

Axel KLEIN

## Twice Bitten, Once Shy

### Religious Organizations and Politics after the Aum Attack

While a considerable number of religious organizations had tried to build and maintain political networks up to 1995 to protect themselves from unfavorable interference by the state, the aftermath of Aum surely was a test case for the effectiveness of this strategy and for the influence of religious groups in Japan's political system. This article assesses both facets based on an analysis of the changes the relationship between political parties and religious groups underwent in the wake of the Aum attacks. The approach taken treats religious groups as organized interest groups vulnerable to the forces of the political arena. Aum's terror attacks are placed in a comparative framework by looking at them as one example of incidents in which a group of originally non-criminal actors causes massive damage to human life or the environment. In these cases related interest groups often suffer collateral damage and collective punishment, just as most religious groups did after Aum. Instead of retreating from the political arena, however, these groups decided to stay in order to maintain political influence as insurance against future threats.

KEYWORDS: interest groups—religion and politics—Religious Corporations Law—Aum Shinrikyō

Axel KLEIN is a professor of Modern East Asian Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany).

JAPAN SEEMS to be a rather forbidding environment for any cooperative relationship between politics and religion. For one thing, the constitution states in Article 20: “No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority.” Article 89 adds: “No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association....” Originating from Japan’s experience with State Shinto (*kokka shintō* 国家神道), both provisions reflect the dominant postwar demand that any future government should not give privileges to or suppress any religious group or belief. In public and political discourse, these provisions are broadly represented by the term *seikyō bunri* 政教分離, the separation of state and religion.

In addition to this historical and constitutional background, the mass media have hardly painted a positive or at least neutral image of religious organizations, and especially not of New Religious Movements (hereafter, NRMS). The mainstream media have maintained a critical distance in their coverage, while the yellow and weekly press have routinely run negative stories, either ridiculing NRMS or playing on the subtle fears of many readers regarding the alleged sinister intentions of such groups. This negative reporting might be a factor in the levels of distrust and antipathy regularly expressed in surveys on public attitudes towards religious organizations (ISHII 2000). In his comparative study, Peter Clarke concluded that the “response to New Religious Movements... across the world from governments, the media and mainstream society, although not always of the same intensity, has almost without exception been hostile” (CLARKE 2006, 43). For the case of Japan he added that “the public response... has been generally hostile, bringing together the centre, the left and the right of the political and religious spectrum” (CLARKE 2006, 53).

The attitude of political actors in Japan, however, has been more complex than Clarke’s comments suggest. As this article will demonstrate, political parties and individual politicians have often kept divergent views on and different relationships with religious organizations.<sup>1</sup> For example, many politicians from the Liberal Democratic Party (*jiyū minshutō* 自由民主党; hereafter, LDP), which

\* The author wishes to thank Erica Baffelli and Ian Reader for their editorial suggestions and feedback during the preparation of this paper.

1. Another indication that Clarke’s portrayal of political adversity to religious organizations in Japan is somewhat misguided is that he only refers to the Communist Party in this context of hostility to religious movements (CLARKE 2006, 52). However, the Communist Party has never

dominated Japanese politics for decades, and the Democratic Party (*minshutō* 民主党; hereafter, DPJ), which has been the governing party since 2009, have established and maintained friendly relations with religious organizations such as Sōka Gakkai 創価学会, Risshō Kōseikai 立正佼成会, and Jinja Honchō 神社本庁, to name just a few. Beginning in the late 1960s, even the Unification Church, which originated in Korea and is known in Japan as Tōitsu Kyōkai 統一教会, was considered worth cooperating with by a number of Liberal Democrats (*Asahi Shinbun* 23 October 1985; 1 February 1990; 1 April 1992; *Aera* 3 May 2004), a point that is surprising given that according to the church's religious dogma, "Japan must be subservient to Korea, the 'divine country,' and the Japanese must compensate for its thirty-six-year colonization of Korea" (SAKURAI 2010, 320). Given this background, why do Japanese politicians get involved with these groups?

Simply put there are three major perks such cooperation can provide for politicians: votes, money, and staff. In their attempt to foster support, politicians and their parties have mostly been convinced that approaching organizations of any kind (sport clubs, neighborhood organizations, labor unions, NGOs, companies, professional associations, or religious organizations) provides them with enhanced access to voters. The term *soshikihyō* 組織票 ("organizational votes" or "organized votes") is common currency in the political domain (HORI 1985), and even though it has apparently become more difficult to mobilize membership (REED 2011), politicians have not given up on this strategy. As one example later in this article will illustrate, some religious organizations also provide campaign funds and other forms of political donations. Finally, religious organizations also recruit campaign staff from among their members and place them at a candidate's or party's disposal to help with election campaigns.<sup>2</sup>

For religious groups, political involvement seems to be attractive for different reasons. It creates political influence and may thus not only help to push single policy issues, but also to solve problems with the authorities or even change the contents of unfavorable laws and regulations. In this sense, political influence can help to protect religious organizations from the state. In the past, a number of representatives of religious groups have even been nominated as candidates for national elections (mostly by the LDP) and in many cases won a seat. Watanuki Tamisuke, a Shinto chief priest (*gūji* 宮司) from Toyama prefecture, is one example of an influential and long serving LDP parliamentarian (1969–2009),

---

won more than a few percent of the seats in the diet and therefore is significant in historical and ideological terms at best. As this article shows, the key areas of political hostility to new religions today are located elsewhere.

2. Participating in election campaigns also provides an additional field of activity for members of religious organizations—it strengthens group cohesion and offers a stage for proselytizing and improving name recognition (KLEIN and REED in press A).

while Satō Megumu, a chief priest (*jūshoku* 住職) of the Shinshū Ōtani sect 真宗大谷派, even became Minister of Posts and Telecommunications (1984–1985) and Minister of Justice (1990–1991).

### *Approach and Research Questions*

The features described above clearly allow for the conceptualization of religious organizations as political interest groups. Such a perspective has two important implications. First, religious groups crystallize as actors that are exposed to the conflicting forces of the political arena just like interest groups for industry or labor. Accordingly, the analytical focus of this paper is widened to also include political confrontations which originally were unrelated to any religious issue but came to affect religious groups because of their “presence” in the political arena.

Secondly, the approach provides a broader frame of comparison by singling out a particular setting of interest group activity. This setting evolves when a group of originally non-criminal actors causes massive damage to human life or the environment. Along with the Aum attacks examples would include the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska in 1989, the Columbine High School shootings in the USA in 1999, the EHEC-bacteria infection of food in Germany in 2011, and the nuclear disaster of Fukushima in the same year. Cases like these are not often addressed in political science or economics. In general, academic research on organized interests has mostly focused on economic actors, usually reducing context in an attempt to further theoretical advances (LOWERY 2007, 43). My study, however, is very much interested in context and in the specifics a case like Aum entails for interest groups.

One characteristic all these cases share is that strong public protests erupted immediately, creating considerable pressure on the government to act. At the same time, extensive media coverage helped to form a bogeyman image not only of the actual culprit(s) but also of groups that shared prominent characteristics with the perpetrators or were related to the incidents. Not only Exxon, but all oil companies in the USA saw themselves on the defensive; Columbine forced the National Rifle Association and weapon manufacturers to counter-lobby the public outcry against guns; food producers in many European countries saw themselves subjected to suspicion and suffered losses while the search for the EHEC-bacteria went on; and all local power companies in Japan were faced with immense public and political pressure regarding their nuclear power plants after Fukushima. While government can respond to the situation and thus win public support by taking a decisive stance, interest groups are at a disadvantage and often suffer twice: First, their public image is collectively damaged and second, they are often affected by stricter legal regulations.

This was very much so in the case under examination here. While certain distrust had previously existed (see McLaughlin in this issue), it was the criminal act of one NRM that provoked collective punishment for and suspicion of all religious organizations in Japan (see Baffelli and Reader in this issue). The lesson born out of the wartime experience suggested that religious groups needed to be protected from interference by the state, but this idea was supplanted in 1995 by a broad public demand for tougher state controls of religious groups in order to prevent similar terror in the future (READER 2004).

This change in the relationship between religion and the state manifested itself, among other things, in the legal and regulatory framework for religious organizations, the most important being the Religious Corporations Law (*shūkyō hōjinhō* 宗教法人法; hereafter, RC-Law), reformed just nine months after the attack. The reform process and outcome can better be understood by applying the above-mentioned approach and by following a theoretical signpost which says that politics is very much about gaining and maintaining power.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, interest groups suffer not so much as a result of the honest concern of politicians, but because governing parties try to utilize an opportunity to gain a competitive edge against their political rivals.

Dealing with a terrorist attack usually offers a government strong arguments for implementing measures to better protect its citizens, deter potential criminals, and also expand state power. Stricter controls and legal reforms can more easily be justified as strategies to prevent similar cases than at other times. When the suspicion arose that members of Aum Shinrikyō had committed the sarin gas attacks, media coverage and the public outcry that followed were echoed by the statements of government officials, often demanding swift action. In early April 1995, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi concluded that authorities should be given more power to investigate suspicious groups (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 4 April 1995). Even before Aum was clearly identified as the perpetrator of the sarin attack, Yosano Kaoru, Liberal Democrat and Minister for Science, Education, and Culture, went on record with his demand to reform the RC-Law. Along with more transparency and better instruments for the authorities to control religious groups, Yosano also demanded that it should be made easier to dissolve religious organizations if they were “found to conduct anti-social activities” (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 4 April 1995).

3. This is also the basic hypothesis of public choice theory, a theory that features prominently in the literature on interest groups originating out of political science and economics (PELTZMAN 1976; BECKER 1983; POTTERS and SLOOF 1996). The theory considers politicians to be self-interested, rational actors trying to maximize their utility, assumptions that I find too narrow to reflect the complexity of real life. I do, however, subscribe to the notion that “orthodox faith in the benevolence of political man (and woman)” (SHUGHART II and TOLLISON 2005, 1) is not sufficient to understand real-world politics.

Surely, statements like these are meant to reflect a concern with the potential danger emerging from secluded religious groups or “cults,” as they were sometimes referred to, especially after the subway attack (see Baffelli and Reader in this issue). Given the above-mentioned hypothesis, however, it would be a mistake to reduce any analysis to summarizing critical comments made by politicians in charge, to weighing the contents of reform proposals, and to examining legal discussions regarding the interpretation of Japan’s constitution. Such an approach would leave a huge potential for explaining the political aftermath of the Aum attack untapped. Previous accounts such as those by DORMAN (1996), INOUE (1996), LO BREGLIO (1997), YUKI (1997), KISALA (1997), MULLINS (2001), READER (2000), WILKINSON (2009), and McLaughlin (in this issue) have at least suggested that the reaction of the LDP-led government was also motivated by concerns unrelated to the Aum attacks. These scholars based their analysis at least partly on the assumption that the LDP was trying to capitalize politically on the events.

There is historical precedence for this assumption. In 1993 a multi-party coalition succeeded in unseating the Liberal Democrats from their thirty-eight years of uninterrupted rule (KLEIN 2006). Kōmeitō 公明党 (Clean Government Party), the party founded by Soka Gakkai in 1964, was part of that coalition and was soon identified as a major target for attacks by the LDP. Trying to regain its grip on power, the ousted Liberal Democrats claimed that a political party in power controlled by a religious group would violate Japan’s constitution. Some very outspoken opponents of Soka Gakkai, among them Kamei Shizuka and Jimi Shōsaburō,<sup>4</sup> initiated the establishment of the April Society (*shigatsukai* 四月会), a group that quickly turned into the main LDP vehicle to campaign against the alliance of religion and politics. The April Society did so by enlisting the support of many other religious organizations, among them Risshō Kōseikai, Bussho Gonenkai Kyōdan 佛所護念会教団, Shingonshū 真言宗, Shintō Seiji Renmei 神道政治連盟, Reiyūkai 霊友会, Zen Nihon Bukkyōkai 全日本仏教会, and Shinshūren 新宗連, all of which fervently criticized the Gakkai’s alleged influence on Japan’s government. While these religious organizations were trying to prevent Soka Gakkai from gaining more political influence, they were also subjected to a political power struggle that at its core was completely unrelated to religion (KLEIN and REED in press B).

After the Aum attacks, however, many religious organizations—although being competitors in the *religious* domain—combined their efforts in the *political* arena to get the LDP-led government to compromise on its reform plans. During their campaign, all of these groups were confronted with the question of how

4. Both men later became leading figures of the New People’s Party (*kokuminshintō* 国民新党) and ministers in the cabinets of Hatoyama Yukio (September 2009–June 2010), Kan Naoto (June 2010–September 2011) and, in the case of Jimi, Noda Yoshihiko (September 2011–).

effective and meaningful their political involvement had been. Although only one group with comparatively few members had committed a terrorist attack, all religious organizations were affected by the response that followed from the state and the public. If a considerable number of religious organizations had tried to gain political influence up to 1995 to protect themselves from unfavorable interference by the state, the aftermath of Aum surely was a test case for the effectiveness of this strategy and for the influence of religious interest groups in Japan's political system.<sup>5</sup>

This article assesses both facets based on an analysis of the changes the relationship between political parties and religious groups underwent in the wake of the Aum attacks. For this purpose, I will continue by focusing on the LDP's struggle to regain political dominance and how this affected religious organizations. After almost a year in opposition (August 1993 until July 1994) the LDP managed to form a coalition with two smaller parties but did not enjoy a majority in the important House of Representatives. In addition, the party soon saw itself confronted with a new and potentially powerful political rival, the New Frontier Party (Shinshintō 新進党; hereafter, NFP) which originated out of a fusion of several parties, one of them being Kōmeitō. Given this background, the Aum attack offered fuel for the LDP's campaign to strengthen its position in power and was used as a welcome set of opportunities to fight its political opponent (see below).

After the LDP had successfully passed a revised version of the RC-Law that would tighten control over religious corporations, the party set out to repair the strained relationship with these groups. Attempts to pass a "Basic Law on Religion" (*shūkyō kihonhō* 宗教基本法), which some Liberal Democrats had drawn up to reduce the political activities of religious organizations that could legally be permitted, were soon abandoned. On the one hand, religious groups still felt betrayed by the LDP's reform campaign, and on the other hand they had to accept that the Liberal Democrats offered the only way to prevent Kōmeitō (as part of the NFP) taking over the government. Many of the partnerships that had existed between the LDP and religious organizations prior to 1995 were gradually revived, helping the LDP to win the heavily contested 1996 general election. Judging from its electoral victory over the NFP, the LDP's strategy applied in the wake of Aum had produced the intended outcome (see below). Religious organizations, however, though bitten twice by the Aum attacks, were not shy enough

5. I should add here that this article is not about the relationship between religious groups and state authorities. Therefore, the debates about the application of the Anti-Subversive Activities Law (*habōhō* 破防法), the work of the Public Security Investigation Agency (*kōan chōsachō* 公安調査庁), or the contents and implementation of the 1999 Victims Compensation Law (*higai-sha kyūsaihō* 被害者救済法) and Organizational Control Law (*dantai kiseihō* 団体規制法) are not discussed on the following pages. Further information on these points can be found in ASANO 1997, HUGHES 2001, MULLINS 2001, READER 2004, and WILKINSON 2009.

to retreat from the political arena and were rewarded by successfully preventing Kōmeitō from becoming part of the government.

The analysis and conclusion presented in this article cannot offer a complete picture of developments in the political arena after 1995. This may be an obvious caveat given the number of actors involved and the events that happened during this period. Another reminder, therefore, seems to be called for. The process of collecting data for this article confirmed again what other studies on the public perception of religion, especially NRMS, in Japan have found (READER 2004). As these groups have rarely enjoyed support from the general public as a whole and have often been the subject of negative media coverage, politicians have little if any incentive to talk openly about their partnerships with these organizations. Even politicians from Kōmeitō tend to not mention the widely-known fact that their main support group is Soka Gakkai. This may also be part of the explanation why my requests for an interview with a representative of the Agency for Cultural Affairs (*bunkachō* 文化庁), the government institution in charge of religious organizations, were rejected on the grounds that questions regarding the reform process and implementation of the RC-Law “cannot be answered.” Still, representatives of religious organizations and politicians that were kind enough to grant me an interview helped me to gain more insight and reassess my understanding of these developments.

#### *Aum and the LDP's Struggle for Political Dominance*

The LDP had ruled Japan since its foundation in 1955. The opposition, led by the Socialist Party of Japan (*Nihon shakaitō* 日本社会党), was so weak that political scientists coined the phrase “one and a half party system” to describe the imbalance of power. By the early 1990s, however, this dominance showed serious signs of strain as the LDP and its loyal government apparatus displayed a growing inability to respond with sufficient speed to new challenges, among others those posed by the end of the Cold War. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, the US pressured Japan to support the international effort to fight Iraq's troops, but the LDP-led government was again busy with internal power struggles, with the aftermath of a huge corruption scandal (the “Recruit scandal”; see KUJI 1991), and with a lost Upper House election that had cost it its majority in this second chamber of the national diet.

In 1993, a considerable number of disaffected Liberal Democrats left the party after then-Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi had broken his promise to press ahead with political reform.<sup>6</sup> They formed new parties and contributed to the

6. Most of these “LDP-rebels” were possibly not only motivated by the broken promise but also by the fact that they had lost power struggles within the party.



success of a no-confidence motion against Miyazawa, leading to a general election. Even though the LDP was still able to hold 223 of the 511 Lower House seats, the will to unseat the party was so strong among its opponents that a coalition of seven parties and one Upper House group was formed to take over government. For the first time in thirty-eight years the LDP was severed from all the advantages that come with being in government.

Power as the glue that had kept the party together was gone and consequently the LDP, in order not to fall apart, tried hard to quickly unseat the new and politically very heterogeneous coalition. One strategy was to attack the participation of Kōmeitō. According to Liberal Democrats, Kōmeitō violated the constitutional principle of separating state and religion even though the party had erased all religious elements from its platform in 1970 and insisted that it was not a religious party (KŌMEITŌ 2001; FISHER-NIELSEN 2012). In June 1994, the LDP regained power by luring its Socialist arch enemy, soon to be renamed the Social Democratic Party (Shakai Minshutō 社会民主党; hereafter, SDP), and some former Liberal Democrats, now members of the New Harbinger Party (Shintō Sakigake 新党さきがけ), into a coalition.

Still, when Aum struck in March 1995, the LDP was far from its old dominance. Not only was it dependent on support from two smaller parties, but also its major rival was enjoying growing public support. In addition, the NFP had incorporated parts of Kōmeitō and thus profited from the best-organized voting bloc in Japan, the members of Soka Gakkai. Right after its foundation, the NFP enjoyed a support rate of 13.1 percent. Although the LDP fared better with 22 percent (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 22 December 1994), the NFP emphasized its ambitions by winning a governorship in Aomori Prefecture in February 1995 (KLEIN and REED in press B).

Aum, however, provided a welcome instrument for the LDP to fight the new rival. The massive and inescapable media coverage that followed the terrorist attack (HARDACRE 2007) strengthened the often latent distrust that had characterized the view many Japanese held regarding religious organizations, and such stereotypes and fears were easily enforced. As the general public is the all-dominant jury in the political arena, this change in public attitude had a considerable impact on political parties. Even though it took some months before their strategy had picked up steam, the LDP could now build upon the anti-Kōmeitō campaign it had run in 1993. An important characteristic—and also a problem—of this strategy, however, was that in order to damage the NFP politically, the LDP leadership could not differentiate much between Aum and other religious groups, but had to tar them all with the same brush. This clearly irritated many religious organizations, but it worked for the party in terms of winning public support and fighting political rivals.

The process that produced the reform of the RC-Law furnishes proof for this assertion. The ruling LDP made use of the state machinery to deliver on its

promise to tighten control over religious organizations. Only a few weeks after the attacks, Yosano's ministry had already set up a "commission of inquiry into religious corporations" (*shūkyō hōjin shingikai* 宗教法人審議会; hereafter, COI) to deliberate the issue of reform, and the minister made it clear that the Japanese public was expecting fast results (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 25 April 1995).

The ministry had chosen one representative each from the religious groups Shūyōdan Hōseikai 修養団捧誠会, Zen Nihon Bukkyōkai, Shingonshū, Ontakekyō 御嶽教, the Catholic Church, Tendaishū 天台宗, Fusōkyō 扶桑教, the Anglican Church, and Zenrinkyō 善隣教, along with two from Jinja Honchō to join the committee. The COI was completed by three academics from Japanese universities, namely Satō Kōji (professor of law, Kyoto University), Shindō Kōji (professor of law, Tokyo University), and Nakamura Kyōko (professor of the history of religions, Kawamura Gakuen Women's University, Chiba prefecture). The last member was Misumi Tetsuo, then the chairman of the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO but also a former bureaucrat in the Ministry for Science. Misumi assumed the position of committee chair.

Among these fifteen members opinion was split about whether the RC-Law needed reform at all and if so, what kind of reform was appropriate. Those who opposed reform claimed that Aum was a special case for which other religious groups should not be punished. According to this camp, the RC-Law had been a sound basis for the coexistence of society and religion since its passage in 1951, protecting religious groups from excessive control by the state and guaranteeing religious freedom. Advocates of reform, on the other hand, demanded more thorough investigations into groups before granting them the status of a "religious corporation" and stricter supervision afterwards. In addition, legal procedures for dissolving a religious organization were asked for (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 20 May 1995).

Okamoto Kenji,<sup>7</sup> the vice president of Jinja Honchō, and Katō Kazumori, Jinja Honchō's managing director, were two COI members who, in spite of being members of a religious organization, came out in favor of the reform plans. One reason for this attitude was that Jinja Honchō had stronger ties with the LDP than other religious groups, the above-mentioned long-serving LDP parliamentarian Watanuki Tamisuke being living proof of this connection. Jinja Honchō's agenda, "the resurrection of Japan along the axis of the Ise myth" (BREEN 2010, 298), resonated well with nationalistic Liberal Democrats. Cooperating with the LDP on the reform initiative therefore appears to have been motivated by the thought of trading it in for courtesy on other issues in the future. In addition,

7. Okamoto was also a founding member of the nationalistic "People's Conference to Protect Japan" (*Nihon o Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi* 日本を守る国民会議), a group that later renamed itself to become the "People's Conference" (*Kokumin Kaigi* 国民会議) and traditionally held close ties with, among others, a number of religious organizations (WINKLER 2011, 75).

being the administrative umbrella of eighty thousand shrines, Jinja Honchō was of a different nature than many other religious organizations and possibly considered itself to be only slightly affected by a reformed RC-Law.

At the second meeting of the COI in June, chairman Misumi established an eight member subcommittee within the COI to “organize the issues regarding the reform of the RC-Law,” but his move was quickly criticised by reform opponents as being an attempt to sideline opposition (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 7 June 1995). Indeed, the subcommittee consisted only of pro-reform COI members. The initial inclusion into the COI of religious representatives opposing any such move consequently lost much of its meaning. The subcommittee enabled its chairman to hasten the deliberations and to produce a pro-reform consensus.

A survey conducted by the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (27 June 1995) found that 85 percent of respondents favored the idea of reforming the RC-Law. This very high approval rate for the government’s initiative clearly fuelled the LDP’s strategy to trade their religious partnerships for broad public support. A development that also strengthened the LDP’s conviction to follow that strategy was the relative success of the NFP in the Upper House election held in July 1995. The party won forty seats, only six less than the LDP, and only the mechanism of the electoral system had kept the NFP from gaining a majority. About 12.5 million voters (30.8 percent) chose the NFP in the proportional part of the election while only 11.1 million (27.3 percent) wrote “LDP” on their ballot sheet.

While it is difficult to precisely determine how much Soka Gakkai had contributed to the NFP’s result, looking at Kōmeitō votes in the Upper House elections in 1992 and 1998 suggests that more than half of NFP votes resulted from support by the Gakkai. In 1992, Kōmeitō won 6.4 million votes, and in 1998 more than 7.7 million. As FISHER-NIELSEN (2012) reports, raising eight million votes for Kōmeitō has been a major goal for members of Soka Gakkai during many elections.

In spite of its encouraging result, however, the NFP was also struggling with the effects of the Aum attacks. Party leaders consulted regularly with representatives of Soka Gakkai, but failed to gain substantial support from other groups. Although many religious organizations such as Risshō Kōseikai opposed the reform initiatives of the LDP, and even though Soka Gakkai approached the umbrella organization of new religious movements, Shinshūren 新宗連, with an offer to cooperate on this issue,<sup>8</sup> the rivalry between Soka Gakkai and other groups proved to be an impediment for the latter to actively support the NFP and its attempt to stop reform. A number of representatives from groups such as the Shinshū Ōtani sect, Tenrikyō 天理教, Sekai Kyūseikyō 世界救世教, and the United Church of Christ in Japan visited NFP events and presented their

8. Interview with Takashi Hirohashi, representative of Shinshūren, Tokyo, 17 November 2008.

positions, but it never appeared as if that would translate into electoral support. The weekly newspaper of the Shinshūren, the *Shinshūkyō Shinbun*, for example, did not mention the NFP in its coverage of the debate.

On 29 September 1995, the COI presented its final report. The proposal to give authorities the right to conduct investigations within the premises of religious organizations (*chōsaken* 調査権) had been changed at the last minute into the right to question groups (*shitsumonken* 質問権). Apparently, this was the only compromise the subcommittee was willing to make with reform opponents. What many religious groups had feared was that a right to conduct investigations would have opened the way for authorities to massively interfere with the internal matters of religious groups. Still, seven of the fifteen members of the committee complained about the proposal and about having had insufficient debates on it, while the others considered the proposals to be without alternative (*Shinshūkyō Shinbun* 25 October 1995).

While religious groups and political parties were still publicly fighting over the report, Justice Minister Tazawa Tomoharu admitted receiving a loan of 200 million yen from Risshō Kōseikai and resigned in October 1995, only two months after assuming his cabinet position. This incident demonstrated that even though the LDP was publicly taking a tough stance on religious groups, some of its politicians had been profiting from support of these groups and were clearly caught in a conflict of interests. According to the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (8 October 1995), 265 lawmakers in the Lower and Upper House had enjoyed the support of Risshō Kōseikai at that time, among them 180 Liberal Democrats.

Risshō Kōseikai claimed that it did not actively select candidates but responded to requests for support by politicians. When deciding on whom to campaign for, party affiliation was allegedly unimportant, and only the individual and the concurrence of his or her policy stances to those of Risshō Kōseikai counted. Therefore, Risshō Kōseikai only campaigned in the single member districts of the Lower House and for the proportional tier of the Upper House, in which voters can choose between individual candidates of a party list. According to Takeda Hiroshi, representative of Risshō Kōseikai, this selection process sometimes resulted in his organization supporting the same politician as Soka Gakkai, but both groups would never campaign together.<sup>9</sup>

After the Aum attack, however, many politicians seemed keen on either not making their involvement with religious groups public or denied any close relationship. LDP heavy weight Mitsuzuka Hiroshi, for example, had enjoyed massive support from Kōfuku no Kagaku 幸福の科学 (hereafter, KKK), whose spiritual leader Ōkawa Ryūhō began in summer 1995 to publicly praise Mitsuzuka as the ideal leader for Japan (OGAWA 1995; WIECZOREK 2002). Mitsuzuka, however,

9. Interview in Tokyo, 13 February 2008.

claimed to have “no awareness of being a member” of the group, but only to have subscribed to its publications (*Aera* 14 August 1995).

In spite of the tendency among Liberal Democrats not to talk about their relationship with religious groups, the fact that this part of their support base was now under fire still strained the politicians’ relationship with their party leadership. Influential Liberal Democrat Kamei Shizuka, who had been fighting Soka Gakkai for most of his political career, tried to allay the concerns of his colleagues by claiming that, for example, Risshō Kōseikai was not opposed to a reform of the RC-Law, but only demanded more time for deliberation. That, however, did not end the inner-party debate (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 24 October 1995). The NFP did not fare much better. When the court case against Aum leader Asahara was about to begin, some NFP politicians demanded that concerns for Soka Gakkai (as a religious organization that might be damaged by the ongoing discussions about the criminality of another movement) should not be allowed to dominate NFP strategies (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 26 October 1995).<sup>10</sup>

As far as the party line was concerned, however, the NFP had clearly manoeuvred itself into a corner by uncompromisingly and fervently defending the interests of Soka Gakkai. The party threatened to obstruct parliament by boycotting sessions and, as Japanese opposition parties often do, called the ruling party dictatorial as it would ignore democratic rules (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 24 October 1995). The LDP, on the other hand, had to do nothing but portray the NFP as the “Soka Gakkai Party” (Soka Gakkaitō 創価学会党). At the same time, Liberal Democrats could bank on the fact that the Gakkai’s religious rivals had no alternative to the LDP. Consequently, the party leadership assumed that once some time had passed old partnerships would be resumed and only little damage would remain.<sup>11</sup>

In late 1995, the NFP was looking for ways to postpone the passage of the reform bill and demanded that a number of witnesses be questioned by a parliamentary committee. This idea also originated from the toolbox of Japanese opposition parties and was supposed to slow down procedures to a point at which the parliamentary session would be too short to pass the law. Although in the past this strategy seldom produced the desired outcome, opposition parties could enjoy media attention and demonstrate their resolve to fight for their political convictions. When the LDP responded to the NFP’s request by demanding that Soka Gakkai’s Honorary President Ikeda Daisaku should also appear before parliament, the strategy turned into an own goal.

10. Diverging interests like these were not at all uncommon as was proven when Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō in 1999 officially asked Kōmeitō to join a coalition government with the LDP. It took the LDP leadership almost two years to squelch the resulting resistance among its politicians (KLEIN and REED in press B).

11. Interview with Liberal Democrat Katō Kōichi, 31 January 2011.

Considering the status of Ikeda among Soka Gakkai members and his personal history (MCLAUGHLIN 2009), the idea of him being submitted to questioning by parliament must have been greeted with cheers within the LDP. For the Liberal Democrats, this tactic contained two major advantages. For one, it provoked the NFP, driven by its major support group, to present itself even more explicitly as the party of Soka Gakkai.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the LDP now had a weapon that kept the NFP on the run until the law was passed in December 1995.<sup>13</sup>

In its final version the major points of the RC-Law were:

1. Religious organizations that have religious buildings (*keidai kensetsu* 境内建設) in more than one prefecture fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.
2. Within four months after the end of the fiscal year religious organizations are obliged to submit a list of executive staff members (*yakuin meibo* 役員名簿), an inventory of property (*zaisan mokuroku* 財産目録), a fiscal report (*shūshi keisan sho* 収支計算書), and information on hiring and renting (*chinshaku taishōhyō* 賃借対照表).
3. Religious organizations are obliged to give their members and other people with a legitimate interest access to this information.
4. Given certain suspicions, authorities can demand information from religious organizations and also question members. If it is necessary to enter the premises of the religious organizations for this purpose, authorities need the consent of a representative of the organization (HARA and TAKAMATSU 1996, 14–16; for detailed accounts in English see LO BREGLIO 1997; MULLINS 2001).<sup>14</sup>

### *Rapprochement*

The LDP had won the battle, but not the war. The next Lower House election was too far away for the party to rest on the laurels of a reformed RC-Law. Again, Liberal Democrats were at odds with each other about how to proceed. One group called the “working team on the religious problem” (*shūkyō mondai wākingu chīmu* 宗教問題ワーキングチーム) and, chaired by Yosano, began deliberations on a new “basic law for religious corporations” (*shūkyō hōjin kihonhō* 宗教法人基本法) that—in its radical form—would have effectively outlawed Kōmeitō. Members of the “working team” justified their initiative by claiming that there was a

12. For a summary of NFP resistance see McLaughlin in this issue.

13. In the end, the LDP settled for Soka Gakkai's president Akiya Einsouke, who was questioned in parliament on 4 December 1995. (For a detailed report on the questions and answers, see the *Yomiuri Shinbun* 5 December 1995.)

14. Aum Shinrikyō had been stripped of its status as a religious corporation by the time the reform of the RC-Law was passed by the diet.

need to “officially define what the principle of the separation of state and religion means” (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 29 January 1996).

However, a more influential part of the party and the two coalition partners stopped the initiative. For one thing, this law would have risked a new confrontation with religious groups, but this time without broad public support. As this bill could not have been pushed with reference to Aum, it would be clearly taken for what it was, a political instrument to attack Soka Gakkai and Kōmeitō. Secondly, such a law would have prohibited parliamentarians and cabinet members from visiting both the Yasukuni and Ise Shrines, a fact that would have caused trouble with other important sources of organized LDP votes, such as the “Bereaved Families Association” (*izokukai* 遺族会) and the Jinja Honchō. The idea was therefore soon abandoned (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 30 January 1996).

Rather than continuing the conflict with religious groups, the LDP therefore decided to begin a rapprochement with its former allies. Judging from the Shinshūren’s newspaper the anger over the RC-Law reform did not allow for a quick return to old times. In its edition of 25 May 1996, the paper reports on Yosano Kaoru’s visit to Shinshūren’s headquarters. For one, the former minister had come to explain his party’s decision to abandon the idea of a “basic law for religious corporations.” Yosano said the LDP now understood that demands for world peace, made by religious organizations, were of a political nature and in cases like this one it would be difficult to draw a clear line between religion and politics. In addition, Yosano explained, the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech and assembly had also led the LDP to give up its plan for a “basic law.” Nevertheless, the newspaper continued to report on problems religious corporations were encountering with the reformed RC-Law.

Another form of protest against the RC-Law was the unwillingness of religious corporations to submit annual reports and information to the authorities. In July 1998, more than two years after the passage of the reformed RC-Law, these reports had to be submitted for the first time. By now, however, the salience of the topic had faded and the implementation of the regulations was neither strictly executed nor was any noteworthy penalty handed down on trespassers. Two months after the deadline only about 40 percent of all religious groups had fulfilled their duty (*Shinshūkyō Shinbun* 25 September 1998).

The low submission rate was not the only problem with the law’s implementation. In addition, there were still very few officials at the prefectural level to deal with these reports. About 185,000 religious corporations existed in Japan, the majority of which were under the jurisdiction of prefectures (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 21 June 1995). In the Tokyo metropolitan area, four officials had to deal with the reports of more than 6,300 religious corporations (*Shinshūkyō Shinbun* 25 July 1995). Obviously, the implementation of the RC-Law was not a priority on the LDP’s agenda. Indeed, WILKINSON (2009, 114) even argues that the “specific

changes to the law seem to have had little or no effect on Japanese religious groups.”

The rather cold reaction of many religious groups to the Liberal Democratic rapprochement did not exclude the possibility of electoral cooperation. It was obvious that the NFP was no alternative for these groups, and the fact that the general election in 1996 was considered an open race may have added an incentive for the LDP's former allies to swallow their anger and support the lesser of two evils.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the new single member districts in the Lower House pitted LDP candidates directly against NFP politicians in a fight for one seat only, suggesting that religious rivals of Kōmeitō would indirectly help their competitor if they refused electoral cooperation with the LDP or even exited the political arena completely.

In the end, the degree of support by religious groups depended mostly on the region and the particular competitive situation. In Osaka, where Soka Gakkai and Kōmeitō enjoyed more support than in other parts of the country, the religious rivalry did indeed revive religious support for the LDP. In Tokyo, Rishō Kōseikai, Reiyūkai 霊友会, and Myōchikai 妙智会 also supported the Liberal Democrats. In Aichi, a number of religious organizations supported the Liberal Democrats (*Yomiuri Shinbun* 13 October 1996). In Hiroshima's electoral district No. 6, Rishō Kōseikai campaigned for the LDP's Kamei Shizuka, who was also fighting a candidate from the NFP. A quote from Kamei shows how the LDP tried to win its old allies back: “The Gakkai has tied the legs and arms of the NFP and its candidates and uses the party as their instrument to rule over Japan” (*Asahi Shinbun* 20 November 1996).

Eventually, the support by religious groups and the campaign against the “Soka Gakkai Party” helped the LDP to win 239 of 500 seats, 83 more than the NFP (156 seats). Both parties had fielded about the same number of candidates (LDP: 355; NFP: 361). Even though the LDP did not gain a majority, it had dealt a decisive blow to the NFP's ambition to take over the government. Without a perspective to access positions of power in the short run, the heterogeneous NFP began to fall apart.<sup>16</sup> In less than a year thereafter the LDP's general secretary Katō Kōichi had managed to lure enough NFP lawmakers to the Liberal Democrats to secure a majority in the Lower House by September 1997. The NFP eventually dissolved in December 1997.

15. Interview with Takashi Hirohashi, 17 November 2008.

16. Interview with Sakaguchi Chikara, Member of Parliament for Kōmeitō, Tokyo, 31 January 2011.



### *Conclusion*

The aftermath of Aum was a litmus test for the political involvement of religious groups and their political influence. The results of this test confirm that religious organizations as interest groups are vulnerable to the forces of the political arena. In the wake of Aum it became obvious that the relationship with political parties is first of all a function of the electoral benefits religious groups can deliver at a given time. The NFP was highly dependent on Soka Gakkai in this regard and consequently pursued a strategy that would protect the interests of its religious support group. The LDP, on the other hand, could strain its partnerships with religious groups and trade it in for broad public support. Such a process is neither unique to religious organizations nor to Japan's political system. Interest groups that acquire a negative reputation are often shed by politicians even if they can still provide money, staff, and organized votes.

This analysis has positioned the Aum attacks in a comparative framework by looking at them as an incident in which a group of originally non-criminal actors causes massive damage to human life or the environment. In these cases related interest groups often suffer collateral damage and collective punishment, just as most religious groups did after Aum. In addition, research in interest group activity suggests that lobbying works best in the dark while it has little effect in the face of the public (KOLLMAN 1998). The case under examination here furnishes proof to this assumption. Time, on the other hand, usually works in favor of interest groups. As BAUMGARTNER and JONES (1993) show for American politics, the salience and popularity of certain topics changes and affects the chances for lobbying. Even after the Aum terror, public interest did at one point start to decline, giving more leeway to religious groups for lobbying. While they may have been unable to stop or affect legislation, they were able to influence implementation. This point is often neglected by interest group studies but is of importance, as was demonstrated above.

For a while, the Aum case seemed to suggest that religious groups could rely on protection from the state at best to the extent that they were able to deliver electoral benefits, an ability that depends to a considerable degree on the way that the Japanese public views religious groups. Of course, Japan's constitution does set certain limits to what governments can do, but leeway for legal interpretation doubtlessly exists. Public reaction to the Aum attack and the broad support for a reform of the RC-Law implied that certain forms of "anti-social activities" by a religious group could result in even stricter state controls in the future. The aftermaths of the Aum attack seemed to reveal better than any other event in Japan's postwar history how limited the political influence of religious organizations and their ability to defend against state interference were.

After Kōmeitō's ten year span as a ruling party from 1999–2009, however, this assumption is in need of a major modification.<sup>17</sup> Even though Kōmeitō's support base still did not include religious groups other than Soka Gakkai, the party constituted a reliable insurance for *all* religious groups against threats and interference by the Japanese state. By the time the party was sent back to the opposition benches in 2009, the issue of separating religion and politics had lost much of its power as an instrument for fighting political confrontations. While Aum clearly damaged the public standing of religious groups in Japan, Kōmeitō in a way helped to repair this damage.

Still, when "Science of Happiness" (KNK) established a new and explicitly religious party only months before the general election in 2009, reactions to the "Happiness Realization Party" (Kōfuku Jitsugentō 幸福実現党) showed that the aftermath of Aum was still perceptible. In its short history, the Happiness Realization Party has not only been unable to win a single seat in either national or local elections, but has also never gained more than a few percent of votes at best (KLEIN 2011). It is this fact, among others, that some critical observers find strikingly similar to Aum's politically unsuccessful "Party of Truth" (Shinritō 真理党; *Shūkan Asahi* 31 July 2009).<sup>18</sup>

It is difficult to say whether the party's lack of success is mostly due to the fact that it originates from KNK or because it is explicitly religious. Its policies may not appeal to the Japanese electorate or it simply did not have enough time to make itself sufficiently known. Possibly, KNK's leader Ōkawa Ryūhō assumed that fourteen years after the Aum attacks a new religious party would not suffer from the terror's aftermath. But if the high expectations of the party's leadership regarding its chances to win seats in the 2009 and 2010 national elections are any indicator, the group's leaders simply miscalculated. Just as declaring Mitsuzuka Hiroshi KNK's favorite politician only four months after the Aum attack was bad timing in a political sense, establishing a religious party in Japan may also not be an idea that produces political success. In other words, Japan still seems to be no easy environment for the relationship between politics and religion.

17. After the reform of the electoral system of the Lower House in 1994, both the LDP and Kōmeitō found themselves in need of additional support to avoid major defeats at the ballot box in the future. Consequently, both parties began a rapprochement which was mostly motivated by political expediency, leading to a coalition period of rule from 1999 on (see KLEIN and REED in press B).

18. As BAFFELLI and READER have demonstrated (2011), however, KNK's teachings are not apocalyptic and far less pessimistic than those of Aum, a fact that should be considered when comparing both groups.

## REFERENCES

## PERIODICALS

- Aera* アエラ (Asahi Shinbun Publications Inc. 朝日新聞出版).  
*Asahi Shinbun* 朝日新聞 (The Asahi Shinbun Company 朝日新聞社).  
*Shūkan Asahi* 週刊朝日 (Asahi Shinbun Publications Inc. 朝日新聞出版).  
*Shinshūkyō Shinbun* 新宗教新聞 (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan 新日本宗教団体連合会).  
*Yomiuri Shinbun* 読売新聞 (Yomiuri Shinbunsha 読売新聞社).

## SECONDARY SOURCES

ASANO Kenichi 浅野健一

- 1997 *Oumu "Habōhō" to masu media* オウム「破防法」とマスメディア. Tokyo: Daisan Shokan.

BAFFELLI, Erica, and Ian READER

- 2011 Competing for the apocalypse: Religious rivalry and millennial transformations in a Japanese new religion. *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* 2: 5–28.

BAUMGARTNER, Frank, and Bryan JONES

- 1993 *Agenda and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

BECKER, Gary S.

- 1983 A theory of competition among pressure groups for political influence. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 98: 371–400.

BREEN, John

- 2010 Resurrecting the sacred land of Japan: The state of Shinto in the twenty-first century. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37: 295–315.

CLARKE, Peter

- 2006 *New Religions in Global Perspective: A Study of Religious Change in the Modern World*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

DORMAN, Benjamin

- 1996 The Revision of the Religious Corporations Law in 1995: Perspectives on the Soka Gakkai through the Print Media. Honours thesis, Australian National University.

FISKER-NIELSEN, Anne Mette

- 2012 *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Japan: Soka Gakkai Youth and Komeito*. Japan Anthropology Workshop Series. London: Routledge.

HARA Katsumi 原 克己 and TAKAMATSU Michio 高松典雄

- 1996 *Shitteokitai shūkyō hōjinhō* 知っておきたい宗教法人法. Tokyo: Ōkura Insatsukyoku.

HARDACRE, Helen

- 2007 Aum Shinrikyō and the Japanese media: The Pied Piper meets the Lamb of God. *History of Religions* 47: 171–204.

HORI Sachio 堀 幸男

- 1985 *Senkyo to shūkyō dantai* 選挙と宗教団体. *Juristo* 38: 120–25.

HUGHES, Christopher W.

- 2001 The reaction of the police and security authorities to Aum Shinrikyō. In *Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society through the Aum Affair*, Robert J. Kisala and Mark R. Mullins, eds., 53–70. New York: Palgrave.

INOUE Nobutaka 井上順孝, ed.

- 1996 *Shūkyō hōjinhō wa doko ga mondai ka* 宗教法人法はどこが問題か. Tokyo: Kōbundō.

ISHII Kenji 石井研士

- 2000 Nihonjin no “shūkyō dantai” ni taisuru ishiki to jittai ni tsuite 日本人の「宗教団体」に対する意識と実体について. *Chūō Chōsahō* 510: 1–4.

KISALA, Robert J.

- 1997 Reactions to Aum: The revision of the Religious Corporations Law. *Japanese Religions* 22: 60–74.

KLEIN, Axel

- 2006 *Das politische System Japans*. Bonn: Bier'sche Verlagsanstalt.  
2011 Wenn Religionsgemeinschaften zur politischen Reformation ansetzen. Der Fall der japanischen, Kōfuku no kagaku. *Asien. The German Journal on Contemporary Asia* 119: 9–26.

KLEIN, Axel, and Steven R. REED

- in press A Religious groups in Japanese electoral politics. In *Kōmeitō: Politics and Religion in Japan*, George Ehrhardt, Axel Klein and Steven R. Reed, eds.  
in press B Anti-Kōmeitō counter-mobilizations. In *Kōmeitō: Politics and Religion in Japan*, George Ehrhardt, Axel Klein and Steven R. Reed, eds.

KOLLMAN, Ken

- 1998 *Outside Lobbying*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

KŌMEITŌ 公明党

- 2001 *Zoku, seikyō bunri: Sono zokuron, meiron o kiru* 続・政教分離—その俗論・迷論を斬る. Tokyo: Kōmeitō Kikanshi Iinkai.

KUJI Tsutomu 久慈 力

- 1991 *Rikurūto jiken ni “shūketsu” wa nai* リクルート事件に「終結」はない. Tokyo: Shinsensha.

LO BREGGIO, John

- 1997 The revisions to the Religious Corporations Law: An introduction and annotated translation. *Japanese Religions* 22: 38–59.

LOWREY, David

- 2007 Why do organized interests lobby? A multi-goal, multi-context theory of lobbying. *Polity* 39: 29–54.

MCLAUGHLIN, Levi

- 2009 Soka Gakkai in Japan. PhD dissertation, Princeton University.

MULLINS, Mark R.

- 2001 The legal and political fallout of the “Aum Affair.” In *Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society through the Aum Affair*, Robert J. Kisala and Mark R. Mullins, eds., 71–86. New York: Palgrave.

OGAWA Kūjō 小川空城, ed.

- 1995 *Mitsuzuka Hiroshi sōridaijin taibōron* 三塚博総理大臣待望論. Tokyo: Kōfuku no Kagakaku Shuppan.

PELTZMAN, Sam

- 1976 Toward a more general theory of regulation. *Journal of Law and Economics* (August) 19: 211–40.

POTTERS, Jan, and Randolph SLOOF

- 1996 Interest groups: A survey of empirical models that try to assess their influence. *European Journal of Political Economy* 12: 403–42.

READER, Ian

- 2000 Scholarship, Aum Shinrikyō, and academic integrity. *Nova Religio* 3: 368–82.
- 2004 Consensus shattered: Japanese paradigm shift and moral panic in the post-Aum era. In *New Religious Movements in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Legal, Political, and Social Challenges in Global Perspective*, Phillip Charles Lucas and Thomas Robbins, eds., 191–201. New York and London: Routledge.

REED, Steven R.

- 2011 Winning elections in Japan’s new electoral environment. In *Japanese Politics Today: From Karaoke to Kabuki Democracy*, Takashi Inoguchi and Purnendra Jain, eds., 71–87. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

SAKURAI Yoshihide

- 2010 Geopolitical mission strategy: The case of the Unification Church in Japan and Korea. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37: 317–34.

SHUGHART II, William F., and Robert D. TOLLISON

- 2005 Public choice in the new century. *Public Choice* 124: 1–18.

SHŪKYŌ HŌJIN HŌSEI KENKYŪKAI 宗教法人法制研究会

- 1996 *Kaisei shūkyō hōjinhō no kaisetsu, Heisei hachi-nen* 改正宗教法人法の解説・平成八年. Tokyo: Ribatei Shobō.

WIECZOREK, Iris

- 2002 *Neue religiöse Bewegungen in Japan: Eine empirische Studie zum gesellschaftspolitischen Engagement in der japanischen Bevölkerung*. Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde.

WILKINSON, Gregory

- 2009 *The Next Aum: Religious Violence and New Religious Movements in Twenty-First Century Japan*. PhD dissertation, University of Iowa. Available at Iowa Research Online: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/272> (accessed July 2011).

WINKLER, Christian G.

- 2011 *The Quest for Japan's New Constitution: An Analysis of Visions and Constitutional Reform Proposals 1980–2009*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

YUKI, Hideo

- 1997 Problems with the revisions to the Religious Corporations Law. *Japanese Religions* 22: 75–86.