 1899 legal persons had been exempt from income tax, and since 1896 from registry tax, which was levied on real estate transferred free of charge to the recipient. As religious bodies often received gifts of this sort, exemption from registry tax was extremely important to them. Estates housing religious buildings were also exempt from the same tax for groups recognized as legal persons, which had also explicitly been the case for Christian churches since 1905 (UMEDA 1971, 160).

Accordingly, there were enough financial incentives to seek recognition as a legal person. However, according to a Home Ministry ordinance from 1900, this necessitated an application at the ministry detailing the group's history, the structure of its inner organization, how ceremonies were conducted, the creed spread, and the priests or teachers qualified and appointed. A change in any of these items had to be approved by the Home Ministry first, which had the power to withdraw recognition of a legal person's status (ABE 1970, 282–83). Estates containing religious private schools were exempt from land tax, which differed for those upon which other religious buildings stood (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 167).

Article 28 of the ROL determined that the Ministry of Education could collect information from religious corporations within the limits of its duty of over-

sight. The law here remained vague, and older and more detailed instructions remained in force. The Meiji government had introduced a system of reporting the numbers of adherents, priests, and buildings, obligatory for Buddhist and Shinto groups, in 1876 (UMEDA 1971, 113). The details of how the government obtained statistical data changed several times until the Ministry of Education published an ordinance in 1914 which was to remain valid until 1945. According to this ordinance, religious groups had to send in semiannual reports on the number of adherents, buildings, and priests or teachers. In addition, they had to disclose the names of all employees and provide details on gatherings, missionary activity, other facilities (especially schools), and their annual budget (UMEDA 1971, 114).

### 3. LEADERSHIP

One of the most prominent new features of the ROL was the obligatory provision of one central leader for each religious organization, called *kanchō* 管長 for Buddhist and Sect Shinto sects, and *tōrishā* 統理者 for Christianity and other religions. This leader had to be approved by the Ministry of Education, and he in turn had to approve most internal matters of the religious organization under the ROL.

A system of religious leaders (or “chief abbots,” as Abe translates it) of Sect Shinto and Buddhist organizations, also called *kanchō*, had been instituted by the early Meiji government when it had begun experimenting with the Great Promulgation Campaign in 1872 (see HARDACRE 1989, 42–48). As the campaign was gradually abandoned in the 1880s, the last step of its demise was an 1884 cabinet order ending the hiring of Buddhist and Shinto priests as instructors (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職). The *kanchō* system, however, was perpetuated, and regulated by a cabinet order from August 1884, operative until 1939. Each sect had to name a *kanchō*, for whose appointment Home Ministry permission was necessary. The *kanchō*’s main responsibilities were taking care of the sect’s bylaws, and hiring, firing, and promoting teachers and priests as well as regulating their ranks and titles (ABE 1970, 280). A system of individual responsibilities not on the level of large (usually nationwide) religious organizations, but for single shrines and temples, had been fixed by 1881. Each shrine and temple had to nominate a representative (*sōdai* 総代), to be selected from among the patrons, and to be approved by the mayor (UMEDA 1971, 122).

### 4. PENAL MEASURES

The ROL provided for strict control of religious activities: “When the spreading of doctrine, conduct of ritual, or another religious performance by the religious organization or priests and teachers harms public peace and order or runs

counter to the duties as subjects, the Ministry of Education can limit or prohibit them, stop the activities of priests and teachers, or cancel the permit of a religious organization” (Article 18). Before 1940, penal measures for religious activities had only been possible through two police laws from 1900 and 1908 (HARDACRE 1989, 125–26). A Home Ministry decree from 1908 set prison sentences for practices defined as superstitious, among which it counted prayers for the health of other people (UMEDA 1971, 488), a provision clearly directed against new religions.

A comparison of the rules already existing before 1940 and the ROL shows that most of the duties and obligations for religious groups spelled out in the latter were not new. Religious groups had been obliged to report information, including financial details, to the authorities for several decades and had been forced to gain permission for erecting religious buildings and for disseminating their faith. There had even existed a *de facto* obligation for larger entities to obtain registration as a legal person, unless they wanted to hazard losing tax privileges. Furthermore, most regulations were operative for all three large religions (Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity), with the exception of the *kanchō* system, in which responsible representatives had to be named both for the overarching organization and for individual temples or shrines.

The main novelties of the law were that Christianity was for the first time mentioned officially in a legal text (where it had heretofore been at most one of the “religions other than Buddhism and Shinto”), thereby achieving in a certain sense a measure of official recognition, and that the Ministry of Education acquired a number of competences which had earlier been divided between itself, the Home Ministry, and regional authorities, in particular those concerned with punishing transgressions against the disturbance of public order. Legal historian Watanabe Osamu emphasized this function of the ROL when he characterized it as “a weapon through which the Ministry of Education was finally able to unify in its hand all those controls over religious groups over which it had quarreled with other government agencies” (WATANABE 1979, 153). In a sense, this transfer of authority to the Ministry of Education might actually have worked to the advantage of religious groups (and especially Christian ones), who were often confronted with utter ignorance when dealing with local or regional authorities, but could expect a minimum measure of understanding from a ministry at the national level.<sup>5</sup>

5. A few years earlier the Ministry of Education had been an important ally of the Catholic Church against other government agencies when an incident erupted over the refusal of several students at the Jesuit-run Sophia University to pay homage at Yasukuni Shrine in May 1932. For the role of the Ministry of Education in resolving the incident, see KRÄMER 2002, 34–40.

*Indigenization and Centralization in the Catholic Church*

Consideration of the written law alone, however, will not suffice if one is to gauge its immediate and long-term effects. I will therefore now turn to the circumstances of its actual enforcement, first taking up the example of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was incorporated as Nihon Tenshu Kōkyō Kyōdan 日本天主教教団 by the Ministry of Education in 1941.<sup>6</sup> The two most obvious changes the Catholic Church underwent in its new form of organization were the unification of all dioceses as one church under a chairman (*tōrisha*) and the fact that each diocese was placed under the jurisdiction of a Japanese bishop, whereas the majority of diocesan heads had been foreigners only a short while before. Out of the fifteen Japanese mainland dioceses (some of which were, technically speaking, apostolic vicariates or apostolic prefectures at the time in question) three had been led by Japanese up to 1940, three were assigned to Japanese in October 1940, three more in November 1940, two in December 1940, and the last four in January 1941.<sup>7</sup>

An episcopal conference meeting on 11–12 September 1940 had decided to take this step, deemed necessary, as it declared, under the “new system” that Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro 近衛文麿 had announced on 24 June 1940 (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 170). The more direct motivation, however, was a conference held at the Ministry of Education on 12 June 1940, at which Ahara Kenzō 阿原謙造, head of the Bureau for Religion, explained that the provisions of the ROL alone would not suffice in order to be recognized as a religious organization. Instead, the ministry set up several other conditions, which turned out to be those parts of earlier drafts of the law that had not been passed in the Diet (WOODARD 1956, 463–64). The condition Ahara explained on 12 June 1940 was that religious groups would only be recognized if they could prove their financial and personal independence from foreign countries (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 166).

While reshuffling the personnel was thus obviously prompted by the Ministry of Education and the wartime mood hostile towards all things foreign, it is equally obvious that the indigenization of the clergy suited the general intentions of the Catholic Church very well. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the Vatican had for a long time given relatively little attention to the work of the missions abroad. This, however, changed when Pope Benedict xv issued

6. The Catholic Church had been (and is) known better as *katorikku kyō*, phonetically rendering the Latin term “catholicus.” The new name combined one of the possible words for “God” (*tenshu*, see below) with the literal translation of the original meaning of “catholicus” (in the sense of general, all-encompassing) as *kō*.

7. Lists of appointees can be found in HECKEN (1963, 93) and TAKAGI (1985 vol. 2, 173–74). Two dioceses in Korea, the Prefecture Apostolic of Karafuto, the Vicariate Apostolic of Nan'yō, and the Prefecture Apostolic of Taiwan, also switched over to Japanese leadership between 1941 and 1943.

his apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* in 1919. Addressed to all the faithful in the world, the first section of this papal writing was directed at the mission leaders (bishops, apostolic vicars, prefects), stressing the following “very important point for anyone who has charge of a mission”:

He must make it his special concern to secure and train local candidates for the sacred ministry. In this policy lies the greatest hope of the new churches. For the local priest, one with his people by birth, by nature, by his sympathies and his aspirations, is remarkably effective in appealing to their mentality and thus attracting them to the faith. Far better than anyone else he knows the kind of argument they will listen to, and as a result, he often has easy access to places where a foreign priest would not be tolerated.

(ACTA APOSTOLICAE SEDIS 1919, 444–45)

Ever since *Maximum Illud*, Rome has granted high priority to nationalizing the clergy in mission areas; Benedict’s successor Pius XI continued this policy and was instrumental in enforcing the thoughts laid out by his predecessor (ALLAM 1990, 67). In Japan, these endeavors were picked up by the Tokyo regional synod of 1924, where the wish to “entrust able Japanese priests the leadership of missionary districts and the supervision of younger priests” was explicitly voiced by the missionaries and foreign dignitaries (METZLER 1980, 279). That the Japanese episcopate followed up on its words can be seen in the fact that the first dioceses handed over into Japanese hands were the two most important ones: Nagasaki (1927), with 63,698 out of 97,581 Japanese adherents by far the largest diocese in the country, and Tokyo (1937), standing out as the only archdiocese of Japan and also the third largest with 10,681 believers.<sup>8</sup>

While there were thus early efforts at indigenization at the top level, the same concern proved to be much more difficult at the lower level of ordinary priests, although almost half of all priests in charge of congregations were Japanese by the 1940s.<sup>9</sup> The government, accordingly, did not demand the nationalization of the priesthood *in toto* (other than in the case of Western administrators of mission schools, who were replaced by Japanese; see ION 2003, 92). As early as 1935, the Japanese bishops, at that time non-Japanese citizens except for Hayasaka Kyūnosuke 早坂久之助 of Nagasaki, had taken a public stand on the nationalization of the clergy. Sensing the difficulties ahead, a pastoral letter dating from 25 April 1935 announced:

The foreign missionaries are entirely taken up with the task of increasing the number of believers and bringing forth native priests in large numbers, while

8. The figures are from 1927 and 1937, respectively (HECKEN 1963, 70 and 75, respectively).

9. One hundred and fifty-six out of three hundred and twenty-nine in 1947 (*Report of the Rehabilitation Committee* 1948, 63; n.a.).

they endure the troubles of an alien language and alien customs, having left behind their homeland with the resolve to adapt to the [customs of the] missionary area. As soon as the Catholic churches of these missionary areas have reached independence and are able to support themselves, the missionaries leave these areas forever, completely entrusting them to native priests.

(KCKFSK 1999, 121)

While this pastoral letter may well have been written with the authorities as an additional readership in mind, the strong emphasis on independence and self-sufficiency as the primary goal of the missionary is striking nonetheless.

Forming a unified organization was the second precondition for recognition set up by the Ministry of Education on 12 June 1940. To be sure, the Japanese Catholic Church had been acting jointly and as a unified block until 1940, treated as such by the competent church authorities in Rome. The dioceses, though, were in principle able to act autonomously, and a formal alliance or union at the national level goes against both this regional focus on the diocese and the claim to universality upheld by the Catholic Church as a worldwide organization. Nonetheless, nationwide cooperation had been conspicuous in Japan before 1940: important decisions had always been reached among the diocesan heads in accordance with the Apostolic Delegate. The institution of the episcopal conference, central for this process of forming an opinion, was continued under the ROL; the “general assembly” (*sōkai* 総会) established by Articles 102 to 141 of the new church constitution was nothing but the episcopal conference in a new guise, for Article 103 stated: “Regular members of the general assembly are the heads of the dioceses” (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 193). Since Article 127 took care to have all major responsibilities stay with this assembly (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 194–95), the institution of a nationwide chairman forced upon the church did not constitute much of a problem. While this post was irreconcilable with Catholic traditions insofar as the new *tōrisha* came to stand between the bishops and the pope, the new church constitution provided that he remained a *primus inter pares* among the bishops. As such, the post was not that new, for the archbishop of Tokyo can be said to have played a similar part before 1940. It is not surprising, then, that the Catholic Church did not encounter great trouble in agreeing on a person to fill the new post: anybody else but Doi Tatsuo 土井辰雄, archbishop since 1937 and therefore highest representative of the Catholic Church in Japan—albeit without the formal authority that comes with this function—was out of the question. The post of the important man behind the scenes, namely head of the general affairs office (*sōmu* 総務), was given to Taguchi Yoshigorō 田口芳五郎, bishop of the largest diocese in the Kansai area, that of Osaka (NIHON KATORIKKU SEIGI TO HEIWA KYŌGIKAI 1992, 30).

The new constitution drawn up by the Japanese Catholic Church met harsh criticism in a plenary of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the

Faith (Propaganda Fide) held in Rome in May 1941. The assembled cardinals likened it to the civil constitution of the clergy under the French Revolution and declared their intention to withhold their approval of the document. Pietro Fumasoni Biondi, Prefect of the Congregation, however, advised the cardinals that their approval was not asked for and even commended the Japanese bishops for their wise course of action. This was to remain the Vatican's official position on the new constitution of the Japanese church (METZLER 1976, 488). The actual consequences of organizational centralization were minimal. In the ensuing years, the new institutional framework, Nihon Tenshu Kōkyō Kyōdan, and the bureaucracy set up around it, were mainly used as a bridge between the government and the dioceses, forwarding requests by the former—such as demands for war support both in material and in spiritual terms—to the latter.

When the ROL was rescinded by GHQ in October 1945, the Catholic Church of Japan was no longer forced to be institutionally organized as described above. Nevertheless, an episcopal conference convened on 28 November 1945 decided to retain the fundamental structure of the union, changing its name to Tenshu Kōkyō Kyōku Renmei 天主教教区連盟 (Union of Catholic dioceses) (ONO 1968, 54). Its central decision-making body was to remain the episcopal conference, and Doi was reaffirmed in his position as chairman, his new title being *renmei rijichō* 連盟理事長 (union general director). Even Taguchi remained in his post, now with the official title of *jimu sōchō* 事務総長 (general secretary) (SHIMURA 1991, 188). Under the 1951 Religious Juridical Persons Law, the Catholic Church registered under the new name Katorikku Chūō Kyōgikai カトリック中央協議会 (Catholic Central Committee) which it has retained until today. The continuity is equally conspicuous at the level of the bishops: not only were the comparatively new diocesan heads not replaced by their predecessors after 1945, but up to the present they have also been recruited from the native priesthood. At least concerning the outward shape of the church, its institutions, and organization, it is apparent that the alleged pressure exerted by the wartime state was not so unbearable that its consequences would have been done away with by the church after 1945. Proceeding to matters of more substance, the next section problematizes what compromises the church had to make regarding the articulation of its faith.

### *Changes in the Catholic Catechism*

Much of the blame put upon the ROL stems not from anything fixed in the letter of the law, but from demands the Ministry of Education raised when explaining the law to the religious groups. Not all of these were voiced at the conference of 12 June 1940: in his memoirs, Shimura Tatsuya 志村辰弥, a Tokyo priest and close aide to Taguchi Yoshigorō, claims that the Catholic Church was faced with one such additional condition for approval as a religious body by being forced to

change its catechism. Indeed, Sheldon Garon notes more generally that “government agencies pressured the established religions into eliminating alleged discrepancies between their teachings and the imperial myth,” and more concretely mentions “forced revisions in the creeds of Tenrikyō and Nichiren Buddhism” (GARON 1986, 300).<sup>10</sup>

In the case of the Catholic Church, the episcopal conference had submitted the catechism in its 1936 version in order to fulfill the need for supplying an “outline of the teaching” as part of the application. On 12 September 1940, an extraordinary session of the episcopal conference decided to install a special committee for revising the catechism and the prayer book. While it is unclear what steps led to this decision, Shimura recounts that it was the Ministry of Education that had explicitly ordered the catechism “to be rewritten in an appropriate way, as it sounded like a translation and included many points not matching the feelings of the Japanese” (SHIMURA 1991, 31). Shimura also relates the long procedure of coming to an agreement with the ministry’s officials that Taguchi Yoshigorō, the priest chosen for the task of dealing with the bureaucrats, had to endure:

When the draft was finished, P. Taguchi went to the religion division and asked to have it examined. In the religion division he was told: “Since we wish to check the contents carefully, we have to ask you to be patient.” From that point on, things became painful. P. Taguchi was called out to the Ministry of Education several times and asked: “What does that mean? Can’t you correct it in the following manner?”, so that they interfered with various issues, even the substance of our doctrine. (SHIMURA 1991, 32)

For lack of further available evidence, the degree of actual interference in the process of redrafting the catechism is unclear. As a catechism is, however, a central and very sensitive text insofar as it is explicitly aimed at newly baptized believers still uncertain of their faith, and those interested in joining the church, it is safe to assume that the church will not have taken changes lightly, and changes in the substance of the teaching, as reflected in the catechism revision of 1940–1941, will be a good indicator of how heavily the state did in fact interfere. The 1942 edition will be compared here to that of 1936—which differed from its predecessor of 1925 only by being written in a more colloquial style (MUELLER 1967, 63)—and to the first postwar edition from 1947.

The most obvious revision is to be found in the foreword. Restricted in 1936 to mere editorial comments, the 1942 preface is a laudatory hymn to the ROL,

10. In the case of Tenrikyō, these revisions had been enforced before the ROL came into effect. Under pressure from the Home Ministry, the Ministry of Education had in 1938 advised Tenrikyō leaders to substantially rewrite several of their major publications and foundational texts, leading to what Watanabe Osamu has called “a complete change of organization and doctrine” of the group (WATANABE 1979, 149–50).

which “has permitted a new start as a religious organization for our Catholic Church through recognition by the Ministry of Education as a religious organization on 3 May 1941” (KY 1942, preface, 1–2). This “new start” also brought with it the intention “to strengthen the determined will to religious patriotism in this new religious organization, to spread the faith following the imperial way, and to serve the best of the nation by religious life” (KY 1942, preface, 2).

This rhetorical bow before the *zeitgeist* was not followed by a fundamental change in the global structure of the text, which was still divided into three parts: “faith,” “commandments,” and “ceremonies.” Stylistically, however, the question-and-answer format, once introduced for didactical reasons, was abandoned in favor of a more easily readable sequence of statements. In the following analysis, a number of potentially delicate points concerning both matters of outward organization and of inner doctrine will be singled out, namely 1. the position of the pope, 2. hierarchy and organization of church offices, 3. interpretation of the first commandment, 4. the characterization of God as creator and ruler of the world, and 5. the characterization of the Catholic faith as the one true religion.

#### 1. THE POSITION OF THE POPE

At the beginning of the chapter entitled “Catholic Church” the pope is presented as Petrus’s descendant and bishop of Rome who, as representative of Christ on earth, leads the church (KY 1936, 99–100; KY 1942, 56–57). The only difference between the two versions is the term employed for “pope”: While *kyōkō* 教皇, the term still preferred today, can be found in 1936 (KY 1936, 99), it was exchanged in 1942 for *kyōfu* 教父 (KY 1942, 57), usually either a technical term for the early church fathers or for “godfather.” The character 皇 is also found in the word *tennō* 天皇, and the possible association of the head of the church mingling with the affairs of Japan’s ruler will probably have led to employing the unusual word; the 1947 version returns to the prewar *kyōkō*.

#### 2. HIERARCHY AND ORGANIZATION OF CHURCH OFFICES

A similarly subtle change, most probably grounded in fear of the false impression that the church engaged in competition with the Japanese emperor, can be found further down in the same chapter. The enumeration of various ranks of Catholic clergymen (KY 1936, 100; KY 1942, 57) is concluded in the 1936 version by the statement: “The faithful must follow the spiritual guidance of the pope, the bishops, and the priests unconditionally” (KY 1936, 100). Even the qualification marked by “spiritual” seems not to have been deemed sufficient in 1942: the whole sentence is missing after the explanation of the hierarchy. Neither was it reinstated on the occasion of issuing a new catechism in 1947.

## 3. INTERPRETATION OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Among the doctrinal details laid down in the catechism, the interpretation of the first commandment is of special interest in light of the church's relation to Shrine Shinto and its position of competition towards other religions. It was here that the only relevant change had taken place in the 1936 edition relative to its predecessors: the older catechisms up to 1925 had answered the question "What exactly does the First Commandment prohibit?" by citing superstition (*mōshin* 盲信) and blasphemy (*tokusei* 汚聖). Superstition had been further explained as follows:

Q: What does superstition mean?

A: Superstition means to believe in Shinto deities (*kami*) and Buddhas, to honor idols and to believe in talismans, lucky charms, prophesizing, and so forth.

Q: Isn't there anything else that counts as superstition?

A: Visiting temples (*tera ni mōde* 寺に詣で), burning incense, performing Buddhist rites, or contributing to temples are sins of superstition.

(KCKFSK 1999, 41)

In the meantime, however, the Catholic Church had revised its stance on Shinto shrines. This occurred in the aftermath of several incidents involving the refusal of Catholic students at mission schools to perform worship at Shinto shrines. The Catholic Church of Japan had first obtained a statement by the Ministry of Education that shrine worship contained only patriotic elements and concerned only the duties of citizenship (that is, did not affect the religious sphere) and then the papal instruction *Pluries instantanterque*, issued by Propaganda Fide in May 1936. This instruction, based on the wishes of the Japanese bishops that had been communicated to Rome in the preceding year, directed the Japanese ordinaries to explain to the faithful that the character of Shinto shrines was purely secular and the ceremonies conducted there merely expressions of patriotism and respect for the imperial family (DOAK 2008, 48–51; KRÄMER 2002, 31–34).<sup>11</sup>

In accordance with this policy change, in 1936 the answer to the question about superstition was changed as follows, omitting any reference to shrines or temples: "A: Superstition is granting veneration to the created that is only fit for God [...]. As prophesizing, lucky charms, and so on, not only contradict reason but are also strictly prohibited by God, one must avoid believing in these or performing them as superstition" (KY 1936, 138).

11. Whereas the instruction itself only held that believers *may* participate in Shinto ceremonies if deemed necessary, Pope Pius XI, when approving the document, added that "the ordinaries of Japan can and must follow the standards given above" (METZLER 1976, 791). On the rites controversy in general, including the influence of earlier events in China, see MINAMIKI 1985, 149–52.

The 1942 edition took up the exact same wording. The First Commandment itself, however, was translated differently. While the 1936 edition had stated “I am your Lord, you shall not treat anything besides me as God” (KY 1936, 133), the 1942 edition put it this way: “I am your Lord, you shall venerate me as your only God” (KY 1942, 97). Explicitly writing “anything besides me” (*ware no hoka ika naru mono* 我の外如何なるもの) might have seemed to point too obviously to other potential objects of veneration (such as the *tennō*), so the wording was changed to one less inclined to arouse unpleasant associations. This interpretation is supported by the following explication of the commandment. According to the 1936 version, God by the commandment ordered “to venerate God alone” (*tada tenshu dake o reihai suru koto* ただ天主だけを礼拝すること) (KY 1936, 133). In 1942, however, one can read that it is said that “only God is to be venerated as God” (*tenshu nomi o tenshu toshite reihai suru koto* 天主のみを天主として礼拝すること) (KY 1942, 97), that is, while other objects of veneration are not explicitly excluded, they may simply not be venerated “as God.” The answer to the question of what this veneration meant was weakened, too. The 1942 version stated: “Venerating God as God means venerating God as the creator of all things.” This is a literal rendering of the 1936 version—except for one omission: in 1936 the catechism had taught it meant “venerating God as the creator of all things and as supreme lord” (KY 1936, 134). Here, too, the potential conflict with the *tennō* will certainly have played the decisive part in eliding the “supreme lord.” The 1947 edition retained the 1942 translation of the First Commandment. The explication of its meaning, however, was put in a new way:

Going to the places of veneration of other religions with the intention of venerating there (*sankei* 参詣), donating money, or taking part in the ceremonies of other religions is a sin. In the case of weddings, funerals, and so on, however, it is permitted to take part in these as a custom or to burn incense, for example, if it does not have the meaning of participating in the other religion.

(KY 1947, 105)

The gist of *Pluribus instanterque* is still discernible, even if accentuated in a different way than had been the case before. Unlike in the catechisms before 1936, activities in temples and shrines are not unconditionally prohibited, but rather explicitly permitted, if “custom” or “politeness” (*reigi* 礼儀) demand so. Other than in 1936 and 1942, however, it is taken for granted that regular shrine visits are not covered by this permission.

#### 4. CHARACTERIZATION OF GOD AS CREATOR AND RULER OF THE WORLD

An even more subtle modification can be found in the chapter on “God.” The 1936 catechism (and the 1947 one as well) read: “God is the infinite spirit who created heaven, earth, and all things, and who rules them” (KY 1936, 16; KY 1947,

19). The same sentence can also be found in 1942; the only change is the reading given for the characters translated above as “rules,” now *shusai suru* 主宰する instead of *tsukasadoru* 主宰る. Although the difference is of a minor order, *tsukasadoru* carries the nuance of “to take office,” “to control,” while *shusai* is closer to “to preside,” “to plan,” or “to organize,” thus less directly implying the actual exercise of authority. Another semantic point can be made regarding the word used for “God.” Today, and before the war as well, most Christian groups used “kami” to translate “God.” “Kami” can also mean “Shinto deity” and, by way of popular etymology and common association, can also be thought of as related to a different character pronounced the same way, meaning “above” and sometimes also used to refer to the *tennō*. Takagi Kazuo claims it was during the 1940–1941 revision of the catechism that the Catholic Church of Japan decided to employ *tenshu* instead of kami (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 171–72). In 1943, the Baptist missionary Daniel C. Holtom argued in a similar way:

The Japanese conception of kami as found in national Shinto is a secular-state term and is not genuinely religious, at least in the Christian sense. To point the difference [*sic*] between the two, the Roman Catholic church has recently decreed that the designation Ten Shu, “The Lord of Heaven,” shall be used exclusively as the name of the supreme object of Christian worship.

(HOLTOM 1963, 120)

While Holtom is generous enough not to presuppose motives of accommodation in adopting the new term, and both he and Takagi are right insofar as 1942 was the time when *tenshu* was adopted in the official designation for the church (see above), it is somewhat misleading to assume that the term was entirely new at this time. Besides having been already in use during the first Christian mission of Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and again in the early Meiji period, the 1936 catechism also exclusively employed *tenshu* for conveying the concept of “God.” An even more eloquent argument against the hypothesis of change under pressure is the fact that not only does the catechism of 1947 abstain from changing the term, but it took one more decade until the Japanese Episcopal Conference finally decided in 1959 to substitute *tenshu* for kami in all official publications (NIHON KIRISUTOKYŌ REKISHI DAIJITEN HENSHŪ IINKAI 1988, 906).

##### 5. CHARACTERIZATION OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH AS THE ONE TRUE RELIGION

A central point of Catholic self-awareness is the definition of the faith as the only true one. The catechism of 1936 sets out with a section on “The true religion” (KY 1936, 5–8). The argument begins with the assertion that it is religion in general that teaches man about the beginning and end of his life and guides man on his path through life. Only the true religion, however, can guide man correctly. Accordingly, the question “Are there several true religions?” is answered in the

negative: “Since there is only one God, one truth, and only one true way of man, there must also be only one true religion [...]. The true religion is called the Catholic Church or Catholicism” (KY 1936, 6–7). The complete absence of this whole passage in the revised edition of 1942 is probably the most serious change in the catechism. The 1942 edition does not fail to mention “uniqueness” (*yuiitsu* 唯一) as one of its four principal characteristics (KY 1942, 57), but relinquishing the self-portrayal as the one true religion in a prominent place of the text must be called a substantial loss. This passage also marks the most decisive change in the first postwar catechism. The slightly changed text of the 1936 edition was moved from the first chapter into the preface (KY 1947, preface, 2).

Again, as in the case of organizational change, it is striking to see that the church did not simply revert to its prewar catechism after 1945 but decided to compose an entirely new one, thereby acknowledging that not all changes occurring during the 1930s and early 1940s were necessarily negative. This is especially visible in the case of the translation and interpretation of the first commandment, where a lasting change in the interpretation of canonical law was achieved.

#### *Protestant Denominations and the ROL*

At the conference for religious leaders the Ministry of Education held following the enactment of the ROL on 12 June 1940, head of the Bureau for Religion Ahara explained that only organizations with at least five thousand members and fifty churches would be considered as candidates for becoming religious organizations under the new law (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 2, 166). While this posed no problem to the Catholic Church, only the largest Protestant denominations could fulfill this requirement; the smaller groups had no choice but to see to the formation of a union in order to achieve the required size. The Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan 日本基督教団, founded on 24–25 June 1941, came to comprise all Protestant groups except for a part of the Anglican Church and of the smaller Nihon Seisho Kyōkai 日本聖書教会. The circumstances of its coming into existence have led inner-church critics to characterize the organization as being a child of state pressure, a point that became the subject of internal strife in the 1960s when liberal church members pressed for reforms. Until today historians have tended to stress that “the origin of the coalition of [Protestant] denominations was the interpretation of the Bureau for Religion of the Ministry of Education at the time of the enactment of the ROL” (TAKAMICHI 1965, 52); “the impulse (for the union) did not originate with the churches, but with the Japanese government” (APFELBACHER 1973, 767); that “it took the pressure from the fascist, wartime regime” to bring about the union (DAVIS 1992); or that “the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan had no other *raison d'être* but to respond to the demands of the state system” (HARA 1997, 275).

These views, however, ignore the long history of intra-denominational Protestant alliances in Japan. In the very beginning of the Meiji period, foreign missionaries had already envisioned “a single church by the Japanese themselves,” and it was rather due to a lack of financial resources that a variety of missionary societies became active in different regions of the country, in the end resulting in a multiplicity of denominations (ISSHIKI 2006, 73). As early as 1878, the two then-largest denominational groups, the Presbyterians (Nihon Kirisuto Itchi Kyōkai 日本基督一致教会, in 1890 renamed Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai 日本基督教会, usually abbreviated Nikki 日基) and the Congregationalists (Kumiai Kyōkai 組合教会) began to hold regular meetings under the title of Zenkoku Kirisutokyō Shinto Daishinbokukai 全国キリスト教信徒大親睦会. In 1885, the two groups agreed upon a lasting cooperation, the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōto Fukuin Dōmeikai 日本キリスト教徒福音同盟会 (or Fukuin Dōmeikai, Evangelical Alliance). Only two years later, representatives of the two confessions appointed a committee to effect a merger. When in May 1889 everything seemed ready, the Kumiai National Convention refused to consent at the last minute (SHORROCK 1952, 195–96). Nijima Jō 新島襄, founder of Dōshisha, had been instrumental in averting the merger, which he did not oppose in principle, but which he saw as being dominated by Presbyterian principles of church organization. To Nijima, Presbyterianism was centralist and anti-democratic, and opposed to Congregationalist principles of the autonomy of individual churches. Based on this conviction, he was unwilling to accept any form of representational governing bodies that might potentially undermine the sovereignty of individual churches, and he was likewise wary of any specific phrasing of a fundamental creed that might be binding to the individual churches (DOHI 2004, 68–88). After this, the focus of interdenominational activities shifted from institutional merger to substantial cooperation for some time.

Thus, several smaller groups joined the Fukuin Dōmeikai in 1901, pooling their resources for a mission campaign that put denominational differences last. Over three hundred individual churches participated in this “Forward Evangelistic Campaign,” which lasted until 1904 (LEE 1962, 124). It did not take long before the first alliance initiated not solely for campaign purposes was successfully formed: in 1911 the three confessions richest in membership (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists) founded the Christian Church Federation (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai Dōmei 日本基督教会同盟) together with five smaller groups; out of the larger groups, it was only the Anglicans and the Baptists that were now still outside of church union efforts (LEE 1962, 125).<sup>12</sup> The Church Federation held annual meetings, and its activities included public relations work in

12. Daniel C. Holtom, Baptist missionary in prewar Japan, estimated that the Dōmei “represented nearly all the Christian forces of the land outside of Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox constituencies” (HOLTOM 1963, 96).

the name of Japanese Protestant Christianity and the organization of campaigns for evangelization, the promotion of abstinence, and other causes (IGLEHART 1959, 142). The Baptists, as well as two smaller groups, joined the Dōmei's successor organization, the Nihon Kirisuto kyō Renmei 日本基督教聯盟 (National Christian Council of Japan, NCC), when it was founded in November 1923.<sup>13</sup> The broadened span of NCC's activities included, among other things, representing Japanese Protestantism at international Protestant meetings abroad (LEE 1962, 128–29), and it was this NCC that formally voted to create the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan at one of its plenaries on 6 September 1940.

The NCC had for several years before this vote been the institutional anchor from which union efforts had been further pursued, supported by some of the most prominent Protestant ministers in Japan such as Uemura Masahisa 植村正久 or Ebina Danjō 海老名弾正. The reason that union was not achieved despite massive efforts by the majority of NCC members was mainly opposition by the Episcopalians (Nihon Seikōkai 日本聖公会). Having just joined the NCC in 1929, they had serious reservations against the draft of a constitution for a Protestant union produced by an NCC committee in 1930. Unlike the bulk of Japanese Protestants, for whom universal priesthood and the rejection of special privileges for ordained priests were fundamental tenets, Episcopalians believed in apostolic succession, and their representatives in the NCC insisted on explicitly including this principle in the church constitution (DOHI 2004, 93–94). The impasse over the proper definition of the priesthood effectively put union efforts on hold until 1935.

In the meantime, another proponent of a closer cooperation, journalist and Diet member Tagawa Daikichirō 田川大吉郎, had voiced his opinion on the occasion of the tenth general assembly of the NCC in October 1932. Tagawa espoused an alliance (*dōmei* 同盟) in contrast to a federation (*rengō* 連合), which he thought would be too loose, or an outright union (*tōgō* 統合), which he thought would be too restrictive on its members (ENDŌ 2006, 157–58). Tagawa was also one of seven members of a Commission on Church Union the NCC appointed when it initiated a new round of efforts in 1935. However, the plan proposed by this commission in 1938, despite having been purposely worded vaguely on several key issues, still remained unsatisfactory to the Episcopal churches. What's more, the smaller Japan Lutherans (Nihon Fukuin Rūteru Kyōkai 日本福音ルーテル教会) now decided to abandon their cooperation with union efforts altogether and justified this decision with a reference to the 1530 Augsburg Confession,

13. The Baptists themselves had been divided into a Western and an Eastern group (stemming from missionary efforts of the Southern Baptists Convention and the American Baptist Missionary Union, respectively) which amalgamated in January 1940 to form the Nihon Baputesuto Kirisuto Kyōdan 日本バプテスト基督教団 (EDAMITSU 1998, 99). By 1937, most of the Japan Universalist Christian Church had already been amalgamated with the Kumiai Church (ION 2003, 90).

TABLE 1. Membership in Protestant alliances and unions, 1911–1955.

No.	<i>bu</i>	Name of group or denomination	1911	1923	1939	1941	1955
1	I	日本基督教会・ニッキ (Presbyterians)				62,708	
2	II	日本メソジスト教会 (Japan Methodist Church)				53,700	
3	II	日本美普教会 (Methodist Protestant)				3,386	
4	II	日本聖園教会				NA	
5	III	日本組合基督教会 (Congregationalists)				34,172	
6	III	日本基督同胞教会 (Evangelical)				3,402	
7	III	日本福音教会 (United Brethren in Christ)				2,994	
8	III	基督教会 (United Christian Missionary Society/Christian Church [Disciples of Christ])				2,663	
9	III	基督友会 (Friends)				757	
10	IV	日本バプテズト教会 (Baptist)				7,200	
11	V	日本福音ルーテル教会 (Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church)				7,111	
12	VI	日本聖教会 (ホーリネス) (Japan Holiness Church)				16,350	
13	VII	日本イエスキリスト教会 (Japan Church of Jesus Christ)				3,099	
14	VII	日本協同基督教会 (クリスチャン) (United Christians/American Christian Convention)				924	
15	VII	基督教伝道教会				NA	
16	VII	基督伝道隊 (Japan Evangelistic Band)				NA	

No.	<i>bu</i>	Name of group or denomination	1911	1923	1939	1941	1955
17	VII	日本ペンテコステ教会 (Japan Pentecostal Church)				894	
18	VII	日本聖潔教会				619	
19	VIII	日本自由メソヂスト教会 (Free Methodist Church)				3,038	
20	VIII	日本同盟基督教会 (Scandinavian Japan Alliance/Evangelical Alliance Mission)				1,034	
21	VIII	日本ナザレン教会 (Church of the Nazarene)				1,695	
22	IX	きよめ教会 (Holiness Church)				7,057	
23	IX	日本自由基督教会				304	
24	X	日本独立基督教会同盟 (Assemblies of God Japan)*				7,660	
25	XI	救世軍/救世団 (Salvation Army)				16,425	
26	—	日本聖公会 (Episcopalian-Anglican)				28,587	

\*The seven smaller churches in *bu* no. 10 have been subsumed under their umbrella organization, Nihon Dokuritsu Kirisuto Kyōkai Dōmei.

Data on membership and official group names taken from EBISAWA and ŌUCHI 1970, 200–201, 251, 461, 467, 569; IGLEHART 1959, 286, 291–92; LEE 1962, 147; NKK 12–18; UMEDA 1971, 154–55; YAMAMORI 1974, 155–62.

Religious alliances/unions checked for membership are: 1911: Nihon Kirisuto Kyōkai Dōmei (Christian Church Federation); 1923 and 1939: Nihon Kirisuto Kyō Renmei (National Christian Council of Japan); 1941: Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan (Church of Christ in Japan); and 1955: Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan (United Church of Christ).

Membership of churches in umbrella organizations is indicated as follows:

- full membership
- partial membership
- no membership

The figures in the column “1941” indicate the number of adherents for each group in early 1941.

Article 7 of which postulated the unity of the church through the gospel and the sacraments, implying that the pursuit of institutional unity is pointless. In the light of this open rejection, opponents to a full-blown merger gained momentum even within Nikki, the largest denomination promoting church union. Negotiations reached a dead end when, at an NCC plenary meeting in 1939, the attempt was made to create a new committee to resolve the open questions, and not all denominations involved agreed to nominate representatives (DOHI 2004, 95–96). With this, the problem was deferred until the events of 1940 and 1941 affected the union without asking for the groups' consent (SHORROCK 1952, 198).

As TABLE 1 shows, it was exactly those groups that had already caused difficulties in the NCC negotiations before 1940 (together with several numerically insignificant groups such as the Salvation Army) that (partially) left the Kyōdan after 1945. In 1947, 67 percent of all Protestants were still organized in the Kyōdan; shortly afterwards, in order to be able to engage in common activities with those that had just left, the NCC was revived in 1948 (SHERRILL 2003, 163–64). More than anything else, the state's intervention in the 1940s seems to have functioned as a catalyst, merely speeding up a process that was inevitably bound to take place anyway, although the precise nature of the union as it resulted in 1941 was not necessarily identical to what Protestant leaders had envisioned in the preceding years.<sup>14</sup>

A look beyond these *pro forma* alliances shows that church union had, for all practical purposes, been reality by 1940. Besides the evangelization campaigns already mentioned,<sup>15</sup> cooperation had become a matter of course in the field of education. The earliest achievement was issuing a common prayer book, available in 1903. The large groups had consented upon its compilation even before the Fukuin Dōmeikai was founded in 1901 (IGLEHART 1959, 131). Representatives of Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists founded the National Sunday School Association in 1907; they had been using common schoolbooks for some time before (IGLEHART 1959, 130). Christian teachers founded the Japan Christian Educational Association in 1909 to have a federation for solving problems arising in all Christian schools. While the Japan Christian Educational Association did not have any competence in regard to individual schools, it did engage in a host of activities of a consultatory nature (IGLEHART 1959, 160). In 1918, six denominations (including Presbyterians and Methodists) came together to found Tokyo Joshi Daigaku 東京女子大学 (Tokyo Woman's Christian College), combining the higher departments of their for-

14. Tagawa, for one, while acknowledging that the 1941 union meant the fulfillment of his goals in certain ways, disapproved of the Kyōdan. According to him, a real union could not be achieved for political reasons, but only for religious reasons (ENDŌ 2006, 159).

15. The largest of these showed almost all Protestant groups participating in some five thousand individual events between 1914 and 1916 (IGLEHART 1959, 151).

mer autonomous schools in the Tokyo area to an institution officially recognized by the Ministry of Education as a college (*senmon gakkō* 専門学校).<sup>16</sup>

In light of these past developments it is small wonder that the union allegedly forced upon Japanese Protestant Christianity survived World War II more or less intact. While the Episcopalians and the Salvation Army, with their clearly different backgrounds, quickly withdrew from the Kyōdan in 1946, some discussion accompanied the withdrawal of the Lutherans and the Baptists. The former Presbyterians remained within the Kyōdan until 1951 when some of them left. Ever since then membership has been stable.

Concerning the inner organization, the post of the *tōrishā* that the ROL had ordered the new religious organization to institute has been continued under the new title of “moderator” (*sōkai gichō* 総会議長), although his powers, almost dictatorial in 1941, have been abridged to conform to a more democratic constitution. Tomita Mitsuru 富田 満, elected in 1941, was followed by Kozaki Michio 小崎道雄 in 1946. Again, this personnel change was a reflection of continuity as Kozaki had been Chairman of the Board of General Affairs under Tomita, the latter remained on the Executive Committee, and no other officers were replaced from their wartime functions (IGLEHART 1959, 285). Nothing, however, has been done to formally recognize the individual churches organized in the Kyōdan, as some members have desired. At the time of its inauguration in 1941, the Ministry of Education had, as a measure of goodwill, granted the wish of the Kyōdan to be allowed to organize itself in eleven so-called “blocks” (ブロック, later called *bu* 部) of denominationally similar groups. Answering expectations articulated by the Ministry of Education at the time of the official approval of the Kyōdan, the latter decided to dissolve these blocks in 1943, although the former block leaders are said to have retained a sizable degree of informal autonomy up to the end of the war (IGLEHART 1959, 243; DOHI 2004, 117).

When the future of the Kyōdan was discussed in 1946 and the following years, the course taken was one of even stricter unionization: the Kyōdan was to become a church, not a church union. A natural result of this strongly contested—but in the end successful—decision was that not only was the block system completely abandoned, but also the denominations were denied the opportunity to represent particulars of their faith inside the Kyōdan.<sup>17</sup>

16. DEFOREST (1942, 426–27) wrongly gives 1915 as the time of foundation. The college was established unofficially in 1917 and granted recognition as a *senmon gakkō* in March 1918.

17. The Lutherans were the most vocal opposition to this trend which did, in fact, become the reason for their leaving the Kyōdan (ROUSE and NEILL 1967, 462). The reason for the partial withdrawal of former Nikki affiliates in 1951 was also that their wish for denominational independence within the Kyōdan had been denied in discussions over the nature of the new union around 1950 (DOHI 2004, 123).

As mentioned above, in 1940 the head of the Bureau for Religion had set up yet another condition for being granted recognition that was not mentioned in the ROL itself: like Catholics, Japanese Protestant groups had to be independent from foreign missionary societies, both organizationally and financially. As with church union, religious writers since the war have seized upon this as proof of the state's malicious intent, branding it "a part of this programme of repression" and concluding that "the Church had been completely cut off from Western contact" so that "the rightist groups had achieved their purpose" (SHAFFER 1946, 122).

However, this happened to coincide with what most of the groups themselves cherished. Even more than within the Catholic Church, Japanese independence had been the subject of intense debate among Protestants ever since the early missionary activities had first yielded results. The institutional debate was fueled by theological concerns: as Japanese Christianity achieved a degree of maturity, leading church members began to question the conservative views held by the mainstream foreign missionaries. This rift became pronounced around 1890, when ideas of liberal theology began to gain ground in Japan (NIREI 2007, 152, 157, 160). Presbyterians and Congregationalists began discussions with their missionary societies in 1894 and 1895 respectively (IGLEHART 1959, 96). In 1905, the Presbyterians declared their complete independence, thus forfeiting the entitlement to any further financial or personal support by foreign missionaries. The Methodists took the same measure in 1907, when three hitherto competing groups merged and elected a Japanese leadership (GONOI 1990, 290); as this was the first time representatives of the Methodist Church in Japan were chosen, the Methodists had, in fact, "had only Japanese bishops from the outset" (INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF MISSIONS 1941, 251). Boards of directors at mission schools had for some time been filled with Japanese and foreigners in equal numbers, while possession of the schools remained in foreign hands. When, following the turn of the century, the administration gradually came to be placed solely in Japanese hands, actual rights of possession soon followed. Missions passed over land, buildings, and finally control of the institutions, and the schools were incorporated under Japanese law.<sup>18</sup> The passage of the anti-immigration law of 1924 in the U.S. accelerated the trend towards independence. Even among smaller groups the wish to become financially independent from the missions now grew rapidly, and in larger groups such as the Methodists all missionary activity was conducted by Japanese exclusively from then on (IGLEHART 1959, 187–88).

18. IGLEHART 1959, 102; DEFOREST 1942, 430. Some schools had acted even earlier: the Congregational Dōshisha University in Kyōto chose to reject financial support from the U.S. in 1895, while at the Presbyterian Meiji Gakuin in Tōkyō, Ibuka Kajinosuke replaced James C. Hepburn as president in 1892 (STOEHR 1976, 338).

### Conclusion

Both DUUS and OKIMOTO (1979, 72–74) and Sheldon GARON (1986, 300) have suggested using the analytical framework of corporatist theory when looking at Japan in the years before 1945. While our focus here is not on the state side of the dynamics between state and religion, corporatist theory is also illuminating for the role of religious groups under an authoritarian type of government such as the one considered by the “state corporatist” model. Political scientist Philippe Schmitter has characterized a corporatist society as follows:

Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.

(SCHMITTER 1974, 93–94)

We can easily identify most of the attributes listed by Schmitter in the Japanese state’s efforts to control religious groups through the ROL. Certainly, one of its prime goals was to extinguish competition among them and to propel them towards a cooperative stance. To that effect, the state allowed only one category (that is, a religious organization under the ROL) for each religion and in turn granted the new religious organizations an unchallenged monopoly on interest representation. Indeed, the official recognition by the state (as seen above) and the dislodging of the competition through new religions (as argued by Sheldon Garon) were the major motives behind the Christian churches’ support of the legislation.

That the political dynamics surrounding the ROL cannot be explained exhaustively by referring to it as a fascist law of suppression, however, is best visible in the transwar continuities of the effects originally brought about by the law. That neither the Protestant denominations nor the Catholic Church returned to the *status quo ante* after the ROL was repealed in 1945 clearly shows that some of its consequences must have been desirable after all, or at least that the costs of restoring the *status quo ante* were seen to exceed the consequences of sticking to the changes. In this sense, the ROL and its implementation had, at least partially, the character of a catalyst speeding up changes that had been underway for some time anyway, such as the indigenization of the Catholic clergy or the process of forming a union among the Protestant denominations. Furthermore, Japanese Christianity had already shown a substantial degree of willingness to go along with the political changes in the country since the early 1930s. The general anti-socialist and anti-modernist bent of the Catholic Church in the first decades of the twentieth century had made it easier for the Japanese church leadership to side with the state, emphasizing the patriotic qualities of Christians, particu-

larly since the Japanese assault on Manchuria in 1931 (KRÄMER 2007, 259–64). It was assisted in doing so by the acquiescent attitude of the Vatican regarding the political situation in East Asia, marked by its semi-official recognition of the Japanese puppet regime in Manzhouguo (TAKAGI 1985, vol. 4, 236). Meanwhile, the Protestant umbrella organization NCC had at least since 1937 vigorously supported Japan's war in China (TAKAMICHI 1965, 47), and the Kyōdan during the final years of the war actively contributed to mobilizing the population for the wartime effort and developed a strategy for mission work abroad in line with the notion of the Greater Japanese Empire (ISSHIKI 2006, 79–92). Furthermore, by the 1930s both the Catholic Church and important exponents of major Protestant denominations such as Tagawa Daikichirō had come to publicly support the interpretation that worship at Shinto shrines was not only a nonreligious act but a duty for all Japanese subjects (ABE 1970, 243–44).

The leaders of the Catholic Church, for one, resorted to theological arguments in order to explain the new situation created in 1941. Apostolic delegate Paolo Marella addressed the Japanese ordinaries, most of whom had just been appointed to their new posts, in June 1941, arguing for a distinction between the “organism” and “organization” of the Catholic Church, the former being divine and the latter human. While the exact nature of the organization partially depended on that of the organism, it also encompassed elements which were not immutable: “Man differs from man, one people differs from another people,” and thus the organization can not only, but indeed must be adapted to the circumstances of individual cultures (TAKAGI 1986, 13; 1993, 259–60). Marella's words eerily echoed the explanation given by the Ministry of Education when the draft for the ROL had first been introduced into the Diet two years earlier: “Admittedly, the doctrine and the faith itself of a religion may be something extraworldly and suprallegal, but the religious teachers expounding these are citizens and the religious organizations to which they belong are organizations existing under the law” (TAKAMICHI 1965, 46). In the broad picture, rather than having been a highly exceptional period, wartime Japan may just have marked one further step in Christianity's path towards its firm establishment in modern Japanese society.

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