Between Unity and Separation:
Religion and Politics in Japan, 1965-1977

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One of the problems vexing scholars of Japanese religion is whether the kinds of changes taking place in Japanese religion and society can properly be designated "secularization." The term itself smacks of a concept of religion more appropriate to the experience of Western Christianity than to that of Japanese religion. That important, perhaps even radical changes are occurring in Japan is not to be denied, but if secularization is regarded as involving a widespread sense of social malaise and value-crisis, most scholars would probably agree that what is happening in Japan should be designated by some other term. If, however, one sets psychological considerations aside, it might prove a useful exercise to ask: if the term "secularization" were applied to certain events in recent Japanese history, what would the term then mean?

For the purpose of this inquiry, the events to be considered fall into the general category of religion and politics. Before identifying and discussing them, however, it is important to outline the mainstream tradition concerning the relationship between religion and politics and

the alternative tradition institutionalized since 1945.

Setting the stage. It is generally accepted that the dominant tradition in relationships between state and religion in Japan is that of *saisei itchi*: the unity of religion and politics. This tradition has gone through several developments.

Its earliest stage probably dates from the time of Himiko, queen of the principality of Yamatai (3rd century A.D.?). In this stage the queen appears as a shaman whose messages from the spirit world were transmitted to her brother, who was guided by them in conducting affairs of state (Hori 1975, p. 234). Role differentiation is evident, but high office clearly entailed the interrelation of religion and politics.

In time, and perhaps because the shaman's advice led to difficulties, the shamanistic role declined in importance, but the idea that the ruling family is by nature a priestly family whose ancestral line goes back to the sun goddess Amaterasu played, and continues to play, an important part in Japanese life.

The official introduction of Buddhism from Korea in 538 (or 552) led to a power struggle between pro- and anti-foreign factions, but with the triumph of the pro-Buddhist faction in 587 and court support for Buddhism under the regency of Prince Shōtoku (r. 593-622), Buddhism came to be seen not only as a horizon-expanding religion with unfathomable philosophical depths and elevating cultural virtues but also, particularly in the *Lotus sutra*, as an advocate of the "harmony" that made possible Japan's cultural unification (Nakamura 1962, p. 66 [Eng. transl., pp. 386-387]). Subsequent power shifts notwithstanding, it has generally been the case that Buddhism played a sometimes more, sometimes less conspicuous role as guardian and upholder of the state.

Throughout most Japanese history, the emperor did not

exercise political power directly. Only between 1868 and 1945 was direct political leadership by the emperor the rule. This form of the *saisei itchi* tradition, however, is distinctly exceptional.

Saisei itchi has never meant "theocracy" in the sense of a professional priesthood exercising government directly in the name of a god or gods. It has meant, with regard to Shrine Shinto, that the emperor was revered as a descendant of "the Deity who established the State" (Anesaki 1963, p. 20) and, with regard to most forms of Buddhism, that religious organizations have been considered, and usually considered themselves, as rightly at the service of the state.

In 1945, however, a different tradition was inaugurated: the tradition of *seikyō bunri* or "separation between religion and politics." This tradition was not without Japanese advocates even prior to 1945, notably among liberal intellectuals, Christians, and Communists. But the fact remains that its institutionalization in the structure of Japanese law began as something imposed from without.

Two constitutions, two laws. The difference between the *saisei itchi* of the 1868-1945 period and the *seikyō bunri* of the post-1945 period can be shown by contrasting two laws pertaining to religious bodies in Japan: the Religious Organizations Law of 1940 and the Religious Juridical Persons Law of 1945.[1]

The Religious Organizations Law defined "religious or-

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1. Technically, the Religious Juridical Persons Law did not come into existence until April 1951, having been preceded by the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance of December 1945. (For a detailed discussion of the two, see Kawawata 1972 and Woodard 1972.) Since the law was intended to correct defects in the ordinance and to uphold the same general orientation, however, this distinction can here be ignored. For convenience, we refer to the ordinance and the law alike as the Religious Juridical Persons Law.

ganizations," in effect, as those of Sect Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity. Shrine Shinto, though it functioned as the state cult, was defined as a non-religion (Kasahara 1977, p. 310). A religious organization, in order to exist within the˘law, had to apply for and be granted government recognition — a status not lightly accorded. Government officials, in deciding whether to grant recognition and in supervising the organizations they authorized, were free to insist that a religious organization use only rites and teachings generally supportive of the emperor system and the government. Unrecognized religious bodies were ipso facto illegal and subject to persecution (Koike, Nishikawa, and Murakami 1978). Even though this wartime law and the manner of its enforcement appear extreme when compared to the exercise of state authority vis-à-vis religious organizations in Japanese history as a whole, it represents nonetheless one form that a centralized government bureaucracy of the modern period could and did give to the *saisei itchi* or "unity" tradition.

The Religious Juridical Persons Law, on the other hand, codifies fundamental features of the *seikyō bunri* or "separation" tradition. The distinguishing principle of this tradition is that the state is required to refrain from involvement in religious activities and from support for religious organizations — which presently include once "non-religious" Shinto institutions like Ise Shrine and Yasukuni Shrine. Religious organizations are now legally free to exist whether or not they apply for religious juridical person status. Moreover, the criteria the government must use to assess the qualifications of organizations that apply for this status are clearly specified in terms that forbid violation of the constitutionally guaranteed principle of religious freedom.

Both the Meiji Constitution of 1889 and the Constitution of 1946 contain a guarantee of religious freedom. But if one assumes that the meaning of the 1889 guarantee is to the Religious Organizations Law as the meaning of the 1946

guarantee is to the Religious Juridical Persons Law, the two guarantees, however similar in form, turn out to be quite different in orientation and consequence.

A tentative classification. As might have been expected, the 1945 shift to a legal code oriented to "separation" by no means spelled an end to the tradition of "unity." It did, however, strengthen the position of religious groups that had formerly been persecuted as illegal or, in order to escape persecution, had taken refuge under the skirts of a recognized religious body. Some of these groups support the separatist principles enunciated in the Constitution.

For the purpose of analysis, Japanese religious groups with an interest in political affairs can be divided into three classes. The first class is that of "traditional unity." Following from the tradition of *saisei itchi*, "traditional unity" suggests a harmonious relationship between the world of politics and the world of religion. It includes the idea that religious organizations as such do not engage in political activity or present themselves as critics of government. As opposed to the anti-clericalism characteristic of relationships between church and state in some periods of Western history, the idea that the state is generally supportive of religion, and religion of the state, belongs to the concept of "traditional unity."

The second class is that of "anti-traditional unity." This term is intended to suggest the position that the security and prosperity of the nation, represented by the emperor and the government, depend on its conversion to and support for one particular form of religion. This position is best typified by the Nichiren Shōshū, which will be considered in some detail shortly.

The third class is that of "separation of religion and state." In this case the state, though by no means hostile to religion, avoids participation in religious activities and support for

religious institutions. By the same token, religious institutions refrain from direct involvement in politics — though they may seek to influence developments in the political realm through an intermediate organization of their own devising, as Risshō Kōsei-kai does through the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

If politically concerned religious groups are divided into these classes, the result looks something like that shown in table 1. The membership figures in table 1 must be taken cum grano salis for at least three reasons: (1) they are often general estimates, (2) most people are counted both as Shrine Shinto adherents and as adherents to one stream of Buddhism, with the consequence that some figures overlap, and (3) depending on the issue, many members of the two "unity" classes support separation of religion and state, and many members of the "separation" class support the tradition of unity. The table, therefore, should be taken as suggestive, not hard fact. But even when these qualifications are taken into account, the overwhelming numerical strength of organizations that generally support the traditional idea of politico-religious unity is indisputable.

The fact that organizations supporting the separation tradition may now appeal to the Constitution can be taken to mean that the unity and separation traditions constitute the two main perimeters within which issues concerning religion and politics have taken shape in the postwar period.

Getting down to cases. Recent years have seen the emergence of a number of issues that have drawn the attention of scholars of Japanese religion. Among them are: (1) the proposed legislation that would define Ise Shrine and Yasukuni Shrine as non-religious institutions and support them with government funds, and (2) the lawsuit brought by the Christian wife of a deceased Self Defense Force officer, protesting his enshrinement by the Self Defense Force and

TABLE 1

CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

TRADITIONAL UNITY		SEPARATION		ANTI-TRADITIONAL UNITY	
		Shinto			
Shrine Shinto					
Jinja Honchō	61,629,653				
Sect Shinto		*Sect Shinto*		*Sect Shinto*	
Izumo Ōyashirokyō	1,049,615	Konkōkyō	490,045	Ōmoto	161,680
Kurozumikyō	380,736				
Misogikyō	124,960				
Ontakekyō	733,450				
		Buddhism			
		Jōdo Sects			
		Jōdo Shinshū Honganjiha	6,907,440		
		Shinshū Ōtaniha	6,150,141		
Nara Sects					
Fudō Shū	3,559,208				
Others	1,166,105				
Nichiren Sects		*Nichiren Sects*		*Nichiren Sects*	
Bussho Gonenkai Kyōdan	1,474,317	Myōchikai Kyōdan	679,150	Nichiren Shōshū	16,362,224
Nichiren Shū	2,281,368	Risshō Kōsei-kai	4,741,818	[Sōka Gakkai	16,539,375]
Reiyūkai	2,700,124				

TABLE 1 – *Continued*

Between Unity and Separation

TRADITIONAL UNITY		SEPARATION		ANTI-TRADITIONAL UNITY
Shingon Sects		*Shingon Sects*		
Kōyasan Shingon Shū	4,276,900	Gedatsukai	209,425	
Shingonshū Chizanha	1,528,536			
Shingonshū Buzanha	1,188,729			
Tendai Sects				
Tendai Shū	610,135			
Washū	2,220,820			
Zen Sects				
Rinzaishū Myōshinjiha	693,070			
Sōtō Shū	7,531,546			
		Christianity		
		Catholic	349,708	
		Orthodox	9,862	
		Protestant	479,064	
		Other		
Seichō no Ie	3,095,771	Ennōkyō	286,854	
		PL Kyōdan	2,646,070	
		Tenrikyō	2,485,226	
Totals	96,245,043		25,434,803	16,523,904

NOTE: Only organizations regarded as belonging to the three classes are included in this table. The figures represent the number of adherents as of 31 December 1977 (*Shūkyō nenkan* 1978). Sōka Gakkai membership figures are for the most part included in those of Nichiren Shōshū and hence do not enter into the total shown for the anti-traditional unity class.

the prefectural veterans' association in Yamaguchi Gokoku Shrine. These issues, however, are still unresolved. The suit is still in the courts, and the bill has yet to become law.[2]

For the purpose of this inquiry, it is useful to select re-solved cases. In postwar Japan two such cases stand out with particular prominence. One is a court case having to do with a Shinto rite, the other a conflict involving Bud-dhism that was settled out of court.

The method to be employed in exploring what seculari-zation might mean if applied to these two cases is consecu-tive. The result, therefore, will be open-ended, subject to modification as other cases become available for analysis.

Case 1. Sōka Gakkai and the freedom of speech and press issue. If importance is weighed by the degree to which a religious organization's actions are watched and reacted to by other religious organizations, then Sōka Gakkai is clearly the most important organization on the religio-political scene in contemporary Japan. The story of its founding need not be repeated here, but it will be useful to review its position in the Japanese Buddhist world and some of the principles it advocates.

Sōka Gakkai is not a Buddhist sect. It is one (though certainly the most prominent) lay association of the sect known as the Nichiren Shōshū. The Nichiren Shōshū con-tends "that Nichiren is the true Buddha of the present age, that the state should build an ordination hall where prop-erly qualified people may receive the Buddhist precepts and take on themselves the Buddhist discipline, and that

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2. Another recent issue is that of the era name (*gengō*). What was a bill at the time this inquiry was originally undertaken has now become a law. This law requires all institutions that serve the public to indicate dates not by means of the Western calendar but by means of the era name and number associated with a given emperor. The year 1979, for example, the fifty-fourth year in the reign of Emperor Hirohito, is known as "Shōwa 54."

the state should be governed by Buddhist principles. This last teaching, known in Japanese as *ōbutsu myōgō* . . . , calls for a fusion of imperial authority and Buddhist institutions and includes the demand that Nichiren Buddhism be established as the state religion" (Matsuno 1972, pp. 206-207). Sōka Gakkai, as a lay association under the Nichiren Shōshū, is presumably guided by essentially the same principles. Its proclivity for direct involvement in Japanese political affairs was more than hinted at by former President Ikeda when he said, in 1966, "Sōka Gakkai will enter into no political activities whatever *outside Japan*" (*Sōka Gakkai no rinen* . . . 1975, p. 132, emphasis added).

Legally incorporated as an independent religious juridical person in 1952, Sōka Gakkai soon entered the political arena. In 1956 it had three candidates elected to the House of Councilors (the upper house of the National Diet). In 1964 it established the Kōmeitō ("Clean Government Party") as its political arm, and this body, which in 1967 had twenty-five candidates elected to the House of Representatives, has now grown to be a respected, even decisive force in the Diet.[3]

It is against the background of these principles and developments that the issue concerning freedom of speech

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3. With reference to the emergence of the Kōmeitō, Swyngedouw observes: "It is this fact which dominates for a great part, if not completely, the political stance taken by Japan's other religious organizations" (Swyngedouw 1978, p. 543). Thus the liaison organization popularly known as Shinshūren (the abbreviation for Shin Nihon Shūkyō Dantai Rengōkai, the "Union of new religious organizations of Japan"), led by Risshō Kōsei-kai, has sought, without entering the field of politics directly, to establish ties with political power-holders and to exercise influence among conservative politicians and in elections. Since voters from the world of religions, exclusive of Sōka Gakkai, are loosely estimated to number anywhere from five to eight million, it is easy to see why the politicians, from their side, have been quick to cultivate religious organizations. (For a detailed account of politically active religious organizations and how they have fared in recent years in supporting candidates for political office, see Matsuo 1978.)

and press came to the fore.

In 1969 Fujiwara Hirotatsu, a political scientist and critic, sought to publish his book *Sōka Gakkai o kiru* [Beheading Sōka Gakkai]. As the title implies, the book is an indictment of Sōka Gakkai and what the author calls "its bastard," the Kōmeitō. The substance of his criticism is that Sōka Gakkai, pulling the strings of the Kōmeitō, is a Machiavellian organization that gives lip-service to democratic principles but in fact relies on principles and methods that show it to be an enemy of democracy.

Sōka Gakkai, for its part, is oriented to the principle that the important thing is to get people to believe the one, true religion: the form of Buddhism taught by the Nichiren Shōshū (Ikeda 1964, p. 203; 1969, p. 162). It holds that this is the way to personal and national well-being and that democratic principles will reach fulfilment only on this basis.

Whether Fujiwara's criticisms are, or were, accurate is not at issue. What is important, if one may judge from Fujiwara's report and from the subsequent actions of Sōka Gakkai and the Kōmeitō, is that various attempts, some apparently extra-legal, were made to prevent the publication of Fujiwara's book (cf. White 1970, pp. 345-346).

In the end what was published was not only the book but also the story of the pressures that had been brought to bear — pressures widely interpreted as inimical to freedom of speech and press. The result was a great furor in the media, a public apology by the president of Sōka Gakkai, the resignation of a Kōmeitō figure, and an allegedly more complete separation between Sōka Gakkai and the Kōmeitō.

In brief, then, the points to be considered are these: (1) the principles of the Nichiren Shōshū, (2) Sōka Gakkai's comparatively direct involvement in politics through the Kōmeitō up to the time of the Fujiwara incident, and (3) its subsequent "retreat" from politics. The question is: what would it mean to regard these matters under the rubric

of "secularization"?

The first point to note is that Nichiren Shōshū principles, taken by themselves, have direct and straightforward political implications. If Sōka Gakkai, in acting to realize those principles, were not bound by other constraints, there would appear to be no intrinsic reason to establish the Kōmeitō at all, let alone to pronounce it, after 1970, more autonomous. The external constraints in this case appear to be twofold: the Constitution itself, which requires that "no religious organization shall . . . exercise any political authority" (Article 20, Section 1), and media-represented popular sentiment, which in this case took the form of expressions of outrage at the violation of rights held essential to democracy and guaranteed by the Constitution.[4] It appears, therefore, that the changes under consideration were externally occasioned.

The internal corollary is that the more Sōka Gakkai is guided by power considerations, that is, the more it seeks not merely to influence politicians but, through the Kōmeitō, to acquire and exercise political power, the more it must accommodate itself to prevailing currents and run the risk of diverging from the principles espoused by its parent organization.[5] Thus its actions on behalf of the principles are vulnerable to two damaging interpretations: they can be viewed either as a watering down of Nichiren Shōshū principles or as a matter of concealing these principles behind

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4. Article 21 of the Constitution reads: "Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press, and all other forms of expression are guaranteed."

5. Since 1970, the Kōmeitō has omitted from its statement of principles the phrase *buppō minshū*, which in paraphrase means something like "one people under the universal principle of Buddhism." Ikeda Daisaku, till recently president of Sōka Gakkai, has long insisted the Sōka Gakkai has "no intention of becoming a state religion" and that it stands by the principle of religious freedom for both true and false religion (Ikeda 1969, p. 203).

tactical professions of loyalty to other, more generally ac-
cepted principles. The first entails severe tension with the
parent organization, the second, widespread feelings of skep-
ticism and suspicion among the general public. This is, in
fact, the present plight of Sōka Gakkai – and perhaps the
most important meaning of its "secularization."

Case 2. The Tsu City suit. The lawsuit over a Shinto rite
began in 1965 in the city of Tsu when Sekiguchi Seiichi,
a Communist member of the city council, charged that the
mayor had misused public funds by paying four Shinto priests
an honorarium for conducting a *jichinsai* or grounds-purifica-
tion rite prior to the construction of a municipal gymnasium.
The question was not whether the city could, even excep-
tionally, legally engage in a religious activity or use public
funds for a religious purpose. It was understood by all con-
cerned that the Constitution prohibits the former in Article
20, Section 3 and the latter in Article 89.[6] The question
was whether the Shinto rite was religious.

The case was tried in three courts. The Tsu District Court
decided, in 1967, in favor of the defendant. It maintained
that the Shinto rite, though religious in origin, is now nothing
but a convention. It found the use of public funds for this
purpose "inappropriate, but not illegal."

The Nagoya High Court, in an appellate trial, reversed
the decision of the lower court. In 1971 it held: (1) that
Shrine Shinto, whether considered by scholars of religion
or scholars of constitutional law, is clearly a religion, (2)
that the rite for purifying the grounds is not a secular but
a religious rite, and (3) that the mayor had violated Article

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6. Article 20, Section 3 reads: "The State and its organs shall refrain from
religious education or any other religious activity."
  Article 89 reads: "No public money or other property shall be expended
or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institu-
tion or association . . ."

20, Section 3 of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court, in 1977, in effect upheld the decision of the Tsu District Court. The majority of Supreme Court justices (ten out of fifteen), basing their view as to what is and is not religious on what they called "the assessment of religion among ordinary people and the ideas current in [Japanese] society," decided that since the Shinto rite was not intended to propagate Shintoism and since it did not interfere with other religions, it should be regarded not as a religious but as a secular (*sezokuteki*) activity. Consequently, the use of public funds to pay those who performed the rite was held not unconstitutional.

The Tsu City suit, since it marks the first time that a case having to do with the principle of separation between religion and state has gone all the way to the Supreme Court, is widely regarded among Japanese people as of great significance. The question here is: what would be involved if this case were analyzed as an example of secularization?

In contrast to the West, where secularization generally signifies the loosening of ties between religious organization and state power, secularization in the light of the Tsu City case would mean the reinforcement of such ties. In support of this contention it should be noted that the Tsu *jichinsai* decision stands not as an isolated event but as a precedent that will play an important role in the shaping of coming developments. Both supporters and opponents of the Supreme Court decision see it as giving direction in the resolution of pending issues. The *Jinja shinpō*, for example, organ of the Jinja Honchō (Association of Shinto Shrines), hailed the decision as justifying official (rather than merely private) visits by prime ministers to Ise and Yasukuni Shrines and the performance of Shinto rites in the palace by the emperor (*Shūmu jihō*, no. 42, March 1978, p. 11). The Roman Catholic Church, conversely, protested

the decision as blurring the relationship between religion and state (*Katorikku shinbun*, 16 October 1977), and the *Kirisuto shinbun*, which often speaks for Japan's largest Protestant body, the United Church of Christ in Japan, observed that the decision signals "a dangerous trend" (*Kirisuto shinbun*, 23 July 1977). To the extent that these assessments are correct, it follows that the more Shinto rites and institutions are defined as secular, the freer the government will be to take actions linking the two. In this case, more particularly, secularization would have to be understood as entailing the strengthening of ties between religious and political structures with a common orientation to the "traditional unity" form of the *saisei itchi* tradition. To change the metaphor, secularization here implies not the marginalization but the centralization of Shrine Shinto.[7]

Theoretical implications. In this consideration of what "secularization" might mean if applied to politically related developments having to do with Sōka Gakkai, on the one hand, and Shrine Shinto, on the other, a number of common and contrasting meanings have been found.

Common to both is an interest in establishing links with political power. This interest is by no means merely prudential. It sees such involvement as a positive religious imperative.

Also common to both is the necessity of taking into account the minority *seikyō bunri* tradition represented in the Constitution. But whereas Shrine Shinto does so through affirming the *saisei itchi* tradition and supporting interpretations of the Constitution that harmonize with it, Sōka Gakkai has publicly denied the *saisei itchi* tradition and

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7. The response of Shinto priests to the Supreme Court decision in the Tsu *jichinsai* case is worth nothing. With surprisingly few exceptions, the reaction was one of triumph.

affirmed constitutional principles.

A major point of difference between the two has to do with the element of stress. In the case of Sōka Gakkai, secularization has forced it into a stress situation vis-à-vis its parent organization and vis-à-vis the general public. In the case of Shrine Shinto, the court definition of the *jichinsai* rite as secular has led to no such stress.

The question that emerges at this point is: can these data be fitted into any of the major theories of secularization? In order to deal with this question, it will be convenient to consider two radically opposed forms of secularization theory: the "decline" theory of Bryan Wilson and the "metamorphosis" theory of Thomas Luckmann. At the risk of caricature, a summary statement about each is called for.

Wilson's theory depends on a substantive definition of religion. Religious institutions are defined in terms of empirical criteria, and the argument is that the functions once performed by religious institutions have gradually been taken over by secular agencies as part of a general process of differentiation and rationalization. The result is that religion is on the wane. This is the meaning of secularization.

Luckmann's theory depends on a functional definition of religion and a distinction between religion and religious institutions. Religion is characterized as that which mediates the transcendent in the form of a world view that gives cohesion to personality and society. To be socialized is to internalize a world view, which is by definition religious. From this perspective, the waning of institutional religion signifies not the decline but the metamorphosis of religion. Secularization can mean either the marginalization of religious institutions without prejudice to religion, or a religious institution's accommodation of its traditional universe of meaning to the values of industrial society for the sake of retaining social viability.

Both Luckmann and Wilson agree, then, that seculariza-
tion can mean, at least in part, the decline or marginaliza-
tion of religious institutions.   Let us consider the Shrine
Shinto and Sōka Gakkai cases in this perspective.

With regard to Shrine Shinto, one can stipulate the war-
time period as the time when it stood in closest relationship
to political power.   Shrine Shinto, then legally defined as
outside the category of religion, was the de facto state cult.
The Occupation authorities, seeking to prevent the recrudes-
cence of a militarism legitimated by what was then known
as State Shinto, severed the ties between Shrine Shinto and
the state.   This separation, intrinsic to the principle of
separation between religion and state later written into the
Constitution, had the effect of legally and financially mar-
ginalizing Shrine Shinto.   Since 1952 when the Occupation
came to an end, Shrine Shinto has been moving, little by
little, back toward the center.   The jubilant Shrine Shinto
reaction to the Supreme Court decision in the Tsu City
jichinsai case indicates that an important step was taken
in this direction.

Likewise with regard to Sōka Gakkai, one can discern,
since the formation of the Kōmeitō in 1964, a general move-
ment toward the center.   This is evident not only in terms
of political power as measured by the number of Kōmeitō
candidates elected to public office but also in terms of modi-
fied Kōmeitō policies.[8]   The sharper institutional differen-
tiation between Sōka Gakkai and the Kōmeitō since 1970,
such that the same persons no longer hold office now in
the one, now in the other, may appear to Sōka Gakkai
members as a structural (and probably regrettable) form
of secularization.   With reference to power considerations

8.   Kōmeitō's original opposition to the Self Defense Force and to continua-
tion of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, for example, is now considerably
muted.

and the measures needed to achieve them, however, this structural alteration is congruent with its move toward the center.

In both cases, therefore, we have to do not with peripheralization but with centralization. To the extent, then, that secularization theory is taken to imply the decline or marginalization of religious institutions, it can be applied to these cases only by standing the theory on its head.

The second meaning of secularization put forward by Luckmann dealt with the accommodation of a religious institution's traditional world view to the dominant ethos.

In relation to Sōka Gakkai it may be arguable that its pronouncements disavowing any intention of becoming a state religion and otherwise affirming the values of the dominant culture amount to a form of internal secularization. Certainly the tension between Sōka Gakkai and the Nichiren Shōshū lends itself to this kind of interpretation (even if it is by no means the whole story). This argument depends, however, on the judgement that Sōka Gakkai has in fact diverged from Nichiren Shōshū principles and that its public affirmations of "separation" principles are to be taken at face value. If, on the contrary, one assumes that Sōka Gakkai holds fast to Nichiren Shōshū principles and that its public protestations to the contrary are not worthy of credence, then the argument for internal secularization loses its force. In either case the basis of argument is somewhat equivocal.

As for Shrine Shinto, it is difficult to see that the Supreme Court decision or, more broadly, the postwar development of Shrine Shinto as a whole, makes plausible the idea of internal secularization. What appears to be happening, rather, is a growing resistance to the idea of being boxed into one little compartment labeled "religious," a growing articulation of the view that Shinto is concerned with all that makes for life in community. Even if this overstates the case, there

seems little that could be brought forward as evidence for
the view that Shrine Shinto is becoming internally secularized.

One swallow does not make a spring, and two cases do not
make some form of secularization theory totally inappli-
cable to Japanese religion.[9]   This inquiry has not even
touched, for example, on such phenomena as changes in
ancestor worship, the decade of strife between reformists
and conservatives in the Ōtani branch of True Pure Land
Buddhism, the mounting wave of international influences
and the acute concern as to the meaning of Japanese identity,
etc.   Yet even from this limited inquiry into two cases in-
volving religion and politics, it may be possible to see some-
thing of the difficulty that scholars of Japanese religion
have encountered when trying to make use of securaliza-
tion theory in relation to religion and social change in postwar
Japan.

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9.   For an attempt to employ the secularization theory formulated by David
     Martin in understanding developments of recent years in the United Church
     of Christ in Japan, see Reid 1978.

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