

# The Christian Year in Review

## Significant Events of 1994

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### JANUARY

- 1 Pope John Paul II issues an Apostolic Letter *Sociarium Scientiarum* formally establishing the Papal Academy for the Social Sciences. Among the social scientists from around the world appointed to the Academy are two Japanese, Murakami Yoichirō (Tokyo University) and Nojiri Taketoshi (Osaka Gakuin University.)
- 5 The Tokyo District of the Salvation Army announces the results of its Community Chest collection which was held over the holiday season. Down a further US\$30,000 from the previous year, the total collected came to \$287,000. (Note: While the relative strength of the yen over against the dollar sees only a drop of \$3,000 compared to last year's figures, when converted to dollars, the real value of the drop is nearer to the figure given.)
- 11–21 As a follow-up to NICE I and NICE II, the Structural Reorganization Team of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, under the leadership of Bishop Mori Kazuhiro (Auxiliary Bishop of Tokyo), visited France and Germany to study methods and programs for the ongoing formation of the laity.
- 15 A NICE Young People's Network is formed as a follow-up to NICE II which had been criticized by many young people attending as delegates. Delegates from across the country gathered at the meeting at which the Network was formally launched.
- 13–16 Some 130,000 people gathered at Tokyo Dome during the four nights of the Billy Graham Tokyo International Revival. Some 1,120 Christian churches from across the country cooperated in the preparations for the revival at which some 12,000 signed pledge cards committing themselves to Jesus Christ. Those present also contributed nearly a million dollars to the collection that was taken up during the revival.
- 19–20 January 19 saw the release from jail of Aoyanagi Yukinobu, high school teacher and member of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Fukuoka. Since his arrest on September 27, 1993, Mr. Aoyanagi had spent nearly four months in jail for assisting an out-of-work Peruvian nisei who lacked an employment visa. A Eucharist celebrated at Yoshizuka Catholic Church in the Hakata district of Fukuoka to mark the release of Mr. Aoyanagi was filled with priests and parishioners from Yoshizuka and neighboring parishes. (Note: Mr Aoyanagi's trial continued throughout the year at irregular intervals with no end in sight as this is being written.)
- 24–26 At a meeting of the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ), a resolution was passed calling upon all dioceses to discuss the problem of the nam-

ing of the Church when it formally unites with the United Church of Christ in Okinawa. The “naming question” has become a focus of the many other sticking points that stand in the way of the two Churches coming together. At the same meeting, Kitamura Sōji, chair of the committee for the revision of the hymnal, asked that the members show their appreciation and understanding for the work being done on behalf of the committee by the publications department. Those present then went on to recommend that a committee on music and the liturgy be established at the next meeting of the Church’s General Assembly.

- 27 The National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ) at its executive meeting held at the Japan Baptist Federation, Minami Urawa, Saitama, decides to propose Otsu Kenichi of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) for the post of General Secretary at the next meeting of the General Assembly. Also proposed for the agenda were items related to the abolition of the death penalty and a call for a retrial in the Sayama Case.

## FEBRUARY

- 1 As part of a program of events to mark the 110th anniversary of the foundation of the Yokohama YMCA, the Shōnan Totsuka YMCA was formally opened in Totsuka, Yokohama. The building was designed to serve as a center for ongoing formation and training.
- 1 The United Church of Christ in Japan sent a letter of opposition to the governing parties’ Committee on Tax Reform in the light of indications that the committee was to propose changing the tax status of religious organizations. The letter was submitted through Doi Ryuichi, Socialist Diet member and a pastor of the UCC in Japan.
- 7 Twenty-seven Korean women forced to work as sex slaves during World War II filed suit against the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor’s Office for failure to bring charges against those Japanese Army members responsible for the “comfort women” program. The group claimed that those responsible were guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Prosecutor’s Office refused to allow the filing of the papers on the grounds that the statute of limitations had passed for such matters under Japanese national law. In many countries there is no statute of limitations with respect to war crimes or crimes against humanity.
- 7–9 Randall Waters, a former member of the executive board (Bethel) of the Jehovah Witnesses, who converted to orthodox Christianity and is now involved in work countering the activities of such groups, visited Japan at the invitation of the Evangelical Association for the Word of Truth. He addressed a seminar organized by the same group on methods of mind control, and how to rehabilitate people who have been subject to the same.
- 9–10 The Fourth Catholic Social Welfare Seminar was held in Yokohama and sponsored by Caritas Japan and the Catholic Diocese of Yokohama. The theme of the seminar was “With the Eyes of Christ: Questions of Social Welfare Today.” Following a keynote address by Bishop Hamao, the discussions were enhanced by reports from those involved with broken families, foreign residents in Japan, the handicapped, and those suffering from drug dependency.

- 11 *Kenkoku Kinenbi* (National Founding Day), a day associated by many with State Shinto and a revival of Japanese militarism, was marked by many events opposing the ideological coloring of the holiday. In Urawa City, Saitama Prefecture a gathering held at the Saitama Education Center was addressed by Morita Toshio of the Japanese Peace Education Foundation on the topic of "The Historical Significance of Upholding the Constitution." Among the topics taken up at other gatherings were the "Comfort Women" (Nagaoka, Niigata), "Building Peace Together" (Maebashi, Gunma), "Stop Creating Hero Spirits" and "Facing our Responsibilities as Aggressors" (Kudan, Tokyo). Kudan in Chiyoda, Tokyo is the site of Yasukuni Shrine, considered by many Christian groups to be a focal point for the activities of conservative and rightist groups who wish to revive Japanese militarism and World War II nationalism.
- 19–20 The National Convention of the Japanese Catholic Commission on the Lay Apostolate was held at a retreat center in Hanakawa, Ishigari, Hokkaidō. The theme of the convention was "The Vocation of the Laity, A Message to the Family." The keynote address on the topic, "Continuing On from NICE II: The Role of the Believer in the Family," was given by Bishop Jinushi Toshio, Sapporo. The reports in the Catholic press made no note of any significant contribution by a member of the laity.
- 24 The Japan Bible Society announce that sales of the New Interconfessional Translation of the Bible (NIT) had reached the 1.5 million mark. Following the publication of the NIT New Testament in 1978, the translation of the whole Bible, including a revision of the NT translation came out in 1987. Through the years various translations of the Bible and books introducing or commenting on the Scriptures have proved to be popular among the general population in Japan.
- 25 Julio Gutierrez, a Catholic priest from Mexico who also works as a professional wrestler under the name Father Tornado, visited Japan. He gave a public lecture at the IMA Hall, Nerima, Tokyo in which he spoke of his work with street children in Mexico. He related how in seeking financial support for an orphanage for these children he ended up working as a masked professional wrestler.

## MARCH

- 3 In response to a request from the Catholic Church in the Philippines, a team was sent by the National Catholic Justice and Peace Commission to investigate the effects of a dam project in the state of Zamboanga, Mindanao Island, on the life of the indigenous people.
- 7 The Catholic Archdiocese of Osaka announced a program whereby newly ordained of the diocese, either as members of the diaconate or soon after ordination to the presbyterate, would be sent overseas for a year of cross-cultural training and experience. Hiki Kiyoshi, a young deacon of the diocese, set off for the Philippines as the first participant in the program.
- 8 *Shinto no Tomo* (Believer's Companion), a monthly magazine published by the UCC in Japan marked its thirtieth anniversary. Celebrations to mark this milestone in the history of the magazine were held at Shiba Kōen, Tokyo.

- 14 Tabata Shinobu, former president and professor of Constitutional Law at Dōshisha University, dies from pneumonia at the age of ninety-two. Professor Tabata, a committed Christian, devoted his professional and scholarly career to the cause of Japanese neutrality in the world. He promoted the idea that Japan should make a formal declaration of its perpetual neutrality in world affairs. Such a declaration would of course mean the dissolution of the Mutual Security Treaty between Japan and the United States, and the removal of all U.S. military bases from Japanese soil.
- 14–15 At the General Assembly of the NCCJ, Nakajima Masaaki of the UCCJ was elected as the new chair. Edo Hisako of the Japan Baptist Federation and Tokuyoshi Yoshikazu, professor at Japan Lutheran Seminary were elected as assistants. The theme of “Our Responsibility to History: Working Towards Interdependence” was approved as the council’s key theme for the coming year.
- 15 The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments announced that the Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law saw no grounds for barring young girls or women from ministering as Altar Servers, that is assisting the priest at the altar during the celebration of the Eucharist. With this decree the Vatican finally acknowledged the fact that in many dioceses and countries, including Japan, girls or women were already acting as altar servers and that the practice was widely accepted by the local churches.
- 23–24 At an extraordinary meeting of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, the bishops formally approved and released for publication its response to the Vision Statement produced by NICE II (see *Japan Christian Review* 1994). The content of the document is well summarized in its title, “The Family and Evangelization: Working towards the Realization of a Church Community that lives the Gospel and Supports the Family.”
- 23–25 The seventh Korean, Expatriate Korean and Japanese Women’s Theological Forum was held at Sushiru University, Seoul, Korea. The theme of the forum was “Surmounting the Battlements: Topics and Roles of Women in Solidarity.” Taking as their starting point the Book of Esther from the Old Testament, the participants reflected on the themes of women, the Diaspora, the people, power (with the nuance of hegemony) and revenge. Statements were issued calling for a more adequate response to the problem of the comfort women, the legal status of expatriate Koreans in Japan, and Japan’s responsibilities in the wake of World War II.
- 29 A Canadian missionary in Japan, Pastor J. H. Mackintosh, had his appeal against the Immigration Bureau’s refusal to grant him a re-entry visa and an extension of his residence permit rejected by the Osaka District Court. Mr. Mackintosh refuses to comply with government regulations which require the fingerprinting of all foreigners resident in Japan.

#### APRIL

- 1 The Japan Bible Society (JBS) announces the publication of a parallel Japanese/Spanish translation of the New Testament. *Nuevo Testamento* will be of great assistance to those involved in pastoral work among the substantial Latin American *nikkei* populations that are found in such areas as northern Kantō, Tōkai

(centered on Nagoya), Fukuoka, and northern Kyushu. The JBS already publishes parallel translations of the NT in English and Korean.

- 6 Some forty members of parliament from all shades of the political spectrum gathered at the First Diet Members' Center, in Nagata-chō, Tokyo to formally launch the *Diet Members' League for the Abolition of the Death Penalty*. The League will be headed by Tamura Hajime (LDP) with members from the Socialist and Clean Government party also serving on the group's steering committee. Some 103 Diet members have expressed their support for the group.
- 7 At a regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the NICE II Secretariat was disbanded. Its work was deemed complete, and Bishop Okada Takeo (Urawa) was delegated to oversee any further work related to the NICE project that still remains to be done.
- 8 Reports from international news agencies and other sources confirmed that tribal conflict had ensued in Rwanda following the assassination of the Presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi. Numerous workers for various international agencies and the Christian churches had been murdered. International aid agencies and the Christian Churches are at the forefront of work with refugees who have fled into neighboring countries. Numerous calls for assistance have received a more than generous response from Japanese Christians. The contribution of the Japanese Christian Churches may be considered disproportionately large considering the minority status of the Christian community in Japan.
- 9 Professor Kenneth Kitchen, world-renowned Egyptologist from Liverpool University (U.K.) gave the inaugural address at the launch of the Biblical Archaeological Society, held at the Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo. The Society was established with the aim of founding a Center for Biblical Archaeology, the first of its kind in Japan. The Center will gather and display archaeological material related to the Bible from the Mediterranean and the ancient Near East.
- 19–21 Under the auspices of the Catholic Episcopal Committee on Education, the seventh Convention of School Principals and Administrators was held at Atami City, Shizuoka. The convention focussed on two themes: "Catholic Schools in Japan Today" and "The New Code of Canon Law and The Identity of Catholic Schools—Clarifying Standards of Assessment." The Bishops were asked to provide guidelines on the application of the Code, which rooted as it is in European realities and legal traditions, does not seem immediately or easily applicable to Japan. The Episcopal Committee on Education was also asked to provide criteria for formally describing a school or educational institution as Catholic. (Due to technical difficulties and an acute shortage of experts in Canon Law capable of translating the Code from the original Latin, some nine years passed between the original promulgation of the Code in 1983 and the appearance of a Japanese edition in 1992.)
- 21 Ceremonies were held at Sakuramachi Hospital, Koganei, Tokyo (administered by the Missionary Sisters of St. John the Evangelist) to mark the opening of the hospital's Hospice Unit. The unit is the first of its kind at a Catholic hospital. Sakuramachi Hospital itself is one of the oldest Catholic hospitals in Japan.
- 25–29 The Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) met in Pattaya, Thailand bringing together bishops from

thirteen Asian countries along with bishops from Europe and the United States. Also present were observers from the Protestant Churches and Buddhist monks. The theme of the Institute, one of a series that began in 1979, was "Christian/Buddhist Dialogue: Searching for Harmony in Today's World." Among those present from Japan were Bishops Tanaka Ken'ichi (Kyoto) and Satō Keiichi (Niigata), and Minegishi Masanori, head priest of the Sōtō Zen Temple Anrakuji.

- 29 The fourth Ecumenical Day sponsored by the Japan Ecumenical Association was held at Matsubara Catholic Church, Setagaya, Tokyo. The first half of the day was devoted to an ecumenical prayer meeting guided by members of the Taizé Community. This was followed by the general meeting of the Ecumenical Association at which Fr. Zēnon Yelle, professor of Scripture at St. Sulpice Major Seminary, Fukuoka and Mr. Kondō Jirō of Hirabari Catholic Church, Nagoya were presented with commendations for their contributions to ecumenism. Fr. Yelle and Mr. Kondō worked together to produce a computer concordance to the New Interconfessional Translation of the Bible.
- 29 Hasegawa Yasushi, Senior Adviser of the Holy Spirit Social Welfare Institute, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka, dies from heart failure at the age of 90. The Holy Spirit Welfare Institute, founded in 1930, has been at the forefront of the hospice movement in Japan. Also located in Hamamatsu are the Holy Spirit (*Seirei*) University of Nursing, the Holy Spirit Social Welfare Workers Training School, and other foundations committed to preparing qualified specialists for social welfare work.

## MAY

- 7 More than three hundred people attend the launch of the Japan Hospice-Living Will Association (JHL) which took place at the Japan Foreign Correspondents Club in Yurakuchō, Tokyo. Nakajima Shūhei, chair of the International New Hope Hospice Research Association and representative of those who had worked to promote the founding of the group, gave an address entitled "On Living Today: Looking at Life from its Termination." Kitamori Kazō, author of the classic *Theology of the Pain of God* spoke on the theme "The Theology of Death with Dignity."
- 7 A statement was issued by the Fellowship of Reconciliation Japan calling for all to be alert to government actions that could return Japan to the tragedy of war. The statement was issued partly in response to a statement by former Justice Minister Nagano Shigekado who asserted that stories of the Nanking Massacre were fictitious or an exaggeration of what really took place.
- 11 The eleventh Niwano Foundation Peace Prize is awarded to Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns, Archbishop of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Cardinal Arns came to Japan to receive the prize and also gave a commemorative lecture to mark the occasion.
- 12 The Japan YWCA presented a petition to Prime Minister Hata Tsutomu calling upon the Diet to pass a resolution of apology and regret with respect to Japan's invasion and oppression of Asian and Pacific countries in the last war.
- 19 A petition, containing some 310,000 signatures, was presented to Doi Takako and Hara Fumihei, Speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses of the Diet respectively. The petition calls for the passing of a resolution expressing apology and regret for Japan's actions in World War II. The petition also called for appropriate action to

be taken on the still unresolved question of war reparations. The petition movement has wide support in the Christian Churches and from the trade unions.

- 22–25 A rather unusual gathering took place at a hotel in Koto, Tokyo at which the sixteen diocesan bishops of the Catholic Church in Japan sat down with over 120 representatives of the men and women's religious orders and missionary societies of the Catholic Church who work in Japan. Over the years, these groups have seemed to be working as much on their own agendas rather than in response to the policies established by the Bishops' Conference. This anomaly was questioned during NICE I and resulted in the emergence of a joint effort to establish common priorities and to open up more adequate channels of communication between all parties involved. The theme for this first discussion was "Towards a Deeper Self-Understanding of our Shared Responsibility for Evangelization.
- 30–31 After initially being declared *persona non grata* by the immigration authorities in the Philippines, Bishop Sōma Nobuo, (former Ordinary in the Diocese of Nagoya and Chair of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission) was allowed to attend a conference of NGO's held in Manila on human rights abuses in East Timor. He made a strong call for the United Nations to become more directly involved in the problem. Just before he left for Manila, Bishop Sōma appeared in court in Fukuoka as a witness on behalf of Aoyanagi Yukinobu. Aoyanagi, a member of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Fukuoka, is charged with helping Peruvian nisei who are resident in Japan without valid working visas to obtain work.

## JUNE

- 1–3 A conference for those involved in youth ministry sponsored by the Japanese Catholic Youth Commission was held at the Japan Catholic Study Center in Nagoya. The theme of the conference was "Youth Formation: Current Situation and Prospects." The need for the Church to be more responsive to the spiritual hunger of young people was strongly emphasized. It was also pointed out that there is an increasing number of young people who are alienated and carry deep spiritual and psychological wounds.
- 1 In announcing the results of its latest statistical review, the public relations department of the Catholic Bishops' Conference noted that there had only been a very minor drop in the overall Catholic population, down less than a hundred over the previous year. It also noted that there had been over 10,000 baptisms in 1993, and nearly 10,000 non-Christian couples marked their marriage with wedding ceremonies at Catholic churches. Some dioceses still number "missing" parishioners in their overall counts, but there has still been no effort to survey the number of Catholics in the *nikkei* community (citizens from other countries who are of Japanese descent) who came to Japan in the years of the bubble economy seeking employment.
- 6–7 Representatives of the evangelical wing of the UCCJ met at the Tokyo Major Seminary in Mitaka, Tokyo for their fifth general assembly. Since 1967 differences of opinion have arisen on many occasions between the evangelical wing of the UCCJ and others in the Church. This eventually led to the evangelicals banding together under the leadership of Matsunaga Kikuo, President of the Tokyo Major Seminary,

and meeting regularly to express their opinions on matters of concern. On this occasion they focussed on the two questions of allowing non-baptized to receive communion at the celebration of the Eucharist, and the leading of worship by believers who have yet to receive the laying on of hands. Katō Tsuneaki, pastor of Yukinoshita Church, Kamakura decried the practice of allowing non-baptized to receive communion saying that the Church was inviting its own demise by condoning such practice.

- 10–11 The 82nd General Assembly of the Federation of Christian Schools, held at Keiwa Gakuin University, Shiibata, Niigata was marked by a symposium on the topic “Do Christian Schools Have a Future?” The prevailing nihilism present in society was named as one of the biggest barriers to the work of Christian schools.
- 15–20 The 23rd Missionary Congress of the Northeast Asian Churches met at the UCCJ, Suidōbashi Church in Tokyo. Some ninety representatives gathered from Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The main theme of the congress was the need for a renewed commitment to work among youth. Young people should no longer be just on the receiving end of mission, but should also come to see themselves as called to mission.
- 22 Representatives of the Roman Catholic and the Anglican Churches in Japan gathered for a joint prayer service for world peace and Christian unity at St. Ignatius Church, Yotsuya, Tokyo. Along with some twenty-five bishops from both Churches, Nakajima Masaaki and Otsu Ken’ichi from the NCC were also present. A previous joint prayer service had been held some eleven years previously in May 1983 to mark the first anniversary of the historic visit on May 29, 1982 of John Paul II to Canterbury Cathedral.
- 20–24 The Ordinary General Meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference is held at the Japan Catholic Center, Shiomi, Tokyo. The bishops work through a very extensive agenda that included the following topics: 1) a formal decision to request Vatican permission to introduce the Permanent Diaconate; 2) the establishment of criteria in accordance with Canon Law for deciding which groups may be officially named Catholic; 3) revision of the *Sacramentary* (liturgical ceremonies and forms that accompany the giving of the sacraments) to be readied by the year 2000; and 4) a decision to separate the process for beatification of Yustus Takayama Ukon from that of Petoro Kibe and some 187 other martyrs of the Edo period. The bishops will seek to have Takayama beatified as both a martyr and confessor of the faith.
- 21 On the foreign exchange market the yen broke through the crucial 100 yen to the dollar mark. One unremarked consequence of this change in the exchange rate was to reduce the value of the money received by overseas missionaries from America and Europe. As was to be later noted in the *Kirisuto Shinbun*, a weekly Protestant newspaper, in its editorial for July 9, this could mean some Mission Boards may have to withdraw missionaries, since they cannot afford the cost of keeping them in Japan.
- 25 Nearly twenty years after they were originally issued, Japanese translations of the Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation were finally made available by the Catholic Episcopal Commission for the Liturgy. Originally prepared for use during the Holy Year for Reconciliation in 1975 no translation was attempted then because of lack of time. Some will regret that, in line with the translations of the texts for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the translators have opted for the theologically weaker

term forgiveness over reconciliation, on the grounds that forgiveness is more widely used in everyday speech. The Prayers are recommended as suitable for use during Advent, Lent and any gathering where forgiveness or reconciliation is the central theme.

- 27 The strength and breadth of opposition to the building of the proposed Memorial Hall for Peace in Memory of the War Dead was demonstrated at a meeting held at Toyoshima Civic Center, Ikebukuro, Tokyo, when representatives of many Christian denominations and concerned local citizens met to discuss how they could work together more effectively. The municipal assembly of Chiyoda, Tokyo has already passed a motion expressing opposition to the building of the hall. The Memorial Hall, if built, would be administered by the *Nippon Izoku Kai*, a group that ostensibly represents those bereaved in the last war, but one that is also known for its support for the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine, and a right-wing, nationalist rereading of history that would seek to justify Japan's military activity during the 1930s and 40s.
- 30 The Yasukuni Shrine committee of the NCCJ held a conference on the theme "Approaching Fifty Years after the War: Our Challenges," at Lighthouse Hall, Iidabashi, Tokyo to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the introduction of a bill to nationalize the shrine. To date proposals to nationalize the shrine have never come to a vote in the Diet, however there still exists a strong undercurrent of support in favor of the Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet paying a formal visit to the shrine on August 15, the anniversary of Japan's surrender in 1945, to pay their respects to the war dead enshrined there. Other topics considered at the conference were a review of Japan's war reparations policy, and the payment of pensions to non-Japanese who fought for Japan in World War II.

## JULY

- 1 The Catholic Buraku (Ethnic Minority) Committee of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission issued the first of a series of pamphlets designed to promote "human rights education" in schools. The lack of suitable teaching materials has meant that young people are insufficiently aware of the problem. The theme of the first booklet is oral folk tradition and its use in promoting or preventing discrimination.
- 5 The fourteenth International Eternal Prayer for Peace Festival was held at the Nakanoshima Festival Hall in Osaka with some two thousand in attendance. Since 1994 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Maximilian M. Kolbe, the Polish priest and missionary to Japan who later died in a Nazi concentration camp, the Catholic Church was invited to assume responsibility for organizing the event. Well-known Catholic author Sono Ayako gave a commemorative lecture on the theme "The Role of Religion Today." This was followed by a performance of the Polish Requiem composed and conducted by Krzysztof Pendereki. The third part of the festival was a Liturgy of the Word concluded with Prayers of the Faithful. The priests who gathered for the Liturgy of the Word were a witness to the internationality that marks Catholic missionary presence in Japan.
- 7 In a message issued by the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission to mark the Octave for Peace (August 6–15), Bishop Okada Takeo emphasized four points: the need for

ongoing prayer for peace, making personal sacrifices for peace and reconciliation, study of the tradition of Christian teaching on war and peace, and becoming a peacemaker.

- 7 & 18 At a series of meetings attended by representatives of the NCCJ, the YWCA Japan, the Japan Christian Women's Temperance Union and other concerned groups opposition was expressed to the government plan to set up a privately subscribed fund that would resource development monies in lieu of "reparations" to the women from Korea, Taiwan and other Asian countries forced into prostitution during the war. Among the projects the fund would assist were those concerned with youth exchange, education, and historical studies. In establishing a quasi-NGO, which would be named the Asia Exchange Center, to collect and distribute the money a certain distance could be set between the government and the aggrieved parties. At all costs the government wishes to avoid either directly or indirectly making reparation to the victims of the Comfort Women program.
- 20 The High Court in Osaka declared that the use of public money to help partially defray the costs of a memorial service held by the Mino City branch of the *Nippon Izoku Kai* (Association of Bereaved Families of the War Dead) was not in breach of the Constitutional provisions or related laws on separation of religion and the state. Christian groups had appealed a similar decision by the lower courts. Though it has strong links with Yasukuni Shrine, the *Nippon Izoku Kai* is not formerly registered as a religious organization.
- 21 Catherine Asako Chesnutt, a seventeen-year-old high school student from Albuquerque, New Mexico (U.S.) visits Japan to share ideas on peacemaking with high school students here. Catherine is a member of a project team that wants to build a replica of the Hiroshima memorial to *hibakusha* children (child victims of the atomic bombing) at Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the two nuclear devices that were used in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were developed. Before the close of the year, it emerged that the plan might have to be shelved due to opposition from the local chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, among others.
- 26 The Osaka International Exchange Center was the setting for a symposium on the topic of Religious Intolerance and Discrimination. The symposium was organized by a coalition of religious groups in the Osaka area at the suggestion of the Center for Human Rights at Essex University (U.K.). The center is preparing a world report on religious beliefs, freedom of conscience and other ideas to help mark 1995 as the International Year of Tolerance. Mr. Kevin Boyle, professor in the Faculty of Law at the university addressed the symposium on the topic of "Religious Conflict and Tolerance."

## AUGUST

- 4 Representatives of the Catholic Church and the Buddhist faith gathered at the Tendai Buddhist temple of Enryaku-ji on Mt. Hiei, Kyoto to mark the seventh Interfaith Day of Prayer for Peace. The day takes its inspiration from the Interfaith Prayer for Peace gathering held under the leadership of John Paul II at Assisi, Italy in 1986. Bishop Tanaka Ken'ichi, Kyoto, (Episcopal Committee for Interreligious Dialogue), and Archbishop Shirayanagi Seiichi (Tokyo) were present as official

representatives of the Catholic Church. Yamada Etai, 253rd Patriarch of the Tendai Buddhists in Japan was also present. A fraternal message from Francis Cardinal Arinze, head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, was read out by Bishop Tanaka. (Yamada Etai, who has always taken an active part in promoting interreligious dialogue died in February 1995.)

13–15 An International Forum on Postwar Reparations 1994 was held in Tokyo. Delegates were present from thirteen countries, and during the three days of the gathering over 800 attended various events at the symposium. Peter Kanpura from Papua New Guinea very graphically related the atrocities he had personally witnessed when Japanese troops, under the pretense of suing for peace, gathered people from their shelters, only to systematically rape the women in front of their children, and then behead all the men in the village. Takagi Ken'ichi, lawyer and head of the organizing committee related how reparations had been hastily negotiated at an intergovernmental (in many cases colonial government) level at the onset of the Cold War. In such circumstances it is understandable that real reconciliation has yet to be achieved between Japan and most Asian countries.

15 With the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II now just a year away there were numerous gatherings on August 15 and the days preceding it: The Peace Prayer Group held an early morning prayer service at Chidorigafuchi Memorial Garden, the official national memorial to Japan's war dead. While the Bereaved for Peace held their annual convention at Zensuidō Hall, Suidōbashi, Tokyo. The gathering was addressed by a former "comfort woman," the daughter of a Christian minister in Korea, who related how the family were forced to use Japanese names and later broken up by the Japanese military authorities. She states quite bluntly her belief that the present government is Japan is waiting for people like herself to die rather than make appropriate and adequate reparations.

As has become customary, Cabinet members with right-wing sympathies, or who are supportive of a revisionist reading of the history of the World War II period visited Yasukuni Shrine to pay their respects to the war criminals and others who are enshrined there. As one could only expect from Hashimoto Ryūtarō, Minister of International Trade and Industry, and honorary president of the *Nippon Izoku Kai*, he refused to reply when questioned as to whether he was visiting the shrine in a public or private capacity. No Liberal Democrat members of the cabinet are reported to have visited Chidorigafuchi Memorial Garden.

There is much activity around Yasukuni Shrine by groups opposed to the proposition that a formal Diet resolution, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, be passed apologizing for those acts of aggression and invasion by the Japanese military that saw the opening of the Pacific theater of World War II.

19–21 The Catholic Social Problems Study Center held its annual seminar at Futaba Gakuen, Yokohama. This year's topic was "The Church and Economics," with special attention paid to a critical assessment of market economics in the light of Gospel values. Analyses of the current situation were offered by Kitagawa Akira (financial affairs journalist), Tokunaga Michie (consumer rights adviser), Sumiya Mikio (economist) and Fr. Eugene Juguet. The speakers called attention to the role bureaucrats are playing in blocking deregulation, the fact that trickle down economics has never been shown to work, and that under the market economy the North/South divide

only grows larger. One speaker also called for a reassessment for the positive values inherent in a Marxist analysis of the factors that cause economic and consequently social and political inequality to emerge in society.

## SEPTEMBER

- 2-4 The twentieth National Convention of Catholic Diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions was held in Kyoto. The theme "*Ki to Sen*," (The character read as *ki* carries the meanings of esteemed, honored or revered, while the character read as *sen* carries the meanings of despised, low-ranking, vile or vulgar) was chosen in part to mark the birth of Kyoto as imperial capital exactly 1200 years ago. It reflects the social distinctions and discrimination that became part of Japanese society with the emergence of the *kuge*, the nobility who lived off the imperial court. Beginning with a keynote address by Inoue Kiyoshi (Kyoto University), there were also contributions from Uesugi Satoshi (Kansai University), Honda Saburō (Franciscan, scripture scholar and human rights advocate), and Kuribayashi Teruo (Kansai Gakuin University). Since the conference focused on the historical roots of social discrimination in Japanese society, the emergence of the *Burakumin* (untouchables, outcastes) and their situation is challenged by Jesus' preferential option for the poor and marginalized. Also present at the convention was Araya Noriko, the singer-songwriter, who describes herself as *senmingeinojin*, outcastes' entertainer.
- 11 It was announced that Fr. Jorge Zorena, SJ, professor at Sophia University, was to be one of the recipients of this year's Magasaysay Prize (Asia's Nobel Prize) for his work over many years in improving the living conditions of slum dwellers across Asia. Fr. Zorena divides his time between teaching at Sophia University and working on development projects across South and East Asia. He commented that if we are without respect for the poor, unwilling to be in solidarity with them, then we have no right to visit or work in the countries of the South.
- 14-16 A joint study session for superiors and formation personnel of indigenous women's religious orders in Japan was held at Aichi Senmon Nisōdō, Nagoya. Nisōdō is an *amadera* for Buddhist nuns of the Sōtō Zen sect, and its lifestyle is said to be as disciplined as that at the Sōtō Zen temple Eihei-ji, Fukui Prefecture. The Catholic sisters found themselves invited to experience the ordinary schedule of the community that begins with rising for zazen at 4:00 a.m. They joined their Sōtō Zen counterparts in the daily round of meditation, work and study, and the simplest of meals in the *shōjin* tradition of *ichiju-issai* (one bowl of soup with some vegetables and unpolished rice.)
- 16-24 Josef Cardinal Tomko, Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples made a "pastoral" visit to Japan. In a rather packed schedule that began with time spent in informal discussion with the Catholic Bishops at Japan Catholic Center, Shiomi, Tokyo, he then administered the Sacrament of Confirmation at Matsudo Church, Tokyo (September 18th), then moved on to Takamatsu, Shikoku, and various locations in and around Fukuoka and Nagasaki including Oura Church, the Museum and Shrine to the Japanese Martyrs, and Megumi no Oka Home for *hibakusha* (victims of the atom bomb), Mitsuyama. More than one bishop was heard to express regret that as part of his visit he laid the foundation stone of the

Takamatsu International Missionary Seminary, a seminary founded in breach of the Bishops' Conference's agreed policy that there only be two centers for the training of diocesan priests in Japan, San Sulpice, Fukuoka, and Tokyo Major Seminary. The Takamatsu seminary is under the control of the right-wing, neo-orthodox movement, The Neo-Catechumenate. Any priests ordained at the seminary in Takamatsu will only be allowed to work in that diocese.

- 19-20 This year marks the twelfth since the start of the activities of the Japanese Catholic Resettlement Committee. Representatives of groups who work with the committee from across the country met at the Japan Catholic Study Center, Nagoya to reflect on and assess the work done to date, and discern where attention needs to be focussed in the future. Mizukami Yoichirō of the Refugee Resettlement Office at the Justice Ministry praised the contribution of the Catholic Church in responding to the refugee problem, but also remarked that in comparison with the early days the problem is no longer at the forefront of many people's awareness. He also mentioned that it was no longer government policy to accept any boat people who made their way to Japan. Among other comments that were made was one that the way we treat refugees can serve as a mirror of Japan's supposed internationality.

## OCTOBER

- 9 Following a shortfall in the rice harvest last year Japan was obliged to import rice. However, numerous unfounded rumors, some of which carried overtones of racism and discrimination, particularly with regard to Thai rice, saw large stockpiles of imported rice left over when Japanese rice came on the market. Fr. Takeya Motoi, SVD, head of the *Fukushinkan* (Nagoya), a welfare center for the homeless and day laborers, said his group would welcome the rice. The *Fukushinkan* runs a restaurant that provides cheap meals for the day laborers and over the Christmas/New Year holiday its soup kitchen provides meals for up to four hundred homeless. His appeal brought in over a ton of rice, far more than they could store, so at the autumn bazaar to raise funds for their work they put on a display showing how to cook Thai rice in a way that appeals to the Japanese palate.
- 19-21 The Catholic Bishops' Conference Episcopal Committee on Social Problems held a special study session at the Japan Catholic Study Center, Nagoya on the theme "Dialogue with other Faiths: Separation of State and Religion." With the approach of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the need arose to reassess how the Catholic Church has related to Shinto in the prewar, wartime and postwar periods with a particular focus on the State Shinto period. The formal apology made to the peoples of Asia made by Archbishop Shirayanagi, Tokyo, at the fourth FABC Conference held in Tokyo in September 1986, was recalled as a step in the right direction. However, the Catholic Church still lacks good channels of communication and dialogue with the Shinto leadership, leading some participants to suggest that at a further study session on the same problem a spokesman from the Shinto faith should be invited to make a presentation.
- 21-23 The seventh Joint Study Day on Peace Education, sponsored by the Japanese Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Sophia Social Justice Institute, was held at Asada Catholic Church, Kawasaki. Kawasaki in the Yokohama diocese

has one of the largest Korean populations in Japan. Along with keynote addresses the participants made a field trip to the Korean community to hear the voices of the people themselves. In particular, they heard strongly expressed reservations on the way contemporary history is taught in high school, leaving children with only a sketchy understanding of the events of the first half of this century. Disappointment was also expressed at the failure of Catholic schools to break out of the orthodox mold of history teaching as approved by the Ministry of Education.

- 30 During greetings to those assembled in the square in front of St. Peter's Basilica, John Paul II announces that he had named thirty new Cardinals. They will receive the Red Hat, the traditional symbol of their rank, at a consistory to be held on November 26. Among those named was Peter Shirayanagi Seiichi, Archbishop of Tokyo. Archbishop Shirayanagi becomes the fourth Japanese to be raised to the College of Cardinals. For the first time in the history of the Church in Japan, there are two Cardinals alive at the same time. Cardinal Satowaki of Nagasaki who retired in 1986 is the other one. Previously named to the College of Cardinals were Archbishop Doi Tatsuo, Tokyo (1960), Archbishop Taguchi Yoshigorō, Osaka (1973), and Archbishop Satowaki Asajirō, Nagasaki (1979).

## NOVEMBER

- 1-3 The Japanese Catholic Episcopal Committee on International Cooperation held a workshop on the theme "Solidarity with Resident Foreigners in Japan" in Karuizawa, Nagano. Professor Kuwayama, professor of Psychiatric Medicine in the Medical School of Yamagata University, reported on his work with Filipinas who had married into rural families in the Tōhoku region. He noted that they come under much emotional and psychological pressure as they search for a role, for their identity caught between two cultures, two value systems. Among other topics considered were the setting up of an independent mediator (ombudsman) to help foreigners in trouble, the legal rights of people when arrested or imprisoned, and human rights education.
- 11 Archbishop Shirayanagi (Tokyo) took time from his busy schedule to meet the press and other media on the occasion of his being named a Cardinal. Having just returned from a meeting in Rome held under the auspices of the World Council for Religion and Peace, he spoke of his wish to be an active partner with John Paul II in working for true peace. As his personal motto he has taken the words "For the Love of Christ Urges us On" from the letters of St. Paul. He spoke with regret of the failure of the Church to provide proper and authentic witness in World War II, and the fact that religion has so often been a source of division rather than reconciliation. He urged the government to make a full and proper apology for all that had been done in the name of Japan in the last war, and to take a renewed look at the whole question of reparations. He was also critical of the fact that many of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council continue to talk of peace, but hold on to their nuclear arsenals.
- 26-27 To mark the International Year of the Family, the Research Institute in the Humanities (*Ningengaku*) held a linked series of lectures on the theme "Families Ties: Another Look." There were five speakers, beginning with Japan's recently nam

Nobel Laureate Ōe Kenzaburō, who spoke on the theme of “Family Ties: A Multivalent Idea.”

## **DECEMBER**

- 5–6 The Xavier Summit, as the organizers have named it, was held at Kagoshima Cathedral and a nearby hotel. August 15, 1999 will mark the 450th anniversary of the arrival of St. Francis Xavier and his Jesuit companions in Japan. Bishop Itonaga Shiniichi of Kagoshima, where the missionaries landed, is head of the team set up to organize events to mark the anniversary. It is hoped that John Paul II will be able to attend the celebrations.
- 13–16 The Catholic Bishops’ Conference held an Extraordinary General Meeting, Catholic Center, Shiomi, Tokyo, to discuss the issuing of a declaration to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the need to move ahead with organizational restructuring to create a more open Church, the ongoing reassessment of the present system of diocesan boundaries, structures to facilitate better cooperation and communications with religious orders and missionary societies in order to avoid future confusion, and lay ministers who assist at the distribution of Communion during the Eucharist.