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FORMATIONS OF THE SECULAR IN JAPAN

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Introduction: Formations of the Secular in Japan

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In recent years, a number of new historical studies have traced the formation and development of the category "religion" (*shūkyō* 宗教) in (early) modern Japan.[1] They have shed light on the profound political embeddedness of the category, showing how its conceptualization and implementation were intertwined with statehood and national ideology, which led to the transformation of earlier practices and ideas. As these works demonstrate, in modern Japan the newly incorporated category "religion" came to occupy a clearly demarcated space, differentiated from other societal realms such as governance, education, and science. The isolation of secular orthodoxy from a privatized realm of contingent belief was central to the formation of the modern imperial state. Later, in the postwar period, the category was reshaped according to the demands of the occupying forces, who stipulated the constitutional separation of religion and state.

What counts as religion continues to be debated and negotiated. There is disagreement over the extent to which religious organizations should be allowed to be active in supposedly "public" realms such as education and party politics. Moreover, it appears that recently, the category of religion has come to be perceived negatively as "sectarian" or even "potentially violent," and fewer people are willing to associate with groups that they identify with this label.[2] In response, some religious actors have sought to overcome the limitations imposed on them both by legal secularism and by antireligious sentiments among the general public by reframing their activities in alternative terms, such as culture, tradition, or spirituality. Thus, throughout modern and contemporary Japanese history, religion's category boundaries have been continuously challenged and reshaped, and so, by extension, have been the spaces usually referred to as "secular" (*sezoku* 世俗), namely those spaces explicitly configured as *not* religious.

It has been argued that "religion" and "the secular" are Western parochial terms that emerged in the particular historical context of European Christendom and were imposed on a variety of non-Western practices and traditions in a colonial context.[3] Critical genealogies of "religion" and "the secular" such as those by Talal Asad have convincingly demonstrated that these categories are far from universal: developed in a European setting, they reflected

1 Hoshino 2012; Josephson 2012; Maxey 2014. For an overview, see Thomas 2013.
2 For a discussion of negative perceptions of "religion," see Baffelli and Reader 2012.
3 See, for example, Fitzgerald 2007.

early modern power configurations, and their "universalization" was embedded in imperialist projects even if the categories were appropriated and transformed by non-Western actors.[4] Thus, Asad and like-minded postcolonial scholars have contributed significantly to the re-historicization of these concepts and, accordingly, to the overcoming of universalistic, *sui generis* understandings of religion.[5] The title of this special issue, *Formations of the Secular in Japan*, is a direct reference to the work of Asad, whose genealogical approach and conceptual criticism constitute an important source of inspiration for us. At the same time, however, some of the articles in this volume depart from Asad, notably in problematizing his assertion that "the secular" was a uniquely Western product, developed in a Christian context and forcibly imposed upon non-Western Others. They show that the religious-secular dichotomy played a central part in modern state formation in Japan, in spite of the fact that Japan was one of a handful of non-Western countries that escaped colonization.[6] The categories of religion and the secular were not simply imposed by "the West": they were also shaped by Japanese (state and religious) actors, who drew on preexisting notions and practices as much as on newly imported ones.

Whatever their origins, there is no denying the fact that in modern times, "religion" and "the secular" have acquired profound significance worldwide. The definition and demarcation of "religion" is central to governance in imperial and post-imperial states, not only in Europe and the US but also in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. "Secularity" and "secularism" have long ceased to be Eurocentric terms. Although they developed in the context of "North Atlantic Christendom," as described by Charles Taylor, they have been implemented, appropriated, and at times subverted in nation states with profoundly different worship traditions, taking on a variety of new meanings in the process.[7] Countries as diverse as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Senegal, and Turkey have all developed their own particular secularist ideologies and their own models for classifying and regulating religion.[8] These models are by no means fixed: various actors (religious and otherwise) constantly challenge existing categorizations, for instance by claiming a more visible role for particular religious ideas and practices in the public realm, or, by contrast, by seeking to exclude supposedly "religious" practices and symbols from that realm.

Japan is no exception. The question of whether or not there were functional equivalents to "religion" and "the secular" in the premodern period has been discussed by several scholars, and will be taken up again in this issue in the articles by Paramore, Teeuwen, and Krämer, who examine continuities between pre- and post-Meiji Japan.[9] At the same time, they argue, recognizing such continuities helps us to understand the profound transformations and inventions wrought by the formation of "religion" in the Meiji period.[10]

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4 Asad 1993; 2003.

5 On this topic, see also Masuzawa 2005; McCutcheon 1997.

6 Maxey 2014.

7 See Taylor 2007 for a discussion of the formation of the religious-secular dichotomy in the Western historical context.

8 Bubandt and van Beek 2012a; Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, and Middell 2015; Casanova 1994; 2006; Chatterjee 2011; Dressler and Mandair 2011; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008; van der Veer 2013.

9 Reader (2004) and Kleine (2013) have argued that premodern Japanese society was characterized by a differentiation between a "secular" and a "religious" realm similar to the modern period. For a critique of these arguments, see Horii 2016.

10 Josephson 2012.

Indeed, the question of how to define the incorporated Western category of "religion" (and, accordingly, how to classify and manage existing practices and organizations) became central to the Meiji government's modernization project.[11] As the newly configured "religion" was differentiated from other societal realms, various secularist ideologies were developed. Some of these would exercise considerable influence on modern and contemporary Japanese society and politics, as well as, not surprisingly, on "religious" organizations themselves. In postwar Japan, the problem of religion's definition and legal demarcation has lingered on: controversies related to the legal position of "religion" in Japanese society and politics emerge and reemerge periodically, and the meanings and societal position of "religion" remain as contested as ever.

To grasp the large variety of contexts that are impacted by this ongoing contestation, some concrete examples may be helpful. The following three episodes illustrate the fact that boundary wars over "religion" can be very concrete and intrusive, and are triggered by all kinds of major and minor incidents.

Kyoto, May 1967

Seven shrine priests are arrested for breaking election laws. They have performed *tōsen kigan* 当選祈願 rituals for a politician (a certain Nakano), who has asked them to pray for his election to the House of Representatives earlier in the year. When Nakano is arrested for corruption, the priests get caught up in the matter, and some of them are detained in police custody for up to twenty days, while being pressured to sign documents in which they admit their crime. In the end, they receive fines, against which six of them appeal. The *tōsen kigan* rites involve offerings of saké, and the police claim that such offerings constitute bribes or vote buying. When a priest protests that these are offerings to the gods and not personal "gifts" to the priests, the police investigator reportedly objects that "the gods have not drunk any of the saké, while the priests have." The Kyoto branch of the National Association of Shinto Shrines (Kyōto-fu Jinjachō 京都府神社庁) argues that this kind of "atheistic, oppressive attitude" is unconstitutional because it tramples on the freedom of faith. If this is allowed to pass, the priests state, "all offerings and donations made to religious organizations, whether they are shrines, temples, or churches, will be regarded as secular bribing of religionists, or as complicity in corruption."[12]

Kyoto, July 1985

The city government implements what it calls the Ancient Capital Preservation Cooperation Tax (*koto hozon kyōryokuzei* 古都保存協力税), which requires Kyoto's major thirty-seven temples to collect a tourist tax from visitors. The Kyoto Buddhist Association (Kyōto-shi Bukkyōkai 京都市仏教会) protests that temple visits are religious acts, and therefore cannot be taxed by the authorities. They argue that the new tax is a serious breach of the freedom of faith, and refuse to cooperate. The situation rapidly escalates into a full-scale "temple strike." The city's most famous

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11 Hoshino 2012; Maxey 2014; Krämer 2015.
12 *Jinja shinpō*, 20 May 1967, p. 1.

temples remain closed to all visitors for three years, and tourist numbers in Kyoto nosedive. It is only in the spring of 1988 that the conflict is resolved. The city government cuts its losses and rescinds the tax. Temples, meanwhile, introduce measures to make sure that nobody will ever again mistake a temple visit for mere tourism, for example by replacing entrance fees with "entrance donations." [13]

Ōita, December 2015

The prefectural council of Ōita prefecture, working towards the designation of the landscape of Usa City as a UN-recognized "Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System," publishes a calendar for 2016, featuring beautiful photos of the area, with 1,870 calendars distributed locally using ¥590,000 from public coffers. On 26 December 2015, however, the prefectural Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Planning Division intervenes and withdraws the calendars. The problem, division head Murai explains, is that the calendar contains information about lucky and unlucky days (*rokuyō* 六曜). "If people end up believing in unfounded superstitions, this may lead to discrimination. Such matters should not be included in official publications. We apologize for not having checked this [calendar] more thoroughly." [14]

Through countless conflicts and incidents of this kind, the boundary between the secular and the religious is constantly concretized anew in a process of negotiation and renegotiation. Intrusions of the secular into the religious sphere, or vice versa, are vigorously opposed—understandably so when institutional interests are at stake, as in the first two examples, but even when this is not so obviously the case, as in the third incident. The "formation of the secular" is the cumulative history of such negotiations, both reflecting and gradually transforming the grammar of religion within Japanese society.

A "Global Comparative Perspective"

Until recently, most scholarly accounts of secularization and secularism were primarily concerned with developments in so-called Western societies. A number of scholars have pointed out that classical secularization theories—which, as Casanova aptly summarized, predicted the decline of religious beliefs, the privatization of religion, and the differentiation of the religious from other societal spheres, all of which were seen as inevitable consequences of modernization—were grounded in Eurocentric notions of modernity and corresponding social-evolutionist views of historical progress.[15] Likewise, secularist political theories such as those proposed by John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas are primarily informed by Western European and North American history and ideology, and fail to engage seriously with non-Western world views and historical developments. Accordingly, several historians have argued that the secular-religion binary is essentially a Euro-American historical construct, developed in a Western Christian context, which was imposed upon a variety of non-Christian Others in the context of modern imperialism. This, as we have seen, is the

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13 Graburn 2004, p. 135.
14 *Ōita gōdō shinbun*, 26 December 2015, p. 27.
15 Casanova 1994.

argument of Talal Asad, as outlined in his influential work *Formations of the Secular* (2003). Similarly, in his monumental historical study *A Secular Age* (2007), Charles Taylor argues that modern secularization is the outcome of unique historical developments that took place in the context of Latin Christendom, notably the Reformation and the Enlightenment. Central to this process, according to Taylor, was the development of an "immanent frame" (that is, an epistemological framework that is fundamentally this-worldly) as the default mode for explaining phenomena, which caused religion to lose its self-evidence and become one option among others.

In recent years, however, the study of secularities and secularisms—now often written in the plural, in order to allow for the diversity of forms they have taken—has moved beyond notions of Western exceptionalism and classical West–East (or North–South) dichotomies. A new "global comparative perspective" is emerging, allowing for "a less Euro-centric comparative analysis of patterns of differentiation and secularization in other civilizations and world religions."[16] Although many secularities and secularisms emerged in modern colonial or semi-colonial contexts, they were not merely Western constructs that were imposed upon passive colonial subjects. Notions of secularity were actively appropriated, altered, and implemented by various non-Western actors, who drew on European ideology *as well as* indigenous world views and conceptual frameworks. Accordingly, recent years have seen an increasing awareness of the global interconnectedness of formations of "religion" and the "secular." More and more scholars are studying the historical processes by which European categories influenced, and were transformed by, non-European practices and beliefs. Examples include Peter van der Veer's comparative study of configurations of "religion," "secularity," and "spirituality" in China and India, and the significance of these categories for nation-building projects in both countries.[17] It also includes the recent works on the formation of the category "religion" in Japan by Hoshino, Josephson, Maxey, and Krämer, as well as Dessì's work on the impact of globalization on Japanese religion and secularity.[18]

The new "global comparative perspective" observed by Casanova is also illustrated by the fact that in recent years, various anthologies have been published in which Asian secularities and secularisms are discussed explicitly and extensively, either as the main focus or in comparison with other regions.[19] Two of these volumes contain articles discussing aspects of secularity and secularization in Japan, either in contemporary society or historically.[20] In this special issue, we seek to explore further some of the issues introduced in these anthologies. Instead of taking for granted the supposedly "Western" character of the secular-religion dichotomy, we raise the question of whether it is possible to speak of premodern Japanese secularities, thus challenging the widespread assumption that "the immanent frame" is a uniquely Western historical product. Significantly, several historians

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16 Casanova 2006, p. 11.
17 van der Veer 2013.
18 Hoshino 2012; Josephson 2012; Maxey 2014; Krämer 2015; Dessì 2013.
19 Bubandt and van Beek 2012a; Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, and Middell 2015; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011; Eggert and Hölscher 2013; Heng and Ten 2010; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008.
20 These are Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, and Middell 2015 and Eggert and Hölscher 2013, both of which contain two chapters on Japanese cases. Mullins (2015) and Porcu (2015) look at developments in contemporary society; Isomae (2013) and Krämer (2013) approach the topic historically.

have argued that, although the terms "religion" (*shūkyō*) and "secular" (*sezoku*) were created as calques in the early Meiji period, a similar societal differentiation may have already been in place in the Edo period or even earlier, and it is possible to speak of premodern or early modern Japanese secularism *avant la lettre*.[21] In their implementation of European legal and societal categories, Meiji-period politicians and scholars could not ignore preexisting Japanese epistemological frameworks, which were embedded in their own thinking; and when venturing from the theoretical to the concrete, they had to work around the institutional structures shaped by Edo-period rationales and policies.

The articles in this issue trace the various genealogies of the secular in modern Japan, taking into consideration premodern precedents as well as modern adaptations and the various "imperial encounters" by which they were shaped.[22] This is not merely of historical interest. In spite of many twists and turns, we maintain that there is a thread tying together the different stages of the history of the secular in Japan. Even the three rather random examples given above illustrate such threads of continuity. Beyond questions of corruption, the 1967 arrest of priests displays obvious echoes of Meiji-period discourse: the Peace Police Bill of 1898 had already banned priests and other religious actors from engaging in political activities.[23] The argument that temple visits are by definition religious was first used by Kyoto temples in that same year, in protest against a prefectural tax imposed to subsidize the maintenance of old shrines and temples in the city.[24] Finally, the scrapping of the Ōita calendar in 2015 drew on a more recent precedent: in 2005, the Buraku Liberation League (Buraku Kaihō Dōmei 部落解放同盟) protested against the publication by Ōtsu City of pocket diaries featuring lucky and unlucky days, arguing that public endorsement of superstitions regarding impurity led to discrimination. Each new incident, then, carries within it the traces of earlier bouts of negotiation over the boundaries between the secular and religious spheres, and the limitations that those boundaries impose on actors of all hues.

For these reasons, the articles in this volume will cover a period that stretches from the premodern to the contemporary period, approaching the subject matter from historical as well as social scientific perspectives. What these articles have in common is that they examine formations of the secular in Japan—societal, legal, and ideological—and, in doing so, attempt to rethink the modern history of Japanese (non-)religion in the light of recent theoretical developments. This does not mean they are all in agreement. The authors approach the topic from various angles, drawing on different theories. Some engage with the work and terminology of Charles Taylor, which they apply to a Japanese historical context. Others draw on the ideas of Talal Asad, José Casanova, and others. As editors, we have deliberately refrained from imposing a single theoretical model upon these different case studies, and we have not asked the authors to define "religion" and "the secular" in accordance with our own preferences. Rather, we have invited them to offer their own definitions and interpretations. The authors represent a variety of disciplinary angles (historical, sociological, anthropological, and legal/political), thematic concerns, and interpretations. This diversity, we argue, is one of the defining features—for better or

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21   Kleine 2013; Paramore 2012; Teeuwen 2013.
22   See van der Veer 2013.
23   Maxey 2014, p. 229.
24   Fujita 2014.

worse—of contemporary scholarly debates on the secular, secularism, and secularization. Instead of downplaying this diversity, and the conceptual fluidity (or, at times, confusion) characterizing these debates, we wish to highlight it as an opportunity for cross-disciplinary engagement.

A Secular Japan?

The question of whether Japan is a "secular" or a "religious" society is not particularly new. Already in the 1970s, Reischauer and Jansen famously argued that Japan is a secular society in which religion only plays a peripheral role, and that "the trend toward secularism that has only recently become marked in the West dates back at least three centuries in Japan"—a statement that has been both criticized and derided, but that is arguably worth reconsidering.[25] Secularization theory has been a core concern of sociologists and scholars of religion since the 1970s, and its possible relevance (or lack thereof) for Japan was the subject of much debate, as illustrated by the fact that several conferences and two special issues of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* were devoted to the topic.[26] Somewhat later, sociologist of religion Winston Davis examined the topic of the "secularization of Japanese religion" in an interesting theoretical essay.[27] However, in the 1990s and the first decade of the twentieth century, classical unilinear accounts of secularization lost much of their appeal as scholars worldwide focused on the perceived "return of religion" or "desecularization" of the world.[28] Accordingly, the topic of secularization in Japan received little scholarly interest during this period.

This appears to be changing. The topic of the decline of (rural) religious institutions has recently returned to the forefront of debates on Japanese religion.[29] Somewhat ironically, the first issue of the newly launched *Journal of Religion in Japan* was devoted to secularization and religious decline, with one of the authors even predicting the death of Japanese religion within "two decades."[30] Containing articles by Mark Mullins, John Nelson, Elisabetta Porcu, and Ian Reader, the journal constitutes one of several recent publications reconsidering secularization in Japan.[31] Reader's article is the most outspoken of the four, arguing that religion in Japan is in serious trouble, and that classical accounts of secularization as the "decline of religion" deserve to be reassessed. Reader equates institutional decline with secularization, and provides some impressive evidence of such decline; yet he does not reflect upon ways in which the categories of "religion" and "the secular" have been shaped and reshaped in the Japanese context. The articles by Nelson and Mullins, on the other hand, are clearly informed by recent theoretical debates concerning the multiplicity of secularities and secularisms; they argue that processes of secularization

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25 Reischauer and Jansen 1995, p. 203.
26 Volume 3:4 (1976) and volume 6:1–2 (1979). The former includes articles by Bryan Wilson and Thomas Luckmann, as well as an interesting contribution by Jan Swyngedouw on secularization in the Japanese context (Swyngedouw 1976). The latter includes more articles on the topic, written by leading sociologists and scholars of religion.
27 Davis 1992, pp. 229–51.
28 For example, Berger 1999; Stark 1999.
29 For example, Fuyutsuki 2010; Ukai 2015.
30 Reader 2012, p. 34.
31 Mullins 2012; Nelson 2012; Porcu 2012; Reader 2012.

in Japan are neither unilinear nor all-encompassing, and that they are complemented by processes of sacralization and the *de*-privatization of religion.

Scholars who write about these topics face several conceptual challenges. First of all, the term "secularization" carries multiple meanings and is used differently by different authors.[32] Casanova famously distinguished between three understandings of secularization: "the decline of religious beliefs and practices" (which, he adds, "is the most recent but by now the most widespread usage of the term in contemporary academic debates on secularization"); "the privatization of religion"; and "the differentiation of the secular spheres (state, economy, science)" from religion.[33] Thus, it is possible for a society to experience secularization politically (that is, the imposition of restrictions to religious institutions and symbols in the public sphere), while simultaneously experiencing an increase in the number and popularity of religious organizations. Considering the conceptual fluidity characteristic of secularization debates, participants in such debates should clearly define their terms.

Second, it is important to point out the semantic distinction between *secularization* as a historical process (or, rather, a number of related processes); *the secular* as a modern epistemic and societal category; *secularism* as a type of ideology or political system concerned with limiting the position of religion vis-à-vis politics and other secular spheres; and *secularity* as the state of being secular.[34] José Casanova defined "the secular" as "a central modern category—theological-philosophical, legal-political, and cultural-anthropological—to construct, codify, grasp, and experience a realm or reality differentiated from 'the religious.' […] It should be obvious that 'the religious' and 'the secular' are always and everywhere mutually constituted."[35] By contrast, we understand "secularism" to refer to a range of ideologies or world views that stipulate the separation of religion from purportedly secular spheres (for example, politics and education) and seek to restrict the societal space allocated to religion.[36] It should also be noted that, whereas the terms "secular," "secularism," and "secularization" have received ample scholarly attention for decades, the derived notion of "secularity" has only recently become the focus of intense academic debate. Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt define the difference between "secularism" and "secularity" as follows: "We propose to reserve the concept of secularism for the ideological-philosophical program—hence, for the explicit ideology of separation—and related political practices, and the concept of secularity, by contrast, for the culturally and symbolically as well as institutionally anchored forms and arrangements of differentiation between religion and other social spheres."[37] In other words, secularity is more descriptive and implicit than secularism, which refers to ideological programs to demarcate or enlarge the secular sphere.[38] The recent focus on "secularity" as a conceptual alternative to "the secular" and

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32 See, for instance, Dobbelaere 1981; Demerath 2007.
33 Casanova 2006, p. 7. Cf. Casanova 1994.
34 Asad 2003; Casanova 2011.
35 Casanova 2011, p. 54.
36 See Rots in this issue. Cf. Bubandt and van Beek 2012b, pp. 7–8.
37 Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012, p. 881.
38 It should be noted that Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt's definition of "secularism" is narrower than the one offered by Casanova, who states that secularism may be held either consciously or unreflexively, "as the taken-for-granted normal structure of modern reality" (Casanova 2011, p. 55). Accordingly, Casanova does not use the term "secularity" much.

"secularism" has given rise to a number of publications on "multiple secularities" worldwide, some of which discuss Japanese cases.[39]

Thus, although sociological debates about the secularization of Japanese societies (understood variously as religious decline, as privatization, or as functional differentiation) continue to be important, they are not the full story. And whereas the perceived *secularization* (or lack thereof) of modern Japanese society has engaged both historians and sociologists of religion for decades, until recently considerably less attention has been given to Japanese varieties of *secularism*, let alone to the ways in which *the secular* has been shaped and reshaped in the course of Japanese history. Although this appears to be changing, Japanese cases have not yet received much attention from scholars of these issues outside of Japanese studies, especially those approaching the topic comparatively. Therefore, we believe, it is important that scholars of Japanese history and religion not only are *informed* about the ongoing debates on secularisms, secularities, and secularization, but they should also *contribute* to these debates more actively. With this special issue, we hope to make a further contribution to the understanding of formations of the secular and secularism in Japan, and also to the ongoing debate on ways in which these categories have been given shape in different cultural and political contexts more broadly.

The Articles

This issue is organized chronologically, and begins with articles by Kiri Paramore, Mark Teeuwen, and Hans Martin Krämer that address the question of the degree to which "religion" and "the secular" are exclusively modern concepts. Each of these articles is based on different empirical materials, and while they all dispute Asad's categorical definition of non-Western adoptions of "religion" as colonial imports, they offer very different alternatives to this view. Paramore points out that what he calls the religious and the political were already conceptually differentiated in ancient China in a manner that must be described as "reflective" in Charles Taylor's terminology. He doubts that a premodern era of naïve religious faith, as imagined by Taylor, ever actually existed even in Europe. Rather than searching for the origins of secular reflexivity, Paramore argues, we should be tracing the changing patterns of interaction between already differentiated religious and political spheres. From this point of view, he proposes that Japan moved from a Buddhist-mediated balanced regime of political-religious relations, by way of a tumultuous interlude where *Ikkō ikki* 一向一揆 presented a competing regime, to a Confucian-mediated regime that achieved a new balance. The collapse of Confucianism in the Meiji period undermined this equilibrium, leaving Japan without the means to integrate religion and politics and forcing it to exclude religion from the public sphere as an arena that was by definition irrational and divisive.

Mark Teeuwen offers a different perspective on aspects of continuity between the Edo and Meiji periods (and beyond). Like Paramore, he stresses the radical novelty of late medieval faith-based identities, as pioneered by the *Ikkō ikki*. The alternative "regime" (to borrow Paramore's term) of such faith groups formed the rationale of the early modern

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39 Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012; Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, and Middell 2015; Nelson 2012. These works echo the terminology of S. N. Eisenstadt (2000), who famously argued that there are "multiple modernities" at work in the world, challenging the dominance of Eurocentric accounts of modernization.

temple certification system. Teeuwen discusses the dilemmas of this system as a form of secularity—after all, it involved the constant negotiation of the boundary between the worlds of "faith" on the one hand and governance on the other. Teeuwen recognizes the legacy of this centuries-long process of negotiation in Confucian-inspired notions of "unity of ritual and government" (*saisei itchi* 祭政一致), which gave prime importance to ritual as a mediating practice between what would later be called religion and politics. Teeuwen's first argument is that this Confucian model, which stressed ritual as an integrating practice, continued to compete with the modern discourse on "religion" into the twentieth century, and influenced the mapping of "religion" and "the secular" in the process. His second point is that the institutional realities of temples and shrines, formed under the temple certification system, greatly limited the implementation of modern ideological reforms, and are underemphasized in research on the conceptualization of religion in Japan.

Hans Martin Krämer, too, underlines the crucial importance of "parallel indigenous conceptual traditions" as a factor that determined the reception of Western concepts of religion and secularity in the Meiji period. He argues that the notion that religion and the secular form separate realms had a "prehistory," and that pre-Meiji ideas were crucial to the reconception of this notion by Japanese actors, who used the new term "religion" to solve the pressing problems that threatened their institutions in the new age of "civilization." Krämer focuses on the Shin priest Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911) and demonstrates how this key figure combined time-honored Shin notions of "the Kingly Law and the Buddha Law" (*ōbō buppō* 王法仏法), "the two truths of transcendence and worldliness" (*shinzoku nitai* 真俗二諦), and also the primacy of faith as preached already by Shinran, together with Western ideas about religion and the state in his struggle to defend Shin Buddhism from Shinto pressure. In the process, Krämer concludes, Shimaji became a pioneer of Japanese secularism. Of course, Shimaji's secularism diverged from Western models, but there is no doubt that it shared so many traits with that many-hued family that it came to be recognized as a reconceived form of secularism, construed by integrating both inherited and newly received Japanese and Western ideas in a specific political context.

James Mark Shields writes about the New Buddhist Association, a lay Buddhist group most active between 1899 and 1915. Its members strove to create a nonsectarian movement of lay Buddhists who expressed their faith through active engagement in society. To them the word "new" meant sincere, morally sound, rational, free of both dogma and superstition, and oriented toward this world. In contrast to the Association of Buddhist Sects, which appealed to such ideas as *ōbō buppō* in the hope of securing a privileged position for Buddhism within the Japanese state, the New Buddhists held the secularist view that independence from the government was a prime condition for freedom of faith. In other ways, however, the New Buddhists were anything but secularists. They did not seek to separate "private" religion from the public realm; quite to the contrary, they saw social activism as the essence of modern Buddhism. Shields finds parallels to the ideas of the New Buddhists in Western philosophical traditions, and he compares their ambition to take faith out of the temples and into the "real world" with Protestant movements that sought to Christianize society by secularizing the church. His article reminds us of the many meanings of the term "secular," and serves as a warning against assuming that only one was relevant to Meiji Japan.

The articles by Kate Wildman Nakai and Erica Baffelli both address a topic that has received relatively little attention from scholars of secularism: higher education.[40] These articles show how shifting conceptions and classifications of "religion" and "secularity" exercised considerable impact upon the development of (higher) education in modern and contemporary Japan. Nakai discusses the role of "religion" and "secularism" in early twentieth century Japanese higher education. Drawing on the work of Ahmed Kuru on French and Turkish secularism, she argues that Japan's educational policy at the time was likewise characterized by "assertive secularism," as the state restricted religious education and ceremonies at all state-accredited schools. Christian universities had to find ways to negotiate these restrictions. Meanwhile, however, they also had to respond to the government's attempts to promote shrine and emperor worship among students. Using the history of the private Catholic university of Sophia University in Tokyo as a case study, Nakai shows that university leaders initially were unwilling to comply, adopting a position of "passive secularism." After the 1932 Yasukuni Shrine incident, however, the leadership of Sophia University changed its position, and started promoting the notion that shrine worship was a nonreligious act of patriotism, "compatible with Catholic belief and practice."

In the postwar period, the government no longer imposes shrine worship as a mandatory educational activity. However, the Ministry of Education still accredits schools and universities based on educational standards that may be considered secular. As Erica Baffelli argues, several new religions have attempted to set up "alternative models for mainstream systems," including education. Sōka Gakkai 創価学会 and Tenrikyō 天理教 are two well-known examples of so-called new religions that have successfully negotiated state secularist demands and established universities that draw upon and incorporate religious beliefs and practices, while simultaneously offering educational programs that meet the standards of the ministry. By contrast, Baffelli shows, Kōfuku no Kagaku's 幸福の科学 application for permission to establish a new university was rejected in 2014. This may have been partly due to changing attitudes to religion in post-Aum society, but the decisive factor appears to have been Kōfuku no Kagaku's failure to recognize that higher education based primarily on the founder's spiritual revelations is fundamentally at odds with the ministry's definition of "science." In other words, contrary to some other new religions, which successfully developed alternative models, Kōfuku no Kagaku offers an interesting recent case study of a movement that has failed to negotiate the demands and speak the "secular" language of the dominant mainstream, at least with respect to higher education. It also shows that education remains one of the fields where the boundaries between religion and secularity are continuously contested and redrawn, today as much as in the prewar period.

Isaac Gagné's article likewise looks at attempts by new religions to negotiate postwar secularism. It examines the case of Kagamikyō (a pseudonym), a comparatively small new

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40 This is not to say that the topic has been completely neglected: there have been some publications addressing issues pertaining to secularity and (higher) education (for example, Waggoner 2011). Revealingly, though, hardly any of the edited volumes referred to in this introduction (Bubandt and van Beek 2012a; Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, and Middell 2015; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011; Eggert and Hölscher 2013; Heng and Ten 2010; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008) contain articles that explicitly address secularism in relation to education (Dressler and Mandair 2011 is the exception, as it contains an article on Buddhism and education in Burma). The topic has not received much attention from leading theoreticians such as Talal Asad, José Casanova, or Charles Taylor either.

religion that has recently gone through a process of "internal secularization." Drawing on the work of Karel Dobbelaere and others, Gagné argues that internal secularization "is driven by the organizational leaders' active transformation of their internal structure, rituals, and even symbolic meanings within their organization toward conformity (or at least complementarity) with another referential world." [41] This referential world, Gagné shows, is perceived as "secular" and even hostile to "religion"; thus, deemphasizing the "religious" aspects of Kagamikyō has become a strategy employed by the leadership to ensure institutional survival. The article outlines several recent transformations within this organization, which have led to the removal or adaptation of practices that were considered too explicitly "religious." Recently, Kagamikyō has reinvented itself as a "global superreligion": it seeks to gain legitimacy domestically through its "international" activities, such as foreign exchange and mission abroad, and attract new followers by constructing a "Paradise on Earth Theme Park" that includes sports facilities and an art museum. Interestingly, however, Gagné's ethnographic data reveal that some of the older-generation members are uncomfortable with the recent transformations, not only because of the financial burdens involved but also because of the changes in worship practices.

Gagné's analysis of Kagamikyō's recent transformations corresponds to what Rots in his article refers to as "discursive secularization": "processes by which beliefs, practices, and institutions previously classified as 'religion' are redefined and reconfigured (by many of the leading actors involved) as 'culture,' 'tradition,' 'heritage,' 'science,' or even 'nature'; in sum, as non-religion." Rots points out that discursive secularization is an important feature of many contemporary Japanese organizations, but adds that this does not necessarily imply the decline of devotional practices or beliefs. Shrine Shinto is a case in point. Drawing on the works of Charles Taylor and Kuroda Toshio, Rots argues that contemporary Shinto ideologues wish to reestablish their tradition as the public "immanent frame" underlying Japanese culture and society—similar to what Jason A. Josephson has referred to as the "Shinto secular." [42] Yet this newly reimagined public, "secular" Shinto is by no means devoid of gods, rituals, and other "sacred" elements, for (discursive) secularization can go hand in hand with sacralization. In his article, Rots focuses on two authors in particular: influential Shinto scholar Sonoda Minoru 薗田稔 and president of the Association of Shinto Shrines Tanaka Tsunekiyo 田中恆清, both of whom assert the existential significance of shrine groves (*chinju no mori* 鎮守の森) as sacred community centers that lie at the very foundation of Japanese culture and society. Shinto, they assert, is a fundamentally public, immanent worship tradition that precedes and transcends any modern differentiation between a religious and a secular realm.

Thierry Guthmann's article likewise addresses contemporary Shinto ideology, in relation to the increasing influence of nationalist lobby organizations such as Nippon Kaigi 日本会議. Guthmann acknowledges the fact that many actors within these organizations argue that Shinto is not a religion; nevertheless, he suggests, the ideology of these "nationalist circles" continues to have a profoundly religious dimension. This is particularly visible in their emphasis on emperor worship as a core aspect of a proud Japanese nation, as well as their patronage of Yasukuni Shrine. Guthmann's understanding of secularization is strongly

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41 See Dobbelaere 1981.
42 Josephson 2012, chapter 5.

influenced by the French notion of *laïcité*, which implies that the state apparatus and public education are independent from religious institutions and adopt a position of neutrality on religious matters. Despite the fact that Japanese society has experienced religious decline, Guthmann argues, nationalist circles within the country continue to retain strong links with religious institutions—not only the Association of Shinto Shrines, but also various new religions and some Buddhist organizations. Moreover, they advocate notions of the nation and the emperor that are of a fundamentally religious nature. Thus, Guthmann concludes, the "secularization" of groups such as Nippon Kaigi appears impossible.

Last but not least, Ernils Larsson's article looks more closely at some of the issues introduced by Guthmann and Rots. In particular, it addresses some of the legal dimensions of postwar secularism by discussing the attempts of Shinto actors and their ideological allies to negotiate and overcome constitutional limitations. In early 2016 many shrines throughout Japan participated in a campaign for constitutional reform, urging visitors to sign a petition supporting such reforms. Larsson addresses the involvement of the Association of Shinto Shrines with these campaigns, asking why this organization has become more politically active in recent years. Of crucial importance, he argues, were two court rulings, which—in contrast to earlier rulings—established that Shinto shrines, as religious organizations by law, cannot qualify for state support: the Ehime case of 1997 and the Sunagawa I case of 2010. Larsson demonstrates that these rulings are indicative of a new legal paradigm that perceives Shinto as a religion subject to the same limitations as other religions. He sees the active involvement of the Association of Shinto Shrines with Nippon Kaigi's attempts to gain public support for constitutional amendments—among others the introduction of a distinction between "religion" and "custom"—in the light of these legal struggles.

Concluding remarks

The articles in this special issue show some noteworthy differences in approach, not only methodologically but also theoretically and conceptually. Reflecting a variety of academic disciplines ranging from history to sociology, from comparative religion to political science and from anthropology to philosophy, "secularism" and "secularization" have long been topics that defied easy disciplinary classification and definition. At times, this has led to conceptual confusion and misunderstandings. At other times, however, it has provided opportunities for cross-disciplinary interaction and cooperation, opening up important new insights. The recent mushrooming of books and edited volumes on secularisms and secularities "beyond the West" clearly shows that the topic is by no means exhausted: as religion and the secular remain highly significant and often contested categories in societies worldwide, the historical and anthropological study of their formation is of immediate social and political relevance.

Beyond the differences in approach, the articles in this volume have several things in common. First of all, all authors stress that the Meiji concepts of "religion" and "the secular" were not simply foreign impositions or colonial imports. Rather, in their construction of these categories, leading Meiji-period actors drew upon, adapted, and reinterpreted premodern concepts and practices. Second, some of the tensions and themes already present in Meiji-period Japan resurfaced at various times in later pre- and postwar history, and remain unresolved today. Higher education and law are two of the societal fields where religion-secular boundaries continue to be renegotiated and redrawn. Issues related to

state patronage of shrines, religious activism in the public sphere, protection from state coercion and persecution, and other questions pertaining to the limits of religious freedom continue to come up periodically. And third, all the articles in this special issue show that, throughout modern and contemporary Japanese history, religion and secularism were no mere abstractions. They were, and are, *social realities*, the definitions and demarcations of which have very real consequences for people's lives.

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Premodern Secularism

Kiri Paramore

This article argues that secularism is not an exclusively modern phenomenon, but is rather a recurring pattern which arises throughout different periods of premodern and modern history. I begin with a *longue durée* overview of Japanese history as a case study, proposing a regime of such historical cycles over a 1,200-year period. I then focus on changes in religious-political relations which occurred in one specific, important cycle, through the transition from the late medieval into the early modern period. I argue that this period ushered in a new form of political-religious relations where Neo-Confucianism, instead of Buddhism, for the first time represented the religious element in Japanese politics. I demonstrate how this early modern regime of political-religious interaction supported by Neo-Confucianism was particularly stable and functioned to support public discourse. In conclusion, the article notes the destruction of this early modern form of political-religious relations during East Asian modernization, and suggests that the continuing lack of a stable regime of political-religious relations in both contemporary China and Japan can be seen as an ongoing legacy of that destruction.

Keywords: Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, public sphere, political religion, early modern history, early modernity

[The Master] sacrificed to the dead as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits, as if the spirits were present.[1]

For over two thousand years, people in East Asia have thought about religious ritual in these "as if" terms. This reflective, relativizing consideration of the sociality of core ritual practices was identified with Confucius in one of the founding texts of the tradition, and institutionalized within an imperial state-sanctioned canon in the Han Dynasty (206BC–220AD). It has functioned ever since as an established, mainstream way for the East Asian elite to think about what we would today call the nexus between politics and religion. East Asian premodernity thus had at its political, intellectual, and religious heart a relativization of ritual practice which invited interpretation in instrumentalist, agnostic, pluralist, reflexive and reflective terms.

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1 *Confucius Analects*, Bayi (translation in Legge 1983, 3/12).

So much for Charles Taylor's idea of a premodern "era of naïve religious faith." [2] East Asian society, elite society at least, seems to have already had a "reflective" approach to religion well before the common era. Seeing a reflective attitude sits at the heart of Taylor's preferred (third) definition of the secular, and as it is patently clear that East Asian conceptions of belief and ritual were reflective, and even relativist, does this not mean that premodern East Asian society was, at least if we follow Taylor's definition, already "secular"?[3]

Of course, Taylor's vision of premodernity as an "era of naïve religious faith" could just as well be problematized from the perspective of European history, and perhaps make similar claims.[4] Taylor is very open in his book that his theories do not stand for any "world" other than that of "Western civilization." [5] Even in that world, however, one wonders if reality gels with his vision of a "naïve" religiosity which, through the use of a couple of nonrepresentative examples like Hieronymus Bosch, he alleges held for the entire history of a kind of flattened West-European premodernity.[6] I would suggest that Taylor's position is actually only a slight detour from the stereotypical modernist vision of the premodern Western world where a naïve religious vision bereft of all reflectivity and rationality was only brought to an end through one of the twin triumphs of either the Enlightenment or Protestantism, or most often a conflation of the two. Taylor's small amendment to this usual narrative of modernist West-European triumphalism is simply to replace Protestantism with a progressive Catholic-inflected vision of "humanism," which Taylor links historically to the rise of Deism.[7] This vision offered up by Taylor is simply a light progressive Catholic inflection of a familiar modernist Western narrative.

If we accept, however, the view from some intellectual historians of Europe that Deism itself was at least partly the outcome of the Jesuit transmission of Confucian ideas from China to Europe in the seventeenth century, then we can see Confucianism striking back even in the European background to Taylor's Deist-influenced definition of "secularism." [8] The kind of pragmatic and highly relativized vision of religiosity we see in much of Confucianism was not only an earlier manifestation of what Taylor now calls Western secularism, but perhaps even part of its historic origin. It might be interesting to reflect upon whether modernist ideas of secularism, both those of Taylor and the original more obviously politicized sectarian Protestant outlooks he amends, are not all ultimately descended genealogically (through late Deism) from East Asian tradition, and Confucianism in particular. But let us leave that for another article.

What the above discussion most certainly illustrates is that secularism, secularity, and secularization are all very slippery and highly politicized concepts. There is only one aspect shared by (nearly) all definitions of these: they arise together (sometimes in a causal relationship) with the global rise of a range of new sociopolitical constellations around the world that we now label *modern*. There are plenty of writers who see secularism as a bad thing, but even they criticize it as part of the modern, usually through a religious critique

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2 Taylor 2007, pp. 11, 19.
3 Taylor 2007, pp. 4, 20.
4 For one of many such problematizations from historians of medieval European religion, see Marty 2008.
5 Taylor 2007, p. 15.
6 Again, see Marty 2008.
7 Taylor 2007, p. 19.
8 Whelan 2009, p. 33.

of an imagined secularized (or secularizing) modernity. Both critics and supporters thereby usually describe secularism as a destination somewhere towards the end of a linear narrative of historical developmentalism. Usually it is part of an ultimate modern destination (what was once Fukuyama's end of history); sometimes it is an attribute of a modernity being surpassed in a more religiously reviving postmodern; but it is always modern.

This article posits the possibility of secularism not being only a modern phenomenon, and not coming into being only through linear historical developments. It casts secularism as a recurring pattern that arises during processes of social upheaval. This article firstly presents a *longue durée* overview of Japanese history, proposing a regime of such historical cycles and defending it in general terms. It then focuses on changes in religious-political relations which occurred in one important cycle, through the transition from what historians usually call the late medieval into the early modern period of Japanese history. I conclude the article by considering how an analysis of this history might inform a more creative, useful, and transculturally applicable vision of secularism in relation to modern Japan, East Asia, and the modern world more broadly. The case study presented here involves Japanese history, but I would contend that the historical pattern described here holds also for at least China, and probably also for many other societies.

All definitions of secularism in recent scholarship similarly accept that religion is always present in human society, and always relates to the political in some way or other.[9] Secularism has in recent scholarship thus universally become a term through which the *nature* of that interaction is discussed. Secularism is no longer seen as positing any kind of absence of religion in totality, something I think we all now agree has never occurred at any time in the history of human society.[10] In short, "secularism," for the purposes of this article, is a term used to discuss dynamic changes in the regimes which govern the nature of interaction between the political and religious.

At least for East Asia it seems clear that historical actors on the ground, already from the Han dynasty at the very latest, understood that religious action was a major constitutive part of politics, and discussed it as such. The quote from *Confucius Analects* which opens this article is just one of hundreds of examples available from the classical canons of East Asian religion and politics. These quotes indeed often form part of systematic schemes or regimes for the mediation of the role of religious ritual, belief, and practice in constituting a stable political order in East Asia. Relatively stable regimes of interaction between politics and religion have existed in East Asia since at least the Han dynasty. The formulation of the earliest stable Japanese states was also achieved in large part through borrowings from these same religiously plural, yet structurally deeply Confucian, trans-Asian regimes for the mediation of religious beliefs, affiliations, groups, rites, and practices in imperial statecraft.[11]

The Cycles of Secularism
Organized Japanese states—the political of the political-religion nexus—emerged for the first time in an organized enough form to earn that name sometime in the middle of the first millennium A.D. Mythological, pseudo-historical, and historical records all indicate

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9 Habermas 2008, 2010; Casanova 1994, 2012.
10 Such a consensus is represented in major multi-author works like Calhoun 2011.
11 See Paramore 2016a.

negotiation, controversy, and violence emerging around the settlement of one central question in the formation of these states: how should the political and religious interact? Importantly, these narratives all thereby assumed a conceptual differentiation between political and religious realms, which then in turn provided the basis for dynamic social action (including war) and the understanding of that action through the construction of historical narrative—for instance, in the *Kojiki* 古事記, *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, and *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本記, all of which narrate war in politico-religious terms.[12]

The important point to make here is that the conceptual separation of the political and religious is clearly not a modern phenomenon.[13] Separation was perceived, institutionalized, and bitter; deadly political conflicts were fought out around the negotiation of a scheme to mediate those separated fields. Wars between the Mononobe and Soga (sixth century), or between Empress Shōtoku and her enemies (eighth century), or much later between radical Nichiren and traditional politico-religious forces did not see each side argue for either the complete abolition of religion from the political, or a complete sacralization of the political. They rather centered upon conflict between *competing regimes* for how those realms should be mediated. The conceptual existence of two realms was never in doubt.

Stabilization of the Japanese capital both politically and geographically in the Heian period (794–1185) included the establishment of what I would call the first *longue durée* cycle of Japanese secularism. That regime rested on the establishment of institutions and institutional practices which both separated and linked the imperial court and a number of Buddhist monastic institutions. This settled regime of interaction, although sometimes challenged, was relatively stable from the ninth through to the fifteenth century. The regime institutionalized religious-political relations through customs of interaction between a number of Buddhist clerical institutions (*sangha* 僧伽) and the aristocratic networks which constituted (or at least symbolized) the state. These customized, institutionalized regimes of relations included mutual participation in each other's rituals, movement of personnel between them (retirement of nobles into monasteries), and family relations between governing members of institutions. These custom-based institutionalizations of relations both created stable mediation and interaction between the two, but importantly also clearly demarked their differences every time such an interaction occurred.[14] This stable pattern of institutionally, culturally, and often biologically linked realms of *sangha* and aristocratic

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12 This is evident for instance in the conflicts narrated in *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki* between the Soga and Mononobe (NST 1, NKBT 68, pp. 216–300), or in the eighth century between Empress Shōtoku and her enemies in *Shoku Nihongi* (SNKBT 14, pp. 174–443). Sometimes religious references are drawn directly from Confucian texts like the *Book of Rites*, notably in wars against "barbarian" *emishi* 蝦夷 in Northern Japan (NKBT 68, pp. 330–31). For a related discussion on the use of religion in defining military enemies of the state, see Ooms 2009, p. 168.

13 Kleine 2013. By conceptual, I do not mean linguistic. In this sense I use the word differently from Koselleck, who in my view has confused academic historians' thinking about the relationship between concepts and languages. In a very Indo-European-centric manner, and without much attention to linguistic research, Koselleck's research is based on the incorrect assumption that conceptualization occurs only through language. Psycholinguistic research makes clear that this is simply factually inaccurate (Nuyts and Pederson 1999). Concepts can exist across different linguistic representations, and psychologically are not necessarily initially formed or transferred through language.

14 Adolphson 2000, pp. 21–50.

power can be observed not only in Japan, but also in many other Buddhist-influenced countries through global history.[15]

Intriguingly, the final collapse of court rule and the rise of warrior shogunal governments at the end of the twelfth century barely interrupted this pattern. Rather, the same customs and methods of *sangha*-state integration were incorporated by the new ruling samurai nobility of the Kamakura shogunate, which also then integrated the new Zen clerical institutions along similar lines.[16] The fact that the new political order of shogunate rule, and the new religious movements related to Zen, both fitted themselves into the existent regime of political-religious relations is remarkable proof of its perceived cultural embeddedness and political efficacy.

If we substitute the definite pragmatism of samurai political culture for the alleged rationality of the so-called European "enlightenment," then this kind of stable relationship between the religious and political realms as the fulcrum of social order during the Kamakura shogunate could be said to conform to Habermas's recent definition of secularism as "a two-fold learning process that compels the traditions of the Enlightenment and religious teachings to reflect on each other's limits."[17] Of course, in premodern Japan it was the aristocratic and warrior nobility rather than the enlightenment that formed the rational end of the equation. But surely warrior culture provided a much more concrete historical vehicle for the kind of rational and pragmatic political pluralism Habermas would project than the imagined normative value attached to such a fake historical-ideological construction as "*the* enlightenment."

The Medieval to Early Modern Transition

This long lasting regime of religious-political interaction, however, was finally brought to an end in the late fifteenth century with the rise of new visions of how the political and religious should be integrated. As in the early reformation movements of fifteenth and sixteenth century Europe, so too in Japan these visions often emerged from lay commoner religious affiliates, in concert with hierarchically lower-level religious institutions, who imagined a renewed and broadened vision of religious practice playing a role in challenging both the old religious institutionalism, and its symbiotic relationship with the establishment of worldly power and status.

The most dramatic examples of this kind of movement in Japan were the *Ikkō ikki* 一向一揆. *Ikkō ikki* were federated peasant states which arose independently of warrior (samurai) lord rule in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were related to each other through their shared practice of Shin Buddhism. Despite being identified by the word *ikki* 一揆, more usually used to describe short outbreaks of local revolt, *Ikkō ikki* were in many parts of Japan long running, fully functioning, stable units of governance: states that ruled for as long as a century. Parallels with early Protestant reformism include their disengagement (on the ground in the *Ikkō ikki* states themselves) from religious institutionalism, the links to an alternate social class of political leaders (in this case, wealthier peasants instead of samurai nobles), and a more immediate and independent soteriology. The *Ikkō ikki* marked

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15 Strathern 2007; Harris 2007.
16 Collcutt 1981; Bodiford 1993.
17 Habermas 2008, p. 102.

the end of the old order not so much because they offered a vision of a new regime of political-religious relations—after all, such visions had been presented before. Rather, the *Ikkō ikki* were different as an historical phenomenon because they sustained—sometimes for a century—a competing regime, thereby demonstrating its stability and presenting a persistent challenge to the old regime. That stability was particularly challenging for the old regime because it revealed that the old regime itself, represented both through its constituent orthodox Buddhist religious institutions (monastic, *sangha*), and traditional political centers (court and shogunate), was no longer capable of functioning as the center of either political rule or religious life in Japan.[18]

Despite the *Ikkō ikki* being a real alternate political order which did function and survive for a long period of time, it was never national in scope, nor did it ever establish harmonious patterns of interaction with other powerful interests in society, like the samurai and court nobilities. The *Ikkō ikki* always remained an alternative form, particularly in terms of its radically different organization of social class. A new regime of political-religious relations could not be realized under the *Ikkō ikki* ultimately because the *Ikkō ikki* were defeated in the military battles which finally unified Japan politically in the late 1500s. Protestantism in Europe prevailed in establishing new dynamics of political-religious interaction primarily because Protestants were militarily victorious on a large enough scale and in many cases with armies led and funded by the new rising social classes that associated with the religious movement. In Japan, the peasant-led *Ikkō ikki* states were instead crushed by newly hegemonic military overlords, who reasserted a samurai dominated order, but in a new, much more hegemonic and centralized structure. This also led to the establishment of a new regime of political-religious interaction, one perhaps triggered by the challenge of movements like the *Ikkō ikki*, but not realized through them.

In an outcome very different to what happened in many parts of early modern Europe, the religious reform movements and their class allies did not win the military conflict in Japan. Reformist religious movements, the religious side of the religious-political equation, did not lead to the creation of a new regime of interaction; rather, the reverse occurred. They were instead crushed by new samurai hegemons who represented a strengthening of the political power in relation to the traditional religious institutions. All three of the unifying hegemons of Japan—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu—each more than the other looked to bring the traditional *sangha* institutions under stricter state control, just as they harnessed other organized social groups like merchant guilds, the imperial court aristocrats, and outcaste associations. This then was a complete change of the regime of interaction, but one carried out in reverse of what happened in Europe. Instead of the religious reformers originating a new settlement, the new settlement was imposed by those political leaders who militarily defeated the reformers. This is what Maruyama Masao has referred to as Japan's process of early modern secularization, which he saw leading to complete state domination of the religious realm:

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18 Souyri 2001.

This process gave birth to early modern systems of control, bringing religious power in general into confrontation with secular authority, religious influence in the end becoming completely subordinated to the latter in one of history's great moments of change.[19]

Note that the European historiography that describes the triumph of Protestant reform in the political field in Europe, and the Japanese historiography that describes the total annihilation of religious-led reform in Japan, both characterize these very different outcomes as processes of early modern "secularization." This is because both changes involved a process through which the interaction between the political and religious was totally changed. One "secularization" represented the transformation of political authority by a religious reform movement; the other represented the crushing of religious reform by resurgent political authority. While in Europe the narrative has secularization arising from religious reform impacting on the political, in Japan the narrative casts secularization as the act of political hegemons harnessing the religious.

Early Modern Secularism

So what was the new regime of religious-political interaction that marked out early modernity in Japan? Was the long-term early modern settlement really what Maruyama implied—absolute state domination of religion, which fed into and underlay the (in his view, distorted) processes of Japanese political modernization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? I would suggest that even Maruyama's own work demonstrates that not to be true. Maruyama's first book, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, made clear the religious and political dynamism of the early modern period in this field of religious and political interaction.[20] Crucially, however, he discussed this interaction mainly through reference to Confucian political thought, not Buddhism. I would suggest, therefore, that this complete state domination articulated by Maruyama only lasted through a transitional period of a few decades at most. Thereafter, and slowly arising throughout the course of the seventeenth century, there emerged a new but familiar reflective relationship between the two separate but socially interconnected fields of religiosity and politics, and this relationship was relatively stable for nearly two centuries thereafter. The reason this new regime is often overlooked is that it was no longer realized through Buddhism, but rather primarily (although not at all exclusively) through Confucian religiosity. This was mainly because, while Buddhism was targeted for heavy regulation and state integration, Confucianism, despite a few half-hearted attempts at suppression in the early 1600s, was left comparatively unhindered by the state for most of the Tokugawa period. Maruyama's view that religion was shackled during the early modern period holds only if you equate religion in Japan with Buddhism, something many scholars unconsciously do. But if we expand our vision of religion to include Neo-Confucianism, then the picture looks very different.

Yes, Buddhist institutions were shackled as never before and integrated under state power through a new regulatory scheme that involved policies like compulsory temple registration. But there was another religious movement. In social and political history terms,

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19 Maruyama 2000, p. 120.
20 Maruyama 1952, 1974.

from the Song dynasty onwards across East Asia, Neo-Confucianism had increasingly become the new Buddhism, or as Liang Qichao 梁啓超 endearingly called it over a hundred years ago, "Buddhism in Confucian clothes." [21] Maruyama was right that the Tokugawa state, through its systems of regulation following closely on the heels of violent suppression, had shackled Buddhism. But he did not realize that in early modern East Asia the religion playing Buddhism's traditional role was no longer Buddhism, but actually Neo-Confucianism. In Tokugawa Japan, as in Song and Ming China, religiosity was seen increasingly not through Buddhist institutions, but through a very different kind of less institutionalized social integration of Confucianism and related traditions. This social integration resonates with patterns of early modernity throughout global history, being based in *bürgerlich*, socially integrated but relatively loose urban middle-class institutions like reading circles, discussion groups, and informal schools, rather than in the traditional, premodern, more heavily institutionalized monasteries and temples of traditional Buddhism.

The new way that Neo-Confucianism was perceived in religious terms in the early Tokugawa period is most clearly demonstrated by the suppression of Confucianism that prevailed under the early Tokugawa state. Arai Hakuseki 新井白石, a major mid-Tokugawa Confucian, described it in the following way:

> Under the previous [first four] shoguns, even superior persons mistook those who spoke about Confucianism for followers of Christianity. This was the situation until I first began to study.[22]

As Bodart-Bailey has used this quote from Arai Hakuseki to explain, and as I have discussed using earlier examples, serious suppression of religion during the first decades of Tokugawa rule focused to a large extent on Neo-Confucianism.[23] It was a suppression which clearly perceived Neo-Confucianism as similar to such traditions as Catholicism, as well as militarist and way of heaven thought and populist trends in Buddhism. It is quite clear that members of the elite in early Tokugawa Japan saw Neo-Confucianism primarily as a form of religiosity, in parallel with Buddhism and Christianity. In identifying Neo-Confucianism in religious terms, suppressors of religion clearly saw similarities with both Catholicism and state-proscribed forms of populist Buddhism.

Importantly, the Confucianism that emerged from this brief period of suppression, and continued virtually unhindered by political forces until the Meiji Restoration, was also highly religious in nature. This has been emphasized in much recent Japanese scholarship on the early modern period. Over the last three decades, Japanese scholars of seventeenth-century history have described it as arising out of a general milieu of religious activity that actually emphasized "the individual's way of living in real society," "the nature of the subject's individual morals, rather than aspects of social system, organization or structure."[24] In other words, Confucianism's sociality in the very early Tokugawa period, when it first emerged into popular culture, is currently seen in mainstream Japanese scholarship as the

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21 Liang 1985, p. 7.
22 Arai 1907, p. 550; Bodart-Bailey 1993, p. 300.
23 Bodart-Bailey 1993; Paramore 2009, pp. 78–102.
24 Bitō 1993, pp. 32–35.

product of a tension between Neo-Confucianism's regimes of individualized practice on the one hand, and the reality of the Tokugawa political order on the other.

Ōkuwa Hitoshi 大桑斉, one of the most important contemporary writers on medieval and early modern Japanese religion, recently argued that the rise of Confucianism in seventeenth-century Japan should be explained in terms of popular demand for the kind of religiosity that Neo-Confucianism was able to provide. Rather than being an imposition by the state, seventeenth century Japanese forms of Confucianism and Confucian-indigenous syncretism responded to the norms of the general population, whose "daily lives relied on religion."[25] In this narrative, the embracing of Neo-Confucian religious sensibilities was key to the sudden and meteoric rise of Confucianism in early Tokugawa Japan. Neo-Confucianism afforded a new kind of individual-centric moral religious practice in Japan where an inherently political (although usually not governing) character often obtained. In this political, as well as religious sense, it came to fill the spaces left by the *Ikkō ikki* insurgencies, Catholicism, other supressed popular religious traditions, and even the traditional Buddhist sects now shackled by Tokugawa regulation.

The development of Confucianism through the Tokugawa period, and notably the way it interacted with politics, exhibited a strong religious character. Its most powerful and persistent religious elements were the various regimes for the practice of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation, which were emphasized in nearly every different Confucian tendency in this period.[26] Self-cultivation also provided a framework for thinking about the nature of political-religious relations or, put simply, the relationship between Confucian practitioners and the feudal state. As Watanabe Hiroshi 渡辺浩 has pointed out, Neo-Confucian self-cultivation seems to have facilitated Confucian influence upon politics, while also highlighting moral separation from it. He sees both being established and maintained through a regime of religious-political relations ordered through acts of self-discipline and social compartmentalization, carried out by Confucians themselves as part of a Neo-Confucian religious practice. Watanabe contrasts this to the actions of later Sorai school 徂徠学 Confucians, attributing their relative political disengagement and weakness after Ogyū Sorai's 荻生徂徠 own death in 1728 to their lack of self-cultivation practice.[27] Western-language literature often overlooked the fact that during the late Tokugawa period Neo-Confucianism, or Song learning, was not only increasingly popular, but also much more politically activist, radical, and effective than Sorai Confucianism, but this has recently been reemphasized in scholarly writings by both Watanabe and Maeda Tsutomu 前田勉.[28]

As Maeda has pointed out, however, Sorai Confucianism also created other important *practices* which would increasingly affect politics in the late Tokugawa period. The practice of "social reading" (*kaidoku* 会読), although seemingly established in Sorai's school, was most ardently taken up by Neo-Confucians in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and was also very popular as a pedagogically, socially, and politically central form of critical

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25 Ōkuwa 2012, p. 114.

26 Paramore 2016b, pp. 41–65; Sawada 1993, 2004; De Bary 1981, 1989.

27 Watanabe 2012, p. 185.

28 Watanabe 2010, 2012; Maeda 2009, 2012; Makabe 2007.

practice among many other forms of Tokugawa learning, notably in Dutch studies and nativism.[29]

Ogyū Sorai's critical stance towards Neo-Confucianism is usually emphasized in scholarly considerations of his impact on Tokugawa society. However, the main new scholarly practice he implemented was social reading, which was perhaps even more influential. For Ogyū himself it was a core method of reaching the religious truth of the Confucian way. Ogyū mentioned social reading in his instructions for students, *Master Sorai's Responsals* (*Sorai sensei tōmonsho* 徂徠先生答問書), a pamphlet published in 1726. Following his overall methodology of recovery of the ancient way, Ogyū described pedagogy here as a kind of ritualized attempt to recreate the scholarly practice of idealized ancient times.

> In ancient times they used the word "friend-master [master *and* friend]." Through the cultivation of friendship they spread knowledge and advanced learning.… A school atmosphere permeated by friendly exchange was the most important element [in the ideal educational practices of the ancients].[30]

Social reading is mentioned fairly shortly after this in another passage discussing the method through which texts should be read.

> When one meets with people from the same town and carries out social reading amongst a group of friends, then sometimes East will be mentioned and East will be understood. In far-flung places, where one lacks the support of friends, scholarship cannot be undertaken very easily.[31]

Here Ogyū is talking about how to approach a text, but his key point is that the participant in social reading should not seek to use the group dynamic simply to push earlier views, but rather through cooperation and discussion to arrive at *new* understandings. This is what underlay the technique's capacity to facilitate political discussion within scholarly communities in Japan through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[32] Social reading, both in practice and in its original conception by Ogyū, thus resonates with more contemporary ideas of reasonable discussion we can see in works on the public sphere by much more recent political philosophers like Habermas.[33]

Later state institutionalization of social reading further demonstrated the relationship between the openness to interpretation inherent in this practice, and the political potential of public sphere discourse that some Confucians saw as inherent within it. Although first launched in Sorai's schools, social reading was institutionalized most powerfully by Neo-Confucian scholars who competed *against* the Sorai school during the late-eighteenth

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29 Maeda 2009, pp. 13–25.
30 NKBT 94, p. 171.
31 NKBT 94, p. 173; Ogyū and Yamashita 1994, p. 93.
32 See also Janine Sawada's connection of Sorai's invention of social reading to Jinsai's earlier use of *sakumon* 策問 (the posing of problems) and Ishida Baigan's 石田梅岩 later organization of "support meetings" (Sawada 1993, pp. 91–94).
33 Habermas 1989.

century state reforms led by Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信. Bitō Jishū 尾藤二洲, a Confucian scholar originally based in the Kansai, and later one of Matsudaira's key professorial appointees at the Shogunal Confucian Academy (Shōheizaka Gakumonjo 昌平坂学問所) in Edo, linked the practice of social reading to the Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi 朱熹 idea of the "impartial mind" (Jp. *kyoshin*; Ch. *xuxin* 虚心).[34] This was picked up in the way domainal school ordinances (which, in comparison to most private school ordinances, have been better preserved in state archives) described social reading.

> When one is carrying out social reading, one must maintain an impartial mind and a balanced mood so that this practice benefits you. You should not emphasize convincing others of a previously held position or adopt an argumentative tone of voice.[35]

This example from the regulations of the Kōbe domain school Kyōrindō 杏林堂 shows "social reading" being deployed by Neo-Confucians not only as an intellectual, pedagogical, and communicative technique, but also as a form of self-cultivation. Many other references of this kind indicate that, at least by the turn of the nineteenth century, social reading was the standard approach to education in the resurgent network of Neo-Confucian schools in Japan. The adoption of this practice by Neo-Confucian schools is important, not only because the new state institutions and examinations were all run by Neo-Confucians, but also because the domainal and private Neo-Confucian schools in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries experienced a resurgence of popularity at the expense of Sorai school institutions.[36]

The later social interpretations of social reading thus also led to a combination of educative public practice with individual religious practice in mid to late Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism. The combination provided a robust basis for individual engagement with the public sphere in the Tokugawa order. The same figures who were central in institutionalizing "social reading" practice into state schools also cut down on practices like "lecturing," which were more hierarchical and only facilitated one-way communication. As Shibano Ritsuzan 柴野栗山, another Shogunal Confucian Academy professor put it, "they [samurai] don't listen to lectures, no matter what you are saying."[37] In this sense, Matsudaira Sadanobu can be seen to have played a role in further spreading and strengthening practices associated with the growth of a public sphere discourse around Confucianism, or in the construction of what we might call a Confucian public sphere.

Bitō Jishū, defining the way around the turn of the nineteenth century, used the word that is now used in modern Japanese to refer to "publicness."[38]

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34 Maeda 2009, pp. 26–27.
35 Monbusho 1903, p. 110.
36 Ishikawa 1977, pp. 256–58.
37 Shibano, in Takimoto 1914, p. 143.
38 Bitō uses the character *kō* 公, which at the time most often signified the state (domain or lord, shogunate or shogun). The context of its use here, however, demonstrates that the term was already moving towards the modern meaning of "public," as is indicated by Bitō linking it directly, together with Heaven and Earth, to the universal and normative value of (inherently good) human nature (*sei* 性).

The way is the Principle of Heaven, Earth, and the Public. People receive this through human nature. The sages made learning to cultivate this.… Without the impartial mind, the way cannot be elucidated. Without a balanced mood, it cannot be related to substantial issues. You cannot construct the way with [just] impartiality and balance. But in order to advance the way one must most definitely begin with impartiality and balance.[39]

It was clear his idea of an "impartial mind," and its relationship to discussion of controversial issues, was central to his conception of the political way, which for him was intimately related to Confucian education.[40] The openness and reasonableness inherent in this approach resonates with contemporary theories of thinkers like Habermas or Rawls, who rely on "reasonableness" in public debate as one of the core preconditions necessary for a functional public sphere.[41]

An example of how robust political criticism had become by the late eighteenth century is provided by a widely distributed memorial written by Koga Seiri 古賀精里 to his feudal lord. Koga was at the time head of the Saga domain's academy, and very soon after was appointed one of the leaders of the shogunal academy in Edo.

As our country is under a regime of generals, the path of selection/election is closed. Particularly in domains such as ours [Saga], the damage of the hereditary system is not to be avoided. Those with hereditary status are negligent, and those without do not serve. This is why the spirit of the gentleman/samurai cannot be enacted, and why custom can so degenerate.[42]

Orthodox state Neo-Confucians of the mid and late Tokugawa period, like Koga, were a far cry from fawning lackeys like Hayashi Razan 林羅山. There had been a clear change in the nature of discourse, so that even state-aligned scholars were now in a position to criticize trenchantly the underlying structures of the polity in certain circumstances and media. But they were also capable, usually, of tempering their opinions, of withdrawing to a reasonable, sustainable position of engagement with the reality of the polity. As Maeda Tsutomu and Watanabe Hiroshi have both recently pointed out, this tempering allowed late Tokugawa Neo-Confucians to sustain their social critique over a long period. Mid to late Tokugawa period Neo-Confucianism in particular, more so than other intellectual streams or forms of Confucianism in Japan, developed a robust capacity to sustain public debate over a range of issues, including issues in tension with Tokugawa state policy.[43]

Neo-Confucian figures in the Japanese Confucian world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as diverse as Rai Shunsui 頼春水, Rai San'yō 頼山陽, Koga Seiri, Koga Tōan 古賀侗庵, Bitō Jishū, and Shibano Ritsuzan all managed to combine

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39 NST 47, pp. 261–67.
40 On the difference between the meaning of publicness in the late Tokugawa period and today, see Watanabe 2012, pp. 51–52.
41 Rawls's linkage of rationality and goodness in *A Theory of Justice* resonates with the particular articulation of Neo-Confucianism we see in the late Tokugawa shogunate (Rawls 1999, pp. 347–90).
42 Koga in Takimoto 1914, p. 160.
43 Maeda 2009, pp. 24–25; Watanabe 2012, pp. 181–95.

Confucian activity and later often high office in the emerging state academic institutions with sometimes trenchant critiques of the status quo. This required a combination of reasonableness and practicality, which Watanabe relates to their practice of self-cultivation, entailing as it did self-discipline and also the hope of attaining a state of grace on an individual level, even if activity in the social world (externalized political activity) was not working out.[44]

In short, through the early modern period, Japan increasingly evolved into a stable regime where Neo-Confucianism functioned as the religious element in an increasingly institutionalized stable interrelation between the religious and the political. This regime of course came to an abrupt end with the overthrow of the Tokugawa state, and most notably with the deliberate and targeted attacks on Confucianism and Confucian institutions that followed quickly on its heels. The early Meiji state's disestablishment of Confucian institutions, its appropriation of Confucian sites and spaces, and then its deliberate undermining of the tradition in a variety of ways thereafter followed the general antireligious program carried out against Buddhist and other religious groups.[45] This is again proof that Confucianism at the end of the Tokugawa period, just as at its beginning, was clearly perceived by actors on the ground as similar to other religious traditions, and targeted accordingly. As I have argued elsewhere, the damage to Confucianism was much worse than that done to Buddhism, mainly because the Meiji state displaced Confucianism more comprehensively both from its traditional spaces of practice, and from its traditionally key role in education.[46]

Epilogue

For the story of political-religious relations after Meiji, and the emergence of new regimes, I refer the reader to other articles in this special issue. One simple observation I would make is that once Confucianism was gone, no happy balance ever seems to have been found again. Instead the religious sphere represented, and continues to represent, a politically unstable and potentially disruptive element in general society. Intriguingly, this is the case not only in Japan, but also in other East Asian countries, most notably in China. I see this as a direct result of the crushing of the mutually supportive regime of religious-political interaction facilitated by Confucianism. Buddhism, having been displaced from that role already four hundred years earlier, could not play that role in modern Japan and does not today. Meanwhile, no replacement has been found for Confucianism. The modern conceptualization of religion in East Asia inherently excludes rationalism and politics—an important reason why Confucianism itself is often excluded from the category of religion in East Asia, and also why East Asian states tend to be so ambivalent toward religion in general. The modern conception of religion in East Asia is thereby almost inherently designed to exclude a harmonious political-religious integrative regime. But again, that is another topic.

What was missing after modernization was the mediation of the political by the religious, previously carried out through activist Confucianism. This meant that the

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44 Watanabe 2012, p. 185.
45 Makabe 2007, pp. 23–27; Ketelaar 1990.
46 Paramore 2016b, pp. 141–49.

religious side of the political-religious interaction, and the social and political reflectiveness this represented, died as its institutional bases in education were monopolistically occupied by the new modern state. This occupation was what created the kind of secularism Maruyama was referring to, which I would characterize not as state domination of the religious, but rather as state monopolization of the fields of critical political expression and education that Confucianism had previously occupied. This destruction of a stable regime of political-religious relations, and the continuing vacuum it has created, contributed to the collapse of the public sphere in the modern period, and continues its impoverishment in the contemporary period.

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Clashing Models:
Ritual Unity vs Religious Diversity

Mark Teeuwen

This article seeks to add to our understanding of the boundary drawing between religious and secular spheres in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japan in two ways. First, I argue that we must guard against overemphasizing discontinuity between pre-Meiji ways of dealing with "faith" and post-Meiji policies dealing with "religion." Only by recognizing discursive continuities can we analyze the process of negotiating new conceptual models in the light of older values and worldviews. Second, institutional realities frustrated the implementation of new religious policies. The ways temples and shrines functioned in society set limits to the ambitions of ideologues, and created contradictions that impacted on the boundary-drawing process.

Keywords: *Danka* system, *saisei itchi*, filial piety, Mito school, State Shinto, *saishi hōjin*, Shinto secular, concept of religion

A secular realm emerges when "religion" is separated out from other spheres of social life. In Japan, as elsewhere, this separation took the form of institutionalized boundaries between places and practices that were explicitly defined as "religious" and others that were not. Where this line was drawn depended on many factors, some of which were malleable, while others were more resistant to political manipulation. The concept of "religion" itself was quite pliable, although the diplomatic context imposed a Christian model on whatever Japanese leaders wanted to do with this term. Fundamental ideas about the social order and the nature of government were more resilient, because they informed the legitimacy of the regime. Hardest to change were the social and economic structures that supported temples and shrines. The realities of temple and shrine life forced idealists of all kinds to find workable compromises, often at the cost of blatant contradictions.

When "religion" first found a place in Japanese discourse and practice, mostly in the form of the calque *shūkyō* 宗教, it entered a context with long traditions of controlling people's "faith" (*shinjin* 信心; *shinkō* 信仰) and of managing temples, shrines, and a large population of priests of many kinds. Long before this concept was imported, Japanese thinkers and leaders had experimented with different ways to conceptualize the relationship between universal morals and duties on the one hand, and individual faith on the other. Yet recent studies of the Japanese "invention" of religion place great emphasis on the novelty, or even initial incomprehensibility of that concept when diplomatic negotiations first brought

it to Japan's shores. Recent book-length studies, notably those by Jason A. Josephson (2012) and Trent E. Maxey (2014), have brought about a quantum leap in our understanding of religious policy in the late nineteenth century, at least in English-language scholarship. In this article, I will argue that if anything is missing in their enlightening accounts, it is a fuller appreciation of continuities with pre-Meiji ideas and policies of managing "faith," of central ideas about the role of "teaching" (*kyō*, *oshie* 教) in governance, and of the limits placed on political experiments by the institutional realities of temples and shrines on the ground.

In discussions about the secular imposition of boundaries on religion in Japan, particular attention has been paid to Shinto and its Meiji transformation. Two scholars who have recently stressed the concept of secularity in relation to post-Meiji Shinto are Josephson (2012) and Azegami Naoki (2009). Their conclusions could not be more different. Josephson posits that Meiji Shinto was at the core of Japan's secularity, which he describes as "the Shinto secular." Azegami, on the other hand, characterizes modern (that is, post-Meiji) Shinto as a form of religious nationalism. Josephson argues that Meiji Shinto functioned as a secular "science," and therefore ended up on the secular side of what he sees as a triadic structure, with religion, science, and superstition as the three guiding categories. In contrast, Azegami introduces us to Shinto priests who resisted secularization and even had some limited success in their appeals for official recognition of Shinto as Japan's religion of nationhood. To be sure, Azegami focuses on the early twentieth century, and Josephson on the late nineteenth century. Yet their radical divergence of perspective cannot be reduced to that difference in period alone. In this article I will argue that Josephson's and Azegami's arguments illustrate not only how notions of religion and the secular changed over time, but also how older ways of conceptualizing such categories have been, and still are, interfering with new understandings.

I will attempt to contextualize both Josephson's and Azegami's findings within an overarching model of managing faith that developed organically from pre-Meiji, pre-"religion" ideas and practices. This article takes a long view of the development of Japanese models of what one might call the boundaries of religion. First, I will identify pre-Meiji models of conceptualizing and regulating "faith" and "sectarian creeds" (*shūshi* 宗旨; *shūmon* 宗門). Then, I will trace the lasting influence of these conceptualizations and strategies and the ways they have interfered with newer, Western-inspired ideas and policies, not only in the immediate transition to Meiji but also in the period covered by Azegami, and even into the postwar. I am acutely aware of the fact that by stretching my short narrative over such profoundly different historical periods, I will be reduced to simplifying the specifics of the various contexts that I will be touching upon. My aim, however, is not to give full analyses of the cases here presented, but rather to make the point that, even until recent times, early conceptualizations of the boundaries of religion are still socially meaningful to the functioning of certain institutions (notably shrines), and are therefore still a factor in negotiations about the place of religion in secular society.

The Place of "Faith" in the Edo Period

What was the Edo-period legacy on which Meiji reformers drew in their search for a sensible way to understand and handle "religion"? Much has been written about the question of whether the Edo period had a term that coincided with religion.[1] However, such philological

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1 For a discussion, see Josephson 2012, pp. 6–8, and Maxey 2014, pp. 15–17.

arguments often miss the point: even if some terms (including *shūshi* and *shūmon*, but also *kyōhō* 教法 and others) came close, they were part of a conceptual framework that differed from imported understandings of religion in crucial ways. Also, their meanings were shaped by their role in a different system of governance and regulation. First, I will therefore focus on concrete policies dealing with, on the one hand, questions of "faith," and, on the other, the management of shrines and temples (*jisha* 寺社)—two terms that featured prominently in the language of Edo-period administration.

The overriding concern of such policies, at least in theory, appeared to be the eradication of Christians. This inspired such measures as the temple certification system, the reward system for those who denounced Christians, the enforcement of *efumi* 絵踏 (trampling on Christian images), and so forth. The prohibition of the "Christian creed" (*Kirishitan shūmon* 切支丹宗門) was announced on *kōsatsu* 高札 noticeboards around the country and featured as a stock phrase in an astounding number of admonitions issued to local communities throughout the period; offenders were punishable with the most severe forms of execution. This obsession with Christianity is in itself an astonishing fact, since at least with hindsight, the danger of Christians breaking down the social order was increasingly remote. In fact, in spite of its ruthless rhetoric, the shogunate soon resorted to practicing a somewhat unpredictable blend of tolerance and suppression, indifference and moralism.

The ban on Christianity inspired draconian laws and merciless persecutions in the seventeenth century, but as the threat of Christian agitation waned the authorities became markedly more relaxed in their reinforcement of those laws.[2] When hidden Christians were discovered in Urakami in 1790, in Amakusa in 1805, and again in Urakami in 1842, the authorities settled matters without resorting to heavy-handed punishments. Even when evidence of Christian practices was unassailable (as in 1790 and 1805), the investigators decided that those practices were merely "unorthodox" (*ihō* 異法), rather than "pernicious" (*jahō* 邪法).[3] When alleged Christians were arrested in Osaka and Kyoto in 1827, the Supreme Judicial Council (Hyōjōsho 評定所) in Edo refused to accept that the accused were truly Christians and advised the senior councillors to order a re-investigation. Only the fact that the matter had already triggered a wave of rumors eventually moved the shogunate to order the accused to be executed (in 1829).[4] This incident, which exposed alleged Christians in the very center of Japan, fed into a new fear of Christianity that was already growing at a time when the Western powers appeared ever more threatening. During the last decades of the Edo shogunate, intellectuals of different backgrounds produced a "second wave" of anti-Christian writings.[5] In practice, however, there was still little enthusiasm for hunting down *actual* Christians. Since Christianity was forbidden in the realm, it was not supposed to exist, and if at all possible, the authorities preferred to ignore it or to explain it away.

The prohibition of the Christian creed had many practical purposes beyond stopping Christianity. It served as the rationale for the temple certification system, which offered an effective means of social control.[6] This system forced people to maintain good relations with

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2 See Nosco 2007.
3 Ōhashi 2013; Breen 1988.
4 Fujiwara 1986, p. 220.
5 Paramore 2009.
6 On temple certification, see Hur 2007.

a temple charged with certifying the orthodoxy of their faith. Perhaps less obviously but no less importantly, it also kept a tag on temples and their priests. In the aftermath of the 1827 arrests, the head priests of temples where the alleged Christians had been registered as patrons (*danka* 檀家) were expelled, and even temples that were members of the same mutual surveillance groups (*kumiai* 組合) received minor punishments. Beyond that, the Osaka authorities instructed the various sects' head temples to deal with the deposed priests and the temples that they had vacated, according to sect regulations.[7]

This way of dealing with priests and temples was in line with the general style of shogunal governance. While acknowledging the nominal autonomy of the sectarian institutions, the warrior regime made sure to demonstrate its determination to intervene with great force whenever necessary, not least through unpredictable acts of calculated cruelty or mercy. Temples and shrines were treated as a separate area of governance, overseen by specialized officials of particularly high rank who answered directly to the shogun (*jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行). It would be misleading, however, to conclude from this fact that "religion" was seen as a separate sphere, distinct from the "secular" realm of warrior governance. The model of control at arm's length, through non-warrior heads of social groupings, was applied not only to temples and shrines but also to villagers, city dwellers, and even to beggars and outcasts.

The policy of tasking temples with supervising and certifying the orthodoxy of people's beliefs implied an interest on the part of the authorities in controlling faith—or, at least, in imposing boundaries on what forms of faith could be tolerated. There was, however, a latent contradiction between the two main aims of the temple certification system, namely controlling people's faith and controlling temples. This contradiction was expressed in its most succinct form in Article 4 of the "regulations for temples of all sects" (*shoshū jiin hatto* 諸宗寺院法度), issued in 1665: "Patrons select their temple of registration according to their own will. Monastics may not contest each other's patrons."[8]

The rationale behind the certification system was that temples should prevent their patrons from falling into heresy by making sure that they remained faithful followers of a recognized sect. For this to work, it was essential that people should be allowed to patronize a temple that supported their faith, "according to their own will" (*sono kokoroe ni makasu* 任二其心得一). Forcing people to patronize a temple at odds with their faith would render this system nonsensical. On the other hand, offending a patron's feelings was easier than facing the wrath of a temple, especially when that temple was actively backed up by its sect. Any infringements on existing contract-based relations between temples and their patrons were strongly contested, because contracts with lay patrons defined the economic worth and social standing of temples. Requests to switch temple because of a change in faith could easily develop into legal battles between temples. In such cases, the patron's original family temple would accuse the new temple of "contesting" (*ai-arasou* 相争) its patron, with the latter's collusion. Unless the original temple was found guilty of serious misdemeanor, it

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7 Details about some of these temples are given in *Ukiyo no arisama* 浮世の有様, in Harada and Asakura 1970, pp. 58–69.
8 Monbushō Shūkyōkyoku 1925, p. 100.

tended to win the day.[9] In theory, the certification system was premised on patrons' faith, but in practice, contracts trumped faith. Temples had the upper hand over their patrons, and the interests of religious institutions were routinely prioritized over those of individual patrons.

To sum up, we may note that the regime had a mild interest in controlling people's faith, to the extent that it recognized the need to prevent the spread of "pernicious" practices and sects, notably Christianity. This interest was as a rule superseded, however, by the need to prevent conflicts in the semi-autonomous world of temples. This is a clear example of institutional structures thwarting political ideals. The hypocrisy of this arrangement was duly recognized at the time and was echoed in many critiques of temples and priests; this should be acknowledged as an important factor behind the ambiguity that many expressed about the system as a whole, and, by extension, about Buddhism itself. As I have argued elsewhere, some despised Buddhism as an "inverted way" of corruption, greed, and lust, and sought to exclude its priests from public life.[10] There were also those who went even further, and rejected all public dealings with "teachings" and "ways" as an impediment to effective military rule.[11]

What was so pernicious about the proscribed Christian faith? The original prohibition law, issued in 1614, banned Christianity as a creed that undermined the three teachings of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[12] In the documents relating to the Osaka case of 1827–1829, however, there was no reference to this; instead, the accused Christians were found guilty of "pernicious sorcery" (*jajutsu* 邪術), stealing money, and lack of fear of the authorities.[13] Nineteenth-century writers of anti-Christian treatises adduced yet other reasons. Among the most common concerns was that Christianity undermined loyalty, filial piety, and unity in the realm. As one Kokugaku writer noted in 1861: "Even when [a Christian] kills his lord or his father, he will be without sin if only he gives himself over to this creed (*shūshi*), abides by its doctrines (*kyōhō*), and believes exclusively in *Deus*; surely this is a Dharma for rebels and faithless sons!"[14] In this and similar statements, Christianity appears as an antithetical mirror image of the social order, despised for its alleged immorality but also feared for its magical potency.

Inculcating Loyalty, Filial Piety, and Unity

A concern with loyalty, filial piety, and unity among the populace was clearly reflected in official policy. Most striking, perhaps, were the extensive periods of public mourning for shoguns, emperors, daimyo, and selected members of their families, which routinely put life on hold for days or even weeks at a time. People of all classes were ordered to demonstrate

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9 Tamamuro (2001) presents a telling example of exactly such a case. In 1737, a high-ranking samurai in Kumamoto tried to change his affiliation from a Sōtō to a Nichiren temple after being healed by a Nichiren priest. Article 4 of *Shoshū jiin hatto* was adduced by both parties. In the end, this samurai not only lost, but was stripped of his duties and placed under house arrest.

10 Teeuwen 2013.

11 Teeuwen 2013, pp. 12–15. The texts on which I base my argument in this article are Buyō Inshi's 武陽隠士 *Seji kenbunroku* 世事見聞録 (1816) and (more briefly) Shōji Kōki's 正司考祺 *Keizai mondō hiroku* 経済問答秘録 (1833).

12 Elisonas 1991, p. 367.

13 This was stated on the official boards that announced the crimes of the condemned at the execution grounds (*sutefuda* 捨札). *Ukiyo no arisama*, in Haga and Matsumoto 1971, pp. 67–69.

14 Takeo Masatane 竹尾正胤, *Daiteikokuron* 大帝国論 (1861), in Haga and Matsumoto 1971, p. 524.

their pious respect by refraining from "music and construction" (effectively, from doing anything cheerful in public) while their leaders exhibited their filial piety through elaborate rites of mourning.[15] This strictly enforced practice was never associated with "faith," and of course, the notion that some should be exempt from the disruptions caused by mourning for reasons of personal faith was unthinkable. Yet the mourning bans stopped temple and shrine rites in their tracks, caused matsuri to be cancelled, and, at least once (in 1709), even disrupted the elaborate *shikinen sengū* 式年遷宮 rebuilding procedures of the Ise Shrines. Questions of faith were pushed aside by national, or regional, displays of collective unity based on filial piety and loyalty.

As many have pointed out, the compulsory participation of people of all classes and all faiths in collective, state-led rituals was given a new theoretical basis by Confucian scholars of the so-called Late Mito school in the early nineteenth century. Writers like Fujita Yūkoku 藤田幽谷 (1774–1826) and Aizawa Seishisai 会沢正志斎 (1782–1863) elaborated on the idea that rites and institutions are essential to the ordering of society, as expressed in Chinese classics like the *Rites of Zhou* 周礼 and the *Book of Rites* 礼記, by constructing a new discourse on ritual and its relation to faith. Concepts such as *kokutai* 国体 (national essence) and *saisei itchi* 祭政一致 (unity of ritual and government), which were central to Meiji understandings of the imperial state and the place of "religion" within that state, were first developed in the writings of these Mito thinkers.

Three aspects of Late Mito thought are of particular interest in this context. First, this school displayed an obsession with the notion of creating "unity" by establishing an all-encompassing harmony between all aspects of social life. Second, Mito authors felt that such unity was sorely lacking in Japan at a time when it was most needed, and looked to public rituals of filial piety and loyalty as a means to remedy this crisis. Finally, Fujita and Aizawa adopted Shinto history and ritual as a superior alternative to the classical Chinese court ceremonial of Confucian orthodoxy.

Kate Wildman Nakai has pointed out that "the Mito scholars had an abhorrence of divisions, of cracks in society and potential conflicts in values and norms." [16] They expressed this in a number of mottos, all advocating the unification (*itchi* 一致) of one thing with another. Most pertinent to the topic of this article are their frequent appeals to the unification of "government" (*sei* 政 or *chi* 治) with "teaching," and of "ritual" (*sai* 祭) with "government." In the most famous of Late Mito texts, *Shinron* 新論 (New Theses, 1825), Aizawa wrote that in an idealized golden past, "ritual became government, and government became teaching; teaching and government were never separate." Referring to the *Book of Rites*, Aizawa argued that only ritual allows the ruler to "relay the teaching to the people and correct their customs, extending his transforming influence (*ka* 化) without words." [17] In Aizawa's view, ritual was the prime method for rulers to extend their edifying influence across the realm, transforming the people by virtuous example. At the same time, rites were more than a matter of inner virtues. Ritual united the people not only with their ruler, but also with heaven and earth. By harmonizing the people with the cosmos, ritual

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15 Hirai 2014.

16 Nakai 2010, p. 292.

17 Imai 1973, p. 56; Wakabayashi 1986, p. 158; Koschmann 1987, p. 72. Both Wakabayashi and Koschmann use a range of different terms for the key concepts in Aizawa's discourse, rendering their translations rather loose and opaque.

allowed "original *qi*" (*genki* 元気) to flow without impediments, vitalizing not only the people but also the land itself.[18] Figure 1 is my attempt to visualize the relationship between ritual, government, and teaching in this model.

It is important to point out that this rhetoric of unity expressed a general attitude of seeking a harmonious One behind the fragmented Many of actual existence. Michael Puett argues that the *Book of Rites* displayed just such a logic and offered a concrete method of dealing with "separation" by ritual unification. The "basic goal" of ritual, Puett writes, "was to create

Figure 1. The continuous model of *saisei itchi*.

a world of continuity in which all aspects of the larger cosmos … as well as human beings would be linked through hierarchical lines defined by the living ruler."[19] Arguing for the fundamental unity or continuity between things that at first sight appear to be separate entities was among the most common rhetorical tropes of Late Mito texts. In fact, the Mito thinkers went further than their Chinese sources in their efforts to transcend all divisions by explicitly negating even the distinction between the ruler, the ruler's ancestors, and heaven. For Aizawa, the emperor was one with Amaterasu 天照, Amaterasu was one with heaven, and therefore the imperial succession was one with, and as endurable as, heaven itself.[20] In this line of thought, the ultimate goal of government was to attain perfect union between lord and minister, father and son, and finally, beyond that, man and heaven.

The principal means to achieve those utopian ideals was ritual. By performing rites that expressed his filial piety towards his ancestors, the ruler inspired loyalty in his subjects; filial piety and loyalty are, after all, one.[21] In an argument that perhaps only makes sense in a place where public mourning was the most elaborate nationwide ritual, Aizawa argued that since filial piety cannot be expressed fully to one's living parents, rituals of mourning represent the ultimate expression of human virtue.[22] It was by extending those rituals to the populace as a whole that the nation could be united in a state of virtuous harmony, not only among men but even with the gods: "Gods and men will be one, and the minds of the myriad [people] will follow [the king's example]."[23]

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18 Imai 1973, p. 55.
19 Puett 2005, p. 91.
20 Yoshida 2011 (pp. 194–203) explores the emergence of this idea in the works of Fujita Yūkoku.
21 Aizawa explains the unity of filial piety and loyalty in the lines leading up to the passage quoted above (Imai 1973, p. 56).
22 Sawai 1977, pp. 156–57. Sawai refers to Aizawa's *Kōkyō kō* 孝経考 (Thoughts on the Classic of Filial Piety) for this argument.
23 *Chūyō shakugi* 中庸釈義 (Interpreting the Doctrine of the Mean), quoted in Sawai 1977, p. 157.

A final striking innovation of the Late Mito school was its adoption of kami history and ritual. The grand project of the Mito school was the compilation of an official history of Japan, the *Dainihonshi* 大日本史. Early Mito scholars saw no reason to include the "strange events" (*kaii no koto bakari* 怪異之事計) of the Age of the Gods in their chronicle, and their historical account began with the first human emperor Jinmu.[24] This changed in 1803, when Fujita gained permission from the Mito daimyo to include Jinmu's divine lineage, starting with Amaterasu. This new policy has been described as the "introduction of Shinto" into the Mito school.[25] In the same vein, Aizawa looked beyond the rites of mourning to the imperial ritual of Great Tasting (*daijōsai* 大嘗祭) as the main instrument for uniting the realm. It was through this rite that the emperor displayed his filial piety in front of his ministers, causing them to "feel as if they were sitting to the left and right of heaven/the ancestors (*tenso* 天祖)." That overwhelming "emotion" (*jō* 情), Aizawa maintained, would then spur them to display unity and loyalty in their service to the state.[26] Aizawa held that only by extending this emotion to the people as a whole could Japan fulfill the potential of its unique *kokutai*, as a community of filial and loyal descendants of the gods, led by the emperor as the offspring and embodiment of Amaterasu/heaven.

What comes into view when we compare this late Mito conceptualization of ritual with current ideas and practices in late Edo? First of all, the Mito discourse challenged standard shogunal policy towards temples and shrines by questioning its tolerance of divergent "faiths" or "creeds" in society. Effectively, the Mito understanding of "teaching" invaded the realm of faith by positing that worship of the Japanese kami was an absolute prerequisite for participation in the national community of filial piety and loyalty.[27] Where shogunal policy allowed for a diversity of faiths (tied to approved institutions), and separated faith from questions of filial piety and loyalty, the Mito scholars spurned this attitude as dangerously lax. By leaving the populace without guidance, Fujita and Aizawa believed, the shogunal government was exposing them to the temptations of the "pernicious teaching" (*jakyō* 邪教) of Christianity, which was used by Western powers to seduce the ignorant people of foreign lands and incite them to rebellion.[28] Christianity, however, was only one of many dangerous creeds. Aizawa was deeply worried that the ritual unity he envisioned was under constant threat from "heterodoxies and pernicious theories" (*itan jasetsu* 異端邪説), including "lineages of lowly priests (*fugeki* 巫覡), the Dharma of Buddhists, narrow-minded Confucians and vulgar amateur scholars, and Christians from the Far West." [29] For the unity of ritual and government to work, all heterodoxy had to be erased so that the people's minds were concentrated fully on the orthodox worship of heaven and the ancestors.

Mito scholars sought to move the dividing line between "faith" and "teaching" to one extreme of the scale by requiring all to have faith in *the* teaching (defined as a narrow orthodoxy and a direct reflection of the way) and abandon all "heterodox" (*i* 異) creeds,

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24 *Gyoi oboegaki* 御意覚書, quoted in Yoshida 2011, p. 182.
25 Yoshida 2011, pp. 182–86.
26 Imai 1973, p. 55.
27 Hans Martin Krämer (2015, p. 82) offers a detailed discussion of the meaning of "teaching" in Aizawa's works and its relation to, in Krämer's words, "religion." He concludes that "the dimension of religious practice entered the concept [of teaching], although it retained the character of a tool of the rulers to achieve harmony with the ruled."
28 Wakabayashi 1986, p. 70.
29 *Shinron*, Imai 1973, p. 65.

including those who were officially recognized and protected by the shogunate as guarantors against pernicious faiths. This view stood in contrast to a very different understanding of the role of teaching, often identified with the school of Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠. As is well known, Sorai criticized the Neo-Confucian understanding that the way is immanent both in the universe and in human nature, and redefined it as a system of "rites, music, punishments, and [institutions of] government" (*rei gaku kei sei* 礼楽刑政) created by the sage-kings of ancient China. In *Benmei* 弁名 (Distinguishing Names, 1740), Sorai argued that the sage kings Yao and Shun first established rites, and then dedicated them to heaven. This, Sorai explained, was a stratagem to "deify their teachings" (*sono oshie o shin ni su* 神二其教_), so that they could instigate new policies under the guise of obeying the will of heaven and the ancestors, revealed to the king by means of divination.[30] This notion built on the idea that the "ignorant people" (*gumin* 愚民) cannot be taught about the way because of their limited intelligence, and therefore have to be led with the help of teachings that may not be true (that is, fully at one with the way), but that are nevertheless effective in "uniting the people's minds" and persuading them to submit to authority.[31]

Where Late Mito scholars saw "the teaching" as emanating from the way, Sorai and others who followed his line of reasoning (including some late-Edo Kokugaku authors) saw all forms of teaching as expedient means. It was this view that led even virulent anti-Buddhists to accept Buddhism as a necessary evil: while obviously not true, Buddhist teachings about paradises and hells served to inspire the ignorant to seek virtuous lives. In this discourse, sectarian creeds (*shūshi*, *shūmon*) functioned as expedient teachings useful to the government. Since teachings did not have to be true to be helpful, a broad array of faiths could and should be accepted, with only the limitation that no creed should undermine filial piety and loyalty. Aizawa, in fact, applied a similar logic of expediency to Christianity in Christian lands. He granted that the Christian teaching was extremely effective in uniting Christian nations, and feared that the leaders of those nations actively used the allure of this teaching to seduce the ignorant people of foreign lands. He did not, however, see the popular creeds of Japan as a useful resource in the battle to keep Christianity at bay. Aizawa agreed that common people cannot be taught about the way; but the answer was not to allow or even force them to practice expedient creeds. To the contrary, he feared that the faulty teachings of those creeds rendered the people immune to the civilizing influence of ritual. Therefore, all untrue creeds had to be vanquished and eradicated.

Into Meiji

The Mito scholars' motto of *saisei itchi* served as one of the defining slogans of the Meiji Restoration. On Keiō 4 (1868).3.14, three months after the Meiji coup, the new regime announced that the country would now "return to the system of unity of ritual and government." In practical terms, this meant that the classical Council of Kami Affairs (Jingikan 神祇官) would be resurrected and henceforth supervise all shrines and priests.[32]

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30 Yoshikawa 1973, p. 220. See Watanabe 2005, p. 381. Tucker (2005, p. 208) takes the sting out of this passage by translating the pertinent phrase as "their teachings are deemed divine."

31 *Kenroku* 鈐録 (Record of Essentials, 1727?), *Ogyū Sorai zenshū* 6, p. 443; quoted in Watanabe 2005, p. 381.

32 Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, p. 425. Dates prior to 1873 are given in this format, according to the then current lunisolar calendar. Keiō 4 (1868).3.14 corresponds to 5 April 1868. The Meiji coup occurred on Keiō 3 (1867).12.9, which corresponds to 3 January, 1868.

Clearly, the "ritual" in *saisei itchi* was Shinto ritual, and immediate steps were taken to separate shrines from Buddhism. The new slogan was acted out the very next day, when the emperor led court nobles and warrior lords in taking an oath in front of a shrine dedicated to the deities of heaven and earth, installed in the palace especially for this purpose.[33] It was brought out of the palace in the tenth month, when Emperor Meiji proceeded to Hikawa Shrine, the First Shrine of the province containing Edo (renamed Tokyo only days earlier), and personally worshipped the kami there. The edict issued on this occasion reiterated that ritual (*saishi* 祭祀) was the "foundation of government and teaching" (*seikyō no kihon* 政教ノ基本). The emperor regretted that the "way of government" (*seidō* 政道) had decayed since medieval times; he now stated his intention to make a fresh start by personally seeing to the revival of the "way of unity of ritual and government" from his new seat in Tokyo.[34]

In this rhetoric we can easily recognize central traits of Late Mito thought. The main idea was, as before, that ritual served as the government's main tool in teaching and thus unifying the people. This unity was now thoroughly grounded in the emperor, who was to embody the unity of ritual and government by performing both "in person" (*tennō shinsai* 天皇親祭; *tennō shinsei* 天皇親政). Moreover, "teaching" had now taken on a more concrete meaning than before. With the country in an extremely precarious situation, uniting the people was felt to be even more urgent than in Aizawa's time. The detection of thousands of Christians in the Urakami area in 1867, and the subsequent struggle to find a way of dealing with them, appeared to confirm the old fear of Christianity's destructive powers. The proposed bulwark against this "crisis of conversion" was the establishment of an imperial Shinto thoroughly cleansed of Buddhist stains, and the promulgation of a Shinto teaching that would fully unite the faith of the people.[35]

How can we understand the initial acclaim given to such proposals? As noted above, Josephson describes the creation of a new imperial Shinto as the formation of what he terms the "Shinto secular." He argues that this Shinto should be understood not as a "state religion" but as a "hybrid Shinto-scientific ideology," an unassailable "regime of truth" that superseded questions of faith. Josephson points out that when religion was first conceptualized in Japan, it was in contradistinction to this Shinto secular: as a realm of private faith excluded from the "secular" truth of Shinto.[36] To illustrate Shinto's secularity, Josephson zooms in on the teachings of one of the senior advisors behind the earliest *saisei itchi* policies of the new government, Ōkuni Takamasa 大国隆正 (1792–1871). Josephson characterizes Ōkuni's Original Learning (*hongaku* 本学) as "a fusion of Shinto and science [that] reverberated through the halls of power and … could be heard in classrooms throughout the nation."[37]

This interpretation, however, would appear to project modern concepts into a setting where they did not yet exist. Josephson argues convincingly that we must "unlearn religion" in order to understand the conceptual map of pre-Meiji Japan, because religion was yet to be "invented"; but his notion of a Shinto secular is premised on the assumption that this map did already feature "science" as religion's opposite. It is difficult to argue that Shinto

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33 On the imperial oath and its performative aspects, see Breen 1996.
34 Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, p. 429.
35 For the apt term "crisis of conversion," see Maxey 2014, ch. 1.
36 Josephson 2012, pp. 132–37.
37 Josephson 2012, p. 125.

naturally came to occupy the position of secular science without reading the "religion *versus* science" paradigm into the pre-Meiji period.[38] A less anachronistic reading of Ōkuni would place him on a scale between what one might call Aizawa's notion of "*the* teaching," as the only orthodox explanation of the way, and Sorai's notion of a broader array of expedient "teachings," as false but useful popular creeds.

While it may be true that Japanese scholars attempted to separate Western science from Christian theology, Ōkuni and other Shinto thinkers chose a very different course in their attempts to integrate Western knowledge into their learning. Rather than striving to establish a scientific-and-therefore-secular Shinto, Ōkuni pursued much the same goal as Aizawa some decades earlier: uniting all Japanese (or, in Ōkuni's case, all of humanity) by converting them to the teaching. This was, of course, no easy task, since the ignorant people lacked the intellectual capacity necessary to understand the teaching. It was therefore necessary to unite the people through praxis, rather than doctrine. Ōkuni used the most popular of all sectarian creeds, the Pure Land sect, as his model to achieve this. Pure Land Buddhists, he wrote, distinguished between the way of saintly practice and the way of easy practice, and Original Learning needed something similar:

> The way of easy practice in Buddhism is based on the doctrine that those who recite the *nenbutsu* [念仏] … will escape misfortune in this world, and that their souls will, after death, reach a good place where they will experience the highest bliss. Following this example, we should say that those who recite the words *tohokami emitame* [遠神忌為] will cleanse away all misfortune, and that after death their souls will ascend to the Plain of High Heaven.[39]

To be sure, Ōkuni admitted that Original Learning could not achieve its higher aim of correcting body and mind if this were all there was to the "easy practice." In the rest of his text, he preached about the notions of "adhering to the origin" and "helping one another," rather than elaborating on the Shinto equivalents of the *nenbutsu* and the Pure Land. His first priority was to teach people "uprightness" in their relations to their lords, parents, and so on. To inculcate these virtues, he was more than ready to use expedient teachings—to say what "we should say" to achieve maximum effect. In fact, Ōkuni expressed as much "faith" in the power of his mantra and rebirth on the Plain of High Heaven as he did in Western theories about oxygen and nitrogen. When he regarded Japan's Original Learning as superior to Western learning, it was because the former synthesized knowledge about both "the visible world and the spirit world," while the latter focused only on the visible realm.[40]

Ōkuni's discourse was based on what Puett would call a continuous model. A discontinuous "secular" model, premised on clear dividing lines between social spheres, was not part of Ōkuni's conceptual framework, nor of that of his sponsors. Original Learning balanced between the idea that there was only one teaching, which was one with the way, and the more practical notion that the ignorant people can be eased into the teaching by

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38 Josephson effectively transposes this paradigm to the Edo period on p. 136; see Josephson 2012.

39 *Shinri shōgen* 神理小言 (1861), in Matsuura 2001, p. 100. For a partial translation, see James W. Heisig 2011, pp. 524–35. This quotation is found on pp. 524–25.

40 Heisig 2011, pp. 528–59.

means of "easy practice." Rather than constructing a scientific regime of truth by distancing himself from religion, Ōkuni actively sought to use the strategies employed by sectarian creeds (the methods of Buddhists, and also the seductive teachings of Christians) to beat the priests of competing faiths at their own game.

The Teaching Unravels

The mere fact that a plan as utopian as mass conversion of the entire population appeared convincing, at least to some and for a short while, is a sure sign of the extraordinary situation that in which Japan found itself. This surreal vision was not to last, and soon more practical models of dealing with "teaching" gained the upper hand. This is not the place to attempt a full analysis of the many dramatic reversals that marked the religious policies of early Meiji, which are delineated expertly in Maxey's book (2014). As a background to what follows, however, it will be useful to sum up the main developments with a very broad brush. In the course of the first fifteen years of Meiji, the regime's management of "religion" (temples, shrines, Christianity, and the teaching) passed through three phases.

In the first phase (1868–1872), the government actively sought to recreate Shinto as a purely imperial tradition, reinvented Shinto rituals in order to propagate the teaching, and sent out state missionaries to convert the people. This phase ended in the third and fourth months of 1872, when the Shinto Missionary Office (Senkyōshi 宣教使, a much scaled-down successor of the Jingikan) was replaced by a joint Shinto-Buddhist Ministry of Teaching (Kyōbushō 教部省),[41] which launched the so-called Great Promulgation Campaign by involving Buddhist priests. It was becoming increasingly obvious to the new leadership that there were good reasons not to alienate Japanese Buddhists or Western Christians. The ideal of converting the people was now diluted by obfuscating the teaching's contents, and by outsourcing its propagation to shrines and temples by way of the semi-private Great Teaching Institute (Daikyōin 大教院). There was no compromise, however, regarding the Shinto nature of *saisei itchi* rituals either at court or within the Great Teaching Institute, which was appositely housed within a Shintoized Buddhist temple.

During phase 2 (1872–1882), Western notions of "religion" were introduced into the discussion by various opponents of the campaign as a means to denounce its many contradictions. If the teaching was to be conveyed through Shinto ritual, how could it be taught by Buddhist priests? And, more fundamentally, could "religious" faith be enforced? If not, should the sacred nature of the imperial lineage be treated as a matter of religious faith? Was not this policy excluding subjects with different faiths from the *kokutai*, as well as reducing the emperor to a figure on a par with deities that were sacred to some, but ridiculed by others? Should not Japan adopt the same approach as some Western countries and grant people freedom of faith within the privacy of their own homes, and within well-defined limits? Could Japan afford to keep alienating the Western powers by banning Christianity and prosecuting Japanese Christians?

This second phase ended on 24 January 1882, when an order from the Home Ministry effectively separated shrines from "religion" as sites solely dedicated to "ritual." Henceforth,

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41 This ministry is referred to as the Ministry of Edification in Hans Martin Krämer's article in this volume; I have used that translation myself elsewhere. In this context, however, I make a point of translating *kyō* 教 consistently as "teaching" so as to stress the connotations of that concept; hence "Ministry of Teaching."

shrine priests were no longer allowed to preach teachings, nor perform any other activities that would hereafter be branded as religious. Shrine priests were excluded from serving as campaign instructors (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職), and they could no longer perform funerals or distribute amulets.[42] Shinto shrines were officially declared "nonreligious," in contrast to the temples and the churches of Buddhist, Christian, and private Shintoist "religionists" (*shūkyōsha* 宗教者). Shrine priests performed public rituals, while religionists preached teachings and offered rites that catered to people's personal faith.

This outcome was the result of much experimentation and many compromises. Input from Western theory and practice, for example through much-studied discussions in elite journals such as *Meiroku zasshi* 明六雑誌, was an important factor in this process. Here, however, I would like to stress another aspect of the negotiations that produced this uneasy compromise: the ultimate failure of concrete political experiments to redraw institutional boundaries, and the resistance that such measures generated. Perhaps the most striking example of the influence institutional interests exerted on religious policies was the question of funerals. Early on in phase 2, the Council of State issued a national ban on cremations (18 July 1873).[43] There was no official explanation of the reasons for this ban, but the Council of the Left (Sain 左院, an advisory body within the Council of State) explicitly condemned cremation as a Buddhist practice that was profoundly unfilial. Behind the ban was the ambition to replace Buddhist cremations with Shinto burials, weakening the position of funeral temples in areas where cremations were common (mostly in the cities). The discourse that motivated this ban will be familiar by now: unfilial Buddhism was to be replaced by the Shinto teachings, which would unite the populace with the state by engaging them in rituals of filial piety.

The sudden appearance of this draconian ban created both heated protests and practical problems. The governor of Tokyo Prefecture feared that interment burials would take up too much space, and proposed to confiscate temple lands and convert them into cemeteries; but the Ministry of Finance disapproved of turning taxed properties in the city into non-taxed graveyards. The Council of State then ordered the Tokyo governor to prohibit all burials within the city boundaries, fully realizing that this would throw all funerary temples into an acute crisis.[44] Others pointed out that cremation was gaining ground in Europe, and argued that reverting to interment would be tantamount to turning one's back on civilization and enlightenment. In a joint declaration, the priests of sixty-six Tokyo temples protested that these measures prevented all city dwellers from joining their ancestors in their urban graves. Under such circumstances, they wrote, how could people retain their sense of loyalty and filial piety? If people were excluded from their own family graves, how could they be expected to appreciate the dignity of the "national mausolea" (*kokubyō* 国廟) where the ancestors of the imperial house and the heroes of the state were buried or enshrined?[45] In other words, how could *saisei itchi* possibly work under such circumstances?

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42 Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, pp. 480–81.
43 This section is based on Makihara 1990, pp. 79–117 (ch. 3, "Dosō ka kasō ka" 土葬か火葬か); Sakamoto 1994, pp. 418–49 ("Shinsōsai no fukyū to kasō kinshi mondai" 神葬祭の普及と火葬禁止問題); and Bernstein 2006, ch. 3, "The Great Cremation Debate," pp. 67–90.
44 Bernstein 2006, pp. 75–76.
45 Makihara 1990, pp. 88–89.

For well over a year, the Council of the Left held on to its original stance, arguing that the practice of Buddhist cremation was harmful because it led the people to the doctrines of the Buddha. As protests and practical difficulties piled up, however, the council slowly turned around. In February 1875, it concluded that "there is no need to overrule the feelings of the people in [minor] matters such as funerals; acknowledging the feelings of ignorant husbands and wives and leaving the matter to their individual wishes will cause no significant harm to administration."[46] In its rhetoric, the Council of the Left expressed clearly the view that its members were not enthusiastic about this outcome, but practical considerations had convinced them to be pragmatic. On 23 May 1875, the Council of State suspended the ban on cremations that it had announced less than two years earlier.

The ideological cause of converting the people from Buddhism to Shinto finally collapsed when this last-ditch attempt to change institutional structures through funerals failed. The decision to allow people the freedom to follow their "feelings" in minor matters clearly foreshadowed the Western-derived notion of freedom of faith that would eventually be incorporated in the 1889 Constitution. On the other hand, this conclusion could also be understood in more traditional terms, as a slide from a position that presses for full conversion to the teaching, to a more pragmatic stance that accepts sectarian creeds as a response to the feelings of the ignorant people.

No doubt, this overlap between old and new ideas was helpful in negotiating such a solution, and in integrating new concepts into the public discourse. More importantly, the freedom of funerals undermined what remained of the Edo-period restrictions on changing temple, or changing sect. It was in 1874 that the Ministry of Teaching officially allowed people to transfer their patronage to a different sect "as they wish," without written permission from their old sect (*ridanjō* 離檀状). In 1875, only a year later, the same ministry was confronted with the case of a Christian family who wanted an openly Christian funeral. By this time, the noticeboards banning Christianity had been removed, but the ban itself had not been explicitly revoked. After much deliberation, the regime concluded that in cases where "stern admonition" (*toku to setsuyu* 篤と説諭) did not help, tacit permission was the only feasible policy.[47] Eventually (in 1884), the municipal cemetery of Aoyama, first established as a locality for Shinto funerals, came to allow not only Buddhist but even Christian graves. Since the prevention of Christian conversions had been a major concern of both the Shinto mission in phase 1 and the campaign in phase 2, this was a major concession to reality that rendered the very existence of the Ministry of Teaching itself meaningless.

Ritual Without Teaching

Where did the compromises of phase 2 leave *saisei itchi*, and what did they mean in concrete terms for the shrines that had earlier been transformed into *saisei itchi* institutions? Phase 1 had redefined shrine priests as representatives of the emperor, charged with the task of mediating between the court and the people by involving the latter in a new body of imperial rituals, now performed at shrines throughout the land. These rituals were expected to "relay the teaching to the people and correct their customs" (as Aizawa had put it), and

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46 Makihara 1990, p. 106. Just two months later, the Council of the Left was abolished.
47 Sakamoto 1994, pp. 444–45.

thus make government possible, if not superfluous. This concept of shrines was premised on the ideal of creating a "world of continuity" where ritual, teaching, and government would be one.

The introduction of the category of "religion" shattered this ideal. One particularly outspoken and influential actor in deconstructing *saisei itchi*'s continuous model was the Pure Land priest Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷, who returned from Europe in the summer of 1872. In London, his group of Nishi

Figure 2. The discontinuous model of "religion."

Honganji 西本願寺 representatives had joined the Iwakura mission for two months; Shimaji, therefore, had enjoyed intimate access to leading figures in the Meiji regime and was familiar with their thinking.[48] Before the year 1872 was out, Shimaji had submitted two petitions in which he criticized the Great Promulgation Campaign; in 1873, he followed this up with another petition arguing that the Great Teaching Institute should be dissolved.[49] In these petitions, Shimaji introduced some new distinctions that undermined the *saisei itchi* ideal, substituting it with a model that looked more like Figure 2.

First, Shimaji argued that government and teaching are incompatible. Government, he wrote, seeks to further the desires and interests of the state; therefore, it is by nature particularistic. Teaching, on the other hand, is concerned with inner virtues, and always encourages people to put the interests of others before selfish desires—a virtue that can never be the basis for government. Being universal, teaching can never be patriotic; therefore, the first of the campaign's Three Standards of Instruction, demanding "reverence for the gods and love for the nation," is self-contradictory.[50] Secondly, Shimaji separated "teaching" from "science/learning" (*gaku* 学). In contrast to science, which is the realm of investigation (*kyūri kakubutsu* 究理格物), teaching is the domain of religion. It deals with matters that cannot be known in an objective, final manner: morality, and the mysteries of life and death.[51] The campaign, Shimaji held forth, misconstrued matters of government as matters of faith. This reduced the *kokutai* to a question of belief, rather than an unassailable fact, and it destroyed religion by forcing priests to preach a teaching that is not even a proper teaching. In 1875,
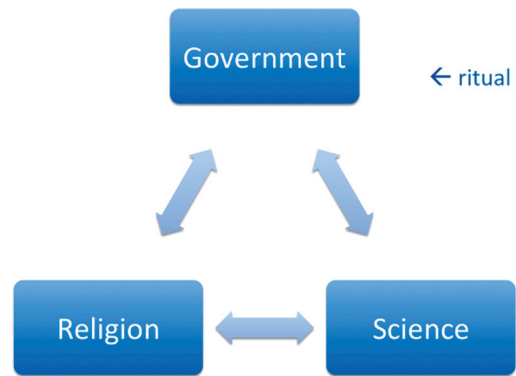
48 In fact, the European expedition of this delegation was proposed and sponsored by Kido Takayoshi (1833–1877), one of the Meiji leaders heading the Iwakura mission. After his return to Japan, Kido went on to advocate privileged treatment for Buddhism in order to "discipline and mobilize the populace in a manner similar to the way Christianity functioned in the West" (Maxey 2014, p. 79).

49 Shimaji was also involved in a petition campaign to lift the ban on cremations. Sakamoto 1994, pp. 440–41. For a detailed analysis of Shimaji's thought and activism, see Krämer 2015, and Krämer's article in this issue.

50 *Sanjō kyōsoku hihan kenpakusho* 三条教則批判建白書 (Meiji 5 (1872)). Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, pp. 235–36. See Krämer's article in this issue for another reading of this petition. In my view, Krämer's translation of *kyō* as "religion" in this context prevents us from recognizing the tension between the continuous model based on "teaching" and the discontinuous model of "religion." In fact, Shimaji stresses in this petition that there is only one teaching that "applies in all countries and covers all human beings" (Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, p. 235): he is certainly not thinking in terms of competing religions.

51 *Daikyōin bunri kenpakusho* 大教院分離建白書 (1873), Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, p. 247.

four Shinshū 真宗 sects, including Shimaji's, left the campaign, and in that same year the Great Teaching Institute was indeed dissolved.

Like Shimaji, the 1882 order talked about the need to "separate government and teaching" (*seikyō bunkatsu* 政教分割) while identifying teaching with religion. Within the shrine world, this process has been described in more concrete terms as the "separation of ritual and teaching" (*saikyō bunri* 祭教分離).[52] After all, the specific focus of the 1882 order was the differentiation between shrine ritualists and campaign instructors/religionists. In order to understand the reactions of the shrine world to this reform, which marked the beginning of phase 3, it is necessary to delve a bit deeper into contemporary views on the relation between ritual and government among Shinto leaders.

One might expect that shrines would resist all attempts to separate ritual from teaching, for the simple reason that the *saisei itchi* model was based on the idea that ritual teaches the ignorant people filial piety and loyalty, and as such forms the basis of government. In 1882, "teaching" was officially redefined as "religion," and shrines were reduced to performing state rituals *without* teaching. Shrine priests were literally silenced by the ban on preaching. Without teaching, the link between ritual and government was, logically speaking, broken: it was no longer clear what ritual was supposed to mean, and at the very least, its scope was much reduced. Was not this a bad thing?

However, things were not so simple. First of all, *saisei itchi* implied that in the new order, ritual, like government, would be performed personally by the emperor. Teaching, on the other hand, would be the task of others. This understanding motivated the dismissal of all hereditary shrine priests (Meiji 4 (1871).5.14), and even inspired a plan (eventually aborted) to move the Inner Shrine of Ise to the palace in Tokyo, so as to enable the emperor to revere his divine ancestress in person. In 1872, at the onset of phase 2, teaching became the responsibility of the Ministry of Teaching, while a new Office of Rites (Shikiburyō 式部寮) within the Council of State was put in charge of ritual. This separation was purely administrative, but it took on a new meaning when "teaching" became increasingly associated with "religion." Fearful of being assimilated to sectarian religion, Shinto spokesmen sought ways to raise the status of shrines by identifying them more closely with nonsectarian, official imperial ritual. Therefore, elite priests were not necessarily unhappy with the 1882 separation of priests from instructors/religionists. What they did lament, and would vigorously campaign to correct over the following decades, was the government's failure to create a new office that would support and fund shrines as vital institutions of state ritual.

It was not, however, so easy to argue for such an office now that the continuous logic of *saisei itchi* had effectively collapsed. Talk about Shinto as "the teaching of government" (*chikyō, jikyō* 治教), in contrast to "religious teachings" (*shūkyō*), may have served to disguise the malfunctioning of that logic, but was hardly an effective way to keep up the

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52 For this term, see, for example, "*Saikyō bunri ron*" 祭教分離論 (an anonymous journalistic piece in three instalments, 1890), Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, pp. 273–80; and Saitō 2006. I here diverge somewhat from Maxey, who characterizes the 1872 founding of the Kyōbushō (Ministry of Teaching) and the Shikiburyō (Office of Rites) as a "separation of ritual and doctrine" and the 1882 differentiation between ritualists and religionists as the "separation of rule and doctrine." Shinto historiography has typically termed 1872 the "first," and 1882 the "second separation of ritual and government."

government's interest in shrines.[53] Indeed, financial support for shrines and their priests dwindled steadily in the 1870s, and this decline accelerated in the 1880s, causing even the largest to fall on hard times.[54] By the late 1880s, concrete steps were taken to abolish state support even for high-ranking state shrines, but for various reasons, this plan was never realized, and state shrines retained modest public funding until 1945. Local shrines, without imperial or national status, were reduced to a minimum of public support already in 1873, and became completely reliant on private funding by 1879.[55]

Again, we cannot ignore institutional interests and practical problems when we try to understand changes in the conceptual landscape during phase 2. Priests were trying to make a living, as well as a point. Again, funerals were an important factor. In some places, Shinto funerals had become common enough to have a real impact on the economic life of shrines. In Satsuma, especially, funerals constituted the financial foundation of many shrines, in much the same way as with temples in Tokyo. When priests were banned from serving as campaign instructors, Satsuma politicians protested and negotiated a compromise: priests of low-ranking, local shrines would be allowed, "for the time being," to continue to provide "religious" services, including funerals.[56] From 1882 onwards, then, the broad category of shrines covered two very different kinds of institutions: high-ranking state shrines that performed *saisei itchi* rituals, received public support, and refrained from religious activities; and low-ranking local shrines that lived off private contributions from their parishioners in exchange for religious services.

This difference in institutional basis caused the priests of state shrines and local shrines to take very different standpoints on the question of ritual and its relation to teaching, or, as it was now increasingly termed, religion. State shrines pressured the government to increase its sponsorship of state ritual, and to raise the status of state ritual by resurrecting a Jingikan-like body in a fashion that was "suitable to the times"—that is, without falling into the trap of demeaning Shinto as a private religion.[57] This movement continued throughout the prewar period. It finally came to fruition in 1940 (or, in the Japanese era, 2600) with the founding of the Jingiin 神祇院, a state institution that was once again to combine ritual with "the propagation of reverence for the gods"—that is, teaching. Although the Jingiin never received the financial means to make much of an impact, it symbolized a revival of *saisei itchi* ideals, though still couched in a rhetoric of freedom of faith. It carefully refrained from invoking religion, because the "political grammar of religion" (in Maxey's terminology) would limit a religious Shinto to the private sphere and undermine its public nature.

Local shrines first organized themselves in 1926, when their priests stepped out of the shadow of the state shrines by forming their own national association (Zenkoku Shashi

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53 On the term *chikyō/jikyō*, see Krämer 2013.

54 For a concrete example of the financial insolvency of even major shrines and the various attempts to deal with this structural problem, see Thal 2005, especially chapters 9 and 11. Even Ise faced severe economic problems in this period; see Teeuwen and Breen 2017, chapter 8.

55 "Local shrines" here refers to prefectural, municipal, village, and unranked shrines, often referred to collectively as "assorted shrines" (*shosha* 諸社) in contradistinction to high-ranking shrines that retained public funding (*kansha* 官社, "state shrines"): the Ise Shrines, imperial shrines, and national shrines. The number of state shrines grew gradually from less than 100 in the 1870s to well over two hundred in 1945.

56 This temporary exemption is included in the order of 24 January 1882; see Yasumaru and Miyachi 1988, p. 480. On its background, see Saitō 2006, pp. 225–26.

57 Saitō 2006, p. 229.

Shashō Kai 全国社司社掌会). In a study of local shrine activism in the 1920s and 1930s, Azegami Naoki points out that activist priests propagated a fresh take on the relationship between shrines and religion. Reacting to an emerging interest on the part of the authorities (notably the Jinjakyoku 神社局 or Shrine Bureau, established within the Home Ministry in 1900 to oversee shrine policy) in using shrines for "popular edification," priests of local shrines urged the government to abandon the definition of shrines as "nonreligious." In 1927, the national association of local shrine priests sent a petition to the prime minister, the home minister, and the education minister, arguing that shrine worship should be recognized as "the public religion of the state" (*kokka kō no shūkyō* 国家公の宗教). This new definition of shrine worship would not deny individuals' constitutional freedom to believe privately in "so-called" religions; but it should be made clear that shrines were qualitatively different, because they represented a public supra-religion to which all Japanese nationals must adhere irrespective of their individual faith.[58]

This petition reflected subtle shifts in the meaning of the concept of religion in the early Shōwa years. What local shrine priests wanted to achieve with their attempt to "take back religion" was not to establish a sectarian Shinto creed for a limited congregation of adherents. In their discourse, "religion" no longer meant a sectarian creed or denomination, but rather referred to "sincere faith" or "genuine religiosity." The shrine activists of the 1920s felt that the model of "ritual without teaching" emptied shrine reverence of all spiritual content, and they were eager to restore Shinto's potential to transform people's lives through self-cultivation and character building (*jinkakushugi* 人格主義).[59] Their position is readily understandable from an institutional perspective. Priests of local shrines offered rituals catering to people's private, "religious" needs, while being embedded in a legal and political framework that defined shrines as "nonreligious" sites of public rituals. One way out of this conundrum was to render nonreligious ritual religious again, and in that way reconnect ritual with the practice of preaching the teaching.

As Japan entered a new national crisis after the 1931 Manchurian incident, the notion of uniting the people through faith in one teaching reemerged. "Religion" became an even more confusing concept. On the one hand, it denoted a category of private creeds that needed to be contained within ever stricter boundaries. The Religious Organizations Law (*Shūkyō dantai hō* 宗教団体法) of 1939 reflected this attitude, and effectively reduced Article 28 of the Meiji Constitution, guaranteeing freedom of faith, to a dead letter. On the other hand, some turned the old association between teaching and religion on its head, and argued that *saisei itchi* ritual should form the basis of a national religion that took precedence over all other, inferior religions. This led to intense pressure on Buddhists, Christians, and other religious movements.[60] Once again, the *saisei itchi* model of uniting ritual, teaching, and government was held high, and at times forcefully imposed. If it were not for the fact that history never returns to the same place, one might say that by a roundabout route (via "religion"), Japan had come full circle.

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58 "Kengi" 建議 (*Kōkoku* 皇国 328, June 1927), quoted in Azegami 2012, p. 81.
59 Azegami 2009, p. 286.
60 Pressure on Christians during this period is a central theme of Nakai's article in this volume. For a particularly telling example of Shinto pressure on Buddhists, see Ives 1999.

Conclusion

Reflecting discussions within religious studies in general, there has recently been a lot of soul-searching within the field of Japanese religions over biases and misunderstandings inherent in our use of the etic terms "religion/religious" to describe places, people, practices, and ideas that were never regarded as aspects of "religion" in emic terms, for the simple reason that no such concept existed before Meiji. An important outcome of these discussions is an increased awareness of the political and ideological instrumentality of the Japanese calque *shūkyō* after the introduction of the category of "religion." The works of scholars such as Isomae (2003), Josephson (2012), Maxey (2014), and Krämer (2015) offer telling accounts of the complicated negotiations that shaped understandings of *shūkyō* in modernizing Japan. They demonstrate in great detail that the Japanese adoption of "religion" was not a simple matter of translating and transferring a ready-made Western notion. Religion was not imposed on a passive Japan; it was actively reinvented by Japanese leaders from many institutional contexts, all with their own agendas. In a world of multiple modernities, there are by necessity multiple concepts of religion. *Shūkyō* is one member of that colorful family.

As pointedly argued by Josephson, the creation of *shūkyō* was a "politically charged boundary-drawing exercise" that created not only a religious realm, but also a secular realm.[61] This secular realm was to be shielded from religion, legally, discursively, and also practically, by way of the removal of religious objects and actors. What "secular" meant in different contexts was a function of contemporary definitions of religion. The results of this boundary drawing were far from obvious out of context. In Japan, for example, funerals were religious while weddings were not, and "religious" amulets were not to be handled by "nonreligious" shrine priests—but then again, this applied only to priests of state shrines, and not to those of local shrines. Only the serendipities of Meiji history could have produced such apparently random boundaries.

One aim of this article is to stress the degree to which institutional interests shaped the boundary-drawing process. Much emphasis has been given to the Japanese reception of Western theories of religion, and to attempts on the part of intellectuals and political leaders to adapt and apply these theories to a Japanese context. Often, however, the realities of existing institutional arrangements thwarted the implementation even of policies that were felt to be vital for the state. To understand how *shūkyō* developed, we need to pay at least as much attention to underlying social and economic structures as to abstract ideals and imported ideas.

The second point that this article tries to make is that *shūkyō* may be a Meiji concept, but it took the form it did in a context where pre-Meiji ideas were still a dominant presence. Following theorists such as Talal Asad, Josephson and others have stressed the radical novelty and alterity of concepts like religion and secularity whenever they were exported from "the West" to the "non-West."[62] However, such concepts did not replace older ideas about the social order; rather, they had to be fitted in with prevalent world views if they were to make sense at all. In Japan, I argue, the reception of "religion" was heavily influenced by pre-Meiji ideas about teaching and its relation to ritual and government. The original ideal of the Meiji state was *saisei itchi*, "unity of ritual and government." I maintain that

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61 Josephson 2012, back cover.
62 See the introduction to this special issue.

the continuous worldview encapsulated in this phrase retained its attraction beyond Meiji, and formed an important framework for the development of *shūkyō*. In short, "religion" was part of a discontinuous model that compartmentalized religious belief and practice by setting it apart from "secular" spheres of social life. As such, it threatened to undermine the continuous model of *saisei itchi*, in which ritual unites the nation, or even the cosmos. The interference between these coexisting continuous and discontinuous models (as crudely visualized in figures 1 and 2 above) underlies the struggles over religion and its relationship with teaching.

Finally, it is worth asking whether echoes of this interference can still be heard in postwar Japan. At least in the case of a small group of shrines closely associated with the state, this is clearly the case. In the late 1960s, when the LDP was preparing its Diet proposal to nationalize Yasukuni Shrine, it soon became obvious that the shrine would first have to shed its status as a religious corporation (*shūkyō hōjin* 宗教法人) for this to become possible. The shrine priests and representatives of the Association of Bereaved Families (Nihon Izokukai 日本遺族会), however, were adamant that the shrine should not be transformed into a secular "monument," and that its Shinto traditions should be maintained. In 1967, a committee in support of the shrine pointed out that Article 34 of the civil law code distinguished between religious and ritual corporations (*saishi hōjin* 祭祀法人).[63] The mission of Yasukuni, the committee argued, was not to spread a religion to select believers, but rather to perform rituals for all who had fallen in the service of the nation, irrespective of their personal religion.

This logic would eventually fail to convince the Diet, but the notion of organizing some shrines at least as "ritual corporations" continued to be discussed within Shinto circles until this category finally disappeared from the books in 2008. It is increasingly obvious, however, that the notion of uniting the nation through shrine ritual has not become obsolete. More recent examples, such as the public performance of the *daijōsai* in 1990 and the participation of PM Abe in Ise's *shikinen sengū* in 2013, suggest that the story of "*saisei itchi* vs religion" may not yet be over.[64] Current campaigning by the shrine organization Jinja Honchō 神社本庁 for constitutional reform, which (among other things) would allow shrine ritual to return to the public sphere as "custom," further affirms this impression.[65] The continuous model of ritual unity is more than likely to morph into new forms also in the future.

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63 *Jinja shinpō*, 5 August 1967, p. 1. The Shinto ideologue Ono Sokyō 小野祖教 further elaborated on this in *Jinja shinpō*, 16 March 1968, p. 4. In a similar vein, an article by Iwakoshi Gen'ichirō 岩越元一郎 (*Jinja shinpō*, 4 and 11 May 1970) argues that Yasukuni represents a "religion of ritual" (*saishi shūkyō* 祭祀宗教), and as such is fundamentally different from "religions of salvation" (*kyūzai shūkyō* 救罪宗教 [*sic*]). I find the concept of a "religion of ritual," combining the previously mutually exclusive terms of *saishi* and *shūkyō* in a single phrase, a particularly telling example of the resampling of old concepts within a new framework—in this case, the postwar legal status of Yasukuni as a religious corporation. Iwakoshi (1902–1978) was the author of books about the Confucian classics, Japanese ethics, and the *Kojiki* 古事記.

64 On the return of the Ise Shrines to the public stage, see Teeuwen and Breen 2017, pp. 2–7 and 241. The upcoming *daijōsai*, perhaps in 2018, could be the next large occasion for the government to further the public use of shrine ritual in order to unite the nation.

65 See the articles by Larsson, Guthmann, and Rots in this issue.

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Reconceiving the Secular in Early Meiji Japan: Shimaji Mokurai, Buddhism, Shinto, and the Nation

Hans Martin Krämer

In the early Meiji period, Japanese Buddhists had to come to terms with a number of profound changes. The prime challenge for the clerical elite was the radically new religious policy of the Meiji government, no longer favoring Buddhism in the framework of the early modern temple registration system, but rather privileging Shinto in its attempts to find a suitable place for Japanese religions in the modern Japanese nation state. Institutionally, Buddhism was faced with the Great Promulgation Campaign initiated under the auspices of the Ministry of Edification from 1872 onwards. Anyone who wanted to continue religious teaching needed to join the campaign; at the same time, Buddhists were prohibited from engaging in sectarian proselytization while teaching under the campaign's umbrella.

Priests of the Jōdo Shinshū were active in overcoming this impasse, and among them Shimaji Mokurai of the sect's Honganji branch was particularly effective. As a member of the first group of Japanese Buddhists to travel to Europe in 1872, he combined the traditional scholarship of a Buddhist priest with modern Western knowledge gleaned in France, Great Britain, and Germany. Drawing on premodern Japanese terminological precedents, Shimaji first conceptualized the separation of the spheres of politics and religion and, slightly later, that of "religious and secular teaching." Out of this separation, a concept of "religion" first appeared in Japan.

Shimaji's intellectual move to separate a sphere of "religion" in order to free Buddhism from the restraints of early Meiji religious policy has structural parallels with the political ideology of secularism as described by Talal Asad. Contrary to Asad's assumptions, however, secularism clearly is not purely a Western project. The case of Shimaji shows how Japanese thinkers and political actors drew upon their local tradition as well as new Western knowledge to come up with their own solutions to specific political problems that arose in the transition of Japan to the modern era.

Keywords: secularization, secularism, modernity, modernization, Talal Asad, José Casanova, Charles Taylor, Jōdo Shinshū, concept of religion, religious policy

Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction to this volume, Talal Asad was arguably the first to challenge, if not thoroughly, then acrimoniously, the idea that secularization is a useful concept to describe the non-West. According to Asad, the West has pursued "the attempt to construct categories of the secular and the religious in terms of which modern living is required to take place, and [in terms of which] nonmodern peoples are invited to assess their adequacy."[1] Asad argues that secularity is part of a political project by the West, a key element of modernity. As such it is expected from non-Western peoples, too, and used against them if they fail to live up to this yardstick.[2] The result of this project of secularism (which, unlike secularity or secularization, is an ideology) is that non-Western people can legitimately be portrayed as lacking a key feature of modernity.[3] We can see here, in other words, a somewhat disguised continuity of the modernization paradigm that was so important in the social sciences throughout much of the postwar period, not least in its application to Japan.[4]

Furthermore, one may detect in Asad's argument a structural analogy to the use of the concept of "religion" outside the West. That is to say, "religion" was imposed upon the non-West as part of the broader imperialist project of Euro-America since the nineteenth century. Again, societies were not viewed as equal unless they could be demonstrated to have proper religions. The two categories of religion and secularity are, of course, envisaged by Asad as complementary: modernity requires the separation of the spheres of religion and the secular, and one can only speak of religion once it has been identified as a distinct sphere from the secular.

The idea that "religion" is not transparent, but a category with a specific history of its own worthy of scholarly investigation, has recently gained much currency even in a field as remote as Japanese studies. Over the last few years, no fewer than four monographs in English have seized upon the idea that the history of the category "religion" needs to be investigated.[5] While the relevance of these historical studies is generally acknowledged, some students of Asian religions have turned their findings into a normative argument about the inadequacy of the analytical concepts deployed, proposing to operate rather with emic terminology. Although this may strike some as extreme, this move has in fact gained wide currency in recent years. In fact, for the case of Japan, Timothy Fitzgerald suggested in his 2000 book *The Ideology of Religious Studies* that religion cannot be usefully disentangled from culture, so that "the Japanese configuration of values is more fundamental analytically" than the concept of religion.[6] One may add that his book was not well received in the field when it first came out.[7]

More recently, the argument that we should do without analytical categories imposed by the West has perhaps been advanced most forcefully in the field of South Asian studies,

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1 Asad 2003, p. 14.
2 Asad 2003, p. 13.
3 Asad is here mainly thinking of Arab Muslims.
4 A recent historical contextualization of modernization theory and its treatment of Japan can be found in Conrad 2012.
5 Josephson 2012; Maxey 2014; Isomae 2014; Krämer 2015.
6 Fitzgerald 2000, p. 180.
7 See the review by Ian Reader (Reader 2004).

where it undoubtedly has also been propelled by the broader and more nuanced approach assumed by Dipesh Chakrabarty.[8] More narrowly focused on the difficulties surrounding "religion," the work of the "India Platform" at Ghent University in Belgium led by S.N. Balagangadhara has gained some notoriety for espousing the refusal of categories formerly deemed universally valid (in fact, this earned Balagangadhara the epithet of "fascist" because of the happy use Hindu nationalists are making of his theories). Balagangadhara and his colleagues stress the roots of the secularization model, with "its division of society into a temporal political kingdom and the spiritual kingdom of Christ," in Protestant Western thinkers such as John Locke, and argue that when this model "travels beyond the boundaries of the Christian West or when western societies become multicultural, it threatens to lose its intelligibility."[9] Richard King and Gavin Flood have also recently stressed that the colonialist patina of the supposedly universal analytical concept of Western origins is so thick that the only remedy lies in going back to indigenous categories.[10] Prominent Sinologists who have made the case for abstaining from the use of the analytical concept of religion when describing modern or contemporary China include Vincent Goossaert and Tim Barrett.[11]

While I acknowledge the problems inherent in presupposing seemingly universal concepts that really have their parochial origins in Europe, this line of arguing overlooks three important points. First, even if one maintains that Western notions of the separation of church and state were alien to Asian societies in the nineteenth century, they have now been in the region for over 150 years and have become sedimented in manifold ways, so that one cannot simply argue them away.[12] Second, those seemingly monolithic Western categories have a very dynamic history of their own; they were not fixed in the nineteenth century and were and are heterogeneous even within the so-called West.[13] Third, and perhaps most importantly, the reason why Western categories were able to catch on easily in Asia is not only to be found in the force of Western colonial impositions, but also in parallel indigenous conceptual traditions.

So, where do we find such indigenous sources—following the three points just mentioned—for the idea of secularization or secularity?[14] The actual term "secularization" (*sezokuka* 世俗化) did not enter the Japanese language until Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 used it in his magnum opus *Nihon Shushi gakuha no tetsugaku* 日本朱子学派之哲学 (The Philosophy of the Zhu Xi School in Japan) in 1905. One can, however, trace the genealogy of "the secular" further back. The somewhat simpler word *sezoku* 世俗 used to render "secular" from European languages was, as far as we know, first employed by Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 in his 1875 *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論の概略 (Outline of a Theory of Civilization). Interestingly, this first occurrence is in a passage about Reformation

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8 Chakrabarty has explicitly criticized the uncritical application of supposedly universal European categories of historiography to Indian history long before his seminal 2000 book *Provincializing Europe*. See for example Chakrabarty 1992.

9 De Roover and Balagangadhara 2008, p. 523.

10 King 2013, Flood 2013.

11 See Goossaert 2005 and Barrett 2005.

12 To be fair, this is one of Goossaert's main points in two articles of his (Goossaert 2005 and 2006).

13 See the contributions on Europe in Eggert and Hölscher 2013.

14 The following paragraph is based on Krämer 2015, pp. 114–36.

Age Europe.[15] Although *sezoku* became well established as an antonym of *shūkyō* 宗教 in scholarly language by the end of the nineteenth century, it seems that it was not until Inoue in 1905 that the scheme was consciously applied to Japan.

Still, there is a prehistory to the notion of a division between "religion" and "secular," and in this essay I will focus on very early Meiji articulations of such precedents. I will do so by analyzing Buddhist authors' discussions of the place of religion in society vis-à-vis other societal forces during the very early Meiji period, when the new abstract terminology that was to become fundamental for the modern Japanese language was formed. Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911) was a scholar-priest of Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗, thoroughly trained in the traditional disciplines, who went to Europe for an extended period early in his life, and who was deeply involved in the political skirmishes of early Meiji religious policy. His example will serve to show how the reconception of the secular played out in practice in the most well-established and institutionalized religion of nineteenth-century Japan. Reconception is here understood to mean the confluence of the three points just mentioned: a) the impact of contact with the West, drawing on b) indigenous conceptual traditions, and c) concrete political agendas of the period in question. All three points will serve to show that we can clearly identify Shimaji as someone who conceptualized the opposite of religion in such a way that we cannot simply explain it as a Western imposition.

Shimaji Mokurai in the Early 1870s

Shimaji is well known in studies of modern Japanese religious history as one of the first to advance the modern notion of freedom of religion and the idea of "Shinto as non-religion," to borrow from the title of the contribution by Ernils Larsson to this present issue. The decisive intellectual move in arguing against Shinto as religion was to acknowledge the existence of a category of religion in the first place. As the first Japanese author to provide any substantial discussion of "religion," Shimaji did so mainly negatively, that is, by contrasting the religious sphere he wanted to establish anew with other entities or by delineating it against them.[16]

We can trace the evolution of Shimaji's thinking about religion and its main opposite in three steps, over the span of a few years from 1872 onwards. While these steps are not perfectly chronologically distinct, they do reflect something like an evolutionary development. In all three phases, we will see that the contrast he makes is with the sphere of politics. Although it is obvious that the category of the political is not identical with that of the secular, I will here concentrate on excavating these three contrasts from Shimaji's texts, and save my thoughts about the congruity or incongruity of the category of the political with that of the secular for the conclusion.

The immediate context of Shimaji's utterances was twofold. First, Shimaji had been sent by his head temple, Nishi Honganji 西本願寺, to Europe in 1872 to investigate European

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15 Fukuzawa is here basically paraphrasing European works such as those by Thomas Henry Buckle or François Guizot.

16 Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847–1889) published a sixteen-page booklet entitled "Religious Freedom in Japan" in 1872, albeit in English and not directed toward a Japanese readership. He reiterated his points in Japanese in *Meiroku zasshi* 明六雑誌, the journal of the Meiji Six Society (Meirokusha), in 1874. By this time, other opinion leaders had jumped in, and a lively debate about the relationship between state and religion ensued. In contrast, Shimaji wrote down his first thoughts on the topic two years earlier, in 1872.

ways of religion. In the background of this mission was a sense of crisis and the urgent need for internal reform following the period of radical Shintoist anti-Buddhist iconoclasm in the late 1860s. Second, while in Europe, Shimaji learnt of the new experiments in religious policy the Meiji government began to undertake in 1872. One year earlier, while still in Japan, Shimaji had successfully petitioned the government to set up a Ministry of Edification (Kyōbushō 教部省). While Buddhists had hoped that the new ministry would be less exclusively Shintoist, the ministry soon began its Great Promulgation Campaign (*daikyō senpu undō* 大教宣布運動) employing instructors (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職) from across Japan, who were to expound on the "Three Standards of Instruction" (*sanjō kyōsoku* 三条教則). These three standards, published by the ministry in April 1872, and their interpretation by the government were seen by Buddhists such as Shimaji as overly pro-Shintoist and thus prompted a flurry of memoranda and petitions seeking to abolish this system.[17]

It was in this context that Shimaji handed over a report to Iwakura Tomomi 岩倉具視 (1825–1883), head of the Iwakura mission to Europe and North America, when both men met in London in August 1872. Shimaji had drafted a report titled *Ōshū seikyō kenbun* 欧州政教見聞 (Things Seen and Heard on Politics and Religion in Europe), at the beginning of which he wrestled with defining what was to be the object of his inquiry. The following passage marks Shimaji's first identification of a separate sphere of religion:

> "Religion" [*kyō* 教]—what is this? It is what one uses to lead people and to support politics [*sei* 政]. Yet, leading people does not mean ruling them. And supporting politics does not mean conducting politics. The object of politics is to erect a system, to promote the sciences [*hyakugaku* 百学], to further productivity [*shokusan* 殖産], and to secure the people each at his/her place. Yet it is religion which helps propel this. […] When I observed politics in Europe, first there was religion, revered by high and low. Indeed, the political system as well as laws must fully rest upon religion. To grow up, to marry, to be interred, to worship your ancestors—all of this is religion. Work and rest—both are religion. All things in the life of men, from birth to death, are without exception religion.[18]

What we see here is a first awareness of a distinct category of religion. It is juxtaposed to "politics," which includes economy ("to further productivity") and science ("to promote the sciences"). From these spheres religion is seen as separate in that it "does not mean conducting politics." At the same time, however, it is deeply intertwined with politics, "which must fully rest upon religion."

Shimaji here—and perhaps later, too—still clings to an older paradigm of religious support for politics and vice versa.[19] In doing so, he was fully in line with mainstream Shinshū expositions on the Three Standards of Instruction, which were at pains to demonstrate somehow the compatibility of these overtly Shintoist tenets with Buddhist

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17 After returning from Europe, Shimaji was successful in convincing his head temple to abandon the Great Promulgation Campaign in 1874, the beginning of the end for the Ministry of Edification, which was dissolved in 1877.
18 Shimaji 1872a, p. 198.
19 This can be seen in later texts of his as well, thus throwing into doubt the claim that he was a forerunner of religious freedom. See Krämer 2015, pp. 60–62.

teachings. Higuchi Ryūon 樋口龍温 (1800–1885), for instance, a senior scholar at the Takakura Gakuryō 高倉学寮, the academy affiliated with Higashi Honganji 東本願寺 in Kyoto, also argued in a text completed in January 1873 that religion (of which, one must add, he did not yet have a clear-cut concept) was the necessary foundation of politics:

> In order to rule (*osamu* 治む) a nation (*kokka* 国家), one must without fail rely upon a religion (*kyōhō* 教法). Without religion (*kyō* 教), government cannot be conducted, and the people have nowhere to return to. This is like taming a horse without a bridle. Therefore, a religion (*kyō*) is the fundament for ruling a country (*kuni* 国). Currently, all the Western countries have their respective religion. One says that if a religion prospers, its country will without fail also prosper. Even countries like ancient China and India had their respective religions. In India there had been, before the emergence of the Buddha, teachings based on the ten good deeds of the cakravartin kings (*rinnō jūzen* 輪王十善). Yet, after the emergence of the Buddha, the kings of the sixteen great countries all ruled their kingdoms through his teachings. This is why the Buddha frequently expounded upon the Law of the King.[20]

By the time Higuchi was writing this, Shimaji had already developed a markedly different stance. In what is today his best known piece of writing, a petition to the emperor written in December 1872 when he was in Paris, Shimaji more clearly distinguished between politics and religion:

> The difference between politics (*sei*) and religion (*kyō*) should never be obscured. Politics is a human affair and governs only outward forms. Moreover, it separates countries from each other. Religion, however, is the work of the divine and governs the heart. Moreover, it runs through many countries. In politics, one will therefore in no way be mindful of others but entirely strive for profit for the self. Not so in religion: one never thinks of the self but first and foremost desires to benefit the other. As for politics separating countries from each other, what is deemed right in a republic is wrong in a monarchy. The policies adopted by autocratic governments are rejected by constitutional governments. Depending on the foundations on which countries are established, their policies are as irreconcilable as ice and charcoal. […] That both Japan and China have traditionally erred in [the relationship between] politics and religion seems to me to stem from their having frequently confused the two. In the old days, the Europeans erred [here] as well, and their culture was enormously backward. In recent times, however, they have come to see this and have now reached great results. I wish this for our country as well.[21]

In this petition, titled *Sanjō kyōsoku hihan kenpakusho* 三条教則批判建白書 (Critique of the Three Standards of Instruction), one can see clearly how religion and politics have come to be defined as occupying distinct domains of social action. In the language of system theory, one could say that they are defined as two functionally differentiated subsystems. Thus,

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20 Higuchi 1873, p. 73.
21 Shimaji 1872b, pp. 15–16.

Shimaji can be read to say that politics deals with everything that works for the national interest, while religion is about the principles of love and mercy that rule the interactions of human beings in society.[22]

Now, in that same 1872 petition, Shimaji uses the neologism *shūkyō* twice. It was not until 1874, however, that he began to render religion as *shūkyō* more consistently. His main reason for doing so was that he now made a finer distinction. He no longer opposed religion and politics, but now sought to differentiate within "teaching" (*kyō*). Basically, his move was to take the older umbrella term of "teaching" or "instruction" and extricate from it religion, as a certain subtype of "teaching." What, however, is then left? This is the topic of a petition of 1874, in which Shimaji again rails against the Ministry of Edification:

> I have not yet completely penetrated this thing called Shinto, but what I can say for sure is that it is not a so-called sectarian teaching [*shūkyō*]. If one now nonetheless attempts to make it into a sectarian teaching, the harm for Japan and the shame from the outside will be enormous. In olden times, when Buddhism had not yet entered Japan, only a secular teaching [*jikyō* 治教] existed in our country. There is thus no obstacle to the coexistence of a sectarian teaching and a secular teaching, but how could one human possibly have two sectarian teachings at the same time?[23]

Reminiscent of the division between outer and inner that Shimaji had already expounded upon in the second text quoted from earlier, another Shinshū author, Kusunoki Senryū 楠潜龍 from the Ōtani branch of Jōdo Shinshū, defined this "secular teaching" in 1874 in a treatise on the "Seventeen Themes," which were to be disseminated alongside the Three Standards of Instruction:[24]

> Beautifying the customs of the nation by rectifying laws, improving the morals of the common people by clarifying rewards and punishments, taking care that there are no disloyal subjects in the nation and no impious children in families, correcting names and clarifying human relationships: this is called the secular teaching [*jikyō*], and if those above teach it, those below will follow. Yet while the secular teaching rewards and punishes outward forms and past events, it does not promote and chastise the right and wrong of the inner heart and that which has not yet taken shape.[25]

There is no consensus in the scholarly community today as to what this *jikyō* is or how to translate it, largely because the term has been obsolete in the Japanese language since the late nineteenth century. Shimazono Susumu has proposed "indoctrination," others have

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22 Interestingly, both definitions are quite different from the way Niklas Luhmann has identified the central binary codes for the subsystems of politics (power/no power) and religion (immanence/transcendence). This may be due, among other factors, to the fact that Shimaji wrote as a religious stakeholder and was thus more likely to list positive values as constitutive of religion rather than an abstract, neutral principle. Furthermore, the binary code of immanence vs. transcendence identified by Luhmann does not work well in a religion such as Buddhism that does not clearly externalize a transcendent deity. See Luhmann and Kieserling 2013.

23 Shimaji 1874, p. 65.

24 The Higashi Honganji sect took the official name of Shinshū Ōtani-ha 真宗大谷派 (the Ōtani branch of Jōdo Shinshū) in 1881.

25 Kusunoki 1874, p. 141.

tried "governing doctrine" or "doctrines of rule."[26] I have chosen "secular teaching(s)" because *jikyō* is consciously employed in opposition to an emphatic definition of religion as the realm of the inner heart, the shapeless, and the unspeakable. In contrast, *jikyō* clearly refers to the this-worldly management of social relations and has no way of accessing this inner domain. There is no sense of superiority or inferiority; the two are simply on different planes. In this sense of a domain that is distinct from and not touched by religion, and consciously and explicitly established that way, Shimaji's opposite of religion may justifiably be called "the secular."

What I would like to highlight is that the real goal of the Shinshū Buddhist authors was to devise a strategy against the Shinto dominance of religious policy in those early years of Meiji. By defining Shinto as mythology, an expression of ancestor reverence, or a set of purely civil rites supporting the imperial institution—in other words, as secular—those authors sought to carve out a domain of "religion" that would protect Buddhism against Shinto by removing the former from competition with the latter. That is, the perception of a pressing political issue, namely "the Shinto problem" in the eyes of those Buddhist authors, was crucial in forming their theoretical point of view on defining the domain of "religion" and the nonreligious. Yet, Shimaji and his colleagues did not invent the conceptual oppositions underlying their new terminology out of thin air. Instead, there was a long tradition in Japanese Buddhism of thinking about the dichotomy of the sacred and the secular realm, although of course it was never expressed in so many words.

The Premodern Sources of Shimaji

Already in Indian Buddhism, "the Law of the Buddha" (Sk. *buddha-dharma*, Jp. *buppō* 仏法) was opposed as a rhetorical figure to "the Law of the King" (Sk. *rāja-dharma*, Jp. *ōbō* 王法) or "the Law of the World" (Sk. *loka-dharma*, Jp. *sehō* 世法). It is important to note that this was not a distinction between domains. Rather, as Christoph Kleine has noted in an analysis of the Japanese medieval Buddhist formula of "mutual dependence of the Law of the King and the Law of the Buddha" (*ōbō buppō sōi* 王法仏法相依), both terms are to be understood as immanent to the religious code. The order of the ruler is associated with saṃsāra, while that of the Buddha is associated with nirvāṇa, both of which are marked by specific ways of life.[27]

In the course of time, however, the *ōbō-buppō* formula was no longer exclusively used in Buddhist doctrinal studies but became part of the political language. By the fifteenth century, it was an important point of reference in attempts by Honganji 本願寺, the dominant institution within Jōdo Shinshū, to rein in unruly elements among its adherents. Rennyo 蓮如, Honganji's leader at the time, disapproved of the militancy of his followers and admonished them to follow the precept of *ōbō ihon* 王法為本: "make the Law of the King the fundament" or, as Michael Solomon translates it, "secular authority as fundamental."[28] In 1474, Rennyo admonished the faithful in a pastoral letter: "First and foremost, you shall make the moral practices of the world [*seken* 世間] your fundament by adhering to the Law of the King [*ōbō*] on the outside and cultivating other-power [*anjin* 安心]

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26 Shimazono 2005, p. 1086; Maxey 2014, p. 33; Ketelaar 1990, p. 129.
27 Kleine 2013, pp. 240, 247–49.
28 Solomon 2006, p. 401.

in your inner hearts." [29] Rennyo's formulation is interesting not least because of the close identification of the Buddha-dharma with the heart, prefiguring Shimaji's and Kusunoki's later association of religion with the domain of the heart.

Ōkuwa Hitoshi 大桑斉 has pointed out that Rennyo—as well as his immediate successors—used the term *ōbō* in only a few rare instances; thus it was not until the Tokugawa period that *ōbō ihon* came to be broadly recognized as a Shinshū ideal. Furthermore, Ōkuwa has argued that *ōbō* originally stood less for the concrete political authorities and more for the "moral practices of the world," also mentioned in Rennyo's 1474 letter.[30] This changed during the Tokugawa period when submission to political authority was increasingly stressed as an ideal by Honganji leaders. Towards the end of the period, the slogan "mutual dependence of the Law of the King and the Law of the Buddha" gained even more salience when the locus of the Law of the King was shifted from the bakufu to the emperor. Jōdo Shinshū writers used this slogan to identify the protection of the dharma with the protection of the nation during the 1850s and 1860s.

In 1869, immediately after the formal restoration of imperial power, Fukuda Gidō 福田義導 (1805–1881), a scholar-priest from western Japan, published a "Commentary on the Sutra of Political Discourse on the Law of the King" (*Ōbō seiron kyō ryakuchū* 王法政論経略註), in which he lauded the traditional model of mutual dependence of the Law of the King and the Law of the Buddha for its relevance to the present.[31] He saw the protection of the imperial realm by Buddhist institutions and the nurturing of the latter by the government as the best way to fend off Christianity. That creed was a heresy (*jahō* 邪法), against which the specific Japanese blend of the three teachings of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism (*shinjubutsu sankyō* 神儒仏三教) and the benevolent rule of the emperor would offer protection. This benevolent rule, however, was best guaranteed by clinging to Buddhist tenets, hence the mutual dependence of Buddhism and worldly rule.[32]

In contrast to Fukuda, however, who used the traditional figure of "mutual dependence of the Law of the King and the Law of the Buddha" to argue for a traditional order and cited the unity of the three traditional teachings as his ideal, his contemporary Shimaji drew on it in a broader sense, so as to develop an argument that departed from nostalgic notions of Buddhist supremacy through state patronage. What is crucial here is that Shimaji thought of them as two logically separate spheres, regardless of which was held to be more important. From there, it was a small step toward the notional separation of *sei* and *kyō*. He reinforced this by referring to another established conceptual pair: the notion of "the two truths of transcendence and worldliness" (*shinzoku nitai* 真俗二諦). Originally, this dichotomy spoke of two types of truth, an ultimate one (*shin*) and a merely relative one (*zoku*). By the second half of the Tokugawa period, however, *shinzoku nitai* came to be employed in a somewhat different sense: *shintai* now stood for the Shinshū teaching of faith in salvation through Amida Buddha, while *zokutai* referred to the worldly and political realm, including existing social norms.[33]

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29 Quoted in Ōkuwa 2006, p. 172.
30 Ōkuwa 2006, pp. 175 and 189.
31 The full title of the sutra commented upon by Gidō reads *Butsui Udennō setsu ōbō seiron kyō* 仏為優塡王説 王法政論経. In this sutra, Buddha explains the faults and merits of kingship to King Udayana (優塡王).
32 See Kashiwahara 1980, p. 414.
33 Fujii 2002, p. 110.

Again, the rhetoric was crucially foregrounded when the Shinshū sect—in this case at first only its Honganji branch—turned against the bakufu and toward the emperor. In 1863 the Honganji branch head, Kōnyo 広如, made reverence for the emperor the official policy of his sect, and since then, the *zokutai* part of the logic of "the two truths of transcendence and worldliness" increasingly came to be identified with the imperial institution.[34] Early in the Meiji period, this logic became part of the self-definition of the Honganji branch of Jōdo Shinshū when Kōnyo defined it as one of four core points for priests and laymen alike in 1871.[35]

The particular way in which Shimaji and his colleagues conceptualized the relationship between religion and society/the state/the secular in the early Meiji period was certainly informed by the marked Shinshū tradition of situating itself vis-à-vis the state through the discussion of formulas such as "the two truths of transcendence and worldliness." We can add here that an important criterion for dividing the two realms was their identification as responsible for the "outside," that is, the world, and the "inside," that is, the heart. This was notable in Rennyo's 1451 letter to the faithful already quoted above: "First and foremost, you shall make the moral practices of the world [*seken*] your fundament by adhering to the Law of the King [*ōbō*] on the outside and cultivating other-power [*anjin*] in your inner hearts."

It is no coincidence that the rhetoric of the heart would figure so strongly in Shimaji. Rather, it had gained central importance already in Shinran 親鸞, revered as the founder of Shinshū. When Shinran argued that full reliance on the power of Amida Buddha was the only way toward awakening, he put "trust" or "faith" (*shinjin* 信心; literally, "a trusting heart") in Amida at the center of his innovation within Pure Land thought. More traditional and inner-sectarian explanations of Shinshū doctrine emphasize that, for Shinran, "this term signifies the central religious awakening or experience in the Pure Land path, and his entire teaching revolves around the clarification of its nature and significance." We see the central importance in the connection that faith, or "trusting heart," establishes between the practitioner and Amida, because "faith" is not an expression of the believer's individual will but is granted by Amida: "This *shinjin* is therefore also 'given' and is itself the Buddha's wisdom-compassion turning itself over to beings." In this sense, Buddha and human beings can become one through the latters' "trusting hearts."[36]

It was easy for early Meiji Buddhists such as Shimaji to identify in this "faith-heart" the crucial distinguishing element of religion, as opposed to secular domains such as politics. Yet, Shimaji was politically shrewd enough also to make sure to identify a connection between religion (or, more concretely, Buddhism), with its privileged channel of access to the heart, and politics. In his 1872 "Critique of the Three Standards of Instruction," he observed:

> [P]olitics obeys human nature and gives humans what they desire. If humans merely fulfill their desires, they come to have the hearts of lions and wolves. Laws are employed in order to control this. [...] Yet, even if one governs peoples' outward

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34 See Iwata 2010, p. 7.
35 See Rogers and Rogers 1990, p. 9.
36 Ueda and Hirota 1989, pp. 146–50.

forms, one does not yet govern their hearts; if one suppresses the shoots, one has not yet stopped the root. Here, only religion (*kyōhō*) can come to the rescue: it controls people's hearts and stops the root [of their desires], and thus drives the lions and wolves from their hearts.[37]

Although the heart is here defined mainly via its ethical faculty, the point is that it is not accessible through the domain of "secular teachings" (*jikyō*—that is, Confucianism or Shinto). Rather, if the state wanted to be sure of the allegiance and compliance of the common people, it would have to employ a full-blown religion. To Shimaji's mind, there was no question that this could only refer to Buddhism. Clearly defining the separate domains of religion and the secular and debating the relationship of the two was thus no idle intellectual exercise for Shimaji, but rather a crucial move for finding a way out of the political crisis that Meiji Buddhism found itself in after the anti-Buddhist iconoclasm of the late 1860s and the promulgation of the Three Standards of Instruction in 1872.

Conclusion

Since the time of Max Weber, secularization has been defined in various ways. Older approaches have usually employed the term to refer to the disenchantment of the world, the "progressive shrinkage and decline of religion,"[38] or the "replacement of a religious by a technological-scientific interpretation of the world."[39] Certainly, no one ever thought in these terms in Japan up to the middle of the nineteenth century, although some Tokugawa-period Confucians may have wished that society would move in this direction. Shimaji certainly did not think in this way, either. However, if we look to more recent attempts to give useful definitions of secularization, I believe that we can easily detect parallels between current conceptualizations of the relationship between religion and the nonreligious and Shimaji's early struggles with this issue. Charles Taylor has defined secularity in his "sense 1" as "the shift from the premodern *connection* of political organization to some notion of ultimate reality towards the modern state, which is free from this connection."[40] The classical—and more precise—definition of this layer of meaning of secularization comes from Spanish sociologist José Casanova and goes as follows:

> The process of societal modernization as a process of functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres—primarily the state, the economy, and science— from the religious sphere and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere.[41]

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37 Shimaji 1872b, p. 16
38 Casanova 1994, p. 20.
39 Pollack 2009, p. 10.
40 Taylor 2007, pp. 1–3.
41 Casanova 1994, p. 19. Casanova was not the first to identify this layer of secularization, which Talcott Parsons, Robert Bellah, and even Émile Durkheim had already referred to as a process of differentiation of religion (see Dobbelaere 1981, p. 11). Yet Casanova was the first to connect it precisely to modernization and to stress that the religious sphere is indeed "newly found" in the course of the process of secularization in the sense described by him.

Both Casanova and Taylor speak of an anonymous social process. As Asad has pointed out, it is instructive to turn our analytical gaze instead to active efforts to achieve the outcome described by Casanova and Taylor, that is, the political ideology of secularism. It is not difficult to identify this attitude in the writings of Shimaji from the 1870s. He wanted to differentiate and compartmentalize religion in "its own newly found religious sphere" not because he thought it deserved to decline in relevance, but precisely because he wanted to salvage what could be salvaged in the face of the advent of modernity. While not overly interested in theorizing about the sphere against which religion was to be established, Shimaji was willing to concede to "secular teaching" the realm of morality and human relationships, saving for religion the domain of the inner heart, the ineffable.[42]

To conclude, I have tried to argue that Shimaji developed a program of secularism, one he closely associated with modernization—although he preferred to speak of a process of "enlightenment" (*kaika* 開化). This program rather closely resembles that described by Asad as a purely Western project, imposed unilaterally upon the rest of the world. To be sure, Shimaji developed his program under the influence of the West: it was no coincidence, after all, that he began writing his sharp critiques of current religious policy while in Europe. Still, the Western categories of religion and the secular were neither "invented" in nor simply "transplanted" or "exported" to Asia, but rather "reconceived" there, within the context of contemporary political agendas. In the case of Shimaji, this immediate context was "the Shinto problem," that is, the challenge posed to Buddhism by the religious policy of the early Meiji government, which seemed to favor Shinto heavily. Searching for an answer to this challenge, Shimaji drew on insights learned from and in the West, even as he relied upon his particular religious and sectarian tradition, namely Jōdo Shinshū, and in this sense on indigenous sources of secularism.

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Immanent Frames:
Meiji New Buddhism, Pantheism,
and the "Religious Secular"

James Mark Shields

The secularization thesis, rooted in the idea that "modernity" brings with it the destruction—or, at least, the ruthless privatization—of religion, is clearly grounded in specific, often oversimplified, interpretations of Western historical developments since the eighteenth century. In this article, I use the case of the New Buddhist Fellowship (Shin Bukkyō Dōshikai) of the Meiji period (1868–1912) to query the category of the secular in the context of Japanese modernity. I argue that the New Buddhists, drawing on elements of classical and East Asian Buddhism as well as modern Western thought, promoted a resolutely *social* and *this-worldly* Buddhism that collapses—or preempts—the conceptual and practical boundaries between religion and the secular. In short, the New Buddhists sought a lived Buddhism rooted in a decidedly "immanent frame" (Taylor), even while rejecting the "vulgar materialism" of secular radicalism.

Keywords: New Buddhist Fellowship, secularity, "social Buddhism," progressivism, immanence

Introduction

As the editors to this special issue have noted, scholarly discourse on the topic of the secular was, until the past several decades, unabashedly Eurocentric. In particular, the so-called secularization thesis, rooted in the rather straightforward idea that "modernity" brings with it the destruction—or, at least, the ruthless privatization—of religion, is clearly grounded in specific, often oversimplified, interpretations of Western historical developments since the eighteenth century. While certainly not the first work to challenge these assumptions, this special issue is intended as an alternative look at the meaning and implications of the secular, using Japan as a locus for investigation. In this article, I use the case of the New Buddhist Fellowship (Shin Bukkyō Dōshikai 新仏教同志会) of the Meiji period to query the category of the secular in the context of Japanese modernity. I argue that the New Buddhists, drawing on elements of classical and East Asian Buddhism as well as modern Western thought, promoted a resolutely *social* and *this-worldly* Buddhism that collapses—or preempts—the conceptual and practical boundaries between religion and the secular. In

short, the New Buddhists sought a lived Buddhism rooted in a decidedly "immanent frame" (Taylor), while rejecting the "vulgar materialism" of secular radicalism.[1]

Querying the Secular in Japanese Religion

Let me begin by raising some theoretical issues surrounding the concept of the "secular," specifically how that terms fits with Japanese religions in the premodern through modern periods. I was initially inspired to turn my attention to this topic by reading Mark Teeuwen's article, published in volume 25 of this journal, on the late Edo-period text *Seji kenbunroku* 世事見聞録 (Matters of the World: An Account of What I Have Seen and Heard). Here, Teeuwen suggests that one of the reasons why the category or concept of the secular was so readily adopted by Japanese thinkers in the Meiji period was that, in fact, there were precedents for a functionally similar conception in what we might call "pre-contact" Japan.[2] As we will see, unlike the author of the *Seji kenbunroku*, there is no doubt that the late-Meiji New Buddhists borrowed significantly from Western thought—political, philosophical, and religious—in developing their distinctive understanding of "new" Buddhism. Still, they insisted that their palpably modernistic interpretation of Buddhism was resonant—at least in spirit—with a long-standing tradition, even if they did not go so far to insist that it embodied or recapitulated the "essence" of some "original" Buddhism.

And yet, while Teeuwen cites Peter Nosco's argument concerning the Edo shogunate's "pragmatic" efforts to bring about something like a separation of religion and politics—which Teeuwen rightly notes as a key feature of concepts of modern secularism (or "secularization")—the New Buddhists were resistant to that separation, at least if it implied that religion must or should remain confined to the realm of the "private" and the "individual."[3] The "immanent frame" of the New Buddhists was both a *natural* and a *social* frame. Indeed, in their version of secular Buddhism, the most significant appeal of Buddhism was in fact its promise to address social, economic, and arguably political problems. That is to say, while the New Buddhist Fellowship rejected state-sponsored religion, they did not envision a *privatization* of Buddhist faith and practice. Quite the contrary, I suggest, they argued for the *socialization* of such—in line, perhaps, with alternative conceptions of modernity more familiar to radical than liberal (or conservative) social and political theory.[4]

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1 Taylor 2007, p. 542. Taylor defines an immanent frame as one in which "the buffered identity of the disciplined individual moves in a constructed social space, where instrumental rationality is a key value, and time is pervasively secular." Moreover, "this frame constitutes a 'natural' order, to be contrasted with a 'supernatural' one, and 'immanent' world, over and against a possible 'transcendent' one."

2 Teeuwen 2013, p. 4.

3 Teeuwen 2013, p. 5.

4 Here I am influenced by the work of Sho Konishi, whose recent book *Anarchist Modernity* argues for a neglected but significant pattern of mutual influence between Russian and Japanese progressives in the late nineteenth century. While Konishi does not deal directly with the New Buddhists, the Japanese activists and intellectuals he writes about were very much of the same cultural, educational, and political milieu as the main characters in my study. Konishi claims that out of this "non-state, transnational" blending of Russian and Japanese ideas arose a "cooperatist anarchist modernity," which served as an alternative model of modernity, one that would have a profound effect on "the expansion of knowledge in modern Japanese cultural life in spheres as diverse as language, history, religion, the arts, literature, education, and the natural sciences" (Konishi 2013, p. 3). In several interesting respects, Konishi's model mirrors the notion of *altermodernity* developed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri; see Hardt and Negri 2009, p. 102.

One way to clarify further this distinction is to revisit the Western roots and development of the concept of the "secular." According to the recently published (and aptly-named) *Dictionary of Untranslatables*, cognates of the English word "secular" are derived from the ecclesiastical Latin term *saecularis*, which itself stems from *saeculum* in the sense of "world" or "worldly life."[5] In this sense, ordinary priests were classified as "secular" because of their pastoral, this-worldly activities, while monks and higher ecclesiastics would largely if not entirely lack this direct contact with the people (though see below for a contrast between Christian and Buddhist monasticism in this regard). Thus, though it would later come to indicate an antinomy between the "sacred" and the "profane" worlds, and eventually be seen as a key component of the process of modernization, the origins and nuances of the concept of the secular are in fact more complicated and, hence, more fertile. For instance, one nineteenth-century German writer, Richard Rothe, picked up on the ambiguity of the term's roots in "this-worldliness" by arguing that, as the Christian church gradually undergoes "secularization," the state and society at large are in fact "desecularized" or "Christianized" in a process of Hegelian dialectical sublation.[6] In short, the process of secularization actually and ironically helps spread religion more deeply and broadly in "this world."

This is a concept that seems particularly resonant to the New Buddhist project. I argue that, rather than setting up the "secular" against the "religious," the New Buddhists were in fact appealing to an alternative model of religion, one that roots religious activity and belief very much within the realm of the rational and the real; a "this-worldly" Buddhism that, by rejecting the traditional monastic institutions and sectarian forms, hoped to stimulate a "Buddhicization" of Japanese society along the lines of the Western Romantic (and sometimes modernist) model of "spilt religion."[7]

The New Buddhist Fellowship

In the following section, I provide a brief history of "New Buddhism" as it developed in late Meiji Japan, with a particular emphasis on the social and political context. The New Buddhist Fellowship (hereafter, NBF) consisted of roughly a dozen young scholars and activists, many of whom had studied under prominent mid-Meiji Buddhist scholars Murakami Senshō 村上専精 (1851–1929) and Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919).[8] Principal among them were Sakaino Satoru (Kōyō) 境野哲 (黄洋) (1871–1933), Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭 (1872–1933), Sugimura Kōtarō (Jūō; Sojinkan) 杉村広太郎 (縦横; 楚人冠) (1872–1945), Katō Kumatarō (Genchi) 加藤熊太郎 (玄智) (1873–1965), and

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5 Launay 2013, n.p.

6 Launay 2013, n.p.

7 The term "spilt religion" was coined by the literary critic T. E. Hulme in his classic 1911 essay "Romanticism and Classicism" to describe—disparagingly—the effects of Western Romanticism. On one level this seems very much like Casanova's model of the "Protestant path" towards secularization, that is, the path of this-worldly reform (traced in great detail by Taylor) that effectively makes "the religious secular and the secular religious" (Teeuwen 2013, p. 17; Casanova 2010, p. 276); but I contend there are subtle yet significant distinctions in the way this dissolution of realms is framed.

8 Founded in February 1899 as Bukkyō Seito Dōshikai 仏教清徒同志会 (Buddhist Puritan Association), the group changed its name to Shin Bukkyō Dōshikai (New Buddhist Fellowship) in 1903. Some parts of the following section have been adapted, with revisions, from Shields 2012.

Figure 1. *Shin Bukkyō zasshi* masthead, volume 1, issue 1, July 1900. SB 1, 1 (July 1900).

『新佛教』編輯員 5 巻 1 号)

融飯一、毛利柴庵、田中治六、境野黄洋、小野藤太、杉村縦横
古川流泉、加藤咄堂、伊藤左千夫、高島囲、結城素明

Figure 2. *Shin Bukkyō zasshi* Editorial Committee, 1904. Yoshinaga 2011, p. 222.

Takashima En (Beihō) 高嶋円 (米峰) (1875–1949).[9] While the NBF was overtly lay-oriented—in fact, as we shall see, strongly critical of traditional monastic or institutional Buddhism—several of the New Buddhists had been ordained as Buddhist priests, and most had some sort of Buddhist educational background, especially within the Nishi Honganji branch of the Shin sect.[10] While their occupations varied, many worked as journalists, educators, or writers. In short, while they hardly represented an elite stratum of society, they can be categorized as largely a movement of middle-class urban intellectuals.

The NBF emerged at an auspicious time, in the aftermath of the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the continuing political gridlock surrounding the 1890 Imperial Constitution. Furthermore, its sixteen-year existence was characterized by various economic, political, and cultural shocks, riots, and unrest in response to new social forces and contradictions brought on by industrial capitalism, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, the High Treason incident (*Taigyaku jiken* 大逆事件) of 1910–1911, and the slow but steady growth of the militarist ideologies that would flourish in the early Shōwa period.[11]

In July 1900, a magazine called *Shin Bukkyō* 新仏教 (New Buddhism) was launched as the fledgling movement's mouthpiece. The first edition of the first volume begins with the group's "manifesto" (*sengen* 宣言; lit. declaration). By turns inflammatory, sentimental and self-consciously poetic, this short piece opens with an apocalyptic call to arms: "Humanity," it begins, "is in a state of decline. Society has been corrupted to its roots, and the rushing water of a great springtide threatens to drown us all, as at the time of the Great Flood.

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9   This group of seven would be joined in the following years by a number of others, including tanka poet and novelist Itō Sachio 伊藤左千夫 (1864–1913), Katō Kumaichirō (Totsudō) 加藤熊一郎 (咄堂) (1870–1949), and Inoue Shūten 井上秀天 (1880–1945). Suzuki Teitarō (Daisetsu) 鈴木貞太郎 (大拙) (1870–1966), a.k.a. D. T. Suzuki, was a regular contributor to the *Shin Bukkyō* journal.

10 The prototypical New Buddhist was born into a Shin temple family, educated at the Nishi Honganji Normal School (Futsū Kyōkō 普通教校; later Bungakuryō 文学寮), and spent time as a student and/or instructor at Inoue Enryō's Tetsugakkan 哲学館.

11 The year 1900 saw the implementation of the Public Order and Police Law (*Chian keisatsu hō* 治安警察法), quickly employed to proscribe the Social Democratic Party (Shakai Minshutō 社会民主党), Japan's first socialist party, soon after its formation in May 1901. The same law would be employed against the New Buddhists throughout the last years of Meiji and early Taishō.

Moreover, religions, which are supposed to give light to darkness and provide solace, have been losing strength year by year." This is immediately followed by a blistering attack on "old Buddhism" (*kyū Bukkyō* 旧仏教) as being little more than a rotting corpse, its adherents weeping "tears of joy" over their palatial buildings and fine brocades:

> These people [that is, "old Buddhists"] know how to worship wooden statues and sutras, how to stand before monks at a temple, and how to listen to the sermons. Earnestly holding to the embedded prejudices of their respective sect, they are mutually well versed in worthless matters. They can skillfully mouth the chants, and know how to take the prayer beads and sutras in their hands. Have they not already abandoned the life of faith? If these things make up what is called "Buddhism," then it is an "old Buddhism" that is on the verge of death.[12]

Here, as elsewhere, the New Buddhists borrow from the discourse of Buddhist decadence (*daraku Bukkyō* 堕落仏教) that first arose with Neo-Confucians of the Edo period and was adopted by a number of secularists and Shinto nativists in the early years of Meiji, before being internalized by early Buddhist modernists such as Inoue Enryō and Nakanishi Ushirō 中西牛郎 (1859–1930)—both of whom sought, in different ways, to "cleanse" Japanese Buddhism of its historical accretions, superstitions, and corruptions.[13] That is to say, this line of argument was hardly new with the NBF. And yet, as I will show, the New Buddhists occasionally pushed the envelope further, beyond the rather straightforward ("Protestant") critique of Buddhist ritualism, monastic corruption, and materialist hypocrisy.

At the end of the manifesto we find the New Buddhist Fellowship's "Statement of General Principles" (*kōryō* 綱領), summarized in the following six points:

1. We regard a sound Buddhist faith (*kenzen naru shinkō* 健全なる信仰) as our fundamental principle.
2. We will work hard to foster sound faith, knowledge, and moral principles in order to bring about fundamental improvements to society.
3. We advocate the free investigation of Buddhism in addition to other religions.
4. We resolve to destroy superstition.
5. We do not accept the necessity of preserving traditional religious institutions and rituals.
6. We believe the government should refrain from favoring religious groups or interfering in religious matters.[14]

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12 SB 1, 1 (July 1900), p. 3; unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine. The NBF journal, *Shin Bukkyō* (SB) is cited by volume and issue numbers, followed by date of initial publication and page numbers in the Akamatsu and Fukushima compilation.

13 Along with Buddhism, traditional forms of Shinto reverence and folk worship also come under attack in the NBF *sengen*. Though Inoue's "magical Buddhism" appears to be the primary locus of critique, other terms used to describe the "old Buddhism" are "pessimistic" (*enseiteki* 厭世的), for its denial of this-worldly happiness, and "imaginary" (*kūsōteki* 空想的), for its elaborate cosmology.

14 SB 1, 1 (July 1900), p. 3.

As the final point above shows, and as noted above, unlike some other reformers of the day, the New Buddhists were not looking for government support of Buddhism—in fact, they were highly critical of *any* government involvement in religious matters.[15] This was largely based on their analysis of Buddhism during the late Edo and early Meiji periods, which, in their estimation, had become corrupted by state support.

As evidence of the changing interpretations given to Buddhist "reform" in the Meiji period, we might compare the NBF list of principles with that of the Association of Buddhist Sects (Shoshū Dōtoku Kaimei 諸宗同徳会盟, hereafter ABS), a pan-sectarian organization founded in a very different context over three decades earlier, in the first year of the Meiji period (1868):

1. The indivisibility of Imperial and Buddhist Law.
2. The study and refutation of Christianity.
3. The cooperation between and perfection of the three Japanese faiths: Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism.
4. The study by each sect of its own doctrines and texts.
5. The expurgation of evil habits.
6. The establishment of a new type of school to produce men of ability.
7. The discovery of new ways to use exceptionally qualified priests.
8. The encouragement of popular education.[16]

The differences between these two lists could hardly be starker. Whereas the ABS looked to bring together the modern (imperial) state and Buddhist law, based on the traditional notion of *ōbō buppō* 王法仏法, the NBF sought to establish separate spheres; where the ABS looked to defeat Christianity, the NBF, while not particularly sympathetic to orthodox Christianity, was in open collaboration with Unitarian thinkers of the day, as well as some Christian socialists; while the ABS sought to unify and harmonize the "three Japanese faiths," the NBF was, if anything, hostile to "syncretism" with traditional religions, which were deemed superstitious and ritually-obsessed; where the ABS advocated sectarian study, the NBF was explicitly non or pan-sectarian; where the ABS sought to find ways to "use" priests for the state, the NBF rejected the priestly and monastic traditions, at least as conventionally conceived and practiced. The only possible points of contact lie in the shared emphasis of the two groups on education for society and the expurgation of "evil habits"— though even here one suspects the NBF would disagree with the ABS as to what constitutes both a productive education and good moral training. In the following section, I will examine some of the doctrinal and philosophical roots for these discrepancies, beginning with the idea of pantheism (*hanshinron* 汎神論).

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15 As Klautau (2008, p. 290) notes, Okamoto Ryūnosuke's 岡本柳之助 (1852–1912) *Seikyō chūsei ron* 政教中正論, published in 1899, exemplifies the plea among many within the Buddhist establishment for a "public recognition" of Buddhism as a state religion (*kokkyō* 国教). This idea was supported by the resolution drafted at the national Buddhism convention held on 8 May 1899 at Chion-in temple in Kyoto, and by the work of Okamoto's younger contemporary, Tsuji Zennosuke 辻善之助 (1877–1955), though with important modifications. See Tsuji 1900, p. 84; Kashiwahara 1990, pp. 141–44.

16 Kishimoto 1956, p. 128.

Pantheistic Foundations

According to co-founder Sakaino Kōyō, the NBF fully embraces the "new" aspect of New Buddhism, even as they reject the notion that the movement is simply a form of Buddhist "liberalism."[17] While New Buddhism is based on a return to foundational Buddhist principles, it is inevitable that such a return will involve a certain measure of "reform" (*kairyō* 改良) and "making new" (*arata ni suru* 新にする). As such, he suggests, New Buddhists see no problem in calling their movement "new"—as opposed to "true" or "real."[18] But what, Sakaino goes on to ask, is it that lies at the foundation of this "new" Buddhism? His answer, rather surprisingly, is "pantheism."

> We New Buddhists wish to establish Buddhism on the basis of a pantheistic world view. A pantheistic perspective shall be the foundation of Buddhism. Upon this foundation, the Buddhism of the future can be continuously improved and purified. This is what we are calling New Buddhism.[19]

What, exactly, does Sakaino mean by a "pantheistic world view/perspective"? Here we might recall the rejection of pantheism by arch-modernist Paul Carus (author of the influential 1894 *Gospel of Buddha*), in favor of an Aristotelian monism of the "superreal."[20] And yet, Carus was specifically rejecting the Western (that is, heretical Christian) notion—often attributed to Spinoza—of "God in all things." Without a background belief in a single, omnipotent "God" to spread throughout the cosmos, a Buddhist pantheism is closer to a generalized animism (such as can be found, arguably, in Daoist and Shinto traditions) than to the monistically inclined Western version.[21] Thus, we might say, it is a pantheism that works from the ground up ("heaven in a blade of grass"), rather than from the heavens down ("God in all things"). In Tanaka Jiroku's formulation, which consciously mimics a famous line from the *Heart Sutra*, "everything is divine and divinity is everything" (*issai soku kami, kami soku issai* 一切即神、神即一切).[22] For Sakaino, pantheism provides a "this-worldly" and secure foundation for a holistic and inclusive perspective when it comes to the objects or focus of belief.[23] As he puts it: "Standing on a pantheistic foundation, we New Buddhists are a religious organization that seeks freedom of belief."[24]

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17 SB 2, 9 (August 1901), p. 325.

18 SB 2, 9 (August 1901), p. 325.

19 SB 2, 9 (August 1901), p. 325.

20 See Verhoeven 2004, p. 28.

21 In fact, Suzuki Daisetsu had already written on the importance of a pantheistic foundation for contemporary religion as early as 1896 in his *Shin shūkyōron* 新宗教論 (SDZ 23, 38). Suzuki argued that pantheism might be conceived as the "positive" or "pro-active" aspect (*sekkyokuteki hōmen* 積極的方面) of atheism; or perhaps as a "middle way" between theism and atheism.

22 SB 2, 10 (September 1901), pp. 350–51. Tanaka goes on to cite two famous passages from the *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* (*Dai hatsu nehan-gyō* 大般涅槃経): "All beings without exception have Buddha-nature" (*issai shujō shitsu u busshō* 一切衆生悉有仏性), and "Plants, trees, and soil—all will attain buddhahood" (*sōmoku kokudo shikkai jōbutsu* 草木国土悉皆成仏).

23 See in this regard Deleuze 1988, pp. 122–30; also Najita Tetsuo on pantheism and "freedom" in the work of Andō Shōeki (2002, p. 74).

24 SB 2, 9 (August 1901), p. 329; for more on pantheism, see SB 1, 5 (November 1900), p. 140; SB 2, 6 (May 1901), pp. 289–95; SB 2, 12 (November 1901), pp. 386–90; SB 4, 12 (December 1903), pp. 916–19; SB 8, 2 (February 1907), pp. 371–81; SB 8, 7 (July 1907), pp. 454–61.

We might conclude that "pantheism" for Sakaino and the New Buddhists is less an ontological or metaphysical claim than it is a methodological and ethical stance: "We did not arrive at our pantheism by simply jumping on the fast lane to philosophical theory. We believe that pantheism harmonizes nicely with ethics, as well as the latest theories of moral philosophy."[25] And yet, it bears noting that even while aligning their pantheism with modern science and ethics, the New Buddhists were unwilling to accept the "pantheistic materialism" (*yuibutsuteki hanshinron* 唯物的汎神論) suggested by well-known socialist and occasional *Shin Bukkyō* contributor, Sakai Toshihiko 堺利彦 (1871–1933).[26] In response to Sakai's charge of their inconsistency and vagueness on this issue—that is, their refusal to extend their pantheism further towards a more rigorous philosophical materialism—the NBF writers counter that they are merely looking for appropriate ways, in line with twentieth-century scientific thinking, "to express the mysterious workings of matter and mind" (*busshin no myōyō o hyōsuru* 物心の妙用を表する).[27] This desire to explain the mysterious connection of matter and spirit (*busshin no ichinyo* 物心の一如 or *busshin no ittai* 物心の一体) is one that was picked up later by New Buddhist Takashima Beihō.[28] I will return to the issue of pantheism below, in the context of a discussion of Spinoza and the materialist tradition of Western thought.

Towards a "Sound Faith"

In addition to pantheism, "faith" (*shinkō*) was another matter of great concern for the New Buddhists.[29] Despite their acknowledgment of significant differences between Buddhism and the monotheisms of the West, the New Buddhists followed the general scholarly consensus of the day in affirming that "faith" or "belief" must be the foundation of any religion worth its name. Indeed, as we have seen, the very first and arguably most significant of their six General Principles states: "We regard a *sound Buddhist faith* as our foundational principle." Thus it is no surprise to see a number of essays in the pages of *Shin Bukkyō* dedicated to this general theme. A good example is the third article in the inaugural issue of *Shin Bukkyō*, "Shinkō itten no ki" 信仰一転の機 (Time for a change of faith), authored by Katō Genchi, who would go on to become professor of religion and Shinto studies at Tokyo Imperial University. Here, following on the heels of earlier Buddhist modernists, Katō begins by denouncing the "worldliness" and "degeneration" of the Buddhist monks and temples of his day, but then goes on to argue, against expectations, that "faith" is a product of religious and social evolution.[30] Thus, while the New Buddhists are adamant that "faith" must remain the foundation for New Buddhism, they are not necessarily calling for a return to the "stabilities" of traditional belief.

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25 SB 8, 2 (February 1907), p. 381; also see SB 2, 6 (May 1901), pp. 289–95.

26 SB 12, 8 (August 1911), pp. 1313–14.

27 SB 12, 8 (August 1911), pp. 1315–16; see Taylor 2007, p. 547, on the "tension" surrounding "mystery" in materialist discourse.

28 We might also note here once again the work of Nakanishi Ushirō, whose writings helped set the stage for the New Buddhists. Like Sakaino, Nakanishi had argued for "pantheism" as the ultimate stage of spiritual evolution—a stage that Buddhism had always embodied and that Christianity was now struggling, with the "help" of modern science, to achieve; see Thelle 1987, p. 202.

29 See Hoshino 2009, p. 142; see the lead piece of the December 1901 issue for a useful summary of thoughts from various contributors on the "faith question" (*shinkō mondai* 信仰問題); SB 2, 13, pp. 398–404.

30 SB 1, 1 (July 1900), pp. 8–9.

> While the root and foundation of religion is of certainty faith, the contents on this faith will depend on the particular period and circumstances. Thus, over time, religions have no choice but to gradually develop and evolve. Therefore it is clear that there will be differences between the faith that was necessary for the establishment of Buddhism as a religion during the ancient period of Śākyamuni, that of the period of Shinran and Nichiren, and that of our own (Meiji) times.… As such, when we see people trying to bring back the old faith of Śākyamuni, Shinran, or Nichiren today in the Meiji period, all we can do is laugh at such a stupid and worthless idea.[31]

As Katō goes on to explain, while the contents of faith today cannot be fully specified, it is also not quite true that "anything goes." Any faith suitable to the modern period must pass the test of reason and "natural, experiential knowledge" (*shizenteki keiken no chishiki* 自然的経験の智識). Thus, "reliance on supernatural beings" is ruled out, as is anything that cannot be verified on the basis of information gleaned from our "ordinary, daily experience" (*hibi heijō no keiken* 日々平常の経験).[32] Moreover, Katō insists that faith must be directly applicable to "practice" or "projects" (*katsudō* 活動 or *jigyō* 事業), thus moving towards the Marxist concept of *praxis*—or, at least away from the "Protestant" separation between faith and works.

For his part, Sakaino clarifies his thinking on the question of "sound faith" in a special issue dedicated to elaborating the founding principles of the NBF published in May 1901. Here he argues that faith is not *solely* rooted in emotion; if it were, he argues, there would be no way of distinguishing "blind faith" (*mōshin* 妄信) from "correct faith" (*shōshin* 正信). Thus, while faith must surely have a foundation in "refined emotions" (*kōshō no kanjō* 高尚の感情), it must also be supported by "clear reason" (*meiryō naru risei* 明瞭なる理性).[33] At this point, Sakaino goes on to make the following, rather extraordinary claim:

> "To believe in Buddhism" does not mean to blindly obey what is written in Buddhist scriptures. The true essence of Buddhism must be pursued through free investigation. However, New Buddhism does not explain what the essence of Buddhism is. Because we value the free employment of reason, we are unwilling to restrict a person's faith.[34]

Here "faith" seems to be little more than an umbrella term denoting a sincere and enthusiastic commitment to the rational, ethical, and social aspects of New Buddhism; that is, practical wisdom, personal moral cultivation, and social reform. On one level, especially when contrasted to its perceived lack within "old Buddhism," New Buddhist faith means "sincerity." Elsewhere, however, it becomes clear that for Sakaino and other New Buddhists, "faith" includes a commitment to fundamental Buddhist ethical principles regarding the elimination of suffering.[35] A closer examination of New Buddhist "sound faith" reveals that

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31 SB 1, 1 (July 1900), p. 9.
32 SB 1, 1 (July 1900), p. 9.
33 In a later work on Buddhist history, frustrated by being unable to reconcile the chronology surrounding the founder of Buddhism's life, Sakaino would go so far as to wonder whether Śākyamuni Buddha might be a "figment of the collective oriental imagination"; see Ketelaar 1990, p. 73.
34 SB 2, 5 (May 1901), pp. 279–80.
35 See Yoshinaga 2011, p. 30.

it comprises the following elements: 1) knowledge; 2) respect for emotions, including poetic feelings; 3) a focus on this world; that is, setting aside transcendence and concerns about the afterlife; 4) pro-active engagement; 5) ethics; and 6) a positive or optimistic outlook.[36] It is, in short, the name for a particular, Buddhist, *style* of living; a commitment to fully investing in the *practice* (or "game") of living a flourishing life according to generic Buddhist principles.

The Joys of Secular Buddhism

As I have indicated, a characteristic feature of the work of the New Buddhists is an unabashed affirmation of "this world" (*genseshugi* or *genseishugi* 現世主義). While the modernistic emphasis on free inquiry and a rational, ethical, and scientific outlook were also in evidence among the figures representing the earlier Japanese Buddhist Enlightenment such as Nakanishi Ushirō, the New Buddhists—at least some of them—took things much further in this direction, to the point where it could be legitimately asked what was left of "religion" (or "Buddhism") as normally understood. For instance, Nakanishi Ushirō had contrasted the "materialism" of the "old" Buddhism with the "spiritualism" of the new, and, in similar fashion, the "scholarship" of traditional monastic Buddhism with the "faith" orientation of the new, lay Buddhism. In contrast, the New Buddhists to some extent reverse these positions, so that it is the "old" Buddhism that focuses on "spiritual" matters, while New Buddhism is content with addressing "real," "practical" issues of this life: poverty, hunger, and so on.[37]

Moreover, while the New Buddhists attempted to clarify a new form of "faith," in doing so they radically transformed the ordinary sense of the term, so that it became, as noted above, a synonym for "moral commitment" or "sincere engagement" (or perhaps, to use traditional Buddhist terms, "right intention"). Although they began their movement as self-identified "puritans," some, including Sugimura Jūō, were hesitant to push this idea too far, lest it begin to sound overly "renunciative," "severe," or "pessimistic." Here, again, their "puritanism" was of a different sort than the "passive" and "world-denying" asceticism (*kin'yokushugi* 禁欲主義) of the monks and priests; rather, it denoted a sincere, focused and "pro-active engagement" with the world (*sekkyokuteki na katsudō* 積極的な活動), one that was also not averse to seeking "pleasure" (*tanoshimi mo motomu* 楽しみも求む).[38] This creates a fascinating tension played out in the pages of *Shin Bukkyō*, between, on the one hand, a renunciative impulse inherited not only from classical Buddhist monasticism but also from nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism and, on the other, an optimistic and this-worldly outlook emerging from Unitarianism, New Thought, Transcendentalism, and nineteenth-century progressivism.

Buddhist Secularism, Pantheism, Materialism?

The term *genseshugi*—one of Sakaino's four pillars of New Buddhism—aptly summarizes the NBF ideal of Buddhism, and of "religion" more broadly conceived. Although often

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36 See, for example, Sakaino's "Confession of Practical Faith" (*Jissai shinkō no hyōhaku* 実際信仰の表白), SB 1, 3 (September 1900), pp. 82–89.
37 According to the results of a survey recorded in the July 1905 edition of *Shin Bukkyō*, more than half of the leading NBF figures expressed their disbelief in any sort of afterlife; Yoshida 1992, p. 331.
38 SB 1, 5 (November 1900), p. 159; see Yoshida 1992, p. 331.

translated into English as "secularism," *genseshugi* has a different nuance than the English term, which usually denotes: 1) the specifically "modern" and "legal" view that religion should be kept separate from "politics," that is, privatized; or 2) a general outlook on the world that may reject religion outright or at least attempt to limit its influence in society. The New Buddhists were not interested in either of these objectives, save for the fact that they resisted direct governmental intrusion into religious matters. One way to understand this difference better is to refer to the Buddhist etymology of *genseshugi*. In East Asian Buddhism, *gense* denotes "this life," or "the present world." The Sanskrit roots are *ihaloka* and *pratyutpanna*, which implies "existing in the present moment" but also the state of being "ready." [39] Thus, we might (creatively) gloss *genseshugi* as "a focus on engagement in this world, including a readiness to act." As such, it not only correlates with the NBF understanding of pantheism and faith, as discussed above, but also comes close to a materialistic perspective; and this is where, we might say, the troubles begin.

I have noted the reluctance among the New Buddhists to adopt the materialist viewpoint of their socialist peers; this was a trend that continued throughout the Taishō and early Shōwa periods. Part of this hesitancy, no doubt, arose from a concern about the other, usually pejorative meaning of *genseshugi*, which is akin to the English "hedonism" (or "materialism" in the most commonly-used sense); that is, the relentless pursuit of material pleasure and worldly fame or fortune. Obviously, this aspect is anathema to New Buddhism—just as it is, at least in theory, to "old" Buddhism. The question then becomes: Is there a way to advocate the first sense of *genseshugi* without abandoning oneself to the second? In other words, what are the parameters of a "secular" or "this-worldly" Buddhism? I suggest that one way to understand this problem—if not its solution—is to reexamine some ideas emerging out of the materialist-pantheist tradition in Western thought; specifically, the work of Epicurus and Spinoza, two thinkers who challenged philosophical orthodoxy in such a way as to render them in most instances anathema to the gatekeepers of philosophical as well as religious orthodoxy.

Epicurus, of course, makes an unlikely Buddhist, new or otherwise. After all, his name has become literally synonymous with hedonism (even more specifically, a love of fine food). And yet, an examination of the work of Epicurus and his heirs—including the prominent Roman poet Lucretius—reveals a number of "Buddhistic" aspects of the Epicurean School, including a tendency towards naturalistic perspective, a residual humanism, an acceptance of change, a critique of common delusions (such as a belief in gods, salvation, immortality) [§124], taking joy in *simple* pleasures [§130–31], and an emphasis on mental equilibrium (as well as physical health) as the key to human flourishing [§128].[40] In addition, though often labeled an atheist, Epicurus is perhaps more properly categorized as a pantheist, in ways

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39 Here it is worth noting the work of David S. Ruegg (2001) on the distinction in Indian Buddhism between *laukika* (Jp. *seken* 世間, also *sezoku* 世俗) and *lokottara* (Jp. *shusseken* 出世間). Christoph Kleine (2013) has argued, following Ruegg, that this central organizing principle of early Buddhism maps onto the Western distinction between the realms of immanence and transcendence—and thus provides a functional equivalent for "religion" as understood via Niklas Luhmann's systems theory perspective. I will return to this argument below in the conclusion.

40 See Stewart 2014, p. 88. All references are to Epicurus 1994.

similar to his most influential philosophical heir, Spinoza, and, I suggest, the New Buddhist Fellowship.[41]

In this regard, I am sympathetic to Matthew Stewart's conception of the "radical" perspective that anchors the Epicurean tradition and finds full expression in the work of Spinoza. Here, "radical" means more than simply the desire for change in the fundamental order of society (and/or consciousness); it includes a direct and penetrating critique of "common sense." Our everyday ideas and assumptions arise at least in part from our common, shared experiences, but while the "common consciousness is useful in a limited way for the purpose of making it through the everyday struggles of our lives"—that is, it has evolutionary resonance—"radical philosophers have maintained that there is something deeply flawed in these common ideas about things, something that induces us to betray ourselves and even participate in our own enslavement when those ideas are applied on any scale larger than that of daily life." [42]

Again, it is Spinoza who best exemplifies this avenue of thought in his theory of the *conatus*, which he developed as a critical response to the work of Hobbes and which has been called a "second-order" form of materialism.[43] For Spinoza, unlike Hobbes, the *conatus* is less a physical property of something than a "mode of thought," and is thus not distinguishable from the thing itself. "The *conatus*, or that which causes a thing to persist in being itself, is also really the sum of everything that makes the thing what it is." What makes this particularly interesting, in a comparative perspective, is the way Spinoza's thought runs into some fundamental Buddhist conceptions about the mind, self, thought, and desire. In this view, our desires are not just "accidents attached to a pre-existing self" (as they seem to be in Hobbes), but are rather "the way in which we conceive ourselves." [44]

And yet, Spinoza's emphasis on the centrality of desire to the mind (and thus, "self") hardly justifies the ways of humanity to God or nature. Our self-representations are often—perhaps usually—distorted, since they are primarily derived from the external experience of things. "Our very own actions, just because they come from us, are not always explained through our essence, or that which accounts for our persistence in being. Which is to say, we often don't know what we really want or who we really are. And when that happens, we are not free." [45] Spinozistic freedom is nothing other than the power of the mind to act

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41 In his discussion of America's "revolutionary deists" (heirs to Epicurus and Spinoza), Matthew Stewart comments that "pantheism is really just a pretty word for atheism" (Stewart 2014, pp. 5–6), but I think there is a conceptual distinction to be made. Later, Stewart writes: "According to the history of ideas as it has been narrated for the past two centuries or so, 'pantheism' is the idea that all things are imbued with the animating spirit of a mysterious cosmic being, and in this form it has been generally construed either as an example of the magical thinking that preceded the Enlightenment or as artifact of the Romantic imagination that followed it. But pantheism is better understood as the idea that God and Nature are two ways of talking about the same thing, and in this sense it is the core religious sensibility of the Enlightenment, from its beginning with Bruno's rediscovery of Lucretius through Locke's proof of a God to the American Revolution. Spinoza did not invent this movement; he epitomized it" (pp. 166–67).

42 Stewart 2014, p. 6.

43 See, for example, Stewart 2014, p. 255.

44 Just as he allows no ontological distinctions between the laws of nature and the objects of those laws, or between the objects of knowledge and the representations that constitute those objects, Spinoza here allows no ontological order of priority between the drives that move a mind and the idea of the mind itself, or between desires and the agent of desire. "Desire, he says, 'is the very essence of man'" (Stewart 2014, p. 256). The tantric implications of this are intriguing, but will not be explored here.

45 Stewart 2014, p. 257.

"through ideas that adequately explain itself and its place in the world.… Freedom in this sense is obviously not a binary, take-it-or-leave-it thing like the imaginary 'free will'; it necessarily comes in degrees—degrees that match the adequacy of our ideas or range of our consciousness." Again, when read in this light, freedom for Spinoza begins to resemble at least some interpretations of classical Buddhist awakening.

As I have argued elsewhere, despite the frequent hostility to "materialism" one finds in both classical and modern Buddhism, there are important conceptual and practical links between the "heterodox" thought tradition of the West and classical as well as East Asian Buddhism.[46] Even with the precedents for secular Buddhism in the Nichiren tradition, the New Buddhists were the first, at least in the modern period, to breach this gap by emphasizing the pantheistic aspects of Buddhism and attempting to forge a place for both "freedom" and "desire" within Buddhist practice.[47] This is most evident in the New Buddhist paean to pleasure and joy, which New Buddhists insisted were essential to Buddhist practice:

> They [that is, "old Buddhists"] cannot eat meat or have wives, cannot sleep at night or rest in the day. In addition, they cannot enjoy themselves, laugh, get angry or sad—this, they say, is what makes them different from everyone else. But New Buddhists have no interest in this. Our New Buddhism is simply about having faith in the power to experience the ordinary joys of life (*tada heibon naru yorokobi o nasan to suru chikara o shinkō ni uru nomi* 唯平凡なる喜をなさんとする力を信仰に得るのみ). And what is faith but the passion that comes from being struck by the actuality of the cosmos? In bringing back enjoyment and lightheartedness, we gain the strength to advance our mind and spirit. Our New Buddhism is a religion rooted in the ordinary, whose faith is in the actual, and whose fruits are of this world (*kekka wa genseshugi nari* 結果は現世主義なり).[48]

Here it would seem that the New Buddhists are taking a cue from the Mahāyāna conflation of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, but filtering it through a reconceptualization of "joy" along lines familiar to the Epicurean tradition, where pleasure or joy is not merely a positive sensation, "nor is it fundamentally a distraction from our true purpose, … *it is just the term that corresponds to an increase in our power to realize ourselves*. Pain is a decrease in the same. That is, pleasure (or joy) is a transition from a lesser to a greater state of perfection of [what Spinoza would call] the *conatus*; and pain [or suffering] when it works the other way around."[49]

Conclusion

Despite the fact that they may not have resolved the various problems associated with collapsing conventional distinctions—for example, between the "secular" and the "religious," and between religion, philosophy, ethics, politics, and society—the New Buddhists should

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46 See Shields 2013 for an extended discussion of "Buddhist materialism."

47 It bears noting that, while Spinoza's works do not show up with any regularity in the pages of *Shin Bukkyō*, Tolstoy's writings are of undeniable influence on the NBF, and Tolstoy considered himself to be a disciple of Spinoza, among others.

48 SB 2, 12 (December 1901), p. 393.

49 Stewart 2014, p. 280; my italics.

Figure 3. Watanabe Kaikyoku, age 31. Photo taken in Strasbourg, 1903. Maeda 2011, p. 14.

be given credit for their experiments in formulating a this-worldly lay Buddhism, especially when we consider the tendency among Buddhists past and present to disassociate "awakening" from sociopolitical or "material" concerns. Among other things, their work opens up new possibilities for conceptualizing Buddhism in relation to the secular and material realms, especially when examined in light of comparative thought.

In a recent essay on religion and the secular in premodern Japan, Christoph Kleine argues that there are functional equivalents to the distinction between "transcendence" and "immanence" in early Indian as well as premodern Japanese Buddhism.[50] In soteriological terms, *lokottara*, defined by Kleine as "absolute transcendence" or the "supra-mundane," "is characterized by complete liberation … ideally represented by *nirvāṇa*, complete awakening, or Buddhahood."[51] As Kleine rightly notes, while this distinction also has ontological (one might even say "cosmological") resonance, the soteriological encoding ultimately takes priority, given Buddhism's strong soteriological emphasis. This is precisely where, we might say, the New Buddhists find their opening, for the soteriological or *praxis*-oriented aspect of classical and premodern Buddhism, combined with the (particularly Mahāyāna) intuition that *nirvāṇa* entails a "transcendence" of conventional categories (such as that of transcendence/immanence, this- and other-worldly, even monastic/lay), allows for a re-inscribing of value to the "secular" or "mundane" realm.[52] As I have argued above, this collapsing of categories is also a feature of "pantheism," which goes some way toward explaining the continuing appeal of Spinoza and like-minded thinkers in the modern period.

On another level, new Buddhist ruminations on *genseshugi* and "social Buddhism" resonate with Charles Taylor's remarks on the "problem" of human flourishing in relation to religions like Christianity and Buddhism.[53] In the introduction to his *Secular Age*, Taylor suggests that:

> we could construe the message of the Buddha as telling us how to achieve true happiness, that is, how to avoid suffering, and attain bliss. But it is clear that the understanding of the conditions of bliss is so "revisionist" that it amounts to a departure from what we normally understand as human flourishing. The departure here can be put in terms of a radical change of identity.[54]

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50 Kleine 2013, p. 14.
51 Kleine 2013, p. 15.
52 See Kleine 2013, p. 15, n. 26, where the author notes the distinction between the sacred (according to Luhmann) and transcendence, as normally conceived.
53 NBF member Watanabe Kaikyoku in his writings proposed a "social (or societal) Buddhism" (*shakaiteki Bukkyō* 社会的仏教), that is, a Buddhism in which social concerns are informed and to a large degree directed by a deep recognition of the social and historical forces that condition our existence. I have not been able to discern whether Watanabe was in fact the first to employ this term, but he is clearly the scholar who did most towards developing the idea. See Murota 2006.
54 Taylor 2007, p. 17.

While Taylor concludes that, as with Christianity, followers of Buddhism are called upon to renounce or "detach themselves from" their own flourishing for the sake of some "higher" (or "transcendent") good like serving God or extinguishing one's self in order to achieve awakening, this seems to push these distinctions too far, especially when looking at East Asian forms of Buddhism. Moreover, and this is a point that I touched on above but needs further work, I see in the New Buddhist understanding of "human flourishing" a strong resonance of "radical" (especially materialist and pantheist) thought traditions, both Asian and Western, which posit an ideal of human flourishing that is at once decidedly immanent and yet not entirely "worldly."

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Between Secularity, Shrines, and Protestantism: Catholic Higher Education in Prewar Japan

Kate Wildman Nakai

Prewar government policy concerning the relationship between religion and education presented Christian-affiliated schools with two intersecting but different challenges. On the one hand, the state adopted a stance that in several regards resembles what Ahmet T. Kuru terms "assertive secularism." As reflected in Ministry of Education Instruction 12 (1899), the government declared that state-accredited schools, private as well as public, should not offer religious instruction or conduct religious ceremonies. On the other hand, from the 1910s on, the government increasingly promoted the offering of reverence by schoolchildren and students at shrines and comparable demonstrations of reverence to the emperor and nation on school grounds. In the face of objections from Christian and other groups, the government held that such activities were not "religious," but, taking what Kuru would call a position of "passive secularism," many Christian school leaders resisted participating in activities of this sort.

The history of Sophia University (Jōchi Daigaku) illustrates one way these issues played out in the prewar period. Founded by the Society of Jesus in 1913, Jōchi was of later origin than its Protestant peers, and from the start its leaders chose to adapt to the state's assertively secularist educational policy. Regarding shrine reverence and state ceremonial, the Jesuits were initially far less accommodating. In the wake of the Yasukuni Shrine incident of 1932, however, Jōchi's leaders moved away from passive secularist resistance to the government's promotion of such activities and came to affirm them as "civil" expressions of patriotism and thus compatible with Catholic belief and practice.

Keywords: Jōchi Daigaku (Sophia University), Society of Jesus, Instruction 12 (1899), Private School Ordinance (1899), Specialized School Ordinance (1903), University Ordinance (1918), Rescript on Education, Yasukuni incident (1932), imperial portraits, National Spirit Mobilization Campaign

Tension over the boundaries between education and religion has marked many modern societies. Prominent examples in the period from the late nineteenth century up to World War II were France and Turkey, both of which adopted secularism (*laïcité*) as a defining

state principle and implemented it in educational policy. In the case of France, the Third Republic issued a series of laws culminating in the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State of 1905, which prohibited the employment of members of religious orders as school teachers, including in schools operated by such orders, and called for the closure of these schools within ten years.[1] Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, between the 1920s and 1940s, Turkey largely abolished Islamic instruction in public schools and increasingly restricted the operation of traditional Islamic schools.[2]

Ahmet T. Kuru has characterized the French and Turkish patterns as instances of the dominance of "assertive secularism," wherein the state actively seeks to exclude religion from the public sphere. He contrasts this to "passive secularism," which tolerates varying degrees of public visibility of religion. If passive secularism, associated typically with the United States, holds the state responsible for securing the free exercise of religion as well as for refraining from establishing a particular doctrinal variety, assertive secularism focuses on confining religion to the realm of private belief and practice and on preventing the intrusion of what belongs to that realm into what is properly public.[3]

It might be possible to include prewar Japan as another example of a state that pursued a policy of assertive secularism in the educational arena. From the 1890s, government officials worked persistently to keep "religion" in the form of doctrinal instruction, prayer, and related activities out of state-accredited schools. Admittedly, to conjoin the Japanese case with French and Turkish *laïcité* without qualification would be rash, for it diverged in several regards. For one thing, in Japan the main target of educational *laïcité* was not a deeply embedded indigenous religious tradition, but a foreign import, Christianity, with only a limited following. Related to this circumstance, controversy over the enforcement of a secular educational policy had little impact on public schools, over which, unlike in France and Turkey (or the United States), religious proponents hardly sought any say. It centered, rather, on private schools that aimed to receive state accreditation while simultaneously preserving a religious dimension.

Another notable feature of the Japanese situation was that the state, in contrast to its efforts to keep what it regarded as "religion" out of schools, from the 1910s actively promoted having schoolchildren pay reverence at shrines (*jinja sanpai* 神社参拝). In the government's interpretation, such reverence was not "religious" because the state did not categorize shrines (unlike the Shinto sects) as religious institutions. Having schoolchildren pay reverence at shrines was, as government spokesmen explained it, intended to unify the "national spirit" (*kokumin seishin* 国民精神), not impose "religious belief." [4] This policy introduced ambiguities into the state's formally secularist stance, particularly as ever-stronger demand for the cultivation of "national spirit" in the 1930s and 1940s led to

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1 Saunders 2009, pp. 61–63.
2 Kuru 2014, p. 154; Kuru 2009, pp. 217–18.
3 Kuru 2009. Kuru's categories of "assertive" and "passive" secularisms overlap to a considerable extent with José Casanova's demarcation of secularism as "ideology" from secularism as "statecraft principle." See Casanova 2011, pp. 66–71.
4 I have examined the evolution of the state's position on shrines and schools more fully in Nakai 2013.

increased emphasis on shrine reverence and ceremonial practices such as showing reverence to the Imperial Rescript on Education and the imperial portraits.

Even if the Japanese case departed in important ways from those of France and Turkey, however, Kuru's analysis offers some useful guidelines for considering the mixture of policies it encompassed and the response to them. Kuru points out that an assertive secularist state policy often spurs passive secularist counterarguments; he also emphasizes that the positions involved are never monolithic and frequently incorporate contradictions.[5] This was true in Japan as well. Religious groups, most particularly Christian ones, raised objections to both dimensions of prewar Japanese state policy regarding religion and education. Following Kuru, we might describe these critics of state policy as in effect staking out positions of passive secularism. Some Christian educators protested the extension of *laïcité* to private schools as preventing them from pursuing their conviction about proper forms of education. Christian educators likewise challenged government assertions that the promotion of shrine reverence and related ceremonial did not entail the enforcement of religious beliefs. To the contrary, they held, adopting such practices would require participation, against their conscience, in a religion other than their own. Typically, they supported their position by invoking the principle of freedom of belief set out in Article 28 of the Meiji Constitution.

From the last decades of the nineteenth century up to the end of World War II, friction arose repeatedly over these crisscrossing currents of assertive and passive secularism. But the positions staked out were neither uniform nor unchanging. Different Christian schools took different stances, and their responses to state policy were marked by adjustment and accommodation as well as resistance. Below I shall take a micro-history approach to considering some aspects of this situation by focusing on one particular case, that of Jōchi Daigaku 上智大学 (Sophia University), founded by the Society of Jesus in 1913 and the sole Catholic male institution of higher education in prewar Japan. Considerable research is available for the more numerous Protestant male schools. By contrast, the prewar Catholic experience has received much less attention.[6] Exploration of Jōchi's encounter with the issues sketched above should contribute, it may be hoped, to a broader overview. Jōchi's story is also relevant, if in a limited manner, to the much larger one, addressed by José Casanova and others, of Catholicism's multifaceted twentieth-century interaction with secularism

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5 Jean Baubérot makes a similar point. See Baubérot 2010.

6 A brief comparison of publications by the schools themselves may serve to illustrate this point. As discussed below, four Christian-affiliated schools, including Jōchi, would ultimately be recognized as full-fledged universities under the University Ordinance of 1918. Two, Dōshisha 同志社 and Rikkyō 立教, have active, ongoing programs to publish research (in both book and specialized periodical form) as well as gather materials on school history. The third, Kwansei Gakuin 関西学院, has put out a multivolume university history combining analytical narrative with primary sources. Some Protestant schools that did not become recognized as universities until after the war, such as Meiji Gakuin 明治学院, have done the same. Jōchi has published a six-volume collection of documents related to university history (a crucial resource for this article), but apart from a valuable but brief account published privately by Theodor Geppert (Geppert 1993) and recent studies by Klaus Schatz based on materials in European Jesuit archives (Schatz 2010; Schatz 2013), there is no reliable analytical narrative. For lower-level schools, Mariakai 1968 offers a useful account of the activities of the Marianists, who operated two middle schools. Christian groups were also active in the area of female education, but both the state and general society had different expectations for women's higher education than for men's, and institutionally male and female schools above the primary level occupied different tiers within the educational structure. For that reason, the following discussion focuses exclusively on the situation of male schools.

in various parts of the world.[7] The Catholic Church came late to the field of Japanese higher education compared to various Protestant groups, and a strong sense of rivalry with the Protestants reinforced Jōchi's founders' determination to secure a place for a Catholic institution of higher learning among the already existing Protestant schools. The founders' primarily European background influenced how they dealt with the complexities of the environment they encountered, but the environment, too, left a mark on the approaches they adopted. To trace the evolution in their position, I shall first take up their response to the government's policy of separating religion and education and then examine how they dealt with the parallel issue of shrine reverence and other ceremonial forms promoted by the state.

State Secularism, Religion in Schools, and Accreditation

In the late 1860s and early 1870s the Meiji leadership experimented briefly with a theocratic program advocated by proponents of restoration Shinto. Thereafter, however, as a number of commentators have pointed out, the leaders moved steadily in the direction of establishing a secular polity, albeit one strongly inflected with a concern to foster national cohesion, loyalty to the emperor, and a commitment to goals set by the state.[8] As Trent Maxey observes, the various aspects of the move toward secularism were not the result of "a coherent secular*ist* project"; rather they emerged from pragmatic considerations, particularly worries about the potentially divisive consequences of state entanglement in competition between the followers of one line of Shinto thought or another, and between them and the equally divided Buddhist camp.[9] The effort to separate the state from religion resulted as well in a gradual evolution in official attitudes toward Christianity, the foreign religion seen initially as a dire threat that had to be kept from infiltrating the popular outlook. Government policy regarding Christianity shifted step by step from outright prohibition to tacit toleration, as with the legalization of "private"—rather than Buddhist or Shinto—funerals in 1884, to implicit recognition, which came in the late 1890s when Christian clerics and churches were brought within the scope of state administrative regulations along with Buddhist and Shinto groups.[10]

The promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1889 was a symbolic milestone in this process. Rejecting the advice of their European advisers, the constitution's compilers refrained from establishing a state religion, and Article 28 granted that "Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties

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7 See, for instance, Casanova 2006, pp. 24–28. See also Clark and Kaiser 2003; Atkin and Tallett 2003.

8 See, for instance, Nakajima 1972; Nakajima 1976; Nakajima 1977a; Nakajima 1977b; Yamaguchi 1999; Saitō 2006. In English, see Pittau 1967, pp. 159–95; Abe 1969a; Abe 1969b. Trent Maxey has recently provided a cogent and well-documented account of the evolution and character of Meiji state secularism; see Maxey 2014. For the tensions introduced into state secularism by the government's efforts to promote patriotism and loyalty to the emperor through measures such as the Rescript on Education, see Gluck 1985, pp. 102–56; Hardacre 1989, pp. 121–24. Shimazono Susumu 島薗進 stands as a notable exception to the tendency in recent years to move away from describing government policy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as one of State Shinto; see Shimazono 2009; Shimazono 2010. Regarding ambiguities in the applicability to modern Japan of the notion of the separation of state and religion, see Isomae 2013; Isomae 2014, pp. 264–96.

9 Maxey 2014, p. 3. Emphasis is Maxey's.

10 See Maxey 2014, pp. 170, 178, 214–15; Yamaguchi 1999, pp. 77–100, 245–67.

as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief."[11] The article focused on private belief, and the looseness of the specifications as to what might limit its public expression left that issue open to subjective and changing interpretation. Nevertheless, Article 28 in effect aligned the government with a position of passive secularism; as noted above, it also provided a frame of reference for those who argued against state policy from such a position.[12]

Although the government came to show a cautious toleration of Christianity in some regards, it remained on guard against it in others. This was particularly true in the field of education, where the government pursued a much more assertive secularist agenda directed foremost at Christian schools. From the beginning of their activities in Japan in the 1860s Protestant missionaries had seen education as a prime means of gaining a foothold in Japanese society, and private Christian-run schools came to occupy a disproportionately large place in the evolving system of national education compared to the number of Christian believers. Fueled by controversies such as the media debate in 1892–1893 regarding religion's (that is, Christianity's) compatibility with the aims of Japanese education, various circles within and without the government voiced concern about the dangers posed by Christian educators and schools. Calls for regulation of their activities grew stronger with the approach of the implementation of the revised treaties with the Western powers, which mandated opening the interior to unrestricted foreign residence. Signed in 1894, the treaties were scheduled to take effect in August 1899.

In preparation for the treaties' implementation, the government undertook to adjust mechanisms for regulating private education. Its main leverage in this area was the prerogative to grant or withhold accreditation, which the consolidation of the overall educational system endowed with increasing importance, particularly for male students. Graduation from an accredited school became a criterion for admission to an institution at the next higher level and to sit for state qualifying examinations. Whether a school was accredited or not bore also on its students' eligibility to obtain deferment of military service. Securing and maintaining accreditation thus became a necessity for private male secondary schools and higher institutions of education so as to attract a sufficient number of good students.[13]

The components of a system for accrediting private schools evolved slowly from the last decade of the nineteenth century and were not fully in place until the promulgation of the University Ordinance (*Daigaku rei* 大学令) in 1918. A key element of the package was the Private School Ordinance (*Shiritsu gakkō rei* 私立学校令), promulgated in 1899. This ordinance set various general conditions for accreditation that private schools of all levels needed to fulfill. Other conditions pertinent to the institutional category were covered in ordinances specific to those categories, such as the Middle School Ordinance (*Chūgakkō rei* 中学校令) of 1886 or the later University Ordinance.

The compilers of the Private School Ordinance considered incorporating in it an article forbidding religious activities within accredited schools. Elements within the government voiced reservations about the consequences—including the reaction of the

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11 *Constitution of the Empire of Japan.*

12 On the Meiji Constitution and Article 28, see Abe 1969a; Abe 1969b; Nakajima 1976; Nakajima 1977b; Yasumaru 1988, pp. 553–55; Hardacre 1989, pp. 114–21; Yamaguchi 1999, pp. 143–54; Josephson 2012, pp. 226–36; Maxey 2014, pp. 183–89.

13 On the evolution of private higher education and the accreditation system, see Amano 2004; Amano 2013.

Western powers—of formalizing such a ban as an article of law. In the event, the ordinance itself omitted reference to the religious issue. Instead, parallel to the official ordinance, the Ministry of Education issued an instruction (*kunrei* 訓令), a form of administrative guidance directed at subordinate government offices rather than a legally binding measure. This instruction, known as Instruction 12, specified that since it was of the utmost importance to keep religion and education separate, no teaching of religion or religious ceremonies should be permitted, within or without the classroom, in schools under government supervision.[14]

Instruction 12 caused turmoil among the Protestant male schools, several of which had only recently received recognition as middle schools under the provisions of the Middle School Ordinance and with it the privilege of military deferment for their students. During the drafting of the Private School Ordinance and Instruction 12, representatives of the Protestant schools negotiated with the government to try to ameliorate the restriction of religious activities within their schools, and they debated fiercely among themselves how to respond once the instruction was issued. Dōshisha 同志社 and Rikkyō 立教 took the route of accommodation, with Rikkyō winning the Tokyo city government's agreement that it could separate its middle school and dormitory and continue to conduct Christian activities in the latter. Other schools, most particularly Meiji Gakuin 明治学院, opted to keep the practice of Christianity as part of their educational program and instead to revert to "miscellaneous" (*kakushu* 各種), that is unaccredited, status.

As noted above, Instruction 12 did not carry the weight of a formal law, and its application proved to be ambiguous in many regards, as can be seen from the fact that Rikkyō obtained agreement that it could continue religious activities in its dormitory. Nevertheless, the instruction constituted a key instrument for the extension of an assertively secularist policy to the private educational arena, and local governments and the Ministry of Education continued to employ it in their dealings with religiously affiliated schools up to the end of World War II. Conflict over the instruction in 1899 centered on middle schools because at the time that was the highest educational level at which private institutions could seek formal government recognition. Higher educational levels were not exempt, however, from the principle of keeping religious instruction and ceremonies out of schools. As further categories of accreditation specifically applicable to higher education were put in place in the following years, Instruction 12 remained pertinent to them together with the Private School Ordinance.

The first stage in the creation of a systematic framework of accreditation for higher education was the promulgation in 1903 of the Specialized School Ordinance (*Senmon gakkō rei* 専門学校令), under which a wide range of private institutions succeeded in gaining official approval. They included fifteen Christian-affiliated schools of various sorts as well

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14 *Gakusei hyakunenshi: Shiryōhen*. The long-standard treatment of the evolution and initial application of Instruction 12 is Hisaki 1973–1976. For recent accounts bringing new materials to light, see particularly Nakajima 2012; Ōe 2014. Nakajima documents the pressures brought by the representatives of foreign governments, particularly the United States, to forestall incorporation of a ban on religious activities within the Private School Ordinance. See also Maxey 2014, pp. 215–17. For the thinking of key government figures about the relationship between religion and education in the period leading up to the Private School Law and Instruction 12, see Saitō 2006, chapter 6.

as leading private institutions such as Waseda 早稲田 and Keiō 慶応.[15] Meanwhile, another development was taking place. Some private institutions began to seek recognition of a different sort: the right to refer to themselves as *daigaku* 大学, or university, in a manner comparable to the imperial universities. Waseda took the lead in this, and in September 1902, just six months before promulgation of the Specialized School Ordinance, won the Ministry of Education's agreement. As a condition for the right to call itself a university, Waseda proposed to establish a year-and-a-half preparatory division (*yoka* 予科), which would focus on foreign-language training (in this case, English) as an essential base to proper "university" education. The training offered in the preparatory division, although shorter, would be equivalent to that received in the three-year higher schools by those going on to the imperial universities.[16]

Once Waseda had obtained permission to call itself a *daigaku*, others among the specialized-school category sought the same. By 1905 there were sixteen such private specialized-school *daigaku*, including six small Buddhist-related schools. Christian schools were slower in joining their ranks. Of the fifteen Christian-affiliated specialized schools, only two had become specialized-school *daigaku* by 1913: Rikkyō in 1907 and Dōshisha in 1912.[17] These two again took the lead at the next stage of evolution of the system of university recognition: promulgation of the University Ordinance in 1918. In contrast to the far less specific Specialized School Ordinance, the University Ordinance stipulated various conditions for obtaining approval under it, including the deposit of a substantial endowment, having sufficient numbers of academically qualified faculty, and possessing an adequate library and other facilities. The hurdles were set at a high level, but the reward for overcoming them was certification as a full-fledged university, formally on a par with the imperial universities. By 1927 twenty-two private schools had met the requirements for approval as a university under the University Ordinance; Dōshisha did so in 1920 and was followed by Rikkyō in 1922.[18]

It is not coincidental that the Christian schools mentioned up to now have all been Protestant. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Christian engagement in Japanese education, including the confrontation with the government over the Private School Ordinance and Instruction 12, was largely a Protestant story. Several reasons for this may be surmised. One was a difference in perception of the relationship between evangelization and education. As touched on above, from an early stage Protestant missionaries saw education as an effective entry point for evangelization. They typically combined religious activities such as preaching with a more broadly oriented offering of classes in various subjects, particularly English. The major pre-World War II male Protestant schools all emerged out of this background, which explains as well their commitment to incorporating religion in their educational program. Their early start meant, too, that Protestant secondary and higher

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15 See Ejima 2014b. The entities approved included a number of Christian theological seminaries as well as theological programs associated with schools such as Meiji Gakuin and Dōshisha. The government distinguished, in effect, between the "professional" training of religionists, which it acknowledged as a legitimate enterprise, and "ordinary" education, from which it sought to exclude the propagation of religion.

16 Amano 2004, vol. 1, pp. 366–83. The qualification for admission to private institutions of higher learning was typically completion of middle school, not higher school.

17 Amano 2004, vol. 1, pp. 383–91; vol. 2, pp. 168–76.

18 Apart from the works by Amano cited above, see also Ejima 2014a; Ejima 2014b.

educational institutions took shape in tandem with the evolution of state policy sketched above. It was partly because of this intertwined process of development that Instruction 12 caused such turmoil among the Protestant schools.

Catholic missionaries did not combine religious and educational roles in the same manner. Until the early twentieth century, Catholic evangelical and pastoral activities in Japan were essentially under the charge of the Paris Foreign Missions Society (Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris). The Paris Missions fathers opened seminaries for training native priests and catechists, but they did not engage in a broader educational outreach.[19] The first move in that direction, as far as male education was concerned, came with the arrival in 1888 of the Marianists, a French teaching order that focused on providing schooling at the primary- and middle-school level. The Marianists established two schools for boys, Gyōsei 暁星 in Tokyo in 1888 and Kaisei 海星 in Nagasaki in 1891. The Marianists' recent arrival perhaps helps account for their quite low-key response to the government's adoption of an assertively secularist approach to private schools. In contrast to the Protestant schools, the Marianists evidently saw it as more prudent to adapt to government policy than to challenge it openly. Neither Marianist school had as yet gained official recognition by 1899, but shortly after the promulgation of the Private School Ordinance and the issuing of Instruction 12, Gyōsei obtained accreditation as a middle school. Preserving accreditation seems to have required some camouflage of the religious elements in the school's program, but in letters to the Marianist headquarters in France, the Gyōsei head reported having managed to deflect the objections of Ministry of Education inspectors without resorting to the kind of open protests of the instruction mounted by the Protestants, which he saw as having had negative results.[20]

Given that the Vatican at the time officially opposed rather than supported the idea of freedom of belief, the Marianists may have hesitated to call upon that notion to challenge the state's assertive secularism in the same manner as the Protestants. Differences in national background may also have been a factor. The Protestant hardline holdouts against accommodation were missionaries from the United States who saw the issue of freedom of religion as bound up with the principle that the state should not limit exercise of that freedom within the private educational sphere. By contrast, the French missionaries came from a country in the midst of a renewed move toward the secularization of education. In 1878 the Marianists had been forced to close fifteen of their schools in France, and the promulgation in 1886 of a law prohibiting clerics from teaching in state schools had led to their removal from those.[21] They perhaps brought with them a sense that it would be wiser to bend nominally with the wind while finding other ways to pursue their own course. The founders of Jōchi would follow a similar strategy in dealing with the dimension of state secularism that called for keeping religion out of schools.

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19 For an account of the approach adopted by the Paris Missions fathers and their general tendency to favor ministering to the ordinary populace over intellectual outreach to the educated, see Yamanashi 2011.

20 Mariakai 1968, pp. 146–49.

21 Mariakai 1999, p. 24. Following the promulgation of the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State of 1905, the Marianist facilities in France would be closed and the order's headquarters, previously located in Paris, were moved to Belgium.

Negotiating the Establishment of a Jesuit University

Since the Marianists specialized in primary and secondary education, the entry of the Catholic Church into the area of higher education in Japan had to await the decision by Pope Pius X in 1906 to ask the Society of Jesus to undertake the creation there of an "institute of higher learning." This decision can be traced in substantial measure to the arguments of Joseph Dahlmann (1861–1930), a German Jesuit who visited Japan in late 1903 and wrote several reports about what he observed.

Dahlmann did not couch his recommendations in terms of goals of immediate conversion or establishing schools that would propagate Catholic doctrine. He emphasized, rather, the need to find effective ways to establish a stronger Catholic intellectual presence within what was already a secularized, modern society. He described Japan as a technologically advanced country with a high level of education and intellectual life. The educated classes were not attached to the traditional native forms of religion, but, to the contrary, found them lacking. At the same time, they were conscious of a spiritual and moral void. What was above all responsible for this void was the dominant influence among the educated of mistaken forms of Western learning and religion, an influence that could be laid to a great extent at the door of the Protestants. The Christianity that educated Japanese knew was largely that espoused by liberal Protestants. This situation had served to "foster the indifference to religion and the materialism that in Japan are a threat to Christianity." The Catholic Church had hitherto failed to counter this threat effectively because of overreliance on methods of proselytization oriented to backward, primitive peoples. This had resulted in their yielding ground to the Protestants and had further led to an unfortunate impression among the Japanese that Catholicism was primarily a French church. As a consequence, educated Japanese, despite their admiration for German culture and learning, thought of Germany solely in terms of Protestantism and were not aware of the existence of German Catholicism. To overcome these various problems, it was essential to introduce a Catholic intellectual outlook in a manner suited to the contemporary conditions of Japanese society.[22]

Acting on the pope's request, in the autumn of 1908 the Jesuit superior general dispatched three members of the society, including Dahlmann, to Japan. They were to explore the situation with an eye to establishing in some form an institute of higher learning with an emphasis on philosophy. In line with Dahlmann's recommendation, members of the German Province of the Society of Jesus (then banned by the German government from activity in Germany) and its offshoots in the United States would play a central role in charting the institute's course.

The three Jesuits who arrived in 1908 did not bring with them a clear prescription for the nature of their institute of higher learning or how it should fit within the Japanese educational framework. As they and those who joined them debated these matters over the next several years, they reached the conclusion that their enterprise needed to be situated within the system of higher education accredited by the Japanese government to have the desired impact. From late 1912 into the first months of 1913, they negotiated approval of a

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22 Regarding Dahlmann's role and arguments, see Geppert 1993; Schatz 2010; reports included in *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 1; Dahlmann 1909. I am grateful to Laura Nenzi for providing a translation of this last piece. The direct quote is from *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 1, pp. 24, 181.

university under the provisions of the Specialized School Ordinance. They thus followed the example of Rikkyō and Dōshisha. Leapfrogging over the other Protestant schools, the Jesuits' institute, named Jōchi Daigaku, became the third Christian-affiliated specialized-school university. It consisted of a two-year preparatory division, devoted almost entirely to classes in German and English, and a three-year main division.

Despite seeking to establish a Catholic institution that would counter what they saw as the Protestant influence on Japanese intellectual life, the Jesuits did not emphasize the Catholic dimensions of their enterprise in their dealings with the state. Having arrived on the scene a decade after the government had made clear through Instruction 12 its determination to keep religion out of the classroom, they paid due heed to the secularist premises of state educational policy. On more than one occasion in the course of their negotiations with the Ministry of Education the question arose: Would it be a mission school? Did they intend to teach religion? No, they responded each time. Religion would not be part of the formal curriculum and instruction in it would be offered only to those requesting it.[23]

In line with this stance, both the articles of incorporation for Jōchi Gakuin 上智学院, the juridical corporation established to purchase land and operate the university, and the statutes for Jōchi Daigaku avoided any reference to religious aims or even the founders' religious affiliation. The articles of incorporation identified Hermann Hoffmann (1864–1937), who in 1910 had become head of the small community of Jesuits in Tokyo, as the corporation's founder, but the document described him simply as "a German subject." It defined the corporation's purpose to be "the education of young men and the promotion of their intellectual, moral, social, and physical welfare." The initial statutes for the university under the Specialized School Ordinance described its object as "to offer comprehensive higher education in the fields of philosophy, German literature, and commerce."[24]

The Jesuits held to the same position fifteen years later in 1928, when they had at last managed to secure the endowment and undertake the enlargement of facilities and staff needed to obtain elevation to university status under the 1918 University Ordinance. Again following Rikkyō and Dōshisha, Jōchi became the third Christian-affiliated school to be recognized as a University-Ordinance university. (Kwansei Gakuin 関西学院 would subsequently join their ranks in 1932.) As part of the process of applying for approval under the University Ordinance, the administration reformulated the university statutes. The description of the university's aim in the revised statutes was slightly more elaborate than it had been in the 1913 statutes, but it was equally circumspect about the issue of religion: "The object of the university is, in accordance with the University Ordinance, to bring students to master academic theories and their application in the fields of philosophy, literature, and commerce, and to have them investigate the principles underlying these subjects."[25]

Strategies of Compartmentalization

Sustained, perhaps, by a tradition of resourcefulness in dealing with challenging moral and political exigencies, the Jesuits seem to have been confident that through a combination of

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23 Geppert 1993, pp. 53–54.
24 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 1, pp. 114, 116–17; vol. 2, p. 33.
25 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 2, p. 130.

compartmentalization and discretion they would be able to achieve their aim of conveying a Catholic intellectual perspective even within the restrictions imposed by secularist Japanese educational policy. One strategy was to utilize arenas adjacent to but not fully incorporated within the university structure. For the Jesuits, as at other schools such as Rikkyō, the dormitory was a natural focus of attention. The dormitory was not limited to students enrolled at Jōchi. Initially a significant portion of the residents were evidently non-Catholic, but this, together with the mixture of students from different institutions, seems to have resulted in factionalism and friction. To resolve the problem, the Jesuits closed the dormitory for several months from the end of 1919, and when they reopened it at the start of a new school year in April 1920, limited eligibility for residence to Catholic believers and those interested in receiving instruction in the faith.[26] Thereafter it became a center for Catholic activities on the university's grounds. A report on developments in Tokyo sent to an overseas Jesuit journal noted for October 1920 that Hoffmann was giving "religious instruction in Japanese to those non-Christian students who desire it on every Wednesday afternoon. He gives similar instruction three evenings each week to the residents of the University dormitory."[27] From about the same period the dormitory acquired the name Aroijio Juku アロイジオ塾 (Aloysius Hall), after St. Aloysius Gonzaga (1568–1591), an early Jesuit who died young and was subsequently declared the patron saint of students.

The Jesuits also made efforts to develop connections with students at other universities and the general public. Eventually, in 1931, following the gaining of recognition as a University-Ordinance university, they established what came to be known as the Center for Catholic Information. Notices were placed in newspapers that every Saturday there would be opportunities for discussion of Catholic teachings at the university and on Sunday a lecture on the same topic.[28] In 1937 this program was expanded and recast under the new name Kulturheim. A leaflet described the Kulturheim as directed at those who in "the midst of unprecedented intellectual turmoil" were seeking "the light of truth and a compass for their own spiritual life." To this end it would provide a place for

> free investigation of both the Christian culture that lies at the base of European and American civilization and the various problems and issues arising daily.… In this way those who are Catholic will be able to correctly examine and consolidate that worldview, while those who are not will be exposed to Catholic culture and will gain a correct awareness of actual circumstances in the West.[29]

Despite such efforts, Catholics remained a small minority (generally less than 10 percent) among the likewise small student body, and converts, of whom the Jesuits kept careful count, grew only slowly. The Jesuits recorded their first baptism in 1917, and by 1921, the number had reached five, two of whom were Chinese foreign students.[30] Given that they could reach only a small percentage of students through openly Catholic activities outside the classroom, the Jesuits necessarily had to rely primarily on indirect methods to

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26 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 2, pp. 199–200.
27 *Woodstock Letters* 50 (1921), p. 250.
28 *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne* 13 (1931), p. 159.
29 Undated publicity leaflet for the Kulturheim, held by Sophia University Archives (JDS).
30 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 1, pp. 165–66, 171; Schatz 2013, vol. 3, p. 299, nn. 1482, 1483.

convey a Catholic outlook within their main educational program. From the beginning they identified a course on ethics as a key opportunity for such an approach. This course, listed under the Japanese title "Rinri" 倫理, was required, with Ministry of Education encouragement, for all students in the Preparatory Division, both first and second year, within a curriculum that was otherwise heavily weighted, as noted above, toward language training in German and English. Presumably because it needed to be taught in Japanese, Hoffmann initially assigned the course to Tsuchihashi Yachita 土橋八千太 (1866–1965), the lone Japanese Jesuit for the university's first several decades of existence. Expressing some reservations about Tsuchihashi's intellectual formation, however, Hoffmann wrote the Jesuit superior general that Hoffmann himself would prepare a "precise curriculum" for the course.[31] From 1915 Hoffmann took over the class. Some years later, in a letter to the superior general, he observed that in a situation where, as in all state-accredited schools, religious instruction could not be offered directly, the ethics class provided the best access to faith, as it could set forth the basic truths of natural religion, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the objective of human life.[32]

The annual reports on the university's operation submitted to the Tokyo city government described the course's import somewhat differently (although undoubtedly in the Jesuits' eyes the two perspectives were not incompatible). Under the heading "Circumstances regarding Students' Moral Training (*kun'iku* 訓育)," the reports consistently began by stating that "classes on ethics inculcate a spirit of loyalty and patriotism and always pay attention to the formation of good character (*hinsei no tōya* 品性の陶冶)."[33]

The Jesuits found other ways as well to incorporate the principles of Jesuit schooling within their class instruction. In a journal circulated among his fellow American Jesuits, Mark McNeal (1874–1934), who arrived in the autumn of 1914, described how he did this in the classes on English that he taught in the Preparatory Division. For the first-year class, he used as a text Charles Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. "The recitations and … paraphrase of difficult words and sentences," he noted, "[require] an analysis of grammatical constructions and an interpretation of the story with some erudition. It thus corresponds almost exactly to what is prescribed in the Ratio [Studiorum; the plan of studies traditionally followed in Jesuit schools] for the handling of a Latin author without the use of the vernacular." Further, although the students might previously have been exposed to some of the stories, the unfamiliarity of "the outlook on life and morals" portrayed in the Shakespearean tales offered an opportunity to provide much pertinent information. For his second-year class, McNeal used selections from Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra*. He had "many occasions in both classes," he wrote,

> to point out lessons of morality and especially of chivalry which make a cumulative impression without being in any way forced or suggestive of an uninvited propaganda. Tangible results are seen in the inquiries put to me and still more in the number of really desirable candidates who ask for religious instruction to be given them in private.[34]

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31 Letter dated 1 April 1913; ARSI Jap 1002-XV, 15.
32 Schatz 2013, vol. 3, p. 299.
33 Report for 1915 and subsequent reports held by JDS.
34 Letter dated 4 April 1918, in *Woodstock Letters*, vol. 48 (1919), pp. 128–29.

Accommodation to Secular Social Forces

While governmental educational policy set restrictions on overt religious instruction within the classroom, the generally secular orientation of the larger social environment posed its own demands for accommodation. The evolution of the curriculum shows the impact of this situation on the Jesuits' expectations for their institution. From the beginning the Jesuits had seen a program in philosophy as the core of their enterprise. The plan for the Main Division that they submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval consisted of two components, the first of which incorporated two "departments": Philosophy and German Literature. The former clearly received greater emphasis. The curriculum listed fifteen subjects in philosophy, from logic and ontology to esthetics and Indian philosophy (the specialty of Joseph Dahlmann and the one non-Western subject in the entire curriculum). The German Literature Department offered seven subjects, but two of these were "Survey of Philosophy" and "History of Philosophy." The assumption was that almost all of these courses would be taught in German, which those enrolling in them would have studied intensively in the Preparatory Division.[35]

The Jesuits were realistic enough to recognize that such classes would likely appeal to only a limited number of potential students; to reach a wider audience they would have to offer as well a program with a more practical orientation. In addition to the departments in Philosophy and German Literature, they thus established one in Commerce. In so doing, they aligned themselves with the Protestant mission schools and private institutions of higher learning in general. With the rise of a white-collar company employee stratum, programs in commerce were becoming the bread-and-butter staple of private schools. In the event, instead of serving as a supplement, the Commerce Department came in many ways to be the main draw. It attracted by far the majority of applicants and graduated many more students than the Philosophy and German Literature departments. Jōchi was an extremely small operation. It had an official admissions quota of one hundred students per year, but the actual student body was much smaller. In the first fifteen years of its existence prior to achieving elevation under the University Ordinance, it graduated a total of 161 students; of these, 121, or 75 percent, were from the Commerce Department.[36] The imbalance continued subsequent to the elevation to full university status.

The courses in the Commerce Department, which included typewriting, stenography, bookkeeping, and commercial composition in German and English, as well as more technical subjects (and also a two-year course on commercial ethics), were taught largely in Japanese and almost entirely by Japanese adjunct professors (see figure 1).[37] Hoffmann wrote that to create the program, the Tokyo Jesuits would look to the model of the Jesuit college of commerce and trade established in 1852 in Antwerp.[38] Nevertheless, the Jesuits' involvement in the Commerce Department courses was inevitably far less direct than in those in Philosophy and German Literature, and Hoffmann noted on more than one occasion the need for a Jesuit with specialized training in economic subjects.[39] Ultimately, in the mid-1920s, a younger Jesuit from Germany, Johannes Kraus (1892–1946), would be sent to study economics at

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35 Curriculum submitted to Ministry of Education 14 March 1913, held by JDS.
36 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 2, p. 47.
37 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 2, pp. 34–45.
38 Letter to superior general of 1 April 1913 (ARSI Jap 1002-XV, 15).
39 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 2, pp. 58–59.

Figure 1. Typewriting class for first-year students in the Commerce Department (Main Division). Image courtesy of Sophia University Archives (JDS).

the University of London and political science at Cologne in preparation for dispatching him to Japan to teach these subjects at Jōchi. After arriving in Tokyo in 1929, Kraus established a wide circle of contacts and spoke and wrote in a variety of venues on current events and social and political issues, including population policy. His presence at the university resulted in a stronger orientation toward topics that were of broad current interest in Japanese society.

Meanwhile changes also appeared in the core curricular area of philosophy and literature. Whereas the original curriculum had been heavily weighted toward philosophy, the balance shifted in the list of courses submitted to the Ministry of Education in 1927 for accreditation under the University Ordinance. The courses in German literature were more extensive and specialized, while the program in philosophy became somewhat amorphous. The specialized classical philosophical topics largely disappeared, replaced by courses in education, sociology, and anthropology. At the same time, courses on German literature and culture came to occupy a substantial part of the program in philosophy as well as that in literature.[40]

We can perhaps see here a subtle shift in intellectual identity. The German Jesuits at Jōchi had always seen themselves as representatives of German learning and culture. They taught German language and literature as well as philosophy, and given that only a few students were interested in specialized philosophical topics and even fewer able to follow classes on such topics taught in German, it was probably only natural that the Jesuits came to put increasing emphasis on classes in literature and culture. As a result, by the 1930s the "institute of higher learning" focused on philosophy had become better known for preparing students to work in large commercial firms and as a center for the dissemination of German culture.

Taking Stock of Accommodation to the Separation of Religion and Education

Regardless, or more likely, as a consequence of these accommodations, the Jesuits could feel by 1932 that they had made significant strides in winning a place for their school within Japanese society. Enrollments were still small, but Jōchi was numbered among the twenty-five private institutions by then recognized as universities under the University Ordinance. Despite its late start compared to its Protestant rivals, it was one of only four Christian schools to secure that status. The year 1932 marked the culmination of the process of achieving recognition. The Ministry of Education had set as one condition for

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40 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 2, pp. 116–17, 131–32; supp. vol., pp. 51–54.

granting recognition a promise by the university to expand and improve its facilities. The university thus embarked on several construction projects, the most important of which, a new main building, was started in June 1930 and completed two years later. To celebrate the building's completion and admission to the ranks of full-fledged universities, Jōchi put on a week-long series of commemorative events in mid June 1932. In combination the events provided a symbolic summation of the course that the Jesuits had charted for their Catholic institution in the Japanese secular educational environment of the 1910s to 1930s.

The organizers drew a careful distinction between events with religious import and those of a general, public nature. The first event, held on Sunday, 12 June, was the consecration of the new building in a Pontifical Mass celebrated by the apostolic delegate to Japan, Edward Mooney (1882–1958). The advance schedule of commemorative events distributed to the students identified this simply as "religious ceremony" (*shūkyō gishiki* 宗教儀式) and noted that attendance was voluntary.[41] The university had held a similar ceremony two years earlier to bless the cornerstone. Reporting on that ceremony, one of the Jesuits wrote to his fellows in Germany, "It was a genuine pleasure for Ours to make this profession of religious purpose and of fidelity to the Holy See represented there by the Apostolic Delegate." He added, "Since in Japan the pagans ever accompany such celebrations by the religious demonstrations of the Shinto priests, this could be done by Ours without exciting the antagonism of the unbelievers."[42] Arrangements for the June 1932 Mass, conducted in the auditorium of the new building, presumably rested on similar assumptions (see figure 2).

The main public events were the formal ceremony of completion on 14 June, for which attendance by all students was required, a series of commemorative lectures held on the 15th, musical and theatrical events, and a sports festival on the 18th. The ceremony on the 14th, held in the same auditorium as the Mass two days earlier, was described in *The Japan Times* as the "secular opening" of the building and by the Jesuits themselves as the "civic celebration" (*weltliche Akt der Übergabe*). It featured, in addition to an address by President Hoffmann, messages of congratulations from the minister of education (read by

Figure 2. The private "religious ceremony" held 12 June 1932 in the auditorium of the new main building. Image courtesy of JDS.

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41 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 3, pp. 22–24.

42 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 3, pp. 3–5, 244–47; *Woodstock Letters* 59 (1930), pp. 426–29. The English version in *Woodstock Letters* is a translation of the original German carried in *Aus dem Lande der gehenden Sonne* 9 (1930), p. 97.

Figure 3. The public "civic celebration" held in the same auditorium two days later; President Hoffmann addresses the assembled guests. Image courtesy of JDS.

the vice-minister), from representatives of the diplomatic corps, from the president of Keiō University, and from the German East Asiatic Society and the German Japanese Association.[43]

Surveying this array of events, President Hoffmann could reasonably conclude that the Jesuits had succeeded in negotiating a modus vivendi between their and the government's educational principles. He expressed just such a conviction in his speech (in German) for the celebratory ceremonies on 14 June (see figure 3). He chose this as an occasion to speak explicitly to the implications of the university's Catholic background. "The university may be described as Catholic," he declared,

> but this does not mean that Catholic religious teachings are included in the curriculum. In compliance with legal regulations, that is not the case. The university is intended to be a scholarly representative of the Catholic Church in Japan. It should make evident that the Catholic world view is based on solid scientific grounds and provides a reliable and appropriate solution for all the great questions of life. Catholic schools have always held firmly that education and formation do not mean merely the transmission of useful and necessary knowledge, but, above all, character building.

He went on to emphasize that the church actively supported loyalty to emperor and state and respect for authority.

> The Catholic Church is a world church that willingly acknowledges the good particular to each nation; it thus in no way stands in opposition to what is rightly admired in the Japanese people. The young Japanese is a member of a large, powerful empire, the particular characteristic of which is the national unity deriving from loyal devotion to the imperial state and which in our time has become the object of admiration of the entire world because of its amazing progress in all areas of Western culture. Now, at all times Catholic education is concerned to uphold the rights of proper authority. It makes clear that true freedom does not mean complete lack of restraint or unfettered "self-indulgence," but, to the contrary, encompasses recognition of all duties to family

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43 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 3, pp. 16–17, 21, 256–59; *Woodstock Letters* 62 (1933), pp. 103–107; *The Japan Times*, 14 June 1932; *Japan Advertiser*, 15 June 1932.

and country. It makes clear that the individual should not think only of himself, but must recognize all the obligations arising from his position in human society.

Hoffmann concluded by reiterating Jōchi's commitment to producing "young men who love their fatherland, are loyal to their emperor, and actualize these sentiments through a zealous devotion to duty, and who see their own happiness in the well-being of the state."[44]

Confronting the Other Side of Japanese Secularity

The "religion" and "education" issue in some regards reprised controversies already familiar from recent European experience, a factor that perhaps facilitated the Jesuits' flexibility in responding to it. But if Hoffmann could be confident that the Jesuits had found ways to deal with secularity in the form of the separation of "religion" and "education," trouble lurked in a more alien dimension of the state's secular stance—the blurring of the lines between "civic" expectations and obligations, on the one hand, and rituals associated with shrines, on the other. In an ironic conjunction of events, the Jesuits received warning of that trouble on 14 June 1932, the same day that Hoffmann gave his speech before assembled dignitaries in the new university auditorium. A telephone call from the Ministry of Education informed the university that because of the failure of several students five weeks earlier to offer reverence at Yasukuni Shrine, the army was seeking to withdraw the military training officer (*haizoku shōkō* 配属将校) assigned to Jōchi.[45]

From the 1910s on, the government had steadily promoted participation in shrine rites as a school activity. Many Christian groups objected vehemently to this from a passive secularist position: the government, they held, was in fact imposing adherence to a state religion in contradiction to the constitutional guarantee of freedom of belief. The Catholic Church repeatedly condemned the government policy as requiring Catholics to engage in an act of superstition and forbade believers to take part in such rites. In line with this stance, the Jesuits from the beginning tried to keep a distance from shrine rites and practices they saw as related to them. At the end of 1913, for example, they decided that they would no longer follow the Japanese custom of putting out the New Year's decorations known as *kadomatsu* 門松, presumably because they held it to smack of paganism.[46]

They showed a similar attitude toward shrine-related events of major public import. In late November 1920, the Tokyo city government sent out an inquiry as to what schools had done to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the handing down of the Rescript on Education (issued 30 October 1890) and the enshrinement of Emperor Meiji on 1 November of that year. The university replied somewhat disingenuously that it had not done anything:

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44 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 3, pp. 17–19, 259–62.
45 I have written more fully on the Yasukuni incident and its background in the policies toward shrines of the government and Catholic Church in Nakai 2013. See also Swyngedouw 1967; Minamiki 1985; Krämer 2002; Gurōbu 2006; Schatz 2012.
46 Henri Boucher diary, entry for 31 December 1913. A typed transcript of the original (in Latin) is held by JDS; excerpts translated into Japanese are included in *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 1. For this entry, see p. 157.

> As many of the professors, including the president, are foreign, there are things they do not fully understand about Japanese ceremonies. They also were concerned that student attendance might be low. Thus the school did not hold any ceremonies whatsoever; it canceled classes for all students for four days, including the anniversary of the school's founding, so that students could do *sanpai* on their own.[47]

With an acerbic touch, Mark McNeal contrasted the events held at other schools on 1 November with what had taken place at Jōchi:

> All Saints' Day was incongruously celebrated by the non-Christians by the formal opening of the newly erected shrine in honor of the late Emperor Meiji.… Ceremonies were held in all the non-Christian schools with solemn bowing in the direction of the temple at the moment when the symbol of the Emperor's soul was placed in the shrine. On the same day, Francis Xavier Sebastian Mihara [a student in his last year] was baptized in our college chapel, choosing, as he said, patrons who would inspire him with courage …[48]

Nine years later in 1929, a similar situation arose regarding performing "reverence from afar" (*yōhai* 遙拝) at the time the deities of the Ise Shrines were transferred from the old sanctuaries to the new as the culmination of the twenty-year cycle of the shrines' renewal. Several Catholic secondary schools, including the two boy's middle schools operated by the Marianists, deliberately refrained from performing *yōhai* on this occasion. This stance caused a substantial furor and resulted in official reprimands being meted out to the schools' administrators.[49] Pressure on universities to join in commemorating the event seems to have been somewhat less direct. The Ministry of Education issued a notice inviting universities to send student representatives to offer reverence within the Ise Shrine grounds, but Jōchi's declining of the invitation seemingly had no immediately untoward effect.[50]

The consequences of the Jōchi students failing to offer reverence at Yasukuni Shrine in early May 1932 were to be far more serious. Their action (or nonaction) when taken to the shrine by the military training officer as part of class exercises, and Hoffmann's subsequent defense of it to the officer as faithful to Catholic teachings, set off a complex sequence of events that extended over the next year and a half, and in some regards beyond that. The army declared that the university had shown itself to be not in accord with the *kokutai* 国体 (in other words, the fundamental basis of the state) and thus not deserving of a training officer. This assertion posed a major threat to Jōchi. The presence of a training officer was an important educational and social credential, and loss of the officer would be a blot on the university's reputation. The army's demand that the officer be withdrawn was also a challenge to the Ministry of Education, which had accredited the university. As the army and Ministry of Education operated the military training officer system jointly, the Ministry

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47 Response from university dated 30 November 1920, held by JDS.
48 *Woodstock Letters* 50 (1921), p. 251. "College chapel" refers to the Jesuits' personal residential chapel; there was no university chapel as such.
49 On this incident, see Nakai 2013, pp. 125–28.
50 Notice from the Ministry of Education dated 5 September 1929; response from the university dated 14 September 1929, held by JDS.

of Education's agreement was needed for the officer to be withdrawn. Not wanting to yield to the army's assertiveness, the ministry shared a common interest with the university in trying to keep that from happening.

Drawn together in a rather odd and not wholly comfortable alliance, between June and the end of September, the Ministry of Education and representatives of the university and Catholic Church worked together behind the scenes to find a solution to the issue of participation in shrine rites. The object was not only to forestall withdrawal of the officer, but also to overcome a long-festering problem that affected Catholic schoolchildren throughout the country. The solution that took shape in autumn 1932 in essence bypassed the passive secularist argument that the state should not require students to take part in the rites of a "religion" other than their own. Moving the issue into a different field of reference, it centered on reaching an official consensus as to the "civil" character of such participation in shrine rites. The Tokyo archbishop requested the Ministry of Education to affirm that the reasons for requiring attendance at "school exercises in connection with national [shrines] … have to do with patriotism and not with religion," and to this end to make "clear that the bow in which the assembled group is invited to join on such occasions has a significance which is exclusively patriotic and in no sense religious." In its reply the ministry avoided any explicit reference to "religion," but it otherwise provided a response in line with the framework the archbishop had set out. *Sanpai* by students was based on educational reasons, and the bow they were asked to perform in unison was "none other than to express patriotic commitment and sincere loyalty." With this statement in hand, the archbishop proceeded to give permission for Catholic students to take part in group *sanpai* and informed the Ministry of Education that henceforth they would do so.[51]

In the event, this compromise did not achieve its immediate aim: by transferring the officer as part of a routine rotation and not providing a replacement, the army found a way to remove the officer without the Ministry of Education's agreement. It would only relent and designate a new training officer for Jōchi a year later, in November 1933, after a series of appeals by the university and the Ministry of Education. Together with those appeals, the university made a yet more explicit declaration of its commitment to *jinja sanpai* as a civil rather than religious form of reverence, an "expression of the Imperial Way (*kōdō* 皇道) within the sphere of the public life of the people of the nation."[52]

Coming on the heels of the triumphant celebration of the university's achievements thus far, the Yasukuni incident shook Jōchi to its roots. Student enrollments, around 315 in May 1932, were 264 a year later, and by the end of 1933, had dropped to around 220. Applications for admission likewise declined. The administration would take great care to avoid similar dangers thenceforth. Meanwhile the Catholic Church moved steadily to consolidate its new interpretation of shrine rites. Eventually, in 1936, the Propaganda Fide, the Vatican office responsible for overseeing missionary activities, issued a formal instruction to the Catholic hierarchy in Japan concerning the duties of Catholics toward their country. The statement called on the bishops to "instruct the faithful that, since these [shrine] ceremonies have only a purely civil value, it is lawful for Catholics to take part in them."[53]

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51 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, supp. vol., pp. 115, 279–80; vol. 3, pp. 74, 273–74.
52 *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 3, p. 91.
53 Minamiki 1985, pp. 154–57; Swyngedouw 1967, pp. 582–84; Schatz 2012, pp. 470–74.

Converging Views of a Spiritualized Secular

The Church's affirmation of shrine rites as civil rather than religious in nature obviated the grounds for a passive-secularist opposition to participation in them. In effect it thus also facilitated rapprochement with the general trend toward what might be termed the "spiritualization" of national life visible from the mid-1930s on. Promoted through policies such as the National Spirit Mobilization Campaign (Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin 国民精神総動員), announced by the Konoe Cabinet in September 1937, the trend toward spiritualization was accompanied by ever more explicit demands on educational institutions to inculcate devotion to state and emperor through ceremonial as well as other means. Against the backdrop of these developments and the trauma of the Yasukuni incident, the Jōchi Jesuits' interaction with Japanese secularity evolved as well. Notably, the gap shrunk, at least formally, between their and the government's perception of the proper scope of a nonreligious educational sphere infused with expressions of Japanese spirit.

The most striking evidence of the narrowing of the gap in perception was the attitude that the Jesuits took toward shrine-related rituals that previously had been off-bounds to Catholics. By 1935, a year before Rome officially sanctioned offering reverence at shrines as an expression of patriotic civic life in which Catholics should participate together with other Japanese, Jōchi incorporated *sanpai* to Meiji Shrine into the annual events marking entrance to the university by new students and the start of the new school year. Following the entrance ceremony held in the university auditorium, all students, faculty, and staff went en masse to the shrine to offer reverence.[54] The university also adopted the practice of making an en masse *sanpai* to Yasukuni on the occasion of the shrine's autumn festival.[55] The university continued to observe these customs until the end of World War II.

Jōchi also included the performance of reverence from afar in school activities. One such occasion was the program it devised for the Days for Offering Service to Asia's Development (Kōa Hōkōbi 興亜奉公日). The government established these days in autumn 1939 as part of the National Spirit Mobilization Campaign, declaring that the entire populace should set aside one day a month to reflect on the sacrifices being made by soldiers on the front and to commit themselves to the campaign for Asia's development. As its program for these days, Jōchi directed students to assemble by 8:00 a.m. on the school ground, where they were to offer "reverence from afar, silent homage; gratitude, prayer" (*yōhai*, *mokutō*; *kansha*, *kinen* 遙拝、黙禱; 感謝、祈念).[56]

Affirmation of patriotic ceremonial carried over into areas that existed on a continuum with shrine ritual. One was the demonstration of reverence toward imperial rescripts, most particularly the Rescript on Education. In 1920 the Jesuits had not felt it necessary to do anything special to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the rescript's promulgation. By the mid-1930s they took a quite different attitude. At least as early as 1934 the university distributed to students a little booklet titled *Seikun* 聖訓, or "Sacred Teachings," consisting of Amaterasu's command that her descendants should rule Japan forever, "coeval with

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54 See the pamphlet put out for the entrance ceremony 6 April 1935; university report to Ministry of Education dated 22 November 1935, both held by JDS.

55 Sakaeda 1957, pp. 31–32.

56 Addendum to student handbook, 4 January 1941, pp. 3–4, held by JDS. A note states that the university had implemented this practice on 1 October 1939, shortly after promulgation of the government order regarding Kōa Hōkōbi.

heaven and earth"; the Rescript on Education; and the Imperial Instructions to the Army and Navy, issued in 1882. By 1936 the university had recorded an elaborate protocol for handling the Rescript on Education on occasions when it was to be publicly recited. It was to be carried to the stage, "(still in its box) on a tray … held at eye level," and removed reverently and ceremoniously from the box. Deep bows by all in attendance were to precede and follow its recitation.[57]

Recitation of the Rescript on Education in this fashion was incorporated as a feature of the university's celebration of the "four major ceremonial days" as well as the entrance and graduation ceremonies. The "four major ceremonial days" (*shidaisetsu* 四大節) were New Year's, National Foundation Day (Kigensetsu 紀元節), the emperor's birthday (Tenchōsetsu 天長節), and Emperor Meiji's birthday (Meijisetsu 明治節). These were national holidays, so classes were not held, but the government increasingly expected schools to conduct some sort of activity to mark the three ceremonial days other than New Year's. In the Taishō period, when the emperor's birthday was celebrated on 31 October, Jōchi had put the opportunity of a holiday to other uses. Mark McNeal, who described the holding of a baptismal ceremony for a student on 1 November 1920, the day of Meiji's enshrinement, noted a similar substitute activity for the preceding day:

> All Hallows Eve is the Emperor's birthday, and is a national holiday. It was made the occasion for a gathering of the faithful in the grounds of the Catholic University, which we decorated for the occasion; some Catholic ladies got up a bazaar for the poor; the Catholic students of the Imperial University came to hold in one of our halls a meeting of their newly organized Society of St. Thomas for the study of Catholic philosophy.[58]

By the mid-1930s, however, Jōchi was at the forefront of universities commemorating the three major ceremonial days apart from New Year's in a manner the government considered appropriate. A 1937 Ministry of Education survey found that only five of the sixteen universities located in Tokyo were observing the three ceremonial days properly. One was Jōchi. Already in 1935 the university had reported that on those days it assembled the entire student body for recitation of the Rescript on Education and a homily suited to the occasion.[59] The university also took steps to obtain an "official" copy of the Rescript on Education. The initial copy of the rescript recited on ceremonial occasions and treated with the reverence described in the 1936 protocol evidently had not been received directly from the government. An inquiry from the Ministry of Education in autumn 1936 about schools' preservation and use of the rescript included as one of its items the date when it had been "bestowed" (*kafu* 下付). Jōchi responded that the "copy of the rescript reverently preserved (*hōan* 奉安) at our university is not one that has been bestowed. It has been purchased."[60]

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57 Booklet signed by student and dated July 1934; university internal memorandum dated 23 March 1936, both held by JDS.

58 *Woodstock Letters* 50 (1921), pp. 250–51.

59 University reports to the Ministry of Education about use of the rescript, dated 22 November 1935 and 10 September 1936; held by JDS. Ono 2014, p. 244. The four other schools were Tokyo Imperial University and, among private universities, Waseda, Risshō 立正, and Senshū 専修.

60 University report to Ministry of Education about rescript, dated 10 September 1936; held by JDS.

The following year, at the end of November 1937, this situation was remedied: the university requested and received an official copy.

In this same period the Ministry of Education began actively to encourage universities to request the bestowal of the other major symbol of imperial grace, portraits of the emperor and empress. (A survey in 1934 found that out of the sixteen universities in Tokyo, only Tokyo Imperial University and Kokugakuin 国学院 had received portraits of the reigning emperor.)[61] The same day that Jōchi put in its request for an official copy of the Rescript on Education, it submitted a further application for bestowal of the imperial portraits. Together with the application, it provided the requisite list of the regulations it had compiled for taking proper care of the portraits and detailed diagrams of the cabinet in which they would be kept. A week later, the university was informed that its application had been approved.[62]

In incorporating these symbolic features into university ceremonial occasions, Jōchi does not seem to have tried (unlike some Christian schools) to combine them with Christian elements.[63] The inclusion of "silent homage" and "prayer" together with "reverence from afar" in the activities for the Days for Offering Service to Asia's Development suggest a potential move in that direction, but the terms used (*mokutō*, *kinen*) were generic ones associated with showing reverence rather than the more explicitly Catholic word for prayer, *kitō* 祈禱. In line with this indirect approach, the Jesuits evidently came to see the ceremonial aura surrounding the rescript and the portraits, like *sanpai* at major shrines, as an aspect of the reverence due legitimate authority and thus compatible with Catholic belief. Some of the clearest evidence of their thinking can be found in reports that they wrote for a newsletter, *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne*, distributed in Germany. Since the newsletter was meant for a German audience sympathetic to the Jesuits' aims and activities, the reports can perhaps be taken as a fairly straightforward reflection of the Tokyo Jesuits' views rather than as something composed to allay potential doubts in Japan about the sincerity of their intentions.

A report for 1935 focused on the autumn festival at Yasukuni and included a photograph of Jōchi students and faculty lined up on campus before marching to the shrine (see figure 4). After describing the "simple and brief" manner in which those offering reverence clapped their hands and bowed their heads "for a few minutes immersed in silence," the author went on to comment:

> The entire manner, the ardor, with which people come [to the shrine] shows that this is not an empty and indifferent gesture. On such occasions the Japanese, with his deep-seated disposition, seems to experience within—or even to feel—what moves the human heart most, the magnitude of dying for one's brothers. In "He gave himself for me" lies the mysterious power of Christianity. The blood given for one's brothers

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61 Ono 2014, p. 241.
62 Application submitted by the university to the Ministry of Education, dated 30 November 1937; Ministry of Education response, dated 8 December 1937; both held by JDS.
63 See Sippel 2012, pp. 34, 38–39.

has forged nations; the blood of God has woven a bond that unites all people beyond ties of race and native soil.[64]

Another report described the entrance ceremony at Jōchi in April 1937. The centerpiece was a detailed account of the recitation of the Rescript on Education that corresponds virtually word-for-word to the protocol in Japanese for handling the rescript mentioned above.[65] A report the next year described in even fuller detail the arrival of the imperial portraits in December 1937. "For each school it is a great honor to possess the imperial portraits," the author, Joseph Edelmann (1912–1993), wrote.

Figure 4. Students and faculty assemble on campus before marching to Yasukuni Shrine in autumn 1935. In the foreground is the training officer assigned to Jōchi in August of that year. Image courtesy of JDS.

Recently we also have been given this honor. With great ceremony the portraits of the imperial couple were transferred from the Ministry of Education to our university and received there. As the first car, in which sat the president and the provost, came into sight, the command resounded: "Saikeirei!" In salute to the emperor, all bowed low until the cars were driven to the entrance to the auditorium.

Inside the auditorium the portraits were placed on the stage, in "a sort of shrine, veiled mysteriously." As the provost, Tsuchihashi Yachita, "ceremonially unveiled the portraits," the president, Hermann Heuvers (1890–1977), appointed following Hoffmann's death in June 1937, took his place on the stage and led the assembled faculty, students, and staff in bowing low before the portraits. "Professors and students, men of the West and East [offered] the salute to the emperor with deep reverence. A solemn silence filled the entire room. In a common symbolic action was experienced the power of one thought and will, which has created and sustains this empire, [manifested in] the offering of appreciation and gratitude."[66]

While expressing what appears to be genuine admiration for the atmosphere of reverence evoked by the unveiling of the portraits, Edelmann indicated that such reverence was not in itself sufficient. "In some of us," he continued, "there was mingled in this joy the desire that this great, mighty, so self-assured people will find the complete truth and happiness of the soul."[67] Clearly, however, he saw the manifestation of devotion to the emperor as congruent with attaining a yet higher level of religious faith. His affirmation of

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64 *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne* 25 (1935), p. 338. Bruno Bitter (1898–1988), the author of this article, is often held to have influenced the Allied Occupation's decision not to abolish Yasukuni. See Mullins 2010. Bitter was also the driving force behind the publication of *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne*. *Jōchi Daigakushi shiryōshū*, vol. 4, p. 343.

65 *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne* 30 (1937), p. 427.

66 *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne* 32 (1938), pp. 447–48.

67 *Aus dem Lande der aufgehenden Sonne* 32 (1938), p. 448.

the national spiritualization of the late 1930s thus carried a step further Hoffmann's 1932 declaration of the compatibility between Catholic education and dedication to emperor and state. Implicitly, participation in the spiritualized forms of national ritual could lead through a process of transmutation to the realization of true belief.

A similar sense of the mutually beneficial possibilities of a rapprochement between national goals and those of Jesuit education can be found in a booklet the university put out in 1938 to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Jōchi's founding. Published in a combined format of both German and Japanese, the booklet was in effect a public statement meant for a broad audience. One of its main features was an account by Johannes Kraus (see above, pp. 109–10) of the history and principles of Jesuit pedagogy. Echoing points made by Hoffmann in his 1932 address, Kraus began by noting what gave Jōchi a distinctive place among Japanese universities. Although it was the product of cooperation between a specific religious community—German Jesuits—and Japanese instructors, it had deliberately excluded the elements commonly associated with so-called mission schools. "Within the school there is no religious education, no religious activity such as collective worship, no courses on theology, no lectures on issues concerning Church history, doctrinal history, Christian morals, or canon law." Instead, Jōchi provided thorough training in German and English and close, daily contact with professors who embodied German cultural life. Above all, it held to a firm pedagogical vision, "the organic union of instruction and 'education,' knowledge and 'character formation' (*tōya*/*Bildung*)." [68]

Kraus went on to trace the roots of the Jesuits' pedagogical approach to the Ratio Studiorum, the comprehensive schema for a sequential course of studies adopted by the Jesuits at the end of the sixteenth century. Much of his intended audience might be assumed to know little about this topic, and for them Kraus provided a succinct overview. He described the Ratio as fusing medieval scholastic traditions with Renaissance Humanism, noted its influence and that of Jesuit schools on European modes of education, and explained the thinking behind various aspects of the Ratio's program, such as the emphasis on the mastery of classical language and rhetoric in the first stage of education and on training in Aristotelian logic in the second. He also emphasized the adaptability of Jesuit education. Although their pedagogical approach had continued to be founded on the ideals of the Ratio, the Jesuits had also, he stated, always been ready to respond to the needs of changing times and circumstances.

For the first two-thirds of his account, Kraus essentially presented the Jesuits' educational stance as compatible with the government's stipulations about the separation of religion and education. In the final third, he adopted a different angle on the issue. Here he simultaneously addressed the role of religion as nevertheless occupying the "core" of Jesuit education and depicted it as supportive of national spiritual mobilization. Making only the barest allusion to specifically Christian beliefs and practices, he presented religion not in terms of doctrine or ritual, but as a process of spiritual training and discipline, the element that enabled the dynamic fusion of character formation and knowledge. He did so in a manner that, whether intended so consciously or not, could be expected to appeal to those who might continue to harbor suspicions about "religion in schools" but had long since come to see the value of "spiritual training."

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68 *Sophia Universitaet, 1913–1938*, pp. 10–11 (German), 9–10 (Japanese).

Explaining *fides* (*shūkyōteki chūjitsu* 宗教的忠実), for instance, as a quality essential for a Jesuit teacher, Kraus focused not on the object to which such faith was to be directed, but on the experience of faith as fundamental to the union of morality and knowledge. He presented the *pietas* (*keiken* 敬虔) and *oboedientia* (*fukujū* 服従) expected of students in a similar manner. Piety, being directed at "the highest value," served "to ensure the reverent preservation of the correct hierarchy of values." It was a natural adjunct to obedience, the "foundation of all discipline (*kunren* 訓練/*Zucht*)." Discipline, in turn, was needed to contribute actively to the basic forms of social community—family, ethnos, state. Since authority played an essential role in unifying and setting restrictions for communal life, the inculcation of "spontaneous and conscious obedience to authority" served to affirm the importance of social community and as a corrective to mistaken conceptions of "freedom." True "freedom" was not possible unless accompanied by restrictions and could be secured only through obedience.[69]

Jesuit accounts in the late 1930s of national ceremonial and the goals of Jesuit education thus projected a kind of symbiosis. Spiritual mobilization centered on state and emperor could serve as a foundation for the consolidation of the Christian faith, while Jesuit education could support the state's aims as well. The Jesuits were far from being the only religious group in this period to affirm the possibility of a fusion of national spiritual goals with their own. Other groups, both Christian and Buddhist, did likewise. At the same time, the rapprochement with the state in this area points to some aspects of the intersection between the secular and religious in modern society that would seem worthy of further examination.

José Casanova has argued that a paradoxical feature of secular modernity is that its triumph "came aided by religion." The shattering of "monastery walls—that is, the symbolic boundaries between the secular and religious spheres," allowed for "a mutual penetration of religion by the secular and of the secular by religion." Focusing on post-Vatican II developments such as the Catholic Church's embrace of "the secular discourse of human rights," Casanova evaluates this development positively as something that has served "to sanctify and legitimate modern liberal secular norms and values as Christian ones." Jōchi's prewar history may be said likewise to present an instance wherein, to borrow Casanova's words, the boundaries between secularity and religion became "so diffuse that it is not clear where religion begins and the secular ends."[70] Yet it also suggests that the process of mutual penetration did not necessarily lead solely in a liberalizing direction.

Accepting the assertive-secularist framework of state policy, the Jesuits worked within it to find ways to pursue their own religiously informed educational aims. Insofar as the situation reprised circumstances familiar from recent European experience, this strategy proved reasonably successful. They encountered a different kind of obstacle, however, in the state's promotion of *jinja sanpai* and other ceremonial that the Church saw as of a piece with *sanpai*. Holding participation in such rites to be tantamount to taking part in a false religion, the Jesuits resorted to an essentially passive-secularist stance of noninvolvement. By the 1930s this stance became increasingly problematic: it seemed to jeopardize not only the Jesuits' educational achievements thus far but the ability of the Catholic Church to show

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69 *Sophia Universitaet, 1913–1938*, pp. 32–35 (German), 32–35 (Japanese).
70 Casanova 2006, pp. 23, 25–28.

itself as a universal church, supportive of legitimate authority in Japan as elsewhere. Such considerations helped bring about a change in the Church's official position on *sanpai*. The redefinition of *sanpai* as a civil rather than religious form of reverence removed the grounds for passive-secularist resistance to shrine-related ritual. It also appears to have fostered a shift into a new register in relations with the state, a register in which distinctions between "secular" and "religious" were submerged in an affirmation of a mutually reinforcing spiritual mobilization, compatible with Jesuit and state goals alike.

This development might be seen as an instance of what Casanova describes as the Church's traditional "preference and the Catholic affinity for hierarchic and corporatist … forms of government," a tradition he acknowledges while juxtaposing to it an alternative scenario.[71] It might also be set against the history of the Jesuits' long and complex interaction with East Asian intellectual, spiritual, and ritual forms. These issues are beyond the scope of the present article, but both deserve exploration. For the moment we might simply conclude that the adjustments of the 1930s provide yet further evidence of the need for caution in using the terms "secular" and "religious" as fixed and antonymic categories of analysis.

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71 Casanova 2006, p. 28.

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Contested Positioning:
"New Religions" and Secular Spheres[1]

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Japanese new religions (*shinshūkyō*) have attempted to enter a wide range of secular domains, such as politics, education, and welfare, in order to offer alternative models to mainstream systems. This paper will discuss the importance placed by new religions on political and educational activities. In particular, it focuses on the activities of several new religions in the field of education, and their ideas on how the education system should be reformed to reflect the groups' teachings and ideologies. Following a general discussion of this topic, the paper addresses the case of Kōfuku no Kagaku, a new religion founded in the 1980s, which applied for permission to establish a new university in 2014. Kōfuku no Kagaku's response to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (Monbukagakushō) rejection of this application provides a pertinent case study to investigate the group's definition of learning and its vision of the role of education in society.

Keywords: education, higher education, Happy Science University, Kōfuku no Kagaku, Monbukagakushō, secularization, *shinshūkyō*

"New religions," or *shinshūkyō* 新宗教, is an umbrella term used to define a heterogeneous group of religious organizations that emerged in Japan from the nineteenth century onwards.[2] The "newness" attributed to these groups in the Japanese context is not necessarily associated with first generation membership, but rather with historical periods of emergence in relation to processes of modernization and transformations in Japanese society. Although membership varies greatly among groups, these movements represent a significant

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2 In addition to *shinshūkyō*, other terms—such as "new new religions" (*shinshinshūkyō* 新新宗教), "new spiritual movements" (*shinreisei undō* 新霊性運動), "new spiritual culture" (*shinreisei bunka* 新霊性文化), "hyper-religion" (*haipā shūkyō* ハイパー宗教), and the more derogatory "cults" (*karuto* カルト)—have been introduced to distinguish movements established during the last three decades of the twentieth century from new religions formed in earlier periods. On Japanese new religions and terminology, see also Astley 2006; Inoue 1992; Inoue 2012; Reader 2005a; Reader 2015; Shimazono 1992; Shimazono 2001; Staemmler and Dehn 2011.

section of Japanese religious culture, with members from across diverse economic, social, and educational backgrounds.[3]

Concerning the topic of this special issue, a discussion of how new religions have been negotiating their role in secular domains could provide a relevant contribution to a wider discussion on "multiple secularities."[4] I am particularly interested in examining the dynamics of negotiation and, potentially, conflicts when new religions' interests in penetrating secular spheres collide with normative definitions of such spheres, that is with an institutional setting that limits the expression of religion in the public sphere, such as in politics and other cultural domains. This is also important in a context, such as postwar Japan, where the separation between religion and the state is enforced by the constitution and other laws. Indeed Article 20 of the Constitution of Japan guarantees freedom of religion, but also states that religious organizations shall not receive privileges from the state and cannot exercise political authority, thereby removing Shinto (and other religions) from the public sphere. However, this does not mean that religious organizations are barred from engaging in political or other public activities or forming political parties. For example, several organizations have actively supported candidates during elections and some have formed their own political parties (as with the case of Sōka Gakkai 創価学会, a Buddhist organization established in the 1930s, and its political party Kōmeitō 公明党 discussed later in this article).

Casanova distinguishes between different theories of secularization.[5] Secularization could, for example, be considered as the decline of religious beliefs and practices. However, as Mark Mullins proposes, modernization "can lead to secularization—the decline of some religions, beliefs, practices or institutions—but at the same time it may reinvigorate others and even create an environment in which new forms of religion can flourish."[6] Another thesis, Casanova notes, considers secularization as the retreat of religion from the public sphere and the privatization of religion. Finally, secularization is conceptualized as "differentiation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms."[7]

It is this latter aspect, which Casanova argues is the "defensible core" of the theory of secularization, that is particularly relevant to the discussion in this article. In particular, in examining the "culturally and symbolically, as well as institutionally anchored forms and arrangements of differentiation between religion and other social spheres," it is important to discuss religious organizations' views of their role in society, as well as their potential challenges to the aforementioned differentiation of domains.[8]

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3 In recent years, scholars have problematized the category of new religions, discussing, for example, the opportunity to analyze Buddhist new movements in the broader framework of Japanese Buddhism. The movements themselves are not necessarily comfortable with the category. However, the category is still widely used in scholarship and public discourse about religion in contemporary Japan. For a discussion on this issue, see Reader 2015. The conceptual category of "religion" (*shūkyō* 宗教) itself has also been at the center of several scholarly debates (see for example, Fitzgerald 2000; Isomae 2003; Josephson 2012; Pye 2003; Reader 2005b; Shimazono and Tsuruoka 2004).

4 Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012.

5 See for example Casanova 1994; Casanova 2006; Casanova 2011; Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012.

6 Mullins 2012, p. 63.

7 Casanova 2006, p. 12.

8 Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012, p. 881. For a critical examination of the discussion regarding the compatibility of religion and modernity see Asad 1999.

After a short overview of early scholarly discussions about new religions in relation to secularization theory, this paper will discuss the importance placed by new religions on political and educational activities, in order to offer their alternative models to mainstream systems. In particular, the discussion will focus on the interest shown by several new religions in the field of education, and on how the education system should be reformed to reflect the groups' teachings and ideologies. In this context the case of Kōfuku no Kagaku 幸福の科学 (lit. Science of Happiness, but also known under the English name Happy Science), a new religion founded in the 1980s, will be discussed as a significant case study. Kōfuku no Kagaku has been particularly eager to promote its activities in politics and education, but at the same time firmly supports a non-secular view of these spheres and explicitly argues for religiously informed politics and education. In particular, the group's response to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's (Monbukagakushō 文部科学省, hereafter MEXT) rejection in Autumn 2014 of its application to establish a new university provides a pertinent case study to investigate the group's definition of learning and its vision of the role of education in society.

Japanese New Religions and Secularization: Between "Heresy" and "Secular Religions"

Since the Meiji period, new religions have been discussed in the context of the role of religion in modern society and the definition of religion itself or, more precisely, of what kind of "religion" could be considered acceptable in a modern society.[9] New religions are usually organized around a charismatic leader or founder, and therefore promote alternative forms of authority that could challenge secular authority. Sawada analyzed this issue through the example of Renmonkyō 蓮門教, a short-lived group established in 1883 by Shimamura Mitsu 島村みつ (1831–1904), which in the late nineteenth century became one of the largest new religious organizations.[10] Renmonkyō became the object of a defamatory campaign by a popular newspaper called *Yorozu chōhō* 萬朝報 which accused it of heterodoxy and heteropraxis and labeled it "perverted, evil teaching" (*inshi jakyō* 淫祠邪教).

As shown by Sawada, during the Meiji period new religions represented a form of "religious otherness" that was used as a contrast to—and hence served as a defining mechanism in the construction of—Japanese religious orthodoxy.[11] As such, they were used by ideologists and public moralists in a process similar to what Mandair and Dressler define as "religion-making from above," that is an "authoritative discourse and practices that define and confine things" and in which religion becomes an instrument to "legitimize certain politics and positions of power." [12] In this process, rapidly expanding organizations such as Renmonkyō and, later on, Tenrikyō 天理教 (a religious organization established in the mid 19th century that will be discussed later in this article) were perceived by bureaucrats, social educators, sectarian leaders, and media as threatening and were accused of being superstitious on account of their use of magical healing and practices. Later, in the period before and during the Second World War, religious organizations that were not affiliated with one of the thirteen legally approved sect Shinto (*kyōha shintō* 教派神道) sects were

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9 See for example Inoue 1992; Inoue 2012; Reader 2005a; Reader 2015; Shimazono 1992; Shimazono 2001.
10 On Renmonkyō see also Dorman 2012; Inoue 1992; Takeda 1991.
11 Sawada 2004, p. 236.
12 Mandair and Dressler 2011, p. 21.

considered suspicious, and closely monitored by the authorities. In some cases, such as that of Oomoto 大本, a religious organization established in the late 19th century by Deguchi Nao 出口なお (1836–1918) and Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎 (1871–1948), they were suppressed.[13]

In the postwar period, the mass media and politicians portrayed dynamic religious movements able to attract adherents from different social groups, such as Sōka Gakkai and Kōmeitō, as a menace to the "postwar orthodoxy of a strict division between religion and state" and attacked them for their teachings and proselytization practices.[14] Sōka Gakkai and its connection with Kōmeitō are recurrently used as a key example in the debate regarding the separation of religion and the state in Japan.[15] After the 1995 sarin gas attack perpetrated by members of the new religion Aum Shinrikyō オウム真理教, the designation of new religions as "dangerous others" and "cults" has become increasingly prevalent.[16] The Aum Affair (*Oumu jiken* オウム事件) affected negatively the image of religion in general in Japan. In particular, journalists, politicians, and some scholars leveled further criticism toward new religions. They labeled their practices and beliefs as "irrational" and "dangerous"; as a consequence, new religions became "more defensive and cautious in the public sphere."[17]

It should be noted here that interpretations of new religions, and especially their associations with modernity, have changed over time. Whereas in the post-Aum era the main discourse has centered around portraying such movements as "irrational" and antithetical to a modern, rationalized, and secular society, in the 1960s they were perceived rather differently. It is not the main purpose of this paper to provide an in-depth discussion of the debate about secularization theories in the Japanese context. However, it should be noted that in earlier studies, in which "secularization" was mainly considered as the decline of religious practices, beliefs, and institutions in relation to the expansion of modernity, new religions were often cited as examples of the ability of religion to adapt to a modern environment. For instance, Davis saw the emergence of religious movements in Japan as being at odds with the decline of "the sacred":

> A large number of religious movements have emerged in recent decades that give us pause when tempted to pronounce glibly on the universal decline of the sacred. The New Religions in Japan, not to mention the Neo-Evangelical movement, astrology, occultism, and youth cults in the United States, are typical examples.[18]

As Davis points out elsewhere, the emergence of new religions was also in contrast with surveys indicating the decline of religion: "The period when our 'hardest' statistical evidence indicates a decline of religious belief in Japan coincides paradoxically with the phenomenal growth of the so-called New Religions."[19] This paradox, in Davis's opinion,

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13 Murakami 1980. On Oomoto's suppression by the government, see also Stalker 2008.
14 For a general discussion of this issue and for examples of such attacks, see McLaughlin 2012a, p. 58.
15 These issues are discussed in Ehrhardt, Klein, McLaughlin, and Reed 2014. On Kōmeitō, see also Fisker-Nielsen 2012.
16 On the post-Aum negative representations of new religions see Baffelli and Reader 2012; Baffelli 2016.
17 Baffelli and Reader 2012, p. 20.
18 Davis 1980, p. 10.
19 Davis 1992, p. 247.

is a confirmation that non-belief shown by the survey should be considered as "largely *situational*" and "symptomatic of that existential drift for which the Japanese have such talent, rather than any disciplined, philosophical commitment to atheism."[20] Similarly, Yamanaka and Hayashi use the persistence of new religions and their developments to advocate the necessity of going beyond a secularization theory based on the idea of the decline of religion.[21]

Sociologist of religion Shimazono Susumu also interprets new religions as products of modern society and a response to the loss of control by the "religion of the elite":

> Where the religion of the elite lost sway, salvific religious movements came to life from out of the religion of the masses and assumed a posture of secularization (as happened in the United States, Korea, and Japan). New religious movements can thus be seen as developmental modes of popular religion liberating itself from bondage to elite culture and adjusting to modern environments.[22]

The notion of new religions as an example of the adaptation of religion was also endorsed by Wilson, who defined new religions (not only in the Japanese context) as "testimonies to secularization" which "often use highly secular methods in evangelism, financing, publicity, and mobilization of adherents."[23] Casanova, too, cites the Japanese new religions and what he terms Japan's several "rush hours of the gods" in the context of an argument for rethinking the nature of secularization.[24] In arguing that secularization does not mean the disappearance of religion, and that a general theory of secularization may not be possible, he describes Japan as being "one the most secular societies on earth while being at the same time extremely hospitable to all kinds of religions."[25] Mullins, however, while recognizing the importance of new religions in the postwar period as "dynamic movements of resacralization," invites us to be cautious about overemphasizing their social role.[26]

Wilson and other scholars suggest that new religions have a role as intermediaries between individuals and "the state," by providing welfare and social networking, and engaging with several secular domains, such as politics, education, and welfare.[27] These religions are also well known for their intensive use of secular marketing techniques and media communication to promote their image, to attract new members, and to create the image of a leader whose charisma is also connected to entrepreneurial qualities.[28] Hardacre, in her work on Kurozumikyō 黒住教, a religious organization established in the mid 19th

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20 Davis 1992, p. 248.
21 Yamanaka and Hayashi 1995.
22 Shimazono 2004, p. 164. See also Shimazono 1992.
23 Wilson 1991, p. 204.
24 "Rush hour of the gods" refers to the title of a book on new religions published by Neil McFarland in 1967 and to the expression "rush hour of the gods" (*kamigami no rasshu awā* 神々のラッシュアワー) that appeared in the press to indicate an apparent increase in the numbers of new religions following the introduction of the Religious Corporations Law (*Shūkyō hōjin hō* 宗教法人法) in 1951.
25 Casanova 1994, pp. 242–43. On Casanova's critique of secularization theories, see also Casanova 2011. For a critique of Casanova's approach, see Reader 2012.
26 Mullins 2012, p. 68.
27 Wilson 1991. See also McLaughlin 2012b.
28 Stalker 2008; on the use of media see also Baffelli 2016.

century, argues that new religions share with secular society paths (or "ways," *michi* 道 in Japanese) of self-cultivation, while offering more efficient organizational structures:

> The paths of self-cultivation constructed by new religions may prescribe different observances, but in essence their intent and import is the same as the *michi* of secular society. The major differences lie in greater organizational efficiency of channeling people through the path, counselling and other forms of socialization along the way, and systematic rewards for good performance.[29]

From this point of view, new religions could be interpreted as a challenge to narrow views of "religion" that are only concerned with private piety and as something separate from the public sphere. As Hardacre shows, new religions may well be engaged with secular society and share many of its values.

New religions themselves have been reshaping their images over the years, often opting for moving away from defining themselves as "religions," or at least attempting to promote themselves as "secularized religions." Some groups, especially after 1995 but also earlier, have attempted to brand themselves as "nonreligious."[30] For example, Kōfuku no Kagaku, the organization that will be discussed later in this article, initially presented itself as a study group, while other organizations chose names that refer to secular institutions, such as Panawave Kenkyūjo パナウェーブ研究所 (Panawave Laboratory), or claimed that their techniques are proven effective by modern scientific methods. In her analysis of the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual, and Cultural Advancement (OISCA), a Japanese NGO which derives from a Shinto-based new religion called Ananaikyō 三五教, Watanabe discusses how the organization downplays its connection with the religious group from which it derived, in order to assert that its work is "nonreligious."[31] One reason for this is the wish to avoid being associated with negative images of religion, especially in the post-1995 period.

Japanese new religions appear to be secularized in many respects. As suggested by Matsunaga, their organizational structure recalls that of larger companies and they operate in many similar ways, for example by offering rewards to members and demanding their time.[32] Some of them also present their teachings or practices as a way to achieve success in business, recognition, or wealth, and to provide members with "means to achieve prestige and recognition that parallel those available to men employed by large corporations."[33]

At the same time, however, the alternative visions promoted by new religions often imply a strong criticism of modern secular life, which is seen as corrupted, or as insufficient

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29 Hardacre 1986, pp. 27–28.
30 On this topic, see also the articles by Gagné and Rots in this special issue. The group discussed by Gagné, for example, has introduced "secular" rituals to eliminate "the stink of religion" (*shūkyō kusai mono o nakusu* 宗教臭いものをなくす).
31 Watanabe 2013; Watanabe 2015.
32 Matsunaga 2000, p. 36. Similarities between the organizational structure of religious institutions and companies could also be noted in older established organizations, such as Buddhist sects. This is partly due to the fact that religious institutions need to fulfill criteria established by the Religious Corporations Law (*Shūkyō hōjin hō*) in order to be legally registered as religious organizations, including having specific structures such as official representatives and so on. I am grateful to Ian Reader for this comment.
33 Hardacre 1986, p. 193.

to respond to the deeper needs of people. As a consequence, movements promote reforms of secular educational, political, and economic systems that are based on their doctrinal tenets and not necessary in agreement with secular definitions of these spheres. In most cases these visions and reforms remain part of doctrinal and rhetorical discourses, and do not translate into concrete plans. In some cases, however, they have led to the establishment of political parties or schools.[34]

Secularist attitudes are not just discursive strategies; they form a vital part of the dynamics of new religions. As pointed out by McLaughlin in his study of Sōka Gakkai, new religions may challenge the "traditional parameters" of religion.[35] Indeed, if we only look at the elements characterizing these groups that appear more "religious," such as doctrines or similarities to other traditions, we risk overlooking the centrality of other practices that are vital elements of members' engagement and of the expansion dynamics of these organizations. For example, McLaughlin argues that one of the key elements in the success of Sōka Gakkai in the postwar period was its ability to position itself as an alternative to society while, at the same time, sharing mainstream society's goals and structures: "A key reason for Sōka Gakkai's unprecedented appeal, one that has been largely overlooked, has been its focus on constructing itself as an alternative means of social engagement by providing its members with opportunities to participate in multiple institutions that mirror those in mainstream Japanese society."[36]

At times, secular institutions are replicated in the organizational structure of the group, such as the above-mentioned company-like structure or the use of an examination system to enter the group or to achieve higher membership status.[37] An extreme case was provided by Aum Shinrikyō, which appointed "ministers," mirroring political institutions and creating a sort of state within the state.[38] In doing so, the organization aimed at separating itself from mainstream society, which was seen as corrupted and as an obstacle to the group's mission.

New religions have been promoting activities, such as arts initiatives and political actions, which replicate secular institutions and practices. By doing this, groups offer their members alternative modes of "national belonging."[39] In particular, politics and education have been important fields to promote alternative views to the mainstream system. For example, Kōfuku no Kagaku aims at the creation of Utopia, an idealized world regulated by the leader's teaching. It posits the development of an "adjunct nation" in ways similar to what McLaughlin describes in the case of Sōka Gakkai: "a nation-like apparatus that replicates the morphological features of the modern nation within its own institutions."[40]

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34 Sōka Gakkai's political activities led to the formation of a successful political party in 1964, Kōmeitō, renamed Shin Kōmeitō 新公明党 in 1998. Although religious content and language have been removed from the party's political program since the 1970s, initially it was founded on the idea of a "Buddhist democracy" (*buppō minshushugi* 仏法民主主義), that was promoted as "true democracy" and advocated the role of religion as the basis of politics, aiming at the realization of a "fusion of politics and religion" (*ōbutsu myōgō* 王仏冥合). Initially, Buddhist terminology was used extensively to promote the party and to justify Sōka Gakkai's decision to enter the political arena. On this topic, see Nakano 2003 and Tsukada 2015.

35 McLaughlin 2012b.

36 McLaughlin 2012b p. 277.

37 Kōfuku no Kagaku too, among others, has used this system, especially in the early period of formation.

38 Established in 1984 by Asahara Shōkō 麻原彰晃 (born 1955) as a small yoga centre, Aum developed into a complex organization influenced by Buddhist teachings and catastrophic millenarian thought.

39 McLaughlin 2009, p. 343.

40 McLaughlin 2012b, p. 276.

Kōfuku no Kagaku conceives the construction of Utopia as an individual project, aimed at attaining individual happiness through Ōkawa's teaching; the process will eventually impact on the collective and lead to a transformation of society and its members.

In other words, new religions engage with modern society and adopt seemingly secular orientations and policies, in ways that challenge normative assumptions about the contrast between religion and the secular. Indeed, recent studies have discussed how political activism is an important element in the structure of several new religions.[41] An area that has been given little consideration, and which this paper seeks to readdress, is that of education, which provides an interesting example for the discussion of the ambivalence of the discourse on new religions and secularization. Some groups, for example, may use education, as value added to their spiritual teaching, to create what Whelan defined as secular "camouflage."[42]

New Religions and Higher Education

During the Meiji period small private schools focusing on women's education and English teaching were established in Japan by missionaries from various British and American Protestant denominations. In the period between 1886 and 1888 Buddhist denominations opened several educational institutions as well, but they were generally aimed at training monks, not at providing general education.[43] In 1899, permission to provide private education was granted by the Private School Ordinance (*Shiritsu gakkō rei* 私立学校令). In the same year the Ministry of Education also issued Order Number 12 (*Kunrei dai 12-gō* 訓令第12号), which formulated the separation of religion and education, prohibiting religious education in schools.[44] Education became an important part of state activities and religious institutions, in particular Buddhist and Christian organizations.[45] In 1947 the Fundamental Law of Education (*Kyōiku kihon hō* 教育基本法) was enacted. Article 9 (now Article 15) stipulated the separation of secular public education from religion, stating: "The schools established by the national and local governments shall refrain from religious education or other activities for a specific religion."[46] As a consequence, religious education as a subject

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41 On new religions and politics, see Ehrhardt, Klein, McLaughlin, and Reed 2014; Nakano 2003; Tsukada 2015.

42 Whelan investigates how the God Light Association (GLA), a new religion founded in the late 1960s by Takahashi Shinji 高橋信次 (1927–1976), overtly appears as a secular organization. For example, the group organizes expensive seminars and events in convention centers that resemble business meetings or academic gatherings, with forms to fill in and participants dressed in suits, avoiding religious rituals and using school metaphors to promote itself as a school or alternative education system "re-infused with the sacred." See Whelan 2010.

43 Hayashi 2014.

44 Hayashi 2014. For details see also Kate Wildman Nakai's article in this special issue.

45 In 1918 the government issued the University Ordinance (*Daigaku rei* 大学令) and officially recognized private universities. As discussed in Nakai's article in this special issue, negotiations between Buddhist and Christian religious institutions and the government were not uniform. In the case of Sophia University (Jōchi Daigaku 上智大学), for example, founded by the Society of Jesus in 1913, the Jesuits decided to respond to the prohibition of religious education with a "strategy of prudence and compartmentalization" (Nakai, 2015, p. 22; see also Nakai's article in this special issue). From the very beginning, religion was excluded from the classroom, but present in other spaces, such as dormitories. Furthermore, through ethics classes the Jesuits "identified ways to present [their] worldview as compatible with the government's concern that educational institutions produce loyal members of the Japanese state" (Nakai, 2015, p. 22; Nakai's article in this special issue). Order Number 12 was abolished immediately after the end of World War II allowing religiously affiliated schools to introduce religious education and activities, such as ceremonies and prayers.

46 See http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/kihon/data/07080117.htm (accessed 23 July 2016).

of study was removed from public schools. Nowadays only education in religious knowledge (*shūkyō chishiki kyōiku* 宗教知識教育) is allowed in public schools, while sectarian religious education (*shūha kyōiku* 宗派教育) and education in "religious sentiment" (*shūkyōteki jōsō kyōiku* 宗教的情操教育) are permitted in private religious schools alone.[47]

With regard to new religions, an interest in education reform was already noticeable in the early period of their development. For example, Oomoto's co-founder, Deguchi Onisaburō, expressed severe criticism of the compulsory education system because, in his opinion, it included too many subjects taught only superficially. In 1916, the group was renamed Kōdō Oomoto 皇道大本 (Oomoto of the Imperial Way), advocating the "restoration of divine rule" (*shinsei fukko* 神政復古) and the "unity of rites and government" (*saisei itchi* 祭政一致).[48] Onisaburō also supported reforms of the education system that promoted teaching specialist skills and aimed to "establish a national curriculum based on the Ancient Imperial Way."[49]

Several new religions promoted education programs, and in some cases their interest in education resulted in them founding schools and universities.[50] The two major examples of new religions that established educational institutions from elementary through university are Tenrikyō and Sōka Gakkai. Tenrikyō, founded in the mid 19th century by Nakayama Miki 中山みき, established the Tenri Foreign Language School (Tenri Gaikokugo Senmon Gakkō 天理外国語専門学校) in 1925. The project was implemented by the second leader (Shinbashira 真柱) Nakayama Shōzen 中山正善 (1905–1967) in order to train missionaries for overseas missions.[51] The school included a Department of Korean Studies which, according to the group's publications, was established after a difficult negotiation with the government.[52] This school eventually became Tenri University in 1949. Currently the main faculties are Human Studies (*ningengakubu* 人間学部), Letters (*bungakubu* 文学部), International Studies (*kokusaigakubu* 国際学部), and Sport Studies (*taiikugakubu* 体育学部). The "founding spirit of the university" (*kengaku no seishin* 建学の精神) referred to the "Joyous Life" (*yōki gurashi* 陽気ぐらし) path established by Tenrikyō's founder:

> Oyasama, Tenrikyō's foundress, revealed the existence of God the Parent, clarifying the truth that human beings are all brothers and sisters, and demonstrating a way of life of helping one another through the path of the "Divine Model." The mission of the University, based upon the teachings of Oyasama, is to cultivate human resources that will contribute to the construction of the world of the "Joyous Life."[53]

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47 It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail recent debates regarding religious education in Japan and the revisions of the Fundamental Law on Education. It is important to note, however, that the most controversial aspect of the law has been the education in religious sentiment and whether it should be introduced, in some form, in public education. On the debate, see Dessì 2013; Filus 2006; Inoue 2009; Tsujimura 2007.

48 Stalker 2008, p. 63.

49 Stalker 2008, p. 69.

50 Several new religions are running middle and high schools, for example Konkōkyō 金光教, Risshō Kōseikai 立正佼成会, Reiyūkai 霊友会, and PL Kyōdan パーフェクトリバティー教団. See Inoue et al. 1994, pp. 574–75 for a list of schools affiliated to new religions.

51 Shinbashira (literally "central pillar") is the name used for a spiritual leader in Tenrikyō.

52 Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department 1998, p. 122.

53 See http://www.tenri-u.ac.jp/en/ariirh0000000760.html. The Japanese webpage is available at http://www.tenri-u.ac.jp/info/index.html (Both accessed 9 March 2016). See also Dōyūsha 1981, pp. 366–80.

Figure 1. View of Soka University of America (SUA), Aliso Viejo, California. Pamphlet "Soka Gakkai International". An Introduction Soka Gakkai International, 2010, p. 14.

However, despite the fact that the founding principles are based on Tenrikyō's teachings, the university promotes itself as a leading institution for language and sport studies. The Faculty of Human Studies includes a Department of Religious Studies where Tenrikyō's theology is studied alongside other religions traditions.

Sōka Gakkai is a lay Buddhist movement founded in 1930 by an educator, Makiguchi Tsunesaburō 牧口常三郎 (1871–1944). Educational reform was at the core of the group's early development, as is clear from its name: "Value Creating Study Association." It was initially called Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai 創価教育学会 or "Value Creating Educational Association". Dissatisfied with Japan's mainstream educational system, Makiguchi's organization aimed to offer to less privileged members of society an opportunity to study and learn, and consequently a way to be included in mainstream society. In 1968, Sōka Gakkai opened its first middle and high schools in Tokyo. Sōka Daigaku 創価大学 was established in 1971, in order to accommodate the first graduating class of Sōka High School.[54] Nowadays the group has a private educational system from preschool to university and also educational institutions overseas, such as Soka University of America (SUA), opened in 2001 in Aliso Viejo in California (figure 1).[55] Faculties at Sōka Daigaku include Economics (*keizaigakubu* 経済学部), Business Administration (*keieigabu* 経営学部), Law (*hōgakubu* 法学部), Letters (*bungakubu* 文学部), Education (*kyōikugakubu* 教育学部), Engineering (*rikōgakubu* 理工学部), Nursing (*kangogakubu* 看護学部), and International Liberal Arts (*kokusai kyōyōgakubu* 国際教養学部).[56] The university mission statement refers to the founder's original idea of "creating value" (*sōka* 創価) and to the leading principle established by Ikeda Daisaku 池田大作 (born 1928), who became Sōka Gakkai's third president in 1960: "Be the highest seat of learning for humanistic education / Be the cradle of a new culture / Be a fortress for the peace of humankind."[57] However, the curriculum of degrees offered is not dissimilar to those in nonconfessional universities.

In both examples, new religions have created alternatives to public universities, with an "added spiritual value" of educational guidelines based on the group's teachings. At the same time, however, the training is similarly structured and the goals are commensurable to those of secular universities. In other words, the religious organizations have been able to adapt

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54 For an account of the establishment of the university from the point of view of Sōka Gakkai, see Ikeda 2008.

55 Established as an independent nonprofit organization in 1987, a four-year liberal college was opened in 2001 and was accredited in 2005.

56 See https://www.soka.ac.jp/ (accessed 23 July 2016).

57 See https://www.soka.ac.jp/en/about/philosophy/mission/ (accessed 23 July 2016).

themselves to secular definitions and expectations of higher education. It is also important to note that both universities aim to attract students that are not necessarily members of the religious organization, and have opted for promoting an image of universities based on religious principles, but not focused on sectarian teachings.

For instance, Sōka Gakkai's account of the foundation of the new university emphasizes that the leader did not believe in religion as part of the educational process, but rather "he wished to establish a new university that provided a fully humanistic education with Buddhism as its philosophical bedrock." [58] As in the case of its relationship with Kōmeitō, Sōka Gakkai carefully presented Sōka Daigaku as separate from the religious organization. Ikeda, for example, did not make an official visit to the university when it opened.[59]

Kōfuku no Kagaku offers an example of a very different approach to the negotiation between new religions and so-called secular spheres, and to the definition of education in schools and universities. A small number of studies have investigated the cultural nationalism trends in Kōfuku no Kagaku and its political activities.[60] However, although education is mentioned in other works as one of the main areas of interest for the group, little attention has been paid to the topic.[61] Kōfuku no Kagaku makes for a good case study because it is a leading new religion in late twentieth-century Japan, and it is a movement that has increased its participation in politics and education over the last few years, in the post-Aum era. Central to this is the movement's plan to found a university, Happy Science University, which I will discuss in the following section.

Kōfuku no Kagaku and Education

Kōfuku no Kagaku was founded in 1986 by Ōkawa Ryūhō 大川隆法 (born 1956), a graduate of Tokyo University. Shimazono has referred to Kōfuku no Kagaku and other contemporary new religions as examples of the "anti-secularism" (*hansezokushugi* 反世俗主義) that developed in the post-1980s, and he has discussed the movement's emphasis on religious values in politics, education, and economics.[62] Ōkawa already expressed these ideas in early publications, such as the text *Yūtopia kachi kakumei* ユートピア価値革命 (The Utopian Value Revolution) published in 1989, criticizing the school system for not teaching the most important lessons for humanity, such as that human life is eternal.

As mentioned previously, political and other public activities play a central role in many new religions. Similarly, for Kōfuku no Kagaku's members, political, educational, and economic activities are an essential aspect of their practice and they are all part of the vision of building a utopian society on earth, merging religious objectives and this-worldly goals. This point is emphasized by Shimazono, who says:

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58 Ikeda 2008, p. 98.
59 See Ikeda 2008, p. 134. The text also mentions the criticisms received by Sōka Gakkai in the early 1970s as one of the reasons for maintaining a separation between the university and the religious organization.
60 See in particular Tsukada 2012; Tsukada 2015; Klein 2012; Schrimpf 2008; Shimazono 2001.
61 In particular Shimazono raises some interesting points regarding Kōfuku no Kagaku's views on education in his discussion about nationalism and new religions. See Shimazono 2001, pp. 104–105.
62 Shimazono 2001, pp. 104, 229–36.

> [Kōfuku no Kagaku] encourages the "Utopian Value Revolution" to change entirely the present social order, including politics, economics and education, and to promote an order emphasizing religious values. In politics, for example, elements of moral excellence should be incorporated into the democratic mechanism. In the economy, divine values should be applied to price, interest rate and tax systems in place of the simple exchange of equivalents. In education, the purpose of life, the importance of love and the value of eternal life should be taught as high priorities.[63]

The group developed its utopian mission over the years with the foundation of a political party in 2008 (Kōfuku Jitsugentō 幸福実現党, Happiness Realization Party) and the establishment of schools in 2010 and 2013. The focus on education has been central in Kōfuku no Kagaku since the very beginning. Initially the group presented itself as a study group on human happiness and referred to itself as a "graduate school of life" (*jinsei no daigakuin* 人生の大学院) rather than as a religious organization.[64] Early publications stated that the aim of the "Science of Happiness" (*kōfuku no kagaku*) was "the scientific investigation of 'happiness,'" and defined the religious person as a "scientist of the world of the heart."[65] Publications in English describe the Institute for the Research in Human Happiness (IRH— that is, the former English name used by Kōfuku no Kagaku) as a research center whose teaching focuses on Buddhist principles and aims to create leaders for society:

> The teachings of IRH are based on the spirit of Buddhism. The two main pillars are the attainment of spiritual wisdom and the practice of "love that gives." Members learn Buddha's Truth (the Law) through books, lectures and seminars to acquire knowledge of spiritual views of life and world. They also practice meditation and self-reflection daily, based on the Truth they have learned; this is the way to develop a deeper understanding of life and build characters worthy of being leaders in society who can contribute to the development of the world.[66]

In 1986 the group introduced an examination system: applicants had to pass an exam based on Ōkawa's books to be admitted as members.[67] Subsequently, members' training was developed through residential training courses (*kenshūkai* 研修会), which even now are still important. Furthermore, members were divided hierarchically into different levels (up to the level of instructor, *kōshi* 講師) through qualification seminars (*shikaku seminā* 資格セミナー).

The group has changed drastically over the years, and has transformed itself from a study group into a religious organization. In 1991 it received Japanese government recognition under the Religious Corporations Law (*Shūkyō hōjin hō*). However, it has retained an emphasis on study in its publications and its leader's speeches, as well as in the organization's seminars and training courses. Education, study, and learning are fundamental parts of Kōfuku no Kagaku's training and doctrine. Recognizing this fact is

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63 Shimazono 2004, pp. 270–71.
64 Astley 1995, p. 357.
65 See, respectively, Ōkawa 1992, p. 8; Ōkawa 1986, p. 17.
66 This text appeared in several publications by Kōfuku no Kagaku in the 1990s, such as IRH Monthly, Kōfuku no Kagaku's monthly journal in English (now Happy Science Monthly).
67 On the examination system, see also Astley 1995; Nijū Isseiki Bunmei Kenkyūkai 1991.
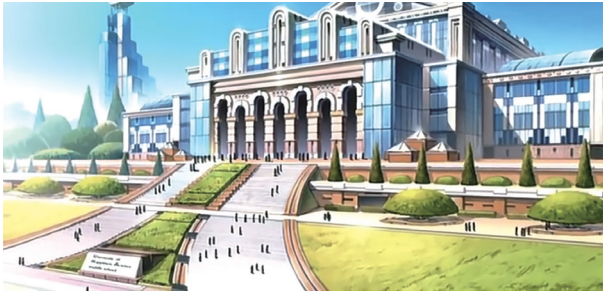
Figure 2. Still image from the movie *Ōgon no hō* (The Golden Laws), 2003 (Ōkawa 2003).

crucial for understanding the movement's recent activities and developments. The idea of building schools connected to the group had already appeared in media texts produced by Kōfuku no Kagaku in the early part of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the movement's animation movie, *Ōgon no hō* (The Golden Laws) screened in 2003, for example, the main character, Satoru サトル, lives in a twenty-fifth-century city of the future, New Atlantis ニューアトランティス, and is an elite student at a middle school which is part of the University of Happy Science (figures 2 and 3). His dream is to be admitted to the prestigious academy to be trained as a religious minister.

Figure 3. Satoru and Arisa, the two major characters in the animation movie *Ōgon no hō* (The Golden Laws), 2003. Advertising poster distributed with film tickets in 2003 (Ōkawa 2003).

The representations of the school in the film, including the architecture of the campus (which recalls the buildings of the boarding school built by Kōfuku no Kagaku a few years later), seem to confirm that the investment in educational facilities initiated in 2010 was part of a long term plan. It shows that discussions about educational reform had previously circulated in the group also through visual culture.

Happy Science University, HSU

In 2010, Kōfuku no Kagaku established Kōfuku no Kagaku Gakuen 幸福の科学学園 (Happy Science Academy) in Nasu town, Tochigi Prefecture, a boarding school that includes a junior and senior high school (figure 4).[68] In the same year a new division for the establishment of a university (*Kōfuku no Kagaku Daigaku Junbishitsu* 幸福の科学大学準備室) was formed and started working toward the opening of a new university in spring 2015.[69] In 2013, a Kansai branch of the Kōfuku no Kagaku Gakuen with a combined junior-senior high school opened in Ōtsu City, Shiga Prefecture.[70] Kōfuku no Kagaku Gakuen has been granted the status of "educational corporation" (*gakkō hōjin*) by the government, and therefore its curriculum follows the standard curriculum of other Japanese high schools and emphasizes preparation for university entrance exams. However, religious practices,

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68 See http://www.happy-science.ac.jp/index.html (accessed 23 July 2016).
69 The name in English used by the group is Preparatory Office for Establishing Happy Science University.
70 See http://kansai.happy-science.ac.jp/ (accessed 23 July 2016).

such as morning and evening prayers, are included in the students' daily schedule, and participation in religious events is integrated in the school calendar. Furthermore, the school's advertising material emphasizes that religious education (*shūkyō kyōiku* 宗教教育) is taught in addition to moral education (*dōtoku kyōiku* 道徳教育). It also stresses that such religious values, which form the basis of Kōfuku no Kagaku's educational principles, will efficiently address issues such as bullying and create a harmonious learning environment. This will eventually transform Japan and the world into a utopia. The educational emphasis is on the creation of talents, a "true elite" (*shinnaru erīto* 真なるエリート) that will enter prestigious universities in Japan and make Kōfuku no Kagaku renowned.[71]
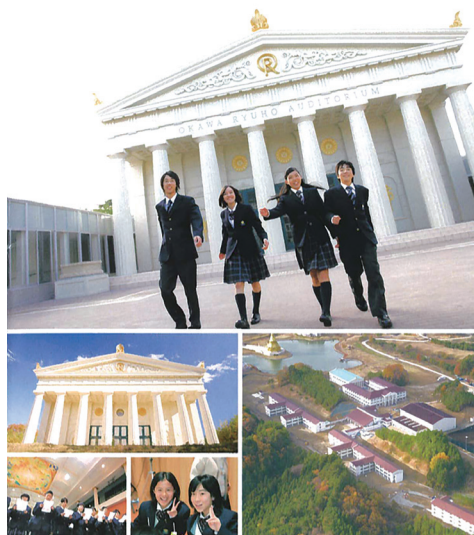

Figure 4. Images of Kōfuku no Kagaku Gakuen, Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture. Pamphlet "Happy Science. Master Ryuho Okawa," Happy Science Public Relations Division, n.d., p. 16.

Happy Science University (*Kōfuku no Kagaku Daigaku* 幸福の科学大学, hereafter HSU) was conceived as a continuation of the educational process started at high school. The initial plan was that the university would welcome the first cohort of students who graduated from the high school. The construction of a university campus in the town of Chōsei in Chiba Prefecture was completed in 2014 (figure 5). Kōfuku no Kagaku developed a plan for the university that included the establishment of three faculties: the Faculty of Human Happiness (*Ningen kōfuku gakubu* 人間幸福学部), the Faculty of Successful Management (*Keiei seikō gakubu* 経営成功学部), and the Faculty of Future Industry (*Mirai sangyō gakubu* 未来産業学部). In 2014, the group also started the international recruitment of teachers for courses taught in English.

HSU promotional material talked of applying Kōfuku no Kagaku's philosophy to education, and emphasized that the spiritual foundation of the university was located in the "search for happiness and the creation of a new civilization" (*kōfuku no tankyū to shinbunmei no sōzō* 幸福の探求と新文明の創造). Videos introduced the project during events and ceremonies, and members supported it with a new "prayer for the successful establishment of Kōfuku no Kagaku University" (*Kōfuku no Kagaku Daigaku setsuritsu daiseikō kigan* 幸福の科学大学設立大成功祈願).[72] Kōfuku no Kagaku presented the university as part of an "education revolution" (*kyōiku kakumei* 教育革命). Its mission is summarized in three points: to be "the foundation stone for utopia" (*yūtopia no ishizue* ユートピアの礎) that will

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71 Advertising material for the schools, as well as presentations of their curricula and schedules of activities are available in several publications and online. See for example: http://www.happy-science.ac.jp/index.html; http://kansai.happy-science.ac.jp/ (both accessed 23 July 2016); Ōkawa 2014a, p. 110.

72 In July 2014, I visited two Kōfuku no Kagaku centers in Kyushu, where the prayer was recited during the morning ceremonies. The promotional video was shown during a ceremony I attended at the Yufuin Shōshinkan (one of the head temples in Kyushu) in Oita Prefecture.

produce a new elite of talents; to be "the foundation for the creation of the future nation" (*mirai kokka sōzō no kiso* 未来国家創造の基礎), a new country based on religious values and prosperity; and, finally, to be "the origin of a new civilization" (*shinbunmei no genryū* 新文明の源流), which will also produce a new culture.[73] The university therefore represents a significant step towards the creation of

Figure 5. View of the main building of Happy Science University, Chiba Prefecture. Photo taken by the author.

a new type of scholarship based on Ōkawa's teachings. It also forms the basis for fostering new talents and a new civilization, that is, utopia on earth.

In a work published in 2013, Ōkawa criticized Japanese university-level education, accusing it of lacking a pragmatic approach and creativity. Some of his comments echoed recent declarations by Shimomura Hakubun 下村博文, at the time Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, about the lack of internationalization in Japanese universities. Ōkawa agreed that it is important for Japanese students to be competitive in the global market and insists on the need to go beyond current approaches, in order to make a "contribution to the future" (*mirai e no kōken* 未来への貢献).[74] Furthermore, he advocated the study of religion as a prerequisite for becoming a future leader and proposed the "Faculty of Human Happiness" as the foundation stone for the creation not only of new learning, but also of an ideal state.[75]

However, in October 2014 MEXT rejected the group's application for permission to open the university. The reason given was that the aim, objectives, and curriculum of HSU, based almost exclusively on Ōkawa's publications, were not suitable for tertiary education.[76] The rejection was based on two articles: Article 83 of the School Education Act (*Gakkō kyōiku hō* 学校教育法) of 1947 and Article 19 of the University Establishment Standards of 1956 (*Daigaku secchi kijun* 大学設置基準). The former defines universities as "centers of arts and sciences" aimed at "teaching a wide range of knowledge and developing intellectual, moral and advanced abilities through deeply researching and studying specialized arts and science."[77] The latter refers to the requirement for a university to structure its teaching appropriately through faculties and departments, and to organize curricula systematically. Curricula should be designed in order to teach specialized arts and science to students,

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73 See *Kōfuku no Kagaku* 2013.

74 Ōkawa 2013, pp. 19–20.

75 Ōkawa 2013, pp. 124–28.

76 The complete response from MEXT is available at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/daigaku/toushin/attach/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2014/10/29/1357077_4_2.pdf (accessed 23 July 2016).

77 The text in Japanese is available at http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/S22/S22HO026.html (accessed 23 July 2016).

and also to foster in-depth general education and provide students with the ability to make comprehensive judgments.[78]

According to the MEXT report, there was a lack of evidence to prove the scientific rationality of the "spiritual messages" (*reigen* 霊言), transmitted through Ōkawa, which would form the basis of textbooks for the curriculum. The report defines learning (*gakumon* 学問) as knowledge and methods systematized and based on a set of theories that become both widely accepted and universal. Although the report clarifies that this is not a judgment of spiritual messages as religious practice, it clearly states that they cannot be recognized as scholarship, as they do not fulfill the above-mentioned criteria for the definition of learning. Only the leader, for example, can perform spiritual messages, so they are not universal.

Kōfuku no Kagaku's Response to MEXT

The group did not expect MEXT's rejection. Significant resources were invested in the construction of the new campus and the first graduates from Kōfuku no Kagaku Gakuen were expected to form the first intake of students for HSU in the spring of 2015. Furthermore, the group showed a very optimistic attitude, presenting the project during meetings and publishing several volumes on educational topics. During conversations I have had with members over the last few years, I had the impression that the opening of the university in 2015 was considered very likely to happen.[79] Kōfuku no Kagaku initially responded by lodging a formal objection (*igi mōshitate sho* 異議申立書) with MEXT on 7 November 2014, followed by a supplementary formal objection on 11 November 2014.[80] In these documents Kōfuku no Kagaku rejected accusations of having acted improperly by putting psychological pressure on MEXT representatives and claimed that the reasons for the rejection were a violation of academic freedom and freedom of religion as well as an act against the separation of religion and the state. Subsequently the group claimed that the Minister of Education, Shimomura Hakubun, may not have appreciated the spiritual messages that Ōkawa had received from his (that is, Shimomura's) "guardian spirit" (*shugorei* 守護霊), and which he published in 2014.[81] The objections were rejected, as a result of which Kōfuku no Kagaku will not be able to reapply to MEXT for official recognition until 2019.

Subsequently, in a series of publications following the event, the group also attempted to refute MEXT's definition of scholarship. For example, an article in the magazine *The Liberty* in January 2015 employs the "spirit" of Socrates to rebut the definition of learning, claiming that god and soul are not something that could be proven, but that they are nonetheless the "prerequisites for learning" (*gakumon no zentei* 学問の前提).[82] Furthermore, the article rejects the definition of learning as "knowledge and methods systematized and

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78 See http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/koutou/053/gijiroku/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2012/10/30/1325943_02_3_1.pdf (accessed 23 July 2016).

79 Ian Reader also mentioned to me that during a visit he conducted to Kōfuku no Kagaku's Tokyo headquarters in November 2013 the group representatives told him that they were expecting to get MEXT approval and that they were convinced that the plan would go ahead.

80 The full texts of these are available at http://university.happy-science.jp/files/2014/11/6tz5goqd.pdf and http://university.happy-science.jp/files/2014/11/7pq3qiyo.pdf (accessed 23 July 2016).

81 See Ōkawa 2014b.

82 *The Liberty* is a monthly magazine published by Kōfuku no Kagaku's publishing house (IRH Press) since 1995. The magazine, aimed at both a member and non-member audience, focuses on discussions of current political events and social issues. See http://the-liberty.com/article.php?item_id=8785 (accessed 18 March 2016).

based on a set of theories" in favor of a definition that sees religion as central to education, and learning as a mission "to reveal the truth of the world that God created."[83] As previously mentioned, from Kōfuku no Kagaku's point of view, moral education, which is a topic of interest to the current Abe administration, cannot exist without religious education. The group also rejected the accusations that the curriculum is solely based on spiritual messages and claimed that spiritual messages are not a technique exclusive to its leader, as other members perform them as well.

In various publications, speeches, and online articles Kōfuku no Kagaku reiterated the point that its teachings are based on spiritual messages and that MEXT did not discourage the application during initial consultations, even though the group declared from the beginning its intention to build a university based on religious teachings. At the same time, in articles and statements published by the organization, HSU is compared to universities established by other religious organizations, in particular Christian universities, which make explicit reference to their doctrine in their mission statements.

An issue of *The Liberty* magazine published in February 2015 devotes twenty pages to a discussion of the possibility of "a science of spiritual messages" (*reigengaku* 霊言学) as a response to the accusations that spiritual messages lack scientific basis. The discussion places Ōkawa's experience in the broader context of religious and spiritual traditions based on spiritual messages. This includes earlier Japanese new religions, such as Tenrikyō and Oomoto, whose leaders experienced spirit possessions, but also Islam, Christianity, European and American Spiritualism in the nineteenth century, and New Age channeling experiences in the 1970s. Furthermore, it presents *reigen* messages as a phenomenon that could be studied and scientifically evaluated, for example by analyzing their contents and mechanism, or by assessing the validity of the prophecies. These claims for the validity of spiritual messages are supported by interviews with several non-member experts.[84] Finally, at the end of the special issue a definition of science (*kagaku* 科学) as the "study of the structure of the world God created" (*kami no tsukutta sekai no shikumi no tankyū* 神の創った世界の仕組みの探究) is proposed, in contrast to science as a "study of replicable phenomena" (*saigensei no aru genshō no tankyū* 再現性のある現象の探究). This serves to assert the validity of the new discipline of *reigengaku* and to reinforce the importance of a religious understanding of scientific research.

Eventually Kōfuku no Kagaku decided to open Happy Science University (*Happī saiensu yunibāshiti* ハッピー・サイエンス・ユニバーシティ) as an unaccredited private religious school and in April 2015 admitted the first group of students. Organizations are not prohibited to set up their own institutions, but without MEXT recognition the awards they make are not officially accredited. This can have implications for the later career paths of graduates. It will be interesting to see what happens when the first group of students finish their study at Happy Science University in 2019.

Concluding Remarks

Kōfuku no Kagaku's attempts to challenge MEXT's definitions of learning and scholarship constitute an interesting case study of how a religious group negotiates the definition of

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83 See http://the-liberty.com/article.php?item_id=8785 (accessed 18 March 2016).
84 *The Liberty* 2015, pp. 65–66.

a secular sphere, namely that of public education. As mentioned in the above analysis, other new religions successfully obtained permission to open a university in the postwar period. The most evident difference, as discussed above, is that Tenrikyō and Sōka Gakkai established institutions that mirrored secular universities while offering "added value." On the contrary, Kōfuku no Kagaku proposed a curriculum that openly challenged secular definitions of scholarship, learning, and science. Another important aspect to be considered is that in the immediate postwar period, new religions had an opportunity to enter the secular sphere (including politics), and, although criticized, they were also seen as an example of religion's ability to adapt to a modern society. In the case of Kōfuku no Kagaku, however, its attempt to set up a university occurred in the post-1995 era, when new religions have come to be seen more widely as a threat to secular institutions.

As a consequence, nowadays new religions are more commonly seen as incompatible with a specific definition of secular education and institutions. In such a context, the attempt by a registered new religious movement to gain ministry approval for a university grounded solely within that religion's own texts and its founder's revelations not only poses an explicit challenge to existing norms and views of what the academic and scientific bases of education should be; it may also reinforce public negative perceptions of and worries about new religions. By questioning the bases upon which university education is grounded, Kōfuku no Kagaku appeared to challenge the very foundations of the secular settlement that has held sway in Japan since 1945.[85] The exchange between Kōfuku no Kagaku and MEXT seems to confirm Asad's observation that having a public role in modern societies is accepted only for "those religions that are able *and* willing to enter the public sphere for the purpose of rational debate with opponents who are to be persuaded rather than coerced."[86]

At the same time, Kōfuku no Kagaku's focus on spiritual messages as a basis for its university education was in line with a prevailing ethos in new religions, in which political and educational activities remain an essential part of their activities. When groups are forced to separate their "religious" and "secular" activities, as was the case for Sōka Gakkai and Kōmeitō in 1970, they can lose dynamism. As McLaughlin[87] has observed, since the 1970s Sōka Gakkai has struggled to continue the growth momentum of earlier periods, and in recent years growth appears to have stagnated.

Therefore, as shown by its attempt to claim the validity of scientific examination of spiritual messages, Kōfuku no Kagaku will endeavor to claim its legitimacy in domains such as education and science and challenge secular definitions and criteria. New religions need to demonstrate their validity and relevance in secular domains to members, but at the same time aim to offer alternatives to the secular sphere. As previously discussed, other religiously affiliated universities, such as Tenri University or Sōka Daigaku, as well as Christian, Buddhist, and Shinto universities, have been able to offer secular education while including also religious aspects, such as classes on sectarian subjects or doctrinal studies departments. Kōfuku no Kagaku's failure to recognize the usefulness of this compromise (or negotiation of boundaries) is also due to its core belief that sees all these domains (spiritual, political,

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85 It is also possible, although there is no evidence to support this, that the concern about the declining numbers of students in Japan may have been a factor in the MEXT's reluctance to grant recognition to a new university.

86 Asad 1999, p. 180.

87 As McLaughlin 2009; 2012b.

and so on) as interconnected, a vision in contrast with the idea of restricting the role of religion and separating it from the public sphere. Kōfuku no Kagaku offers, from this point of view, an interesting example of an uncompromising attitude of a religious group that refuses to confine itself to the private realm (or to keep religion "out of the classroom" as other confessional universities did in prewar Japan). In doing so it openly proposes an anti-secular utopian vision involving politics, religion, and economics, a vision that conflicts with the prevailing ethos of post-1995 Japan.

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Religious Globalization and Reflexive Secularization in a Japanese New Religion[1]

Isaac Gagné

This article draws on ethnographic research with a Japanese new religious organization to examine the interconnection between the processes of globalization and contemporary formations of religion and secularity in Japan. By tracing the development of new religions in modern Japan and examining a case study of a Japanese new religion pursuing a globalizing strategy, this article analyzes how leaders are attempting to transform the structure and image of their organization, the responses by members to these changes, and the larger implications of these changes regarding the dynamics of religious globalization and secularization. In line with recent comparative approaches to the secular, it reveals how religious globalization can become a vector for global growth *and* self-conscious institutional change, which draw simultaneously from global and local notions of religion and secularity. Ultimately, the article suggests that the "formations of the secular" in contemporary Japan are inextricably enmeshed with the processes of globalization, which resonate with broader social changes in Japanese society, and which are refracted through the selective yet dynamic interplay of both religion and secularity on local and global levels.

Keywords: globalization, internal secularization, Japanese religion, New Religious Movements, religious authority, secularization theory, *shinshūkyō*

In June 2009, the Japanese religious organization Kagamikyō held their "Paradise Festival" to mark a new chapter in their forty-year history.[2] At the festival, held in their newly completed headquarters in the Kansai region, the head of Kagamikyō strode to the podium in their main worship hall and announced: "This festival marks the rebirth of Kagamikyō. The new Kagamikyō is a super-religion (*chōshūkyō* 超宗教), a global religion (*sekai shūkyō* 世界宗教)—it transcends all ways of thinking about Kagamikyō itself." Recently, grandiose

Figure 1. Going Global: Sculpture symbolizing Kagamikyō's global expansion at a Kansai worship hall. Photo by the author.

claims such as these have become increasingly common among many new religious movements, but what does this assertion mean in terms of the institutional dynamics and the experience of members within such organizations?

The changes takings place in Kagamikyō typify those occurring in many new religious groups in Japan. Many new religions are engaging in *global* moves toward active overseas proselytizing, as well as *internal* moves to address contemporary needs of members. These two distinctive but related moves simultaneously challenge conventional categories of religion both in Japan and abroad. In this article, based on fieldwork and interviews conducted from 2007 to 2010 and follow-up interviews in 2015 with members of a new religious organization, I examine the interconnection between the processes of globalization and contemporary formations of religion and secularity in Japan, focusing on both institutional and individual levels. By tracing the development of new religions in modern Japan and examining a case study of a Japanese new religion pursuing a globalizing strategy, I analyze: 1) how leaders are attempting to transform the structure and image of their organization; 2) the responses by members to these changes; and 3) the larger implications of these changes for the dynamics of religious globalization and secularization.

In line with recent comparative approaches to the secular, I suggest that the concept of the secular and the dynamics of secularization are not exclusive to Western societies or to the development of Christianity, but rather should be understood within the broader processes of religious globalization and social change.[3] The case study of Kagamikyō's globalization process reveals how religious globalization can become a vector for global growth *and* self-conscious institutional change, drawing simultaneously from global and local notions of religion and secularity. In other words, unlike the radicalization of religious identity and the intensified frictions between religious and secular institutions that have emerged among many globalizing religions, Kagamikyō has actively refrained from advocating exclusivist religious ideologies and has embraced a range of both inclusive spirituality and secular rhetoric and practices.[4]

Through the case study of Kagamikyō, I show how new formations of religious meanings and practice have emerged out of the selective yet dynamic interplay of both religion and secularity, in a process that I call "reflexive secularization." As I describe below, "reflexive secularization" refers to the effects of intertwined processes of religious globalization and secularization on the transformation of organizational structures

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3 Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, and Middell 2015; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011; Casanova 2006; cf. Asad 2003.

4 For example, see Casanova 1994; Coleman and Collins 2004.

and practices. More specifically, it refers to the process of how religious organizations reflexively—that is, self-consciously and purposefully—transform religious elements including teachings, symbols, rituals, and rhetoric in response to external factors, which include public perceptions of religion, challenges in attracting new members, and interaction with other religions and with nonreligious discourses and practices. Ultimately, I aim to show how the "formations of the secular" in contemporary Japan are inextricably enmeshed with the processes of globalization and resonate with broader social changes in Japanese society.

Secularization Theory and Religious Globalization

In order to analyze the particular changes occurring within religious groups in Japan today, it is first necessary to define the terms of the debate around the concept of secularization, and how it relates with Japan. Like other post-industrial societies, Japan has experienced the decline of traditional religions of community-based practice and inherited affiliation (for example, Buddhism and Shinto) under the processes of industrialization and urbanization since the late nineteenth century. Initially, such changes were identified as part of a teleological process of secularization—the disappearance of religion under modernization—that was seen as an inevitable and universal truth under early theories of modernity.[5] However, the decline in traditional religious affiliations and practices has come hand-in-hand with new forms of religion in Japan. First during the nineteenth century, and then rapidly following World War II, hundreds of new religious organizations emerged in Japan.[6] Through the work of both Japanese and foreign scholars, Japan's new religions came to be seen as a counterpoint to conventional secularization theories which posited the decline of religion under the processes of modernization. Anthropologists, sociologists, and religious studies scholars such as Morioka Kiyomi, Winston Davis, Shimazono Susumu, and others have pointed to the new forms of community, the continued practice of "thaumaturgical" rituals, and the diversity of "new spirituality movements" that have flourished with Japan's modernization.[7] Like new religions in many other modernizing societies, new religious movements in Japan over the past century have contributed to a global rethinking and reshaping of secularization theories.[8]

Crucial to the reshaping of secularization theories among contemporary scholars of religion is the concept of secularization as the "functional differentiation" of social sub-systems, including religious and nonreligious spheres, in modern society. This approach is best exemplified in the work by Karel Dobbelaere, Mark Chaves, and Ugo Dessì.[9] Building on Dobbelaere's schematization of three dimensions of secularization—laicization, internal secularization, and religious disinvolvement—sociologist Mark Chaves refocuses the

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5 Such theories were pioneered by Weber (1958, 1968), as well as by later sociologists (for example, Wilson 1966; Berger 1967).

6 The definition of "new religions" remains contested among scholars of religion. In Japan, the term generally refers to those movements that emerged from the mid-nineteenth century, usually alongside the processes of modernization. See Inoue 1996; Numata 1988; Shimazono 1993; Shimazono 2001; Shimazono 2004.

7 Morioka 1976; Davis 1980; Shimazono 1996.

8 Dessì 2013; Nelson 2012; Partridge 2005; Reader 2007; Stark 1999; Stark and Bainbridge 1985. See also Hardacre 2011 for her application of Taylor's (2007) concept of secularization as an elite project as a useful way of understanding state-led secularization in the Meiji period.

9 Dobbelaere 1981; Dobbelaere 1985; Dobbelaere 2002; Chaves 1994; Dessì 2013.

conceptual focus of secularization theory not on the decline of religion per se, but on the decline of the scope of religious authority at different levels in societies. Chaves isolates three levels of secularization in terms of religious authority: the societal level, the organizational level, and the individual level.[10] Drawing from Chaves's work, Ugo Dessì defines secularization in terms of the "functional differentiation" of spheres based on the *medium* of authority, meaning the particular ways that claims are legitimated within different "social subsystems" such as politics, science, and religion.[11] Religious authority, in this framework, is characterized by legitimating claims based on the medium of "the authority of some super-empirical agency."[12]

This focus on religious authority in the public sphere is an important step toward refining a sociological analysis of religion and secularization. However, to understand fully the various ways that religion is transforming within contemporary societies, it is also necessary to examine how organizations are negotiating contemporary societal changes. This dimension of organizational transformation, which is often called internal secularization, has usually been analyzed in terms of the decreasing capacity for religious elites to control "organizational resources within the religious sphere."[13] This is driven by the organizational leaders' active transformation of their internal structure, rituals, and even symbolic meanings within their organization toward conformity (or at least complementarity) with another referential world.[14]

The work of Dobbelaere and Chaves is primarily informed by research on societies dominated by a single major religion, such as Christianity or Islam. In this article, I explore the significance of their theories for the Japanese case. How should we analyze non-Western religions that aim to "go global"? In other words, what are the notable features of "referential worlds" in the case of societies with multiple religious traditions such as Japan, especially when they become active on the global stage? My examination of changes in Kagamikyō suggests the more general point that Japanese religions demonstrate a high sensitivity and responsiveness to various secular and religious "referential worlds," including domestic skepticism of religion and global religious and secular discourses. This sensitivity and responsiveness can best be described as "reflexive secularization," which refers to the mutually related processes of internal secularization and religious globalization. I suggest that Kagamikyō is pursuing "reflexive secularization" on two levels. On the global level, Kagamikyō is relativizing aspects of its distinctive religious teachings and practices in order to make them compatible with and complementary to other religious as well as secular practices and discourse. On the domestic level, Kagamikyō is de-emphasizing, and in some cases eliminating, religious teachings and practices in order to avoid the stigma of new religions in Japan and thereby appeal to younger Japanese who may be attracted to nonreligious and cosmopolitan aspects of the organization. The concept of reflexive

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10 Chaves 1994, p. 757.
11 Dessì 2013, pp. 13–16. For example, the legitimacy of political authority is based on the medium of power (in terms of controlling access to political influence as well as the control of violence), and scientific authority is based on the medium of empirical truths.
12 Dessì 2013, p. 16.
13 Chaves 1994, p. 757. On internal secularization, see also Luckmann 1967; Dobbelaere 1985; Dobbelaere 2002.
14 On "organizational resources within the religious sphere," see Chaves 1994, p. 757. On "referential worlds," see Dobbelaere 1985; Dobbelaere 2002; Chaves 1994.

secularization thus highlights the active and agentive processes of secularization, and also brings attention to the ways that religious globalization can become linked with various formations of secularization at global and local levels.

Challenges and Changes Facing "New Religions" in Contemporary Japan

In Japan, religious organizations and practices have undergone dramatic changes over the past two centuries. These changes have included the decline of "traditional" religious organizations in terms of institutional membership and social relevance to everyday life, as well as the emergence of "new religions," especially in the postwar period.[15] Unlike "traditional" Buddhist and Shinto organizations, these new religious organizations were strongly influenced by foreign religions, modern sciences, and modern technology. They combined Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian teachings with "simple, direct, and practical beliefs and practices," the use of group psychology and the modern mass media, and charismatic leaders.[16]

Postwar Japan witnessed what has been described as a "rush hour of the gods." [17] New charismatic leaders emerged across the country and it seemed that any "spiritually gifted" or "inspired" founder could spread his or her message through the self-production of organizational newspapers, books, and amulets.[18] Especially in the cities and suburbs, new religious and spiritual organizations thrived by offering individuals comfort in their daily lives as well as by rebuilding local communities through the door-to-door activities of members.

These newly resurgent and revitalized religious organizations seemed to mark a new potential for religion in Japan that was neither sponsored nor suppressed by the state, as had been the case during the first half of the twentieth century. Rather, they offered a vibrant force for the formation of new forms of community as well as moral and spiritual direction, meaning, and practice in individuals' lives. Nearly 180 new religious organizations were founded in the twenty years following Japan's defeat in World War II, and a further 27,000 unincorporated religious organizations emerged in the first fifteen years alone (according to figures kept between 1947 and 1960).[19] In the cities, the greatest growth occurred during the period 1945–1964 when "some new religions became true mass organizations" comprising a million or more members.[20] By the 1970s scholars estimated that 10 to 20 percent of Japanese were members of such groups.[21]

While these "new religions" were reaching their peak of academic and media attention in the 1970s, they also began to face a number of challenges to their continued growth. The

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15 For a general review on the decline of traditional religious practices and affiliations, see Reader 2012. For the effects of demographic changes on Buddhism, see Covell 2005; Nelson 2012. For the effects of changing funeral practices on Buddhism, see Rowe 2011; Suzuki 2000. For the transformation of Shinto in the public sphere, see Breen 2010; Mullins 2012; Nelson 1996; Porcu 2012; Rots 2015. See also Smith 1974; Dore 1958; and Dorman 2007 on the decline and changing meanings of Buddhist ritual practices in households in the immediate postwar decades (that is, through the maintenance of household altars and ancestor veneration).
16 Davis 1980, p. 8; Hardacre 1986; Nagai 1995.
17 McFarland 1967.
18 See Baffelli 2007; Dorman 2012.
19 Hardacre 2004, pp. 399–400.
20 Hardacre 2004, p. 399.
21 Shimazono 2004.

increase of new religions coincided largely with the growth of Japan's postwar economy and with the mass movement to cities, and as the economy and urban population have faced new challenges since the 1970s, new religions have also been affected. As a result, the religious topography of Japanese society has faced new structural challenges driven by an aging population, changing social gender roles, urbanization, and a growing public skepticism against religious activities.

First, Japan's changing demographics—an aging population and declining birthrate—is one of the most salient structural changes in Japan. As families shrink and current members grow older, many new religions are shrinking and aging. As a result, many organizations are looking for novel ways to attract new members to revitalize their membership and to gain potential sources of income for their maintenance and expansion.

Second, religious participation in Japan is heavily gendered and supported primarily by active female members. Women make up the majority of lay members in most religious groups, and women also occupy many positions as local leaders.[22] In the postwar period in particular, women have been active agents in spreading religious teachings and practices in the growing urban and suburban areas of Japan's major cities. Some estimates suggest that roughly two-thirds of the members of many new religions are women, which was confirmed by my own observations of a range of new religious organizations from around 2007 to 2016.[23] With the growing number of women in the workforce, however, organizations have found the need to adapt their activities to meet the lifestyles and needs of working women. Indeed, by the early part of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the dominant forms of activities in many groups had changed from weekday study groups and daily rituals to evening, weekend, and public holiday events that do not interfere with work or family.

Third, the popularization of new religious organizations during the twentieth century was part of the larger process of urbanization. The height of their growth occurred during the period of rapid urbanization in the 1950s and 1960s, when many newly married couples and young families moved to urban and suburban housing complexes. The expansion of new religious organizations during this time largely relied on door-to-door proselytizing by women targeted at recently arrived female residents removed from previous family and neighborhood connections. By the 1990s it became increasingly difficult to gain new members through door-to-door proselytizing, as smaller neighborhood communities were replaced by compartmentalized mass housing complexes with a more rapid turnover rate among residents, along with growing anonymity among neighbors.

Lastly, in the media and among the public, skepticism toward new religious groups has increased, especially after the infamous Aum Shinrikyō sarin gas attack in 1995. While skeptical public attitudes initially emerged in the late 1960s in response to scandals involving press censorship, aggressive proselytizing, and political activities by major new religious organizations such as Sōka Gakkai 創価学会, the 1995 Aum attacks, in which thirteen people were killed and over six thousand people were injured, became the trigger

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22 See for example, Davis 1980; Hardacre 1986; Hibino 2003; Schattschneider 2003; Usui 2003. In some major new religions such as Tenrikyō 天理教, Renmonkyō 蓮門教, Ōmotokyō 大本教, Reiyūkai 霊友会, and Shinji Shūmeikai 神慈秀明会, women have been founders, co-founders, and prominent leaders.

23 For example, Hibino 2003; Numata 1988.

for a powerful and pervasive stigma against new religious groups.[24] Indeed, over fifteen years later, members of various religious organizations recall that the Aum affair produced "allergic" reactions that caused Japanese people to "stay away from anything that sounds like religion."[25]

Case Study: The Structure of Kagamikyō

Religious organizations in Japan have responded in various ways to these changes and challenges. Kagamikyō is one such organization. It has responded to the new domestic challenges facing Japanese religion by pursuing a global strategy. Kagamikyō is a "late-comer" new religion that emerged in the 1970s as a splinter group of the Church of World Messianity (Sekai Kyūseikyō 世界救世教), a major new religious organization that was founded by Okada Mokichi 岡田茂吉 in 1935. Okada has been an influential figure for more than thirty splinter groups that have emerged since his death in 1955.[26] Like most of the other splinter groups, Kagamikyō's teachings and practices are based on Okada's writings, which combine elements of Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity.

Organizationally, Kagamikyō consists of a core group of full-time workers who live in the group's facilities, and a general membership of lay members who attend weekly meetings and monthly ceremonies. After Kagamikyō's split from The Church of World Messianity, it was led by the founding female leader and her husband, until their deaths in 2006. Up until 2006, when the eldest son took over, the group was characterized by a theological emphasis on the teachings of Okada and an organizational emphasis on the authority of the founder and her husband. In other words, while Okada's theology and cosmology remained the ultimate religious teachings, the founding leader and her husband exercised their control over the form of ritual practices, membership requirements, and the structure of leadership, and the founder's husband published a monthly organizational magazine with his own interpretations of Okada's teachings. In their writings and speeches that were published in various books and pamphlets, the founder and her husband promoted themselves as the legitimate heirs and spiritual equals of Okada. Moreover, until 2010 in every office and meeting room, as well as in all of their ritual facilities, large portraits of the founder were hung alongside pictures of Okada. Under the religious authority of Okada, channeled through the leadership of these two charismatic leaders, the group grew from several thousand members in the 1970s to claim as many as 140,000 members in Japan by the first years of the twenty-first century. Since the early 1990s they have also expanded overseas, building small branch offices in Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Brazil.

Theologically, Kagamikyō inherited Okada's complex cosmology of the relationship between the material and spiritual worlds. The souls (*reikon* 霊魂) of all living creatures progress through different "spiritual levels" which determine one's physical health as well as reincarnation. There are 180 such levels, and one's soul can move up or down through these levels depending on the "pollution" of one's body and soul. Such pollution can be

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24 On the Aum Affair, see Baffelli and Reader 2012; Hardacre 2003; Mullins 2012; Reader 2001. On Sōka Gakkai, see McLaughlin 2012.

25 As Rots (2013, p. 60) succinctly notes, the concept of religion has undergone "a semantic change—that is, the term 'religion' has become contaminated in public discourse, and the amount of people willing to identify with it has decreased."

26 See Matsuoka 2007.

Figure 2. Group *johrei:* Members performing *johrei* to each other at an annual ceremony in one of their older Kansai facilities. Photo from a promotional pamphlet published by Kagamikyō.

accumulated through a disrespectful attitude and behavior toward others, as well as through material pollutants in the form of pesticides and pharmaceutical medicines. Okada developed this cosmology and theory of pollutants during the 1930s–1950s, when industrial chemicals and epidemics ravaged the country. In response to these modern pollutants, Okada taught that members needed to purify both their body and soul through a specific practice of faith-healing known as *johrei* 浄霊.

Kagamikyō inherited the practice of *johrei*, which is the ritual focus of the religious life of Kagamikyō members. In Kagamikyō, *johrei* is the practice of channelling healing energy to purify mind and body. Members can perform *johrei* to heal themselves and others of both mental and physical illness. The practice involves raising the hand, palm-outward, toward someone (either member or non-member) for between five to ten minutes, or longer if needed. All members acquire this power having completed the initiation ceremony and received an amulet, which is the only material sign of organizational membership.[27]

Like many other new religions, Kagamikyō was founded by a local leader who broke away from an older religious organization. Yet, while Kagamikyō inherited many of the teachings and practices of the previous organization, it did not inherit much infrastructure in terms of facilities or funding. As a result, Kagamikyō does not own (or at least does not openly report) other sources of revenue, such as rentable land, golf courses, or museums, and the leaders do not publish commercially available books for a popular audience. Rather, Kagamikyō has spent the last forty years building its membership base and funds through active proselytizing. Leaders claim that their organizational funds come exclusively from members' initiation fees, monthly membership fees, and voluntary donations. The reliance on funds from members allowed the group to grow quickly during its early years, but it has also become a bottleneck. As the membership is getting older and many are living only on pensions, donations have become a less reliable source of income, and there has been a new push for gaining new, younger members. Against this backdrop, the drive for international growth has become increasingly important for leaders.

Kagamikyō's Religious Globalization and Restructurings

Faced with the new changes and challenges in demographics, social conditions, and finances as outlined above, Kagamikyō has developed a variety of revitalization strategies to adapt and grow under the rhetoric of "going global." Their moves include consolidating branches within Japan to conserve economic and personnel resources, reforming and revitalizing rituals to reach new young members, and proselytizing to young Japanese and

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27 *Johrei* is usually practiced one-on-one, with both individuals sitting on the floor, or in chairs, although more senior members can perform *johrei* on more than one individual at a time.

non-Japanese in public spaces, rather than relying on their traditional method of door-to-door proselytizing.[28] Altogether, Kagamikyō's move toward "going global" is part of a strategy which includes appealing to global audiences as well as internal restructuring in order to survive in an environment of growing religious skepticism.

Specifically, Kagamikyō's major global push began in 2009 when leaders and members started to talk excitedly about how they would build their overseas headquarters in New York City to initiate their project of "saving America." This project aimed at expanding their membership in the U.S. and gaining recognition as a religious organization among Americans. In fact, this global push is closely tied to domestic revitalization, and was seen as facilitating the future growth of Kagamikyō in Japan through a recursive process of expanding outward to the West and then returning to Japan as an internationally recognized organization.[29]

Kagamikyō had already built small branch offices in Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Brazil in the early 1990s, but leaders noted that they were unable to achieve a sustainable local membership in these countries. These early attempts at overseas proselytizing were unsuccessful, partly because the teachings and practices were left largely untranslated and unexplained, and also because of the over-reliance on donations from Japanese members to support the overseas members, who were mostly from poor communities. As a result, the local branches had been unsustainable, and leaders said that this had even led to a negative image of Kagamikyō overseas. The assistant director of Kagamikyō explained to me that America is the key frontier because "if we can gain acceptance in the U.S., other Japanese and non-Japanese may be convinced about our mission." America is the first step to "going global." Since the beginning of the twenty-first century Kagamikyō's broader global strategy has thus started from their new U.S. headquarters, while it also includes expanding their existing facilities in Asia and South America.

As Kagamikyō spread overseas, it underwent internal changes as well. Since the spring of 2009, leaders explained to me that Kagamikyō had reached a new chapter as a "global super-religion" (*sekaiteki chō-shūkyō* 世界超宗教), a refrain that they repeated in different ceremonies and pamphlets throughout the following years. Specifically, leaders announced their intention to "change our name from Kagamikyō to the 'Paradise on Earth Research Institute' to show people in the world our true mission." They revealed plans to transform their Japan headquarters into the "Paradise on Earth Theme Park" in five years.[30] More than just a facility for religious rituals, the new theme park would be a place for both education and entertainment. It would include tennis courts, basketball courts, a swimming pool, and other sports facilities; an art museum, sculpture garden, library, and movie theater; and a natural foods restaurant and market where people could dine and purchase organic foods

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28 Although their efforts have accelerated over the past fifteen years, Kagamikyō has been a latecomer to overseas proselytizing and expansion, which for many new religions began in the early twentieth century. See Matsuoka 2007; Nakamaki 1991; Robertson 1987; Shimazono 2004.

29 This attempt to harness international appeal in order to gain domestic legitimacy is common in many Japanese new religions. Clammer 2014 (p. 6) also suggests that this is a way that members of Japanese religions create a meaningful identity and sense of community amidst accelerating globalization, noting that, "The local becomes legitimized through its ability to relate itself to the global."

30 The name "Paradise on Earth Research Institute" is also a pseudonym, though the actual name has a similar connotation of being a scientific-like research institute. Likewise, the name for their new theme park has equivalent connotations.

and flowers. It would also include nighttime illumination and live music by their orchestra, who perform their Kagamikyō songs with Händel's Messiah and Disney medleys.

Furthermore, beginning in 2009, the leaders introduced reforms in organizational structure, symbols, and ritual objects. At the 2009 Paradise Festival, changes in the structure and nomenclature of membership were announced by the eldest son of the founders, who was called the chairperson (*kaichō* 会長) of Kagamikyō. While the original structure had been headed by the founder and her husband surrounded by several top ministers and regional ministers, this small group of top-ranking members was now reorganized into a corporate-like structure. The eldest son retained the title of chairperson, but he announced that his own eldest son would be in charge of day-to-day affairs as the acting chairperson (*kaichō dairi* 会長代理). Below them were three tiers of managers, comprising a "managerial staff" (*yakuin* 役員) of fourteen people. The titles of full-time workers and high-level leaders who worked beneath them were restyled from "chief priests" (*kanchō* 管長), "branch leaders"(*shibuchō* 支部長), and "religious teachers" (*kyōshi* 教師) to "chief" (*chīfu* チーフ), "managers" (*manejā* マネジャー), and "staff" (*sutaffu* スタッフ), respectively. Finally, lay members were no longer "believers" (*shinto* 信徒) but "members" (*kaiin* 会員). The changes in titles were less "old-fashioned" and more in line with "global standards" (*sekai kijun* 世界基準), and the corporatized structure reflected the organization's goal of becoming the "construction company of Paradise on Earth" (*chijōtengoku no kensetsu gaisha* 地上天国の建設会社).

In 2009, Kagamikyō also changed its emblem from a simple monochrome star to a multicolored pinwheel symbolizing the five continents of the world, in order to enhance their "cosmopolitan" image. They next introduced a new amulet for members, a gold-colored metallic pendant. While Kagamikyō had used a paper-and-cloth amulet based on the one used by The Church of World Messianity as the symbol of membership and source of *johrei* for over forty years, the new metal amulet was both "more durable" and "attractive." The new amulet resembled "a beautiful piece of jewelry," where its predecessor was more traditionally Buddhist.

In the months and years following these changes in 2009, members were continually updated about the changes at home and overseas at their monthly meetings and yearly festivals. As of 2015, construction of the American headquarters in New York City had been completed, and The Paradise on Earth Theme Park project continues to develop, though it is still closed to non-members. Also by 2015, the organizational restructuring, new titles, and new amulet had been incorporated throughout their Japanese and overseas congregations. There was also a new website, and an updated English promotional video. The new online presence highlighted in bold English their more scientific-sounding and cosmopolitan name, "The Paradise on Earth Research Institute," while avoiding any mention of the word "religion."[31] Members, too, began to refer to the group as "the research institute (*kenkyūjo* 研究所)." Kagamikyō staff described these changes in various ways. Some called it "getting rid of old-fashioned elements" or "eliminating convoluted religious terms and concepts," and others expressed the changes as following "global standards" (*sekai kijun*).

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31 Nonetheless, when I asked a member if Kagamikyō had officially become a nonreligious organization, she answered that Kagamikyō remained as a religious incorporated organization "because they get tax breaks that way."

Throughout these drastic changes, the leaders were very careful lest they lose members' support or confuse them about the organization's traditional practices and their future direction. Indeed, at one of their annual ceremonies a top leader announced, "Some of you might be thinking, 'This is not my Kagamikyō. This is not how we should do things.' But this is necessary for our new phase as a 'global super-religion.'" (see CMS 6.11) And yet, the leaders' attempt to remake the organization into a "global super-religion" has not come without a price. The globalizing themes and practices were inherently directed toward shoring up their domestic membership, yet ironically, the costs of Kagamikyō's globalization have been highest for domestic participants and have produced unexpected challenges.

One of the major challenges is the differential treatment that Japanese and non-Japanese receive. Inside Japan, initiation fees have increased from $100 to $300 due to the change in amulets, the cost for new construction projects, and an increasing number of overseas members who cannot afford to support the local branches in their countries. There is also increasing pressure on members to participate more actively in proselytizing and ceremonial gatherings. Corporate-like pressures to participate and achieve success in proselytization have been imposed on lay members, and used as a measure for promotion within the ranks of the organization. These new measures of member participation and proselytizing have also become ways for the leadership to better assess the size of their active membership.

Kagamikyō staff members who had worked overseas told me that one of the biggest challenges in recruiting new overseas members are the membership fees, as most new members are poor. As a result, Japanese members are encouraged to contribute more to support their overseas branches, as well as to fund the staff members' overseas proselytizing trips and the new construction of mission branches. Japanese members I have talked to often grudgingly accepted these demands and described these financial pressures on them as something "necessary to adjust for growing overseas"; some justify the new costs of membership as being in line with the demands of being a "global organization." I did not encounter any long-term members who resisted these plans or openly questioned the leadership, although I did hear of some members quitting shortly after joining because of these pressures for donations and proselytizing.

In addition to attracting foreign members outside of Japan, Kagamikyō also tries to attract foreign members within Japan by offering them special treatment. Non-Japanese members are offered a discounted "foreigner price" for the group chartered bus trips to attend ceremonies in the Kansai region. These differences in treatment do not go unquestioned by some Japanese members. One long-time Japanese member admitted to me that, "The leaders are very nice to foreign members, but they are very strict on us Japanese members. There is always a lot of pressure to donate more, to get more international members."

On the individual level, some younger members are excited about new developments like the theme park and the opportunity to meet more foreign members, while older experienced members are more critical. Some members expressed confusion at the pace of Kagamikyō's changes, and the new financial demands on their participation. For example, one seventy-year-old woman tended to share confusion and resignation, confessing: "They used to call it a religion, and now they say it's not a religion. I can't really keep up with the changes. But to be honest, it doesn't matter to me, as *johrei* works and this has kept me

and my husband healthy." Another middle-aged housewife member conceded, "They ask for more and more money. But of course it costs money to run this religion, so I cannot complain about it." This sentiment was echoed by many of the older members and younger second-generation members.

In short, while religious globalization can be an important strategy to get more international members and to mobilize domestic members, it also comes with new challenges such as higher costs for domestic members, and can create new tensions among members.

The Institutional "Costs" of Religious Globalization

While Kagamikyō exercised more direct supervision over and applied greater pressure on domestic members, the strategy of going global has also come at a cost to certain aspects of leadership and religious practices. One of the first hints of transformation was manifest in members' physical experience of the group's ceremonies. Beginning in 2009, leaders deemed the practice of kneeling on tatami mats (*seiza* 正座), which is widely used in religious rituals in Japan as a method of bodily discipline, as no longer necessary. They explained that foreigners, as well as young Japanese, are not used to this posture, and so they began replacing tatami mats in all of their facilities with chairs or stadium-style seating. In addition, some older members who had back and leg problems were relieved no longer to have to practice *seiza* for rituals and meetings.

Eventually, more radical transformations took place in their meetings and ceremonies. Previously monthly meetings and annual ceremonies had focused on one-on-one *johrei* followed by long sessions of reading from the complex theological writings by Okada and interpretations by the founder's husband. Beginning in 2010, however, the reading sessions at the monthly meetings were replaced with discussions on the changes and new developments in the organization, as well as reading messages of gratitude from new overseas members.

The annual ceremonies, on the other hand, focused on group *johrei*, singing songs alongside the orchestral performances, and listening to announcements about future changes in the organization and its progress overseas. Meanwhile, the religious texts used by the organization were revised and streamlined. Previously, branch offices had stocked over two-dozen volumes of religious texts written by the founder's husband for use in instructing new members. In 2010, these were replaced with a new three-volume text, which consisted solely of highly-edited selections from the writings of Okada, and an even more simplified two-volume text in English. These are now the only texts required for members to study.

The dynamics of authority within the leadership were also reformed. The previous hierarchical and parochial membership structure was revised and religious terminology was replaced with corporate-sounding titles, but other more fundamental changes in the structure and display of authority were implemented now too. Before the reforms under the chairperson in 2009, the original founder and her husband had openly demonstrated their control over all aspects of the group through official writings and announcements, and they were the only ones who presided over major ceremonies. Serving under them, several chief priests had been in charge of organizational matters, and branch leaders oversaw the different regional congregations. Under the new leadership restructuring, the authority of the founding family was downplayed. First, while the eldest son inherited the leadership

in 2006, he did not continue the family tradition of presiding over ceremonies, and he only occasionally gave speeches. Instead, he relied on the branch leaders and local religious teachers to run ceremonies. This was part of the broader transformation of the organization away from its previous focus on the charismatic leadership of the founders, and towards a more systematized and corporate-like organization.

In accordance with the leadership restructuring, the chairperson withdrew from visible participation in the organization. Unlike his father, he does not publish writings about religious matters or interpretations of Okada's teachings; and he also has no portraits of himself hung in facilities as his mother had. Moreover, while it had been standard practice to bow to the founder's photo hung in the altar at all facilities, in 2009 members no longer bowed to the photo, and by 2010 the photo was removed from all the altars. When I asked members about this change, older members explained that "the top leaders felt the practice was too old-fashioned, and young people and foreigners might 'misunderstand' Kagamikyō [that is, as a dangerous cult]." Young people saw this change positively, as they had felt it strange to bow to the founder's picture as well as to Okada's portrait. In brief, the charismatic leadership that had marked the founding couple's tenure was replaced with a more "modern" and "rational" form of bureaucratic leadership, with the new chairperson and his son serving more as faithful stewards than as dynamic and charismatic leaders.

In fact, these various changes were part of the strategy for transforming Kagamikyō's image entirely. Faced with initial challenges in gaining members in North America as well as in Asia, leaders had often attributed their difficulties to the highly "Japanese" nature of Kagamikyō, which they felt may be "difficult for non-Japanese to understand." One local leader, Chief Sato, a woman in her late forties, explained that the reason Kagamikyō had difficulty appealing globally was that it had many "traditional Japanese elements and practices," such as archaic prayers and rituals. For example, she pointed out how the main prayer at the beginning of every ritual and ceremony, the Amatsu Norito 天津祝詞, was an ancient Shinto prayer in highly archaic Japanese. Not only was it difficult for foreigners to recite, but it was also incomprehensible for most Japanese. Noting Kagamikyō's global strategies and increasing attention to gaining foreign recognition, she speculated, "Probably in ten years we will replace this archaic Japanese prayer with a simple English prayer," which would be easier for foreigners to learn and which would sound less "old-fashioned" and more "global" to Japanese members.

Indeed, some practices like sitting *seiza* on tatami mats, bowing to the founder's image, or reciting the Amatsu Norito that were marked as distinctly Japanese "religious" practices were suddenly seen as "outdated" and potentially "harmful" for Kagamikyō's globalizing process. At the same time, the group's central practice of *johrei* was revitalized by appropriating the global trend of "spirituality" movements. Many young members told me that the main attraction of Kagamikyō is *johrei*, which they claimed not only healed illness but also improved circulation, prevented dental cavities, improved complexion, and even made food taste better.[32]

Since the latter part of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Kagamikyō also started proselytizing to foreigners in the major parks in downtown Tokyo by offering

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32 In the aftermath of the 2011 nuclear reactor meltdown in Fukushima, both younger and older members also claimed that *johrei* could eliminate radiation in food and protect against the effects of radiation exposure.

johrei as a new kind of spiritual practice. While Japanese people often refused the offer immediately, non-Japanese tended to be curious about the spiritual nature of the practice. With her experience in proselytizing in New York city, Chief Sato proposed that while the "religious" claims of this practice may not be easily accepted by younger Japanese, *johrei* could in fact gain acceptance alongside popular Japanese practices like Reiki and Zen among people from countries like Australia, the U.S., and Brazil, where "people were more open to spiritual things."

Moreover, in the process of proselytizing in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Singapore, and the Philippines, staff told me how they were surprised by local people's openness to this practice due to perceived similarities with indigenous healing practices such as pranic healing and yoga. Coincidentally, at a 2010 ceremony at Kagamikyō's Kansai headquarters, I met an Indian Hindu member who expressed his enthusiasm for *johrei*, saying, "Kagamikyō is a lot like Hinduism; it respects many gods everywhere. But the one thing that Hinduism lacks is a healing power like *johrei*." He added, "However, it is also important to practice Hindu meditation, as this makes *johrei* even stronger." This suggests that even in many areas of South and Southeast Asia that have vibrant local religions, *johrei* could be accepted by people as a healing technique that complements their local religious practices.

Thus, part of Kagamikyō's globalization strategy is selectively to choose, relativize, and revitalize the meanings of their healing practice by tapping into local spiritual practices in South and Southeast Asia, as well as by referencing popular Japanese spiritual practices in the West such as Reiki and Zen, which carry a sense of cosmopolitanism.[33] While this may seem contradictory to the leaders' intention of expanding the authoritative power of their particular practice, leaders explained that as long as local people believe in the healing power of *johrei* and were open to receiving it and practicing it, it was not really "problematic" if they did not fully understand the deeper cosmology or teachings of Kagamikyō. In this way, leaders and members explained *johrei* to non-Japanese by relativizing its distinctiveness as a religious practice rooted in Kagamikyō's specific theology and cosmology. They made strategic use of local spiritual practices and the ambiguous language of popular forms of spirituality to create familiarity and affinity among non-Japanese people. The ritual efficacy of *johrei* as Kagamikyō's distinctive religious healing practice is seemingly not undermined by a lack of understanding on the part of recipients, and it was considered entirely appropriate to explain *johrei* in terms of other religious cosmologies and healing techniques.[34]

In short, all of these strategies reveal not only the changing vision of Kagamikyō, but also changing attitudes and images about what "religion" should be within a modern, global society. As Casanova remarks, "Under conditions of globalization, world religions do not only draw upon their own traditions but also increasingly upon one another."[35] Likewise, as Dessì shows how Japanese religious organizations themselves are "carriers of globalization" in

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33 See Dessì (2013) for an analysis of the reception of practices such as Reiki and Zen in the West that play into middle-class and cosmopolitan desires. See also Rocha (2006) for the cosmopolitan attraction of Zen in Brazil.

34 This observation echoes Dessì's (2013) concept of "glocalization" as part of the process of "religious globalization."

35 Casanova 2006, p. 17. He further notes: "Inter-civilizational encounters, cultural imitations and borrowings, diasporic diffusions, hybridity, creolization, and transcultural hyphenations are all part and parcel of the global present."

the spheres of religious dialogue, politics, environmentalism, and humanitarianism, as well as through unintended influence on popular culture and spirituality overseas, Kagamikyō and its members also became agents of globalization as they connected with local populations and merged their own teachings and rituals with local ideas and practices.

Despite the various attempts at reform and revitalization both at home and abroad, the success of Kagamikyō's new global moves is unclear. From my conversations with leaders and members in 2016, I have the impression that domestic

Figure 3. International members greeting Japanese members at a 2010 ceremony in the new Kansai worship hall. Photo by the author.

membership is not growing, but it may be stable. Kagamikyō's membership base seems to remain strong in the Kansai region, where the founder is from and where their religious facilities are concentrated, and I met many second and third-generation members from the region who were excited about Kagamikyō's new developments. However, Kagamikyō has faced increasing difficulty outside of the Kansai region; in fall 2010 they closed their Tokyo branch office, indicating continued difficulty in maintaining their membership in the Kanto region. Yet, while their domestic revitalization may be slow, their global strategy seems to be bearing fruit. Beginning in 2009 I began to see more non-Japanese (particularly Nikkei Brazilians and Southeast Asians) attending the Kansai ceremonies. Overseas, I heard that the New York City branch was attracting the regular attendance of immigrants from Latin America and Southeast Asia. Thus, while specific numbers on membership are difficult to obtain, Kagamikyō does seem to be expanding the international dimension of the organization and moving beyond an exclusively Japanese membership base.

Kagamikyō is thus responding to potential sources of tension and the stigma of new religions in Japan by adapting their rituals, materials, and teachings to the contemporary needs of both domestic and international members.[36] Leaders have enabled members to interpret and engage with the organization's teachings and practices in a variety of ways by reframing and reforming Kagamikyō's activities in more "global" language and practice, as well as by linking their rhetoric and ideas with those of other religious and secular movements around the world.[37] Taken together, the institutional changes under their globalizing strategies have facilitated the "softening" of the group's somewhat "old-fashioned" structure and practices by relativizing the leadership's distinctive religious authority over the meanings and mechanisms of its ritual practices like *johrei* both abroad and at home.

Rather than becoming radicalized in their ideology or exclusive in their membership, Kagamikyō has transcended their original religious doctrine and practices through a global and religiously inclusive revitalization strategy and so escaped some of the stigma

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36   See also Numata 1988; Shimazono 2001; Shimazono 2004.

37   Certainly, participating in various private religious practices for personal reasons has been long noted as a feature of Japanese religiosity. See for example Reader and Tanabe 1998.

of Japanese new religions. Instead they aim to claim a multicultural and "super-religious" form of "global citizenship" for the organization and its members.[38] These movements of transcending exclusivist religious roles mark one of the key dimensions of the strategic use of globalization among Japanese new religions.[39]

The Dynamics of Religious Globalization: Reconfiguring Religion and the Secular

Through these various changes, Kagamikyō aims to go beyond being a "Japanese religion" and to project itself as a "global super-religion." This is not unique among Japanese new religions. As Inoue Nobutaka has argued, the increasing interactions between various religious ideas and practices in the context of globalization have contributed to "the increasing fuzziness of discrimination between the realms of the religious and nonreligious or the secular."[40] He observes, "Since religion enjoys a different status in different places around the globe, the concept of religion itself is forced to undergo transformation as part of the process of globalization."[41]

New religions like Kagamikyō have developed in response to the increasingly penetrating and intensifying forces of modernization and globalization, and they have often been created out of a combination of religious and secular ideas and practices from around the world. As such, the challenges and transformations experienced by new religions offer important insights into how new forms of religion and secularity are also shaping and shaped by the dynamics of religious globalization. Likewise, in his exploration of Japanese new religions and national identity, Clammer identifies how religious globalization has been tied to internal transformations in Japan: "As the Japanese religions have set about expanding into the world, so their experiences and images of the world have flowed back into Japan, presenting a variety of alternative identities and worldviews."[42] This case study of Kagamikyō highlights how the increasingly complex interactions between religious institutions, ideas, and practices at both institutional and individual levels also produces a reverse flow of internal changes within the domestic structure, practice, and experience of religious groups and their members back in the home country.

The internal changes triggered by and through Kagamikyō's global engagement resonate with the concept of "internal secularization." Luckmann first developed this concept to describe the process in which organizations de-emphasize transcendent or otherworldly aspects.[43] The concept was later used by Dobbelaere, Chaves, and Thomas to describe the internal moves by an organization to relativize their own religious and moral authority by "outsourcing" authority to institutions within broader society.[44] Kagamikyō and other new religious groups that have made moves to identify with "nonreligious" or "super-religious" discourses variously attempt to "eliminate elements that stink of Japanese

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38 For a nuanced reading of the cultural dynamics behind such claims to universality, see Dessì's (2013) discussion of "cultural chauvinism" in some Japanese religions' global engagements. For a discussion of the rhetoric of pacifism and peace in Japanese religions, see Kisala 1999. On the multinationalization of Japanese religions, see Nakamaki 1991.
39 For example, Cornille 1991; Hurbon 1991; Matsuoka 2007.
40 Inoue 1997, np.
41 Inoue 1997, np.
42 Clammer 2014, p. 3.
43 Luckmann 1967.
44 Chaves 1994; Dobbelaere 1981; Dobbelaere 1985; Dobbelaere 2002; Thomas 2013.

religion." [45] Building on these discussions, we can say that Kagamikyō's strategy of religious globalization shows how "internal secularization" must be examined as one of the dynamics within broader processes of religious globalization.

As religious organizations engage with other religious and nonreligious ideas and institutions on the global stage, some organizations may become radicalized and exclusivist. Other organizations, such as Kagamikyō, self-consciously transform their teachings, structures, and practices to de-emphasize distinctive religious aspects and to complement nonreligious attitudes and practices of broader society. [46] Crucially, the Japanese case of groups like Kagamikyō highlights the dynamic, reverberating effects of religious globalization on the internal structures, practices, and meanings of the religious organization in its country of origin—what could be seen as the reflexive influence of global-level secularization at the domestic institutional level. [47]

Kagamikyō's encounters with non-Japanese overseas have spurred leaders to make their message accessible and acceptable to more people within a global context. At the same time, they have de-emphasized many of the theologically complex aspects of their teachings in favor of more tangible products, such as the construction of new facilities and more "modern"-looking religious paraphernalia, while maintaining and promoting their core ritual practice of *johrei*. These changes reflect a kind of "internal secularization" in which leaders seek to transform the symbolic meanings, social presentation, and ritual practices within their organization.

Furthermore, given the highly self-conscious ways that leaders attempt to distance themselves from negative connotations of religion and to "normalize" their practices, these moves show a high degree of reflexivity among contemporary religious organizations in Japan—what could be characterized as "reflexive secularization." Resonating with Rots' concept of discursive secularization that marks contemporary Shinto's adaptations to shifting public attitudes toward Shinto, "reflexive secularization" refers to the self-conscious aspect of organizational change, which is informed by leaders' awareness of the reputation and relative repositioning of their organization vis-à-vis other religious groups within secular societies. [48] Rather than emphasizing ideological exclusivity or stressing their distinctiveness as a Japanese religion, leaders explicitly and strategically use nonreligious language and downplay what they see as "religious" (*shūkyō-teki* 宗教的) aspects of their teachings and rituals. In this way, Kagamikyō is able to merge its image and practices both with other religions like Christianity and Buddhism and with nonreligious discourses and practices of

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45 Dobbelaere's broader definition of "internal secularization" also includes "the elimination of religion *per se*" enacted by religious organizations themselves. For example, see Dobbelaere 2002, p. 115.

46 This resonates with recent formulations of secularization theories that examine the transformations in the scope of religious authority within the global societal level and the transformation of religious organizations at the institutional level. For example, see Chaves 1994, Dessì 2013; see also Casanova 2006; Dobbelaere 1981; Dobbelaere 1985; Dobbelaere 2002.

47 This makes an interesting parallel with Casanova's insight about Hinduism and Buddhism that "The institutional transformation in the immigrant diasporas is in turn affecting profoundly the religious institutional forms in the civilizational home areas" (2006, p. 19).

48 The concept of "reflexive secularization" echoes Taylor's (2007) notion of "non-naïve" belief as one of the characteristics of the contemporary "secular age." In the case of Japan, Dessì also notes the increasing reflexive awareness among social actors, including religious actors, under globalization (Dessì 2013, p. 100).

world peace and global citizenship in broader national and global contexts.[49] This reflexive approach to secularization is both enabled and intensified by new discourses of religion and secularity that such organizations encounter as they expand overseas.

Conclusion

From one perspective, the challenges and changes facing religion in Japan reflect similar dynamics in many parts of the world that are confronting demographic changes, political transitions, and intensifying global capitalism. Such changes have often fed the radicalization of religious ideologies in societies where groups have become increasingly active in redefining the limits and roles of religion in the public sphere. In many regions, religious and secularist identity politics have intensified as individuals clash over the role of religion both in domestic politics and global politics, implicitly problematizing conventional categories of religion and secularity.[50]

Despite the similar challenges and changes confronting religion in Japan, the response by most Japanese religious groups has not been one of radicalization or politicization. This raises an important question: how should we interpret the various dynamics and formations of the religious and the secular in contemporary Japan? Do the particular historical developments and emic meanings of religious and secular forms mean that we should abandon the conventional Western categories of "religion" and "secular," as some scholars have advocated?[51] Despite the lack of agreement over how to identify and analyze religion and the secular cross-culturally, a range of recent works argue that the secular need not be seen as only a modern, Western creation.[52] Likewise, as this article has also argued, analyzing the concept of secularization from the perspective of religious globalization reveals how in the contemporary, globalized world, all religions are made to confront the notions of religion and secularity as they encounter diverse religious practices and social contexts, regardless of the origin of particular notions of religion and secularity.

Analyzing the formations of the secular in Japan within the context of contemporary globalization is thus instructive in demonstrating one way in which certain groups attempt to find a way out of the secular/religious cul-de-sac in modern society without invoking simplistic teleological arguments about a religious past versus a secular modernity.[53] Like Kagamikyō, many groups in Japan make claims to one form or another of a "super-religious" organization, eschewing classifications of the conventionally religious or conventionally

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49. See Rots in this issue. In a similar way, Levi McLaughlin (2013, p. 312) notes that, "since the late 1990s, practitioners of various types of spirituality, from the mystical to the mundane, have almost uniformly identified themselves as something other than religious." As a broader trend among religious groups and among the public, some have linked this turn away from religious identification to a global shift away from institutionalized religion and a rise in "spiritual business," "pop spiritualism," and commodified spirituality in the place of "traditional" religion (for example, Gaitanidis 2011; Sakurai 2011; Shimada 2008; Tsujimura 2008).
50. For example, Casanova 2012; Casanova 2013; Habermas 2008; cf. Furani 2015.
51. For Japan, see Fitzgerald 2003; for a general critique of the concept of the secular, see Asad 2003.
52. Krämer 2013; Paramore 2012; Teeuwen 2013.
53. For an agenda on developing a global comparative analysis of secularization in this vein, see Casanova 2006. See also Teeuwen (2013), who argues against the current trend in dismissing the utility of the concepts of religion and the secular outside of the West. He suggests that "the notion that we can transcend our own cultural context and understand a different time and place on its own terms is ultimately an illusion" (2013, p. 18), and he defends the comparative analysis of religion and secularity in Japan through nuanced historical analysis. For specific case studies, see Mullins 2012; Nelson 2012; Porcu 2012; Rots 2013.

secular. Rather than presenting themselves as either religious or nonreligious, these organizations are skillfully able to claim *both* without clashing with other secular or religious institutions.

Altogether, what I found among members of Kagamikyō was that the challenges and opportunities they were facing were not about the clash of new ideologies of religious radicalism, nor about the disappearance of religion from modern society. Rather, the main conditions shaping Kagamikyō's domestic situation are a shrinking population, socioeconomic and urban changes, and an "allergy to religion." In response to these challenges, the "globalization of religion" has become a useful tool for growth and change. As part of this strategy, leaders feel that in order to increase membership and to respond to Japan's changing society, it is also necessary to restructure the organization and expand abroad by appealing to "global standards" in their rhetoric and practices, and to remake their organization into a more "modern" and "secular" space for leisure and health. As a result, members in Japan have been shouldered with certain increased costs. Yet despite such sudden changes most have become more or less complicit and tried to contribute to the organization's global vision, while maintaining their own private reasons to practice the religion.

Furthermore, unlike struggles over religious identity and religious/ethnic citizenship that emerged among many religions under intensified globalization, Kagamikyō has pursued a strategy of embracing both religious and secular discourses and practices from around the world in the process of becoming a "global super-religion."[54] Indeed, one may say that the cost for Kagamikyō as a Japanese religious organization has been particularly severe as they have sacrificed aspects of their distinctive religious/ethnic identity. However, no member of Kagamikyō during my fieldwork raised this with me as an issue of concern. In fact, they openly embraced different religious ideas and they were enthusiastic about the increasing opportunities for nonreligious engagement with leisure and health activities as part of Kagamikyō's new direction as a global religion. For members in Japan, Kagamikyō's interaction with broader religious and secular forces through "going global" did not make them feel like a minority group caught up in a global competition for religious authority, but rather it connected them to other global movements and gave them a sense of being a part of something greater.

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54 On issues of religious identity and ethnic citizenship among world religions, see Casanova 1994; Coleman and Collins 2004.

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Public Shrine Forests?
Shinto, Immanence, and Discursive Secularization

Aike P. Rots

This article analyzes contemporary Shinto ideology in the light of recent theories on the formation of the category "secular" and on secularization. Drawing on Charles Taylor's discussion of the original meaning of the categories "religious" and "secular," as well as the work of Kuroda Toshio and others, it suggests that premodern shrine worship may have been perceived as the "immanent," "this-worldly" counterpart of a more transcendentally oriented monastic Buddhism. In the Meiji period, Shinto developed into a modern Japanese "immanent frame" (or "Shinto secular," as Josephson has called it)—a public, collective, non-optional frame of reference— while Buddhism, Christianity, and "new religions" were configured as "religious," that is, private and optional. Contemporary Shinto leaders such as Tanaka Tsunekiyo and Sonoda Minoru draw upon such Meiji-period understandings of Shinto as the immanent, foundational framework by which Japanese culture and society are shaped and conditioned. According to them, Shinto should not be subject to the same legal restrictions as other religions, as it is an essentially public tradition uniting communities (*kyōdōtai*) around their shared sacred center, the shrine grove (*chinju no mori*). As this article demonstrates, these authors actively contribute to Shinto's *discursive secularization*: they seek to dissociate Shinto from "religion," instead framing it as Japan's underlying "traditional culture" (*dentō bunka*). Rather than challenging the postwar legal state apparatus and separation of religion and state, therefore, they seek to renegotiate Shinto's position within this apparatus, asserting its role as a "secular" worship tradition concerned with the common good of the nation as a whole.

Keywords: *Chinju no mori*, "immanent frame," public space, sacralization, secularism, Shinto environmentalist paradigm, "Shinto secular," shrine communities, Sonoda Minoru, Tanaka Tsunekiyo

In recent years, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's 安倍晋三 plans to change the Constitution of Japan have received ample media attention. In particular, his efforts to adapt and/or reinterpret Article 9 in a way that allows for more Japanese military involvement in foreign conflicts have been subjected to much scrutiny and protest, in Japan as well as abroad. Yet

Abe's proposed constitutional changes are not limited to Article 9. One significant legal-political change, instigated by the Abe government, concerns the constitutionally stipulated separation of state and religion. Although Japan remains a country with comparatively strict laws when it comes to state support for religious institutions, the boundaries of the category "religion"—which have been subject to negotiation ever since the implementation of the category in the Meiji period—are being actively redrawn, and some practices previously classified as "religious" are currently reframed as "culture," "tradition," or "heritage." Supported by powerful conservative lobby groups, Abe has been actively involved with the reintroduction of Shinto and imperial symbols and rituals into the public realm, leading to their "deprivatization" and, it may be argued, a renewed "sacralization" of the nation and land of Japan.[1]

Central to these initiatives are the Ise Shrines, generally regarded as the most sacred site of Shinto, where sun goddess and divine ancestress of the imperial family Amaterasu 天照 is enshrined. Significantly, in 2013, Abe participated in an important shrine ritual in the context of Ise's ritual rebuilding (*shikinen sengū* 式年遷宮), which takes place every twenty years. The myth of Ise as the leading imperial, "non-Buddhist," "eternal" sacred site in the country played a central role in Meiji-period "State Shinto" ideology, and continues to be cherished by Shinto leaders and conservatives. Accordingly, the uninterrupted continuation of ritual practices, including the costly *shikinen sengū*, constitutes one of the Shinto establishment's core priorities.[2] Not surprisingly, then, shrine leaders actively try to secure imperial and political involvement in (and patronage of) these practices. According to Jinja Honchō 神社本庁 (Association of Shinto Shrines), the powerful umbrella organization with which most shrines in Japan are affiliated, prime-ministerial involvement in the *shikinen sengū* is desirable and in full accordance with tradition.[3] In reality, however, Abe was the first postwar prime minister to take part in this ceremony, which is illustrative of significant changes in the public perception of the *shikinen sengū* in the postwar period and, by extension, shifting state-religion boundaries.[4]

Contrary to ministerial visits to Yasukuni, Abe's participation in the ceremony at Ise received little international media coverage and hardly any criticism, despite the fact that he went there in his capacity as the country's leading politician. It is no secret that Abe maintains close links with the shrine establishment and some of its conservative-nationalist lobby groups, yet few of his critics have denounced his patronage of Ise. After all, this shrine has been so successfully depoliticized and turned into a core symbol of both traditional Japanese culture and the natural environment (*fūdo* 風土) by which it is supposedly shaped, that only a handful of interpreters saw his ritual participation as a violation of the constitutional separation of religion and state. Ise transcends religious and political particularities, it appears, and functions as a depoliticized symbol of the sacred nation (*shinkoku* 神国) Japan. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that Abe has shied away from the heavily contested Yasukuni issue, and embraced Ise as an alternative carrying profound

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1 Mullins 2012. For a more elaborate discussion of the lobby groups behind these developments, see the article by Thierry Guthmann in this special issue.
2 Breen 2010b.
3 Tanaka 2011, p. 25.
4 See Teeuwen and Breen 2017. On the different meanings of Ise, see also Rambelli 2014.

symbolic capital, which has the capacity not only to unite Japanese people of different convictions but also to function internationally as a symbol of "ancient Japanese culture."[5]

Abe is not the only political actor who has discovered and appropriated the symbolic capital of the Ise Shrines. In June 2014, the Inner Shrine at Ise was visited by representatives of various "world religions"—including Buddhism, Islam, Daoism, and several Christian denominations—who attended a major international conference entitled "Tradition for the Future: Culture, Faith and Values for a Sustainable Planet," where various issues related to religion and the environment were discussed.[6] The conference was organized by Jinja Honchō, in cooperation with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), a UK-based nonprofit organization which defines itself as "a secular body that helps the major religions of the world to develop their own environmental programmes, based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices."[7] Among the conference speakers were Jinja Honchō's current president Tanaka Tsunekiyo 田中恆清, a member of the Japanese imperial family, a Shingon Buddhist leader, and the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Development Program. Although the event was not open to the general public, it was reportedly attended by approximately seven hundred Shinto priests from all over the country, as well as by a number of selected journalists and scholars.[8] One of them, Paul Vallely, published a report in *The Independent*, describing the conference as part of the "remarkable resurgence of Japan's ancient religion of Shintoism," which "has produced a new Japanese openness to the wider world." This openness was supposedly illustrated by the event's interreligious character, as well as the apparent environmental awareness of the actors involved, which, he suggested, "could benefit the whole world."[9]

At first sight, this image seems to be at odds with the one of a nationalist religion of increasing political significance. How can the image of Shinto as an open, internationally oriented and environmentally-minded religion be reconciled with the image of a conservative tradition with close links to a government that antagonizes neighboring countries and has failed to implement meaningful environmental policies? Yet it is precisely this paradox that defines contemporary Shinto. As I have noted elsewhere, the notion of Shinto as a tradition of nature worship with a strong environmental orientation is actually compatible with conservative and neo-imperial ideology.[10] For one, this "Shinto environmentalist paradigm," as I call it, strengthens notions of the land of Japan as inherently sacred, and justifies the belief that Shinto is (or should be) essentially a *public* tradition, concerned with the this-worldly well-being of the Japanese nation—and, by extension, the world as a whole.[11] Thus, I argue in this article, it is through the discursive association of Shinto with "nature" that its public significance is currently asserted, and its position vis-à-vis both the state and the category "religion" renegotiated. Put differently, the hypothesis explored here is that the association of Shinto with nature and the environment is central to the deprivatization and

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5 Hence Abe's insistence that the 2016 G7 Summit should take place at Ise (see *The Japan Times* 2015). A similar argument was made by Michael Cucek, who convincingly argued that Abe has little interest in visiting Yasukuni precisely because patronage of Ise is less controversial and more politically beneficial (Cucek 2015).
6 *Kōshitsu* henshūbu 2014. See also Rots 2015.
7 ARC, n.d.
8 Dougill 2014.
9 Vallely 2014.
10 Rots 2015.
11 For more elaborate discussions of the "Shinto environmentalist paradigm," see Rots 2013 and Rots 2015.

discursive secularization by which it is currently characterized. Before elaborating on this issue, however, let us have a closer look at the terminology, and explore some of the ways in which Shinto relates to secularism and notions of "the secular."

The Public Secular

In recent years, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the fact that "religion" and "the secular" are historically shaped categories, the meanings of which are neither pre-given nor fixed.[12] From this, it follows that sociocultural phenomena are not intrinsically "religious" or "secular." Rather, their categorization is a function of discourse, and the product of particular power relations, as Talal Asad has demonstrated.[13] What counts as "secular" or as "religious" is not a natural given: it is the outcome of historical processes of classification and negotiation. The same, I argue, applies to Shinto: whether Shinto is classified as "religious" or "secular" continues to be subject to debate. Accordingly, in this article I will refrain from engaging with the question whether Shinto really *is* religious or secular, as that would imply these categories have some sort of fixed "intrinsic" meaning. Instead, I look at ways in which contemporary shrine practices are *framed* as "secular" and "public" by leading Shinto scholars. By doing so, I draw on the work of Talal Asad and his followers, who re-historicized the categories "religion" and "the secular," and examined processes by which the two have been constructed in particular historical and cultural contexts.[14] In addition, I will make use of the theories of Charles Taylor, who conceived of the religion-secular dichotomy in terms of a distinction between transcendence and immanence.

It should be pointed out that "the secular" is not the same as "secularism," "secularity," and "secularization." While these terms are obviously related, they carry different meanings. Following José Casanova, we may conceive of "the secular" as "a central modern category—theological-philosophical, legal-political, and cultural-anthropological—to construct, codify, grasp, and experience a realm or reality differentiated from 'the religious.'… It should be obvious that 'the religious' and 'the secular' are always and everywhere mutually constituted."[15] By contrast, "secularism" refers to a range of ideologies or world views that stipulate the separation of religion from purportedly secular spheres (for example, politics and education) and seek to restrict the societal space allocated to religion. This is closely related to the public-private dichotomy, as Bubandt and van Beek rightly point out (in reference to Asad): "This analytic treats 'secularism' as a political doctrine or project that rearranges society through a new set of socio-spatial divisions: private and public, the religious and the secular. In assigning each to its 'proper place'—'religion' to the private domain and 'the secular' to the public domain—secularism makes possible the establishment of a domain of secular politics that transcends that of religion."[16] As I shall demonstrate in this article, the distinction between a "public" secular realm and a "private" religious realm is of profound relevance for contemporary Japanese society and ideology.

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12 For example Smith 1998. Critical historical studies of the formation of the modern category "religion" in Japan include Isomae 2003; Josephson 2012; Maxey 2014.
13 Asad 2003.
14 Asad 2003. See Bubandt and van Beek 2012 for an insightful discussion of the relevance of Asad's theory for understanding contemporary Asian societies.
15 Casanova 2011, p. 54.
16 Bubandt and van Beek 2012, pp. 7–8.

While "the secular" refers to a societal realm, and "secularism" to particular world views or ideologies, "secularization" refers to the *processes* by which (aspects of) societies become more secular. As several scholars have pointed out, "secularization" is not a monolithic concept: it has been used to refer to a number of different processes, which may or may not coexist, and which may or may not be irreversible.[17] Casanova has famously distinguished three types of secularization: "the decline of religious beliefs and practices" (which, he adds, "is the most recent but by now the most widespread usage of the term in contemporary academic debates on secularization"); "the privatization of religion"; and "the differentiation of the secular spheres (state, economy, science)" from religion.[18] Casanova's conceptual triad was developed further by Charles Taylor, who distinguished between secularization as, first, "the retreat of religion in public life" (that is, privatization); second, "the decline in belief and practice"; and third, and central to his theory, "the change in the conditions of belief."[19] Taylor's model was applied by Richard Madsen in his analysis of processes of secularization in Asia, referring to them as, respectively, "political secularization," "social secularization," and "cultural secularization."[20]

Several scholars have pointed out that the categories "religious" and "secular" are co-constitutive: they have emerged in tandem, and the differentiation of the former from other societal spheres could not have taken place without the formation of the latter. As described by Charles Taylor, both emerged within a late-medieval European ecclesiastic context ("Latin Christendom," in his terminology).[21] At the time, the term "secular" was used to refer to clergy and church institutions concerned with this-worldly affairs, whereas "religious" referred to world-renouncing monastic communities. As he writes, "the secular had to do with the 'century'—that is, with profane time—and it was contrasted with what related to eternal, or to sacred time.… Ordinary parish priests are thus 'secular' because they operate out there in the 'century' as against those in monastic institutions."[22] The defining feature of Western modernity, according to Taylor, was not so much the awareness of a distinction between "profane" (this-worldly) or "sacred" (transcendent) time and space, as the realization that *the former could exist independently from the latter*. As he writes,

> what does seem … to exist universally is some distinction between higher beings (spirits) and realms and the everyday world we see immediately around us. But these are not usually sorted out into two distinct domains, such that the lower one can be taken as a system understandable purely in its own terms. Rather, the levels usually interpenetrate, and the lower cannot be understood without reference to the higher.… The clear separation of an immanent from a transcendent order is one of the inventions (for better or worse) of Latin Christendom.[23]

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17 See for instance Berger 1999; Dobbelaere 1981; Casanova 1994; Demerath 2007. For an overview of recent academic literature on "secularization" and "secularities" in Japan, see the introduction to this special issue.
18 Casanova 2006, p. 7. Cf. Casanova 1994.
19 Taylor 2007, p. 423.
20 Madsen 2011.
21 Taylor 2007; 2011.
22 Taylor 2011, p. 32. Cf. Taylor 2007, pp. 54–61.
23 Taylor 2011, p. 33.

I will not attempt to challenge Taylor's claim that the development of an "immanent frame" freed from transcendent legitimation occurred first in Europe, as this is beyond the scope of the present article.[24] Instead, my purpose here is to draw attention to the initial meanings of the (originally European) categories "secular" and "religious," as outlined by Taylor, and reexamine these in a Japanese context. I believe these offer some important clues for understanding present-day attempts to "secularize" Shinto, which coexist with efforts at (re)sacralization, as I shall explain below. Importantly, as Taylor proposes, in medieval Europe the categories "secular" and "religion" were *both* concerned with gods, priests, and rituals. The difference lies in the fact that the former refers to the world here-and-now, and is contingent upon space and time, while the latter denotes other-worldly practices believed to transcend historical and cultural particularities. Thus, the foundational dyad of Western modernity, in Taylor's scheme, is the immanent-transcendent dichotomy—hence the core analytical concept he uses to describe the secular condition, "the immanent frame." Originally, therefore, "secularity" does not signify the absence of deities, offerings, or ritual specialists: quite the contrary, what it signifies is *their immanent character*.

"Secular," in this sense of the term, does not necessarily mean "disenchanted," nor does it imply institutional neutrality, atheism, or the absence of worship practices in public space, even though this is how the term is often understood today. What it implies is that the gods are manifest in our world and, as a consequence, are culturally and historically contingent. "Secularization," according to this line of thought, refers to the development by which the world here-and-now comes to be seen as the sole foundation of social life, no longer in need of "transcendent" legitimation. This is the defining feature of our "secular age," according to Taylor: the social order no longer needs an external frame of reference, as the world in which we live has come to be seen as the foundational principle (the "immanent frame"). Institutions, narratives, and practices concerned with transcendent matters still exist, but they are no longer foundational. Instead, participation and belief has become optional—a matter of choice, not a pre-given.

Thus, I suggest we reconsider the original meaning of "secular"—as immanent, public, and concerned with the common good of the world in which we live, not necessarily devoid of gods or rituals—as a conceptual tool for understanding present-day attempts at repositioning Shinto. One note of caution is needed, however. When using the concept "secular" in this way—that is, as a term that denotes the immanent character of certain practices and world views—we should recognize the fact that in most political and academic discourse it is no longer utilized as such. As explained above, in modern times the term has come to carry quite different meanings indeed, typically denoting societal fields that are differentiated from religion altogether, not those that are dependent on and legitimated by it. Nevertheless, I think it is worth reconsidering the meaning of "secular" prior to the early modern differentiation of "religion" and "politics," as explained by Taylor: rituals, clergy and beliefs concerned with immanent reality, as opposed to monastic orders concerned with transcendent matters. I believe such an approach may shed some light on contemporary Shinto ideology, which is neither "atheistic" (*kami* 神 remain central to

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24 For instance, Christoph Kleine (2013) and Ian Reader (2004) both argued that there were functional equivalents to the religious-secular dichotomy in premodern Japan. See also the article by Kiri Paramore in this special issue.

Shinto thought and practice) nor "anti-religious," but concerned rather with reestablishing Shinto as a this-worldly ritual system placed in the center of public space both literally and metaphorically. Why is it that Shinto actors and institutions have such an ambivalent relation to the category "religion"? Might it be that Shinto is indeed perceived as a "secular" worship tradition—not because there are no gods, but because the gods are place-based and immanent? To what extent is the "discursive secularization" of Shinto that we are currently witnessing—I will return to this term later—grounded in its immanent character? These are the questions I explore in the next sections of this article.

Secular Shinto?

The notion of Shinto as a public non-religion, closely intertwined with the nation state and its divine imperial house, is often associated with conservative ideology. Yet it was one of the most critical historians who suggested that premodern Shinto might be perceived as the "secular" or this-worldly (*sezokuteki* 世俗的) counterpart of the transcendentally oriented Buddhist monastic institutions. In his famous article "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," Kuroda Toshio 黒田俊雄 writes:

> Here it is important to note the secular character of Shinto in medieval times. Many of the representations of kami familiar to people were secular in form.… The same can also be said of how the word *suijaku* 垂迹 (manifestation) was comprehended.… The term *suijaku* literally meant to descend from heaven to a given spot and to become the local or guardian kami of that spot.[25]

Kuroda proceeds to argue that the "secular representations in Shinto actually expressed an essence that was strongly Buddhist," that "shrines were Buddhism's secular face," and that Shinto's "secularity functioned, in the final analysis, within a Buddhist world."[26] Thus, in the medieval *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合 system, shrines, shrine priests, and kami were this-worldly manifestations or representations of Buddhist monastic institutions, monks, and Buddhas and bodhisattvas. As such, Kuroda argues, they were more closely intertwined with public administration and politics than their Buddhist counterparts.[27]

It has been a while since Kuroda conducted his paradigm-changing research, and some of his conclusions have since been challenged.[28] However, there are some interesting similarities between his description of the labor division between Shinto shrines and Buddhist monastic institutions in medieval Japan, and Taylor's description of the role of "secular" versus "religious" clergy in Latin Christian Europe. The division of labor between "Buddhist" institutions and deities on the one hand, and "Shinto" ones on the other, was arguably more complicated than Kuroda suggested: Buddhist monastic centers were not solely concerned with transcendent matters, and the distinction between kami and Buddhas was not always as clear-cut as it appears in this model. Yet Kuroda's basic point, that there was a division between a "this-worldly" and a "transcendent" realm in medieval Japan, has

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25 Kuroda 1981, p. 14.
26 Kuroda 1981, p. 15.
27 Kuroda 1981, pp. 15–16.
28 For a discussion, see Teeuwen and Scheid 2002.

been substantiated by others, even if they did not equate these realms with "Shinto" and "Buddhism." [29]

Assuming that premodern Japan indeed had some sort of distinction between an immanent and a transcendent order, Taylor's argument that the separation of the former from the latter was one of modernity's foundational moments may be applicable to Japan as well. The "separation of Shinto and Buddhism" (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) in the early Meiji period may then have given rise to some sort of Taylorian immanent frame: the gods were made manifest and of immediate public concern, while belief in a transcendent order became a matter of personal choice, one option among others. Thus, Taylor's own arguments concerning the uniquely Western character of secularization notwithstanding, the Meiji period configuration of "religion" (*shūkyō* 宗教) as private and faith-based, and Shinto as a public nonreligious ritual system (*hishūkyō* 非宗教), was profoundly Taylorian: it has some clear parallels with developments in early modern Europe, where the immanent order gradually replaced the transcendent order as the primary frame of reference. [30] In other words, the fact that medieval (proto) Shinto was "secular" (that is, this-worldly) did not make it any less "religious" in the modern sense of the word. However, when it was reshaped and reclassified in the modern period, its immanent character facilitated its formation as a nonreligious entity. Hence, as Kuroda states,

> The secularity of Shinto and the political applicability of the concept of "the land of the kami" does not indicate that Shinto was without any religious character but rather shows that the Buddhist system that lay behind it pervaded all aspects of everyday life. The present-day illusion that Shinto is not a religion derives historically from a misunderstanding of this point. [31]

Several scholars have discussed the process whereby Shrine Shinto came to be understood as "nonreligious." [32] Most recently, Jason Josephson has addressed this issue in his study of the formation of the category "religion" in Japan. [33] Josephson writes that "religion" entered Japan as "a nonnative category that emerged in a diplomatic context, such that its contours were established by asymmetries of power and centered on Christianity as its prototype." [34] Shinto, meanwhile, "was the condition for the eventual invention of religion in Japan, because it was the form of the political from which religion could be distinguished." [35] Reflecting Kuroda's account of Shinto's this-worldly character, Josephson asserts that Shinto was closely intertwined with education and politics, constituting the basic entity from which the modern category "religion" was differentiated. Thus, he refers to the Meiji-period construction of "Shinto"—the public, de-Buddhistified, mandatory ritual-ideological system conventionally known as "State Shinto"—by the term "Shinto secular." Josephson defines

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29 For example Satō 2003; Kleine 2013; Teeuwen 2013.
30 On the formation of the category "religion" in Meiji-period Japan, see Josephson 2012; Maxey 2014. See also the articles by Hans Martin Krämer and Mark Teeuwen in this special issue.
31 Kuroda 1981, p. 16.
32 Hardacre 1989; Isomae 2003; Nitta 2000.
33 Josephson 2012.
34 Josephson 2012, p. 132.
35 Josephson 2012, p. 132.

"Shinto secular" as "the hybrid Shinto-scientific ideology that undergirded the Meiji state and was ultimately distinguished from the category religion."[36] In contrast to the classical view of "State Shinto" as a state religion in disguise, Josephson argues that Shinto could become a public, imperial worship system exactly by virtue of it being "secularized." That is, it was coercively "purified" from popular devotional practices, discursively associated with science and modernity, and legally distinguished from "religion," which had been configured as "private" and, hence, optional. As he writes,

> Shinto functioned as the secular in two ways. First, Shinto produced a political reality from which religion could be distinguished. It was a precondition for the formation of religion as a legal category in the 1889 Japanese Constitution. Second, after the production of the category "religion," the Shinto secular became a politics that could be distinguished from "religion." Once a Japanese subject granted this Shinto secular ground, religion (Buddhism and Sect Shinto, but also Christianity) was a matter of free choice and therefore optional. This echoed what Charles Taylor described as the core of secularism in the West as the situation in which religion "is understood to be one option among others."[37]

For clarity's sake: the creation of a "secular" Shinto did not entail the removal of divine beings, ritual practices, and sacred symbols from the public sphere. After all, as Josephson describes it, the notion that Japan was "a holy nation beloved by the gods" was taught in public education and was quickly naturalized.[38] Moreover, the "unity of ritual and government" (*saisei itchi* 祭政一致) became an important political principle, and shrine worship was effectively integrated into the ideological state apparatus, especially from the late Meiji and Taishō periods onwards. However, if one understands "the secular" as "the immanent frame" from which "religion" is differentiated, as I have suggested, Josephson's choice of the term "Shinto secular" arguably makes sense. Moreover, he is right to point out that this new ritual-ideological system was closely intertwined with the project of modernization, and associated with the new positivistic episteme, rather than constituting some sort of lingering premodern relic. In any case, the category distinction that emerged at the time—a "public," deprivatized, and mandatory national Shinto that was perceived and classified as essentially different from "private" religious institutions, membership of which became a matter of individual choice—continues to be relevant today, as it underlies popular contemporary notions of Shinto as "traditional culture" concerned with community life and the common good, centered around the local shrine and its sacred grove. I will discuss these notions in more detail shortly.

In sum, it would appear that, in Taylorian terms, Shinto—the "secular" counterpart of Buddhism in the medieval period—came to constitute the "immanent frame" upon which Japanese modernity was founded. "Religions" such as Buddhism were privatized, losing

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36 Josephson 2012, p. 132. For a critical assessment of Josephson's association of Shinto with "science," see the article by Mark Teeuwen in this special issue. In the present article, I refrain from discussing Josephson's interpretation of the category "science." Instead, I engage with his notion of Shinto as a public, "secular" worship system, which I find very useful.

37 Josephson 2012, p. 138; citing C. Taylor 2007, p. 3.

38 Josephson 2012, p. 156.

their previous self-evident and privileged position, and religious belief and affiliation became a matter of personal choice. Shinto, on the other hand, became the foundation on which modern Japanese secularism was based, notwithstanding the importance of divine beings and rituals. No wonder contemporary Shinto scholars and priests are eager to reintroduce Meiji-period symbolism into the public realm, challenge the postwar privatization of shrines, and assert Shinto's essentially public character. Drawing on Meiji-period notions of Shinto as *shūkyō*'s secular Other, leading Shinto actors today are actively promoting not only the deprivatization but also the discursive secularization of their tradition.

Sacralization and Discursive Secularization in Japan

Some interpreters have perceived the return of Shinto symbols and rituals in the public realm as evidence that Japan is not truly secular, and that Japanese politics and society are going through a period of *de*-secularization, characterized by a "return of religion" in politics.[39] Legally and politically speaking, this indeed appears to be the case: as illustrated by Abe's appropriation of Ise, the separation of state and religion (or at least the separation of state and Shinto) is increasingly challenged by leading political actors. Meanwhile, the nation state and emperor are subject to new attempts at sacralization.[40] However, seen in Taylorian terms, what we are perhaps witnessing is not so much the return of religion per se—indeed, generally speaking, institutionalized religion in Japan is in a state of decline, some exceptions notwithstanding—but, rather, attempts to reestablish Shinto as the foundational and sacred (that is, divinely ordained and non-negotiable) framework upon which twenty-first century Japanese society will be built.[41] Sacralization thus goes hand in hand with what I call the discursive secularization of Shinto: the reconstruction of Shinto as the natural, immanent, and commonly shared world view of Japan, supposedly grounded in and shaped by the country's physical environment. In this Taylorian scheme, Shinto is not so much a religious as some sort of ontological *a priori* that shapes the conditions of religious (or nonreligious) beliefs.

As John Nelson has made clear in a recent article, secularization is culturally specific. It is contingent upon time and place, not a universally valid historical necessity. It is a multi-faceted phenomenon: multiple processes of secularization can be at work simultaneously, which are "globally diffuse" and "locally determined."[42] These processes are influenced by global as well as national and local developments in law, mass media, and public discourse.[43] Nelson's approach makes clear that secular ideologies and multiple processes of secularization (locally grounded and not necessarily irreversible) are, indeed, influential aspects of contemporary Japanese society and politics. That does not mean, however, that religion in Japan is dying out. As sociologist of religion N. J. Demerath has pointed out, processes of secularization often give way to processes of sacralization. That is, "modernization does often lead to forms of secularization, but these in turn often spark a sacralizing response—one that ironically uses the means of modernity to protest the

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39 See for instance Guthmann's article in this special issue.
40 Mullins 2012.
41 On institutional decline, see Reader 2012; cf. Covell 2005.
42 Nelson 2012, p. 37.
43 On the impact of globalization on local secularization practices, see Dessì 2013.

ends of modernity." [44] The term "sacralization" refers to "the process by which the secular becomes sacred or other new forms of the sacred emerge, whether in matters of personal faith, institutional practice or political power." [45] In other words, it refers to the production and reproduction of "the sacred" in public. [46] Note that this term does not equal the notion of "de-secularization" as used by sociologist Peter Berger, for sacralization does not negate secularization. [47] Rather, according to this argument, they are two sides of the same coin, sacralization constituting a profoundly "modern" response to secularization. Indeed, secular elements can be sacralized (for example, national flags and civic commemoration ceremonies), just as religious elements can lose their sacred character.

Mark Mullins' article on sacralization in contemporary Japan follows Demerath's theoretical model. [48] He points out that secularization in Japan is by no means an unambiguous process, as "there are 'multiple secularities' competing in Japan today." [49] As the title of his article suggests, they paradoxically coexist with processes of deprivatization and "the reappearance of 'public religion' in Japanese society." Mullins argues that recent decades have seen the gradual "*de*-privatization of religion" in Japan, especially Shinto: several players have consistently lobbied for the revitalization of Shinto as a national ritual tradition, to be reassigned important public ceremonial and ideological functions. In particular, Mullins outlines the efforts of the Shintō Seiji Renmei 神道政治連盟—a political lobby organization associated with Jinja Honchō—to reestablish imperial symbolism in the public sphere, nationalize Yasukuni Shrine, revise the constitution, and rewrite national history. [50]

We can refer to this development as the return of sacred symbols and rituals to the public sphere; or, alternatively, as the (re)sacralization of the public sphere. That is, instead of the deprivatization of religious institutions in general, we are witnessing the deprivatization of *some* rituals, symbols, and worship places, which are reframed as public and national rather than private and "religious." In other words, the declining popularity of the category "*shūkyō*" in Japan does not equal the decline of religious institutions *per se*, only their transformation and reclassification. Secularization coexists with, and may even give rise to, processes of sacralization and the corresponding reappearance of "sacred" symbols in politics and public space. A well-known example of this is the ongoing patronage of Yasukuni Shrine by prominent politicians, which continues to jeopardize Japan's foreign relations. At least as important is the return of Ise as a core symbol of the nation and its primordial ties to the land of Japan and the imperial family, as discussed in the introduction. Central to this was the impressive (yet uncritical) media coverage of the 2013 *shikinen sengū*, which was

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44 Demerath 2007, p. 68.

45 Demerath 2007, p. 66.

46 I use the term "sacred" to refer to objects, places, and practices that are perceived as nonnegotiable; that are set apart from the ordinary, physically as well as discursively; and that are believed to possess certain eternal qualities, that is, that are believed to transcend historical particularities (cf. Rots 2013, pp. 78–87). For a more elaborate discussion of "the sacred" as an analytical category, see Anttonen 2000.

47 Berger 1999.

48 Mullins 2012.

49 Mullins 2012, p. 79. On the concept of "multiple secularities," see also Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012.

50 Mullins 2012, pp. 71–80; cf. Breen 2010a. On this topic, see also the article by Thierry Guthmann in this special issue.

generally framed as a great cultural event of nationwide significance rather than a religious happening.

Thus, various attempts are made to challenge the constitutional separation of state and religion, and to reassert the position of Shinto-related symbols and practices in the public sphere. While some sites and practices are subject to heated debate (for example, worship at Yasukuni by the prime minister), others are much less politicized, at least in public discourse (for example, his patronage of the Ise shrines). Significantly, in both these cases, most of the actors involved evade the category of religion altogether, instead framing Shinto practices and places as "traditional culture" and "heritage," conceiving of them as essentially public. It is to this reframing that I refer with the term "discursive secularization."

As mentioned previously, Charles Taylor distinguished between three types of secularization: political, social, and cultural.[51] Although Taylor's analysis is concerned with "the West," as we have seen, these categories can be applied to Asia as well, as Richard Madsen has demonstrated in an insightful comparative article.[52] In addition, however, I suggest we distinguish a fourth type: discursive secularization. I use this term to refer to processes by which beliefs, practices, and institutions previously classified as "religion" are redefined and reconfigured (by many of the leading actors involved) as "culture," "tradition," "heritage," "science," or even "nature"; in sum, as non-religion. This may go hand in hand with processes of deprivatization, sacralization, and/or attempts to reclaim the public sphere, as in the case of contemporary Shinto, but this is not necessarily the case. Importantly, however, discursive secularization does *not* necessarily imply the decline of faith in supernatural beings, ritual activities, or places of worship. What it means is that they acquire new meanings in a changing context, as they are dissociated from the master category "religion," which in Japan has come to be contaminated to the point that few people or institutions are willing to identify with it.[53]

The notion of *discursive secularization* is an important contribution to existing theories of secularization, I argue, as it allows for the fact that "emic" conceptualizations do not necessarily reflect wider societal processes. Importantly, the fact that certain religious actors decide to redefine themselves in explicitly "nonreligious" terms does not automatically imply institutional privatization or decline, nor does it mean they are no longer classified as "religious" in law, politics, academia, or media representations. We should distinguish between self-definitions and other types of classification, as these do not always correspond. Furthermore, the notion of discursive secularization is useful for distinguishing between *practices* and *interpretations*: people may engage in practices that are legally and academically classified as religious, yet conceptualize these in different terms, which may be explicitly nonreligious. This does not mean they are inconsistent or self-contradictory: all it shows is that the category "religion" may be employed or discarded for various reasons, that practices are neither intrinsically "religious" nor intrinsically "secular," and that a practice described as "religious" by some may be perceived in different terms by others. As we have seen, in a "secular age," religious belief and practice have become optional; what is more, *defining* one's

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51 Taylor 2007, pp. 2–3. For an explanation of Taylor's categorization, see above.
52 Madsen 2011.
53 See Baffelli and Reader 2012.

belief and practice as "religious" or not has become optional as well, in the sense that the label may be used or rejected, depending on (identity) politics and economic incentives.[54]

Thus, importantly, discursive secularization may be a strategy for survival employed by religious actors. Simply put, reframing shrine or temple worship as "traditional culture" (*dentō bunka* 伝統文化) instead of "religion" can be a means to attract more visitors. Significantly, in the Japanese secularist legal system, it is also a strategy to attract corporate and state sponsors. Not surprisingly, then, many prominent religious institutions (*shūkyō hōjin* 宗教法人) these days have set up nonprofit organizations (*NPO hōjin* NPO 法人) for the promotion of shrine and temple activities, including cultural events, tree-planting, educational activities, and workshops in "traditional arts." Such activities serve to establish stronger bonds between these institutions and nearby communities, create positive publicity and, perhaps most importantly, raise funds for maintaining buildings, groves, and so on. Creating a puppet nonprofit organization is a means for religious institutions to secure financial support from local authorities and corporate sponsors; in addition, it can be a strategy for engaging in educational activities that would otherwise be unlawful, providing "religious socialization in disguise."[55]

In sum, my argument here is that leading contemporary Shinto actors actively seek to reframe their tradition as "traditional Japanese culture" rather than religion, even if some of them do not deny Shinto's religious character when asked directly. Thus, they are contributing to the discursive secularization of their tradition. As such, they are not unique: similar patterns have been observed in Buddhist pilgrimage, for instance, where heritagization reportedly led to a decline in devotional practices, and in some "new religions" reinventing themselves in terms of science, therapy, education, or development.[56] Contrary to Reader's rather gloomy prediction of religion in Japan "dying," however, I do not see this discursive secularization as evidence of religious decline *per se*: on the contrary, it can be a powerful strategy for institutional adaptation.

Nor, for that matter, do I see it necessarily as evidence of a decline in devotional practices. The shrines of Kumano are a case in point. They are UNESCO World Heritage listed, and widely perceived as an important cultural site; they nonetheless receive ample attention in the Japanese media as mythological sacred sites (*seichi* 聖地), characterized by primordial natural beauty and filled with spiritual "powerspots."[57] Discursive secularization and heritagization thus do not necessarily mean that places lose their perceived "sacred" or "spiritual" character, but that they are conceived in terms of culture, tradition, and nature, rather than "religion." "Religion," after all, means "private"—and if there is one thing the sacred forests and shrines of places such as Kumano and Ise are *not*, according to the Shinto

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54 There is some overlap with the notion of "internal secularization," used by Isaac Gagné (in this issue), drawing on the work of Dobbelaere (1981) and others. The difference is that "discursive secularization" not only refers to internal institutional dynamics, but also to ways in which religious actors (either institutional or individual) present themselves to the outside world; that is, how they frame their own beliefs and practices. Discursive secularization does not necessarily imply a change in those beliefs and practices; rather, it means that they are conceptualized and classified differently.

55 Rots 2013, p. 336.

56 On the decline in devotional practices at Buddhist temples, see Reader 2012. On discursive secularization among new religions, see for instance Watanabe 2015. See also the articles by Erica Baffelli and Isaac Gagné in this special issue.

57 For a discussion of the impact of Kumano being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, see McGuire 2013.

establishment and its academic spokesmen, it is "private." That is, in contemporary Shinto ideology, it is often argued that, in order for Japanese society to function well, shrines need to be reassigned their "proper" place not as private religious institutions, but as public community centers, the function of which is social and political as well as spiritual. Central to this ideology is the notion of *chinju no mori* 鎮守の森・鎮守の杜. Literally, this term refers to the "sacred grove" or area of woodland surrounding a shrine, but it has recently come to symbolize the shrine as a whole, and its connection to a local community (*ujiko* 氏子) —as well as, by extension, Shinto's essentially public character. It is to this notion of *chinju no mori* that I will now turn.

Figure 1. A typical broad-leaved *chinju no mori*. Tokiwa Jinja, Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture. Photo by the author.

Chinju no mori: Public Shrine Forests?

As I have outlined elsewhere, in recent decades, a new Shinto paradigm has emerged.[58] I refer to this as the "Shinto environmentalist paradigm": the notion that Shinto is a primordial tradition of nature worship (sometimes referred to as "animistic"), which contains ancient ecological knowledge on how to live in harmonious coexistence with nature. Proponents of this paradigm not only draw attention to the intimate connection between shrines, Shinto world views and practices, and (local) natural environments; they also often assert that this ancient ecological knowledge—which, they argue, has been forgotten by most Japanese people as a result of the twin processes of modernization and "Westernization"—contains important clues for living sustainably and solving environmental problems today. Their ideas have gradually spread in recent decades, to the point that they have come to exercise significant impact on mainstream Shinto self-definitions and practices, including, as we shall see, those of the generally conservative umbrella organization Jinja Honchō.

Central to the Shinto environmentalist paradigm is the notion of *chinju no mori*. Composed of the terms *chinju* 鎮守 (or *chinjugami* 鎮守神, a protective local diety) and *mori* 森・杜 (forest), the modern compound word *chinju no mori* has come to signify the groves often surrounding Shinto shrines.[59] In early postwar Japan, many of these centuries-old shrine groves gave way to buildings and roads. In response, around 1980 a conservation movement emerged, led by scientists Ueda Atsushi 上田篤 and Miyawaki Akira 宮脇昭, who conducted research on the composition of shrine forests and pleaded for their preservation. In the 1990s, well-known historians of religion and shrine priests Ueda Masaaki 上田正昭 and Sonoda Minoru 薗田稔 joined forces with these and other scientists in order to prevent

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58 Rots 2013; 2015.
59 See Rots 2015 for a discussion of this term and its etymology.

the further destruction of *chinju no mori*. In 2002, they established Shasō Gakkai 社叢学会 (Sacred Forest Research Association), a scientific nonprofit organization focused on the dissemination of knowledge on shrine forest history and conservation.[60]

Thanks to these initiatives, shrine forest preservation has become an issue of nationwide concern, and local non-profit organizations bringing together volunteers active in tree-planting, forest maintenance, and various educational activities have been set up throughout the country.[61] Accordingly, the notion of *chinju no mori* has come to be used widely, but it no longer solely refers to the physical forests (or areas of woodland) surrounding shrines. As it is now regularly employed in various Shinto texts (for example, the weekly shrine newspaper *Jinja Shinpō* 神社新報 as well as other Jinja Honchō publications), the term has acquired symbolic significance extending far beyond forest ecology. Representing continuity (spiritual, ecological, and cultural) between the present and the imagined ancestral past, the shrine grove has come to be seen as the number one focal point of a local community: both physical, as a meeting place and sociocultural center, and symbolic, signifying social cohesion and existential belonging to a place. As such, the concept has acquired significant ideological potential. Not surprisingly, therefore, *chinju no mori* now feature prominently in contemporary Shinto texts that try to renegotiate postwar secularism and argue for the ongoing importance of shrines—not as private religious institutions, but as community focal points, located both literally and metaphorically in the center of public space. Two authors who have developed and appropriated the concept are Shinto scholar Sonoda Minoru and incumbent Jinja Honchō president Tanaka Tsunekiyo.

Sonoda Minoru is a scholar of religion and head priest of Chichibu Shrine in Saitama Prefecture. He is also one of the most prominent voices in the *chinju no mori* movement. For many years, Sonoda has been a leading member of Shasō Gakkai, as well as of the International Shinto Foundation (a nonprofit organization devoted to the dissemination of knowledge on Shinto, which has promoted the Shinto environmentalist paradigm both in Japan and abroad). He has described Shinto variously as a "natural religion" that was "formed spontaneously"; as the "ethnic religion" (*minzoku shūkyō* 民族宗教) of the Japanese people, which took shape in tandem with the ancient state; as a "communal religion" (*kyōdōtai shūkyō* 共同体宗教) that emerged in response to the natural landscape and climate (*shizen fūdo* 自然風土) of ancient Japan and constitutes a foundational aspect of Japanese culture; and as an ancient "forest religion" typical of primordial nature worship, unique as "the only ancient religion in the world that has survived until today."[62] Thus, in Sonoda's narrative, shrine worship is fundamentally interconnected with the physical landscape and climate of Japan (its *fūdo*) and its local village communities (*kyōdōtai* 共同体 or *kakyō* 家郷).[63] As such, it is similar to other "primal religions" or "folk religions" worldwide, but it is the only such religion which has survived and even flourished in a modern society, while still retaining "strong characteristics of prehistoric religion."[64]

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60 See for instance Ueda 2004. For a more elaborate discussion of the activities of Shasō Gakkai, see Rots 2013, pp. 287–93.
61 For examples, see Rots 2013, pp. 274–365.
62 Respectively Sonoda 1987, p. 3; Sonoda 1998, p. 149; Sonoda 1998, pp. 167–68; Sonoda 1998, p. 41.
63 Cf. Watsuji 1979.
64 Sonoda 1997, p. 45.

As the above list makes clear, Sonoda does not deny Shinto the predicate "religion." Quite the contrary: as a scholar of comparative religion well familiar with classical European theories in the field, he apparently adheres to a universalistic understanding of religion, seeing religion as a natural category present anywhere in the world since prehistoric times. He does, however, classify different types of religions, following classical theories that predate the "critical turn" in religious studies. According to Sonoda, there is a crucial distinction between "religions of the individual" (*kojin shūkyō* 個人宗教) and "communal religions." The former are faith-based and individualistic; they have strongly influenced the perception of "religion" in modern times, including, significantly, the way in which religion is defined in the Constitution and other modern laws.[65] Shinto, by contrast, is an integral part of Japan's "religious culture" (*shūkyō bunka* 宗教文化), which was formed in a symbiotic relationship with the physical environment, while also shaping local community culture.[66]

Thus, in the religious-cultural system described by Sonoda, local belonging and collective ritual practices take precedence over individual beliefs. The Japanese constitutional separation of state and religion, by contrast, rests on a "Western" understanding of religion, which does not adequately reflect the original Japanese situation in which religious practices were closely intertwined with local societies and their environments. To Sonoda, there is a fundamental distinction between "Western," "monotheistic" religions such as Christianity on the one hand, and "ethnic" community religions such as Shinto on the other, not only with regard to the extent to which they are individualistic or collectivistic but also in their relationship to nature. His work echoes the rhetoric of contemporary *nihonjinron* 日本人論 scholars such as Yasuda Yoshinori 安田喜憲 and Umehara Takeshi 梅原猛, both of whom have argued that Japan constitutes a "forest civilization," whose animistic principles should serve as a model for overcoming the global environmental degradation caused by "Western monotheism."[67] Thus, Sonoda argues that:

> Western people raised in the Christian world view did not consider natural landscapes and forests as sacred. Instead, they cleared the land, built churches, and made artificial gardens, establishing order upon the world, the main point of which was to show God's glory. By contrast, since ancient times in Japan deep mountain valleys, forests, waterfalls, rocks, and other such natural features, and even forests planted by people, were seen as sacred places guarded by gods and spirits.[68]

The accuracy of this statement may be debated, not only because it gives an arguably one-sided representation of Christian notions of sacred space, but also because it overlooks the long Japanese history of cultivating and controlling nature. It is typical of the Shinto environmentalist paradigm, however, in its assertion that in ancient Shinto natural elements

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65 Sonoda 1998, p. 167.
66 Sonoda 1998, p. 168. Cf. Sonoda 2000.
67 For example Umehara 1995; Yasuda 2006. Umehara and Yasuda both appropriated Lynn White's argument that the Christian world view is to blame for environmental exploitation, which they combined with a nationalist narrative of an "ecological golden age" followed by decline as a result of negative foreign influences. See White 1967.
68 Sonoda 1998, p. 31.

were seen as intrinsically sacred, and that, consequently, Japanese people have preserved nature since ancient times.

As it is connected to and contingent upon local communities and their natural surroundings, Sonoda argues, Shrine Shinto transcends individual beliefs and political or ideological positions in its concern with *the common good*, that is, the community as a whole. Thus, he states, it transcends the anthropocentrism (*ningenchūshinshugi* 人間中心主義) characteristic of modernity, acknowledging the interdependence of human and nonhuman actors (gods, trees, animals, climatological phenomena, and so on).[69] Concerned as it is with this-wordly collective well-being and sustainable human-nature relations—instead of, say, individual salvation in the afterlife—Shinto has an intrinsically public character (that is, "secular" in the sense of "this-worldly" and "immanent"). In Sonoda's model, this public character is best represented by *chinju no mori*, which constitute the original shape of shrines (that is, people worshipped kami at sacred groves long before they started constructing shrine buildings). They are also seen as the focal points of matsuri (shrine festivals), the most important communitarian activities in traditional Japanese culture, socially as well as culturally. Through matsuri, social bonds between members of a local community are established and strengthened; moreover, by conducting the same rituals as their ancestors, people establish continuity between the present and the past. *Chinju no mori* constitute the centers of these local matsuri—and, hence, of the community as a whole.[70]

Sacred Grove, Public Shrine

As suggested above, the importance of *chinju no mori* conservation far transcends ecological concerns. Arguably, for many of the actors involved, community building and the preservation (or revitalization) of cultural traditions are at least as important. Considering the discursive association between shrine forests, matsuri, and community life—none of which are commonly classified in terms of *shūkyō*, but which all contain devotional aspects nonetheless, possibly more so in the post-3/11 period than before—it comes as no surprise that Shinto actors assert shrines' public significance (social, cultural, moral, and environmental), and reclaim their position in the public sphere.[71] Thus, Shinto actors' attempts to negotiate the secular constitution, and redefine the legal status of Shinto shrines, are not limited to controversial issues such as the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine or the political position of the emperor; they are equally concerned with lesser-known issues such as state support for local shrines and festivals, the role of priests in public education, and the publicly funded preservation of shrine forest land and shrine buildings.

Contrary to what authors such as Sonoda suggest, however, these issues are contested as well. Not all Japanese subscribe to the notion that Shinto constitutes a foundational aspect of their national culture, even if they attend the occasional matsuri or visit a shrine on New Year's Day (*hatsumōde* 初詣). Nor, for that matter, does everybody agree that shrines should be publicly funded. Constitutional changes that would lead to a revision of the secularist state apparatus, allowing for more direct government patronage of Shinto institutions, are

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69 Sonoda 1998, p. 151.
70 Sonoda 1998, pp. 91–138.
71 Elisabetta Porcu has argued that after the disasters of March 2011, people became more aware of the spiritual aspects of matsuri, which thus regained their devotional character to a certain degree (Porcu 2012, pp. 102–103). This does not mean people conceived of these matsuri in terms of "religion," however.

Figure 2. Associated with the mythical first emperor Jinmu, Kashihara Jingū in Nara Prefecture is closely intertwined with modern imperial Shinto. It is also famous for its forest, however, showing that nationalism and nature conservation are not necessarily at odds. Photo by the author.

highly controversial. And while a majority of the population may be fairly indifferent towards these issues, neither embracing Shinto as an important part of their identity nor rejecting it, some ideological minorities actively oppose such attempts at deprivatizing Shinto. These include leftist groups as well as Christians and members of religious movements such as Sōka Gakkai 創価学会, all of which are against state involvement in religious affairs, fearing the reestablishment of a type of "State Shinto" reminiscent of the period prior to 1945 when communists, Christian leaders, and members of several new religions were actively persecuted.

For instance, in 2010 there was the case of two shrines in the town of Sunagawa in Hokkaido, which had been given municipal land by the local authorities. This was an act of public support that was challenged by a number of local Protestants, who argued that it constituted a violation of the constitutional separation of religion and state. After all, according to the Constitution, "no religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State" (Article 20), and no public funds may be used "for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association" (Article 89). The issue was taken up by the Supreme Court, which ruled that the local authorities had indeed violated the Constitution in the case of one of the two shrines (but not the other). According to the judge, shrine activities are not secular, but religious; the construction of a shrine on municipal (that is, public) land, therefore, is unlawful. This court ruling may have significant impact, as Sunagawa is by no means unique: throughout the country, there are shrines built on state-owned land. Not surprisingly, then, the case received considerable media attention—and provoked the wrath of Shinto leaders and other conservatives.[72]

One example of a Shinto leader who has disputed the ruling of the Supreme Court is Tanaka Tsunekiyo, head priest of Iwashimizu Hachimangū Shrine in Yawata (Kyoto Prefecture) and current president of Jinja Honchō (since 2010). Tanaka questions the judges' ruling that building a shrine on public land is unconstitutional, arguing that constitutional guarantees concerning the freedom of belief (*shinkyō no jiyū* 信教の自由) and the separation of state and religion (*seikyō bunri* 政教分離) should not undermine Japanese society. According to him, throughout Japanese history people have come together at shrines; meeting at a shrine (*jinja ni tsudou koto* 神社に集うこと) even constitutes the "foundation of society" (*shakai no konpon* 社会の根本), as it is here that communities took shape in ancient

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72   Breen 2010a, pp. 68–71. See also the article by Ernils Larsson in this special issue.

times. Therefore, "this debate completely disregards the historical reality of the actual lives of the people, causing nothing but unnecessary confusion." Shrines are a "natural" part of Japanese community life, according to Tanaka, and shrine worship is "in the DNA of the Japanese people." [73]

If shrines have an intrinsically public character, as Tanaka argues (thus formulating the ideological position of Jinja Honchō), it follows that the use of public land for shrines—or, by extension, the use of public funds for the maintenance of shrine buildings or the organization of shrine festivals—is only "natural." Restricting the access of Shinto shrines to public land or funding, on the other hand, is at odds with Japanese tradition and "causes unnecessary confusion." The role of Shinto priests, according to Tanaka, is fundamentally different from priests in other religions; while the latter are seen as preachers who mediate between this world and the divine, Shinto priests merely conduct rituals *for the benefit of the community*. Thus,

> When seen from our perspective as shrine priests, shrine ritual worship and governance (*jinja no "matsurigoto"* 神社の「まつりごと」) is always "public." [74] Private affairs do not take place at all. Put simply, all we do is pray for the peace and safety of the nation and the community (*kyōdōtai*) where we live. These are, so to speak, public prayers (*paburikku na inori* パブリックな祈り). [75]

Of course, the claim that shrine practices are intrinsically public is problematic, for various reasons. Not only is there a wide diversity of ritual and devotional practices taking place at shrines; shrines also earn most of their money by performing rituals on behalf of private companies and individuals. Although they may frame their activities as public, and although they constitute the focal points of matsuri and other collective events, the reality is that shrines are actors that operate within the postwar Japanese "religious market," competing with other religious and commercial institutions for the patronage of individual "parishioners" and corporate sponsors. [76] In fact, if it were not for the financial support from companies, many shrines would have even greater difficulty paying their employees and maintaining their buildings.

Tanaka does not deny this reality. However, he does not see companies as private actors, but describes them as collective entities akin to local communities, both of which constitute the building blocks of Japanese society. Central to his argument is the notion of *kyōdōtai*, which refers to a community, but which literally means "collective body." As Tanaka argues, most Japanese are part of such a local "collective body," which can be experienced most directly during a matsuri, when people of all ages "become one body" by carrying a portable shrine (*mikoshi* 神輿) together. Ultimately, these local communities together constitute the "collective body" of the Japanese nation: the "shrine parish" (*ujiko*)

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73 Tanaka 2011, p. 15.
74 The term *matsurigoto* dates back to the *ritsuryō* 律令 system, the China-influenced system of state administration and ritual ceremonies implemented in the Nara period. Interestingly, it refers to both political administration and rituals. The term was reapplied in the Meiji period, and used to refer to the role of the emperor.
75 Tanaka 2011, p. 7.
76 See for example Reader and Tanabe 1998.

to which "all Japanese belong." This collective body is symbolically united by the imperial family, which constitutes its head.[77] Although the political consequences are not necessarily the same, the similarity of these ideas to prewar *kokutai* 国体 ("national body") ideology is significant; they point to an organicist understanding of nationhood that denies internal diversity and downplays historical contingencies. Moreover, they naturalize the imperial institution, by suggesting that the emperor is the head of the "body" that constitutes the Japanese nation.

Clearly, such views are of an inherently ideological nature and have potential political significance. For instance, they may be employed to justify various types of state patronage of Shinto shrines that are not available to Buddhist or Christian institutions. However, while hinting at such possible implications, Tanaka generally refrains from making explicitly political statements. The image of Shinto presented in his work—as in the work of Sonoda Minoru, as well as other contemporary Shinto scholars—is that of an ancient tradition of nature worship, intimately (even existentially) connected to the Japanese nation and its supposed physical territories; not of a modern, politically engaged religion. Significantly, these Shinto thinkers present Shinto not only as a "nature religion" (that is, a religion concerned with the worship of deities residing in natural elements), but also as a "natural religion" (that is, a religion that took shape "naturally" and "spontaneously" without the mediation of a historical founder).[78] By describing Shinto in these terms, they dehistoricize and depoliticize it; as an essential, *natural*, and foundational aspect of Japanese culture and society, Shinto both predates and transcends modern categories such as "religion" and "politics." This naturalization, I argue, is part and parcel of Shinto's discursive secularization: by redefining Shinto as the "natural ground" underlying other cultural and religious practices, it is presented as Japan's "immanent frame" that shapes the conditions of belief. Thus, Shinto is not beyond belief—it precedes it.

The implication of Tanaka's argument is that discussions about shrine patronage in relation to the constitutional separation of state and religion rest on a serious category mistake: Shinto does not correspond to the modern category of "religion," since this category was imposed by foreign occupation authorities rather than being grounded in "the" Japanese historical experience. There is perhaps some truth to this argument: after all, in contemporary Japan, there is a clear discrepancy between legal constructions of "religion" and daily-life uses of the term (or avoidance thereof). As we know, *shūkyō* is a modern construct that does not cover the range of devotional and ritual practices taking place in the country. However, those criticizing the secularist state apparatus for being a modern construct typically fail to acknowledge that Shinto as it exists today is largely a modern invention as well, shaped in tandem with the modern state and its categories.[79] Instead, they assert the transhistorical character of Shinto, arguing that it goes back to prehistoric times, when it took shape "spontaneously" in reaction to the natural environment. This Shinto is said to constitute both a natural and a foundational aspect of Japanese culture and society.

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77 Tanaka 2011, p. 19.
78 Depending on the context, the adverb *shizen ni* 自然に can mean both "naturally" and "spontaneously."
79 Kuroda 1981; Josephson 2012.

Conclusion

Notions of Shinto as a tradition of nature worship—and, correspondingly, pleas for the protection of shrine forest land and shrine-based nature conservation practices—are not at odds with an understanding of Shinto as the ancient spiritual tradition of the Japanese nation, which constitutes a single collective body. Quite the contrary: the Shinto environmentalist paradigm has turned out to be perfectly compatible with notions of a more outspokenly conservative and nationalist nature. One reason for this is that a professed concern for "nature," "ecology," and "environmental sustainability" can serve to provide legitimacy for various activities, in Japan as well as abroad, without necessarily leading to significant changes on a practical level. The increasing association of Shinto with these issues in recent years has led to much positive PR, and arguably contributed to the dissociation of Shrine Shinto from issues of a more explicitly ideological nature, including the lingering nostalgia for prewar imperialism and the historical revisionism displayed by the Yasukuni management and its powerful supporters.

The paradigmatic status of this notion of Shinto as a nature religion is well exemplified by the fact that even the president of Jinja Honchō now writes that "the origin of Shinto is nature worship," and that "the sacred grove constitutes the center of the local community." [80] After all, *nature is public*; moreover, it transcends historical particularities and human contingencies. To what extent Jinja Honchō and its leaders have become "truly" concerned with environmental problems is subject to ongoing debate, and I will not attempt to solve this issue now. In any case, they do appear to have embraced the notion of *chinju no mori* as sacred sites where meaningful and sustainable relationships are established between local communities, natural environments, and deities. According to Tanaka and like-minded Shintoists, it is through a renewed awareness of one's local identity and belonging to a place—social as well as physical—that Japanese people can once again learn about "their" ancient traditions, which are characterized by a symbiotic relationship with the natural environment, as well as gratitude to the ancestors and the gods. Ultimately, the argument goes, this will lead to a moral renaissance, and to the rebirth of the nation.[81]

Thus, in this narrative, the significance of *chinju no mori* far transcends the two-dimensional state-religion dichotomy characteristic of postwar legal secularism. Contemporary Shinto ideologues such as Tanaka Tsunekiyo and Sonoda Minoru challenge this secular apparatus; as such, it appears justified to describe their position as "anti-secular." However, it should be emphasized that ultimately, these Shinto leaders do not challenge the separation of religion and state *per se*. All they state is that modern notions of religion as primarily faith-based and individualistic do not accurately reflect the historical reality of Shinto: a community religion shaped by the natural environment of the archipelago where it emerged. According to them, the legal category *shūkyō*, as it is defined by the Constitution, does not cover Shinto. While the Constitution defines religion as essentially a private affair, Shinto is fundamentally public and collective, they argue. Rather than challenging the separation of state and religion, therefore, contemporary Shinto leaders seek to *reposition* their tradition in the public realm. Thus, they do not wish to abolish the secular system—quite the contrary. Instead, they want to move Shinto from

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80 Tanaka 2011, pp. 10, 12.
81 Tanaka 2011, p. 19. See also Breen 2010b.

the "private" realm of *shūkyō* (back) to the "public" or "secular" realm, which encompasses culture, heritage, and nature. Their claim is that Shinto's place is *in this world*, even though it deals with gods: yet the gods matter here and now, to the entire collective body and the natural environment by which the collective is shaped. Thus, in Josephson's terminology, these scholars seek to reestablish the "Shinto secular." When perceived as such, the attempts to make Shinto public and dissociate it from "religion" can indeed be conceptualized as the discursive secularization of Shinto (but not, obviously, its decline).

Eventually, of course, this all boils down to the question of definition, which brings us back to the topic of this special issue, and the debates outlined previously. The concepts "secularism" and "secularization" are used differently by different interpreters, and have come to carry a range of meanings, which are not always made explicit by authors employing these terms. As I have pointed out, contemporary Shinto ideology may be seen as antithetic to secularism by some. Indeed, the attempts to challenge the constitutional restrictions on religious institutions and re-sacralize the public sphere may appear anti-secular at first sight. However, I have argued that these same attempts to reassert Shinto's role in the public sphere may also be interpreted as a strategy to reestablish Shinto as a secular (that is, nonreligious) collective tradition. In this paper, I have referred to this strategy by the term "discursive secularization."

When using the terms "secular" and "religious" to refer to Japanese ideology and practices, we need clear working definitions, and consistent application. Should we choose to define "secularity" as the absence of any reference to divine beings in public, Shinto most certainly is not secular. However, should we choose to define it as the this-worldly counterpart of a more transcendentally oriented "religion," which in modern times has come to constitute the "immanent frame" by which the conditions of belief and disbelief are shaped, then Shinto *is* secular, at least in the perception of some of its leading ideologists, who actively argue for corresponding legal changes. Whichever approach we adopt, it is of crucial importance to realize that, although they may have been shaped in a "Western" historical context, "religion" and "the secular" have become very real societal categories in many societies worldwide (including Japan), and therefore cannot be discarded. Their meanings continue to be subject to negotiation and change, however. What counts as "secular" and "religious" is never fixed: these are normative concepts, not neutral analytical categories. One man's secularism is another man's religion.

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Nationalist Circles in Japan Today: The Impossibility of Secularization

Thierry GUTHMANN

Contrary to what sometimes has been suggested, contemporary Japanese society is no exception to the rule that the more a society modernizes, the more its individuals become secular. Simultaneously, however, since the end of the 1990s the political sphere in Japan has seen a return of religious elements. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in the case of nationalist circles. State Shinto, which was imposed in the prewar period by the authorities of imperial Japan, constitutes the ideological foundation for these circles. More specifically, the emperor cult and the cult of the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine are the two main components of this ideology. This article argues that is unlikely that the ideology and activities of nationalist circles in Japan will acquire a more secular character, given the fundamentally religious character of their vision of the national community. Nippon Kaigi, a large confederation of political and religious movements, occupies a central place in this nationalist revival. Many politicians of the first rank are involved with this organization. As this article demonstrates, the ideological positions of its members are placed on a continuum, ranging from a religious nationalism close to historical State Shinto to more moderate statements suggesting the existence of a type of Japanese civil religion. Ultimately, members and sympathizers of nationalist movements in Japan are all motivated, to varying degrees, by nostalgia for a golden age of the nation.

Keywords: religion, politics, Nippon Kaigi, State Shinto, the emperor, Yasukuni Shrine, Jinja Honchō, Abe Shinzō, civil religion, golden age

Introduction

As Ian Reader has demonstrated in a recent article, Japanese society is becoming increasingly secular.[1] In opposition to a number of academics who have used Japan as a counter-example against the secularization thesis, Reader provides powerful evidence showing that urbanization and education have contributed to the withdrawal of religion from the daily lives of Japanese people. Individual religious practices are losing importance and, Reader explains, religious organizations are suffering continuous decline. However,

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1 Reader 2012.

in an article published in the same issue of the *Journal of Religion in Japan*, Mark Mullins convincingly argues that the secularization of Japanese society has multiple dimensions.[2] Although secularization is at an advanced stage when it comes to individual religious practice, this is not the case when it comes to political life. Paradoxically, the decrease in individual religious practice has been accompanied, in the second half of the 1990s, by a renewed importance of the religious dimensions of political activities, not in the least when it comes to conservative circles. This development probably corresponds to what José Casanova meant when he used the term "deprivatization of religion" to describe, in four different countries, the reemergence in the public sphere of religious actors who had previously withdrawn to the private sphere.[3] Similarly, in today's Japan, nationalist circles— backed by the Shinto shrine world—are the increasingly influential advocates of a view of the nation that is fundamentally religious.[4]

Throughout this article, I use the term "nationalist circles" to refer to a group of political organizations representing ideological positions that are very similar. Of these, Nippon Kaigi 日本会議 (Japan Conference) and Jinja Honchō 神社本庁 (Association of Shinto Shrines) are the two most important organizations. The online TV channel Nihon Bunka Channeru Sakura 日本文化チャンネル桜 (Japanese Culture Channel Sakura) and the activist group Ganbare Nippon! Zenkoku Kōdō Iinkai 頑張れ日本！ 全国行動委員会 (Ganbare Nippon! National Action Committee) are also major actors within this movement. Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru Kai 新しい歴史教科書をつくる会 (Japan Society for History Textbook Reform) is another well-known organization that is part of the "nationalist circles" discussed in this article.[5]

It should be pointed out here that the ideological platform of Japanese nationalist circles is not limited to the religious dimension. In fact, members are primarily concerned with strengthening the nation; that is, reestablishing Japan as a strong country politically. Thus, they strive for a revision of Article 9 of the Constitution, so that Japan can have an official army, and no longer renounce the sovereign right of belligerency. Another of their key priorities is the popularization of a more positive account of the actions of the imperial army during the Pacific War, especially in school textbooks. In fact, in Japanese nationalist circles, the contents of history education since the end of the war are typically described as "masochistic" (*jigyakuteki* 自虐的); according to this view, such history education is the cause of the lack of pride and patriotism in Japan today. Another major political battle for them concerns the defense of territorial integrity, especially against Chinese and Korean claims.[6]

Thus, the majority of the political battles waged by nationalist circles in Japan do not have religious dimensions. Yet the fact remains that within these circles, popular devotion for the emperor and the existence of a national cult of the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine are

2 Mullins 2012a.
3 Casanova 1994.
4 I use the term "nationalism" to refer to an ideology made up of claims that the strength of a national community should be preserved at all costs, since individuals are not able to fully exist outside of this community.
5 Due to internal conflicts and schisms in the first decade of the twenty-first century, this group lost much of its former influence to a new organization with similar objectives, the Kyōkasho Kaizen no Kai 教科書改善の会 (Society for Improvement of Textbooks).
6 On these political activities of the nationalist circles in Japan, see Guthmann 2017.

considered as two fundamental, indispensable elements of a Japan that has regained all its state power. The cult of the emperor and the cult of the war dead are two remnants of State Shinto, which, I argue in this article, have a religious character. It should nevertheless be noted that the majority of ideologues involved with nationalist movements in Japan consider Shinto to belong to the realm of customs, not that of religion, as was indeed the case in prewar Japan. This point of view is still strong today, as the following example illustrates.

I recently interviewed Ms. F., a resident of Mie Prefecture who has been active for many years as the leader of a local branch of Nippon Kaigi.[7] According to her, Shinto was placed into the category "religion" by the American occupying forces: "Originally, Shinto shrines were not religious places," she stated. "However, during the occupation, Shinto was put in the same legal category as other religions."[8] Ms. F. then declared that she does not consider Shinto to be a religion. This was all the more interesting, since prior to coming to the teahouse where we had our interview, she had entered a shrine to conduct an act of worship. Ms. F. argued: "As a matter of fact, in Shinto there is no founder, there are no commandments, and no proselytization. Shinto consists of customs that are an integral part of Japanese everyday life. This has nothing in common with other religious movements." When asked to define religion, she replied: "It is necessary to have a founder, followers, the will to disseminate a teaching, sacred books. Shinto has none of those things. The only things there are, are religious festivals (*matsuri* 祭)." I pointed out that when there is a collective belief in the existence of deities, we can speak of religion. Ms. F. retorted: "But Japanese deities are not comparable to those that can be found in Christianity, for example. In Japan, the living and their deities are connected by family ties. They are ancestors. Japanese deities are not absolute, all-knowing and omnipotent, like the Christian God. People in the Meiji period translated the word 'God' as *kami* 神, which is why things have become so complicated."

Ms. F. adheres to a very widespread conception of religion, which has roots in the Meiji period. Jason Josephson has demonstrated that, during this period, the concept of religion was invented under pressure from Western nations following the introduction of Christianity. He explains that Meiji-period leaders were the supervisors of a large project to classify various existing beliefs and worship traditions: "Put briefly, Confucianism was not recognized as a religion, but was instead treated as a scholastic subject. Shinto was bifurcated into a national form of Shinto, *which was not defined as religion*, and various individual Shinto sects, which were. In the end, only Buddhism was legally described as a religion."[9] This conception of Shinto as a non-religion was reversed after the war by the American occupying forces, who reclassified Shinto as a religion in law. Nevertheless, like the majority of ideologues involved with nationalist circles in Japan, Ms. F. does not subscribe to the understanding of Shinto as a religion. Instead, she remains committed to a vision of Shinto as "national custom."

It is interesting to note that the interpretation of religious practices as "customs" is not unique to Japanese society. The French scholar Jean Baubérot recently published his typology of different expressions of the *laïcité* phenomenon, which includes "identity *laïcité*"

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7 Interview conducted on 26 May 2015.
8 Ironically, this is what saved Yasukuni Shrine from destruction. On this topic, see Mullins 2010.
9 Josephson 2011, p. 594, my emphasis. In addition to Buddhism, Christianity was also recognized as a religion.

(*la laïcité identitaire*).[10] This notion strongly resembles the view of Japanese nationalists, as it refers to an ideology which considers Catholicism in France as a "cultural" phenomenon, not a religious one. This is the understanding of *laïcité* advocated by former president Nicolas Sarkozy, in particular when he talked about the "Christian roots" of France.

My approach to secularization is strongly influenced by the concept of *laïcité*. Louis-Marie Morfaux has given the following definition: "Independence of the state and public services, especially public education, from any church or religious creed; synonymous with neutrality." [11] In an earlier book devoted to the topic of different types of *laïcité* and secularism throughout the world, Baubérot provides a universal description of this concept: "A process of secularization (*laïcisation*) occurs when a state no longer is legitimated by a religion or a particular school of thought." [12] Now, for Japanese nationalists, as we shall see throughout this article, Japan cannot do without the emperor cult and its ideological template, State Shinto. Thus, my approach to secularization is limited to the political dimensions of this phenomenon and does not encompass its sociological dimensions (which are taken up by Ian Reader, for example, in the article referred to above).

This article consists of two parts. Following authors such as Shimazono Susumu, Mark Mullins, and John Breen, the first part shows that contemporary Japanese nationalist movements are primarily nourished by the ideology provided by State Shinto.[13] In the second part, I will argue that the fundamentally religious character of this vision of the national community prevents any secularization of the activities and ideology of Japanese nationalist circles.

1. State Shinto:
The Major Ideological Source of Contemporary Nationalist Movements

In this article, I do not engage with debates concerning the origins and importance of State Shinto prior to 1945. Instead, my focus is on the contemporary period, in which elements of prewar State Shinto linger on. In my use of the term "State Shinto," I follow the definition given by Shimazono Susumu in his article in *The Sage Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*: "When I use this term [State Shinto] I refer to Shinto-inspired ideas and practices that are mainly propagated by agencies of the Japanese state or government in connection with attempts to integrate the nation and to strengthen the sense of national loyalty—and which are accepted by many of the Japanese people." [14] In a book on existing relations between State Shinto and the Japanese people, Shimazono specifies that this national loyalty is constructed primarily around the emperor. In addition, as explained in the following section, Yasukuni Shrine is considered by many in nationalist circles as a sacred center unifying the Japanese nation. As Shimazono writes: "In reality, State Shinto was never dismantled. Surely, it was considerably reduced in size. Nevertheless, it still exists today." [15]

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10 Baubérot 2015, p. 118. Translator's note: the term *laïcité* is used to refer to the particular type of secularism that has developed in France, which is characterized by a strict separation of public and private realms, the first of which is configured as explicitly nonreligious. Since the term is so distinctive, I have chosen not to translate it, but use it as a foreign loanword [APR].

11 Morfaux 1980, p. 190.

12 Baubérot 2007, p. 3.

13 Shimazono 2010; Mullins 2012a, 2012b; Breen 2010.

14 Shimazono 2007, p. 700.

15 Shimazono 2010, p. 185.

(i) The Emperor Cult and the Cult of the War Dead: The Survival of State Shinto

Why is it possible to say that State Shinto continues to exist? First of all, it should be noted that despite his official renunciation of divine status, the emperor still constitutes a fundamentally religious entity. An analysis of the ideology of Jinja Honchō will illustrate this observation.

Jinja Honchō owes its existence to the 1945 Shinto Directive issued by the American occupying forces, which relegated the management of Shinto places of worship to the private realm. Nevertheless, Jinja Honchō is the direct descendant of organizations within the imperial government that had formerly been concerned with the management of Shinto worship, such as the Jingiin 神祇院, the Hōsaikai 奉斎会, and the national priests association. Jinja Honchō represents approximately eighty thousand shrines—that is, the vast majority of Shinto places of worship in the country. In May 2000 former Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō made a famous declaration that Japan is the country of the gods with the emperor as its center in front of a group of members of parliament involved with the political arm of Jinja Honchō: the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership (Shinto Seiji Renmei 神道政治連盟).

At the center of the cult advocated by Jinja Honchō is Ise Shrine, often simply referred to as "the shrine" (*jingū* 神宮). The deity venerated at this site, located in the city of Ise, is Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神, the sun goddess situated on top of the Shinto pantheon. For Jinja Honchō, the worship of this goddess ultimately constitutes an attitude of indirect devotion to the emperor, her descendant. Thus, on the website of this organization, we can read the following in an article on Ise shrine: "At its center is the Great Imperial Shrine (Naikū 内宮), where Amaterasu Ōmikami, the ancestress of the imperial family, is worshipped." [16] This is presented as an objective fact: the current emperor is the 125th of a long lineage that started on 11 February 660 BC with Emperor Jinmu 神武, descendant of the sun goddess.

It may be worth noting that Japan is the only industrialized country, as far as I am aware, where the date of National Foundation Day, 11 February, is based on a mythical-religious event. In fact, the reign of the first historical emperor (whose existence is proven by historical documents) is generally considered to have been around the sixth century AD, more than a millennium after the official establishment of the nation. This vagueness regarding the historical or mythological nature of the first emperors contributes to maintaining the divine aura of the imperial family.

Likewise, the emperor regularly conducts ceremonies of a Shinto nature, in accordance with the rhythm of the seasons. Many of these are propitiatory rituals, conducted for the benefit of the nation. Actually, there is genuine continuity between prewar and postwar imperial rites since the American Occupation left them untouched. Officially, these ceremonies have a private character. Nevertheless, the prime minister, other ministers, members of parliament, judges, and officials of the Imperial Household Agency are invited to take part in a number of them. Shimazono has commented upon this situation as follows: "It is clear that ceremonies with a Shinto nature are conducted as state ceremonies. Nevertheless, they are treated as 'internal affairs of the imperial court': as the private acts of

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16 On http://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/izanai/ise/ (accessed 29 January 2016).

the Imperial House. For that reason, citizens are not informed about them." [17] It should be noted that, while the average Japanese indeed has no awareness of this religious dimension of the activities of their monarch, this is not the case for most members of the nationalist circles outlined above.

Shimazono traces the relations between State Shinto and the Japanese, and reaches the conclusion that after the war State Shinto has survived in three forms: first, in the shape of the everyday rituals of the imperial family; second, in the activism of private organizations such as Jinja Honchō; and finally, in the shape of popular devotion centered on the emperor and thoughts about/sentiments for the national body (*kokutaironteki na kangaekata/shinjō* 国体論的な考え方・心情).[18] Yet, in his book Shimazono does not mention that State Shinto today also survives in a fourth shape, which arguably is at least as important as the other three: the rituals and other ceremonies conducted annually at Yasukuni Shrine.[19] This shrine constituted the keystone of prewar State Shinto, since soldiers of the imperial army who had died for the nation were honored there by the emperor, the sacred embodiment of the nation.

In a recent article devoted to the history of Yasukuni Shrine as a "shrine of the nation," John Breen demonstrates that this site of commemoration did not acquire a truly national character until the celebrations in the spring of 1938.[20] This was the first time that a large number of people participated in its ceremonies. Furthermore, Breen suggests that after the Japanese defeat, Yasukuni Shrine lost its status as "shrine of the nation," and specifies that it has not recovered this since. He justifies this statement by pointing to the separation between the nation—that is, the Japanese people—and the celebrations with a nationalist character held at the shrine. According to Breen, even though large numbers of people still visit Yasukuni Shrine, many of them do so not in order to commemorate those who died for the nation but in order to participate in the festivities of July (*mitama matsuri* みたままつり) or the New Year. He thus arrives at the following conclusion: "One could perhaps sum up postwar Yasukuni by saying that while 'nationalism' is alive and kicking there today, the nation is conspicuous by its absence. The organic linkage between the shrine, its rites and nationalism on the one hand, and the Japanese nation on the other, is no more." [21] This analysis of national dimensions of the shrine after the war—or rather, for this period, the absence of a national dimension—certainly corresponds to the reality. However, as will be made clear in the second part of this article, it is precisely this national dimension of the shrine that nationalist circles are trying hard to restore.

The two main festivals of Yasukuni Shrine, now a private religious organization, take place in spring and autumn. In both cases, the emperor sends gifts and an official message. Although the festivities last three or four days in total, the arrival by car of the imperial messenger in the heart of the shrine, the transportation of the gifts and message on a palanquin by shrine priests, and their presentation to the deities constitute the height of the celebrations. Likewise, each year on 15 August, the anniversary of Japan's defeat, a

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17 Shimazono 2010, p. 191.
18 Shimazono 2010, pp. 212–13.
19 It should however be mentioned that in a subsequent article Shimazono writes at length about the Yasukuni Shrine issue and its connection to State Shinto. See Shimazono 2016.
20 Breen 2014.
21 Breen 2014, p. 147.

significant number of members of parliament come to Yasukuni in order to participate in the religious ceremony conducted daily in memory of those who died for the country. They are members of a group called the Association of Diet Members for Worshipping at Yasukuni Shrine Together (Minna de Yasukuni Jinja ni Sanpai Suru Kokkai Giin no Kai みんなで靖國神社に参拝する国会議員の会). Finally, the famous visits of the prime minister in office—if they take place—always provoke a storm of criticism and indignation, internationally as well as domestically. Today Yasukuni Shrine continues to be a site of convergence between religion, the emperor, politicians, and the nation through the worship of those who sacrificed their lives in war. This combination constituted the fundamental characteristic of State Shinto.

Figure 1. Reception desk of the Association of Diet Members for Worshipping at Yasukuni Shrine Together. Autumn Festival, Yasukuni Shrine, 2014. Photo by the author.

For all the reasons listed above, I fully agree with the following statement by Shimazono Susumu: "After 1945, State Shinto has continued to exist.… Since the war, the private organization of shrines and priests (Jinja Honchō) has been one of the leaders of the movement for State

Figure 2. Transportation of the gifts and message of the emperor on a palanquin. Autumn Festival, Yasukuni Shrine, 2014. Photo by the author.

Shinto."[22] Although Shimazono mainly addresses the activities and ideology of Jinja Honchō, in this article I am also particularly interested in the ideology of Nippon Kaigi, the biggest nationalist pressure group in contemporary Japan. Significantly, this organization unites a large number of political-religious movements around Jinja Honchō, all of which are motivated, to varying degrees, by a desire to revitalize State Shinto.

(ii) Nippon Kaigi: Ideological Heirs of State Shinto

During the first decades of the postwar period, nationalist groups in Japan lost much of their previous influence as a result of the defeat and the accompanying political-administrative reorganization. Since then, they have worked persistently to regain some of the lost ground. This process of recovery accelerated in the late 1990s, and is currently

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22 Shimazono 2010, p. v.

materialized by the establishment of the second government of Abe Shinzō 安倍晋三. As suggested by Mark Mullins, the great earthquake in Kobe and the sarin gas attack on the subway in Tokyo in 1995 caused severe emotional and psychological shocks that might have constituted the catalysts for a return of right-wing nationalism. That is, these events caused chaos in society, demanding, one way or the other, that the order of things be restored. The nationalist right has certainly profited from these crises provoked by a profound challenge to the values on which postwar Japan was built.[23]

The regaining of political influence by the nationalist right can be illustrated by the fact that in February 2015, fifteen out of nineteen members of the Abe government were members of the parliamentary association of Nippon Kaigi; meanwhile, eighteen of them were (also) members of the parliamentary association of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership.[24] Of these fifteen ministers, at least five have maintained strong ties with nationalist lobby groups since the start of their political careers—not least Prime Minister Abe himself. Arimura Haruko 有村治子, the minister in charge of women's empowerment and measures against the declining birthrate, and Yamatani Eriko 山谷えり子, minister in charge of public safety and the abduction issue, are primarily dependent upon the support of Nippon Kaigi for their election and reelection. The same applies to one of the special advisors to the prime minister (Naikaku sōri daijin hosakan 内閣総理大臣補佐官), Senator Etō Seiichi 衛藤晟一.

Abe Shinzō himself has maintained close links with Nippon Kaigi for a long time. For instance, in December 2009, he actively participated in a large rally organized by the nationalist lobby in order to protest the "political use" made of the emperor by the Democratic Party of Japan government.[25] On 1 April 2014, after he had become prime minister again, Abe was special advisor (*tokubetsu komon* 特別顧問) of the parliamentary association of Nippon Kaigi.[26] A number of newspaper and magazine articles have strongly denounced the ties that unite the new Abe government with this nationalist organization, sometimes even referring to it as the "Nippon Kaigi cabinet" (Nippon Kaigi naikaku 日本会議内閣).[27] According to the count done by Tawara Yoshifumi, as of 23 April 2016, 280 members of the Japanese Diet, representing different political parties, took part in the parliamentary association of Nippon Kaigi. A significant majority of these were also affiliated with the parliamentary association of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership, Jinja Honchō's political arm.[28]

But what exactly is Nippon Kaigi? In terms of the number of individual activists involved as well as the various groups and movements affiliated with it, Nippon Kaigi

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23 Mullins 2012b.

24 Tawara 2015, p. 155.

25 *Nippon no ibuki* 日本の息吹, March 2010, p. 20. This is a monthly magazine sent to members of Nippon Kaigi. It contains articles written by a diversity of authors (politicians, academics, activists, and so on), as well as detailed accounts of the activities of Nippon Kaigi. The magazine often addresses current affairs, while ensuring that the views presented are in accordance with the position of the nationalist lobby.

26 This is according to Nippon Kaigi's internal document *Heisei 26 nendo kokumin undō hōshin / Heisei 25 nendo katsudō hōkoku*, p. 15 (not published).

27 See for instance the article published in the weekly magazine *Friday* in August 2014 (*Furaidē*, 22–29 August, pp. 18–21). Similarly, the daily newspaper *Asahi shinbun* published a series of articles on the topic, entitled "Nippon kaigi kenkyū" (Research on Nippon Kaigi), on 23, 24, and 25 March 2016.

28 *Shūkan kinyōbi* 2016.

constitutes the largest confederation of nationalist organizations in contemporary Japan.[29] It was established in 1997 as a merger between two older nationalist organizations. The first, Nihon o Mamoru Kai 日本を守る会, consisted of a number of new religious movements, as well as Jinja Honchō; the second, Nihon o Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi 日本を守る国民会議, brought together associations of war veterans as well as a number of other groups advocating nationalist ideas. The Advisory Committee of Japanese Youth (Nihon Seinen Kyōgi Kai 日本青年協議会) took care of the administrative management of these two organizations, and continues to do so for Nippon Kaigi.[30] Currently, Jinja Honchō is considered to be the backbone of Nippon Kaigi.

When I met representatives of Nippon Kaigi, I asked them whether it is true that Jinja Honchō makes up the core of Nippon Kaigi, as I had been told at a reception following the organization's general meeting in 2014. One of the representatives answered as follows: "As you can see here [showing a text listing Nippon Kaigi's main values], the importance we place on traditional culture inevitably brings us to Shinto and the imperial family. Therefore, it is true that Jinja Honchō has a special place within Nippon Kaigi." Previously, another representative had told me the following: "As you can see, in the main executive bodies of Nippon Kaigi are several representatives of Jinja Honchō. This shows that Jinja Honchō is an essential constitutive organization for Nippon Kaigi."[31] Among the five advisors (komon 顧問) that make up the management board of Nippon Kaigi, there is one leader of Jinja Honchō and another of Shintō Seiji Renmei. Moreover, one of the four vice presidents, Tanaka Tsunekiyo 田中恆清, is simultaneously president (sōchō 総長) of Jinja Honchō.[32]

Ideologically speaking, Jinja Honchō and Nippon Kaigi are extremely close. In a recent book devoted to the topic of the relationship between religion and politics in postwar Japan, Tsukada Hotaka confesses to being unable to find real differences between the two organizations' ideologies.[33] He argues persuasively that these two organizations, as well as the earlier organizations that merged and became Nippon Kaigi in 1997, have been at the center of a "unified conservative movement" (hoshu gōdō undō 保守合同運動) since the end of the war. In this movement, and on the board of Nippon Kaigi, there are also about ten representatives of new religious movements.[34] Although one would expect these religious

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29 In July 2014, Nippon Kaigi had approximately 35,000 individual members. Membership is voluntary and open to all, regardless of nationality or political or religious affiliation.

30 Uesugi 2016, pp. 27–34; Uozumi 2007, p. 187. The Advisory Committee of Japanese Youth traces its origins to a student movement set up in the late 1960s by the new religious movement Seichō no Ie, in reaction at the time to the strong pressure of leftist student movements. See http://www.seikyou.org/nihonkyogikai.html (accessed 23 June 2016).

31 Interview conducted on 18 July 2014 at the office of Nippon Kaigi in Tokyo.

32 See the official website of Nippon Kaigi: http://www.nipponkaigi.org/about/yakuin (accessed 25 June 2016). For an analysis of the views of Tanaka Tsunekiyo on Shinto's "public" character, see the article by Rots in this issue.

33 Tsukada 2015, p. 65.

34 New religious movements represented on the board of Nippon Kaigi include Reiyūkai 霊友会, Shinsei Bukkyō 新生佛教, Nenpō Shinkyō 念法眞教, Sūkyō Mahikari 崇教真光, Kurozumikyō 黒住教, Busshogonenkai 佛所護念会, Taiwa Kyōdan 大和教団, and Gedatsukai 解脱会. Interestingly, several of these define themselves as Buddhist. For a more detailed analysis of the motivations of these religious groups, see Guthmann 2015.

movements to be rivals, in the nationalist lobby they act together.[35] The representatives of these organizations are all concerned with rebuilding a Japan centered on the imperial house, which they consider as the essential constitutive element of the nation.

It is interesting to note that the cult of the Japanese nation and the imperial family is not limited to Shinto-derived new religions, but also extends to Buddhist and even Christian groups. For instance, Buddhist monks close to Nippon Kaigi believe they have taken on, in the last forty years, the mission entrusted to them by the goddess Amaterasu: that is, to protect Japan from decline.[36] The indigenous Christian organization Kirisuto no Makuya キリストの幕屋, founded by Teshima Ikurō 手島郁郎 in 1948, likewise has regular contact with Nippon Kaigi.[37] This new religious movement with notable nationalistic tendencies encourages in particular the celebration of National Foundation Day and the cult of the first emperor, Jinmu, with the purpose of restoring a feeling of national pride among the Japanese.[38]

In this great ecumenical gathering of groups with diverse religious faiths, we find the manifestation of a Japanese form of civil religion, that is, a celebration of the Japanese nation that depends above all on devotion to the imperial family. Some government policies have undoubtedly contributed to the revival of this devotion, such as the restoration in 1966 of 11 February as an official holiday commemorating the founding of the nation. Nevertheless, Nippon Kaigi is an organization characterized by strong grassroots mobilization, especially through the different religious groups that are united in it. Therefore, while historical State Shinto used to be imposed from above by those in power, civil religion today—the interiorized version of State Shinto—emanates to a large extent from below and is directed towards the top, that is, the imperial family. Analyzing this phenomenon in Durkheimian terms, it may be seen as a popular celebration of the national body.

2. Impossible Secularization: The Religious Character of Japan's Nationalist Circles

As we have seen in the first part of this article, ideologically speaking, contemporary Japanese nationalism rests on State Shinto. It is not likely, therefore, that this nationalism, based on the cult of the emperor and of the spirits of the war dead enshrined at Yasukuni, will become more secular. However, the religious dimension of nationalist statements may be more or less pronounced, depending on the group and the individual. Viewpoints range from a religious nationalism close to that which prevailed prewar, to more moderate nationalist manifestations of a Japanese civil religion. The ideas of members and sympathizers of Nippon Kaigi can be classified into two large groups: those which resemble

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35 It appears that Nippon Kaigi regularly relies on religious movements for mobilizing participants at large mass rallies. For instance, as pointed out by Sugano Tamotsu, during the recent rally for constitutional reform organized on 10 November 2015 at Nihon Budōkan, Sūkyō Mahikari mobilized three thousand of its followers (Sugano 2016, p. 125).

36 *Nippon no ibuki*, December 2013, pp. 24–25. These monks are affiliated with an organization named Kansai Bukkyō Konwakai 関西仏教懇話会 (Kansai Buddhist Assembly).

37 Declining my request for an interview, a representative of this religious organization specified in a letter that Kirisuto no Makuya is not an official member of Nippon Kaigi. In fact, no representative of this movement is directly involved with the administration of the nationalist organization. Nevertheless, the same letter stated that for ideological reasons Kirisuto no Makuya has respect for the work of Nippon Kaigi, so it happens that some of its faithful participate in events and campaigns organized by Nippon Kaigi in an individual capacity.

38 Mullins 1998, p. 127.

the ideology of historical State Shinto, and those which, though influenced by this ideology, belong more to the realm of civil religion.

(i) Religious Nationalism: The Contemporary Shapes of State Shinto

In a recent edition of the monthly magazine *Nippon no ibuki*, published by Nippon Kaigi, the secretary-general of a local branch explains that the imperial palace is the most precious place in Japan, and that the voluntary cleaning of the palace precinct constitutes the first step towards the reconstruction of the country.[39] In fact, most nationalist organizations regularly meet at the gardens of the imperial palace for cleaning and tidying up (*kōkyo kinrō hōshi* 皇居勤労奉仕). Today as in the past, devotion towards the imperial family remains an essential element of the activities of nationalist organizations: people offer their time (and money) for the well-being of the imperial family.

Some, such as a representative of the new religion Taiwa Kyōdan, describe the centuries-old imperial lineage as follows: "It is the most important aspect, the central element of our national character (*kunigara no chūshin* 国柄の中心). This is an ancient male lineage, going back 125 generations, the history of which is intertwined with the history of Japan. Nothing surpasses this institution; nothing could ever replace it."[40] The ideas of Nakanishi Terumasa, former professor at Kyoto University, are of a similar order. He claims that China was very close to installing a communist regime in Japan at the time of the negotiations for the Japan-US security treaty in 1960. He refers to a secret document, composed by the Chinese secret service, which analyses the necessary conditions for the success of a socialist revolution in Japan. This document supposedly explains that as long as the Japanese retain their ties to the Imperial House and to Shinto shrines, the revolutionary project will not succeed, as it is there they will continue to find the strength to resist. Nakanishi concludes by calling for a general realization that "protecting Japan, ultimately, means protecting the shape of the country symbolized by the Imperial House and by Shinto shrines. It should be understood that, if those are no longer protected, that would mean the end of Japan."[41]

I asked Professor Nitta Hitoshi, a scholar at Kogakkan University who regularly collaborates with Nippon Kaigi, why there are so many new religious movements active in the nationalist lobby. He replied as follows: "I believe that the person of the emperor is an important factor. New religions that do not include the emperor in their teachings do not join Nippon Kaigi. The fundamental nature of the person of the emperor is religious, is it not?"[42]

It is clear that protecting the imperial family from any slight is a first priority. For instance, in 2007, there were plans to publish the Japanese translation of a book on Princess Masako, *Princess Masako: Prisoner of the Chrysanthemum Throne*, written by an Australian journalist.[43] Japanese nationalist organizations used their influence to prevent publication. This book alleges that Princess Masako, wife of the crown prince, was bullied and harassed by the Imperial Household Agency (Kunaichō 宮内庁). Nationalist circles—most notably

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39 *Nippon no ibuki*, December 2010, p. 27.
40 Interview conducted on 20 December 2013.
41 *Nippon no ibuki*, January 2013, p. 12.
42 Interview conducted on 18 October 2013 at Kōgakkan University, Ise.
43 Hills 2006.

Figure 3. Nationalist posters at a Shinto shrine in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture. The poster on the left states how fortunate one is to be born Japanese; the one on the right emphasizes the importance of patrilineality in imperial succession. Photo by the author.

Nippon Kaigi, but also the Japanese government led by Abe Shinzō—perceived this book, which is highly critical of palace morals, as an insult to the imperial institution. An article by literary critic Takemoto Tadao, published in *Nippon no ibuki*, begins as follows: "When I read Grand Chamberlain Watanabe's protest letter to the Australian writer of a book on Princess Masako which slanders the Imperial House, I could not resist my desire to take up the pen." [44] Criticism of the imperial institution can lead to severe punishment, sometimes even to physical violence by nationalist extremists; as a result, such criticism is almost absent from the public debate. [45]

The nationalist circles in general, and Nippon Kaigi in particular, are also against the reform of the Imperial Household Law that would make matrilineal succession of the imperial throne possible. These nationalist organizations are not opposed to the enthronement of an empress *per se*, but to this empress giving birth to her successor. The logic at work here is that if this empress married a commoner and gave birth, the imperial lineage would be polluted; only the imperial male seed is considered sacred. Thus, even if this is not made explicit, the fierce opposition of the nationalist circles to matrilineality is grounded in the idea that the imperial lineage is of divine origin.

Nippon Kaigi holds a fundamentally religious conception of Yasukuni Shrine. The remarks of the former president of Nippon Kaigi, Miyoshi Tōru 三好達 (former president of the Japanese Supreme Court), illustrate this well. Referring to a report on the possibility of constructing a site of commemoration for the war dead from which all religiosity would be excluded, he commented ironically: "Exclusion means 'expulsion.' Since only religion can give meaning to notions such as venerated spirits or souls, [the exclusion of religiosity] would mean the expulsion of the venerated spirits." [46] Likewise, the comments of a municipal councilor of the city of Tsu, a member of Nippon Kaigi, reveal a similar religious sentiment. When I interviewed him, I remarked: "Since official commemoration ceremonies are conducted in the presence of the emperor at Nihon Budōkan, it may be argued that it is not necessary to hold them at Yasukuni as well." The municipal councilor commented:

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44 *Nippon no ibuki*, April 2007, p. 18.
45 The Shimanaka affair in 1961 constitutes the best-known case of physical violence committed by a right-wing extremist in response to a perceived insult of the imperial house. The perpetrator attacked the private residence of the director of a publishing company, killing his maid and severely injuring his wife. He wanted to punish those responsible for the publication of a short story entitled *Fūryū mutan* 風流夢譚 (The Story of a Dream of Courtly Elegance) by Fukazawa Shichirō 深沢七郎, which he considered blasphemous towards the emperor.
46 *Nippon no ibuki*, June 2015, p. 21.

"Nevertheless, I do wish that the prime minister would also visit Yasukuni, even though I cannot clearly explain my reasons." "But why?," I insisted. He replied: "I cannot tell you exactly. The official commemoration is one thing; going to the shrine is something else. Perhaps it is because I would like him to visit the place where those who died for their country rest." "Is that not some sort of a religious sensitivity?" I remarked. He admitted: "Yes, perhaps. Yes, certainly…"[47] This conversation suggests that a civil (that is, nonreligious) commemoration alone can never suffice to satisfy the sympathizers of Nippon Kaigi.

(ii) Nationalist Manifestations of a Japanese-type Civil Religion

Following Robert Bellah, I understand civil religion as a celebration of the national community; a collective devotion centered on the community that may be grounded in preexisting beliefs and religious practices, but that is not explicitly connected to one particular religion.[48] Would it be possible, then, to consider civil religion as a type of secularization? In my opinion, it is not, for the unity of the nation still rests on notions of a religious nature: divine protection ("One nation under God") in the case of the USA; the emperor and the enshrined spirits of the war dead in the case of Japan—at least in the case of the nationalist circles. I therefore consider civil religion to be a hybrid phenomenon, which is both political and religious.

Kamei Shizuka is a Japanese political veteran, who currently occupies the position of councilor in the parliamentary association of Nippon Kaigi, and whose ideas are situated somewhere in between State Shinto-inspired religious nationalism and the nationalist manifestations of civil religion. His declarations are first of all reminiscent of civil religion: "The emperor reminds us of our Japaneseness; more, even, than seeing Mount Fuji." I suggested that this may be a sensitivity of a nonreligious nature. But he replied: "No. It is religious: the emperor is a Shinto priest (*kannushi* 神主)."[49] Other members of the Diet whom I have interviewed were not as explicit about the religious nature of the emperor. Their attitude is quite understandable in the context of the state secularism characterizing today's Japan. Nevertheless, all the politicians whom I interviewed agreed on the indispensability of the imperial institution: without the emperor, Japan would cease to be Japan. This position is the prerequisite for joining the Diet organization of Nippon Kaigi. MP Sakurai Hiroshi told me that he openly said to members of Nippon Kaigi that he is a Christian, whereupon he was asked how he feels about the emperor. When he declared his profound respect for the imperial institution, he was told that this is sufficient for joining the organization.[50]

This profound respect for the imperial family, which here has a secular character, is apparent in the pages of Nippon Kaigi's monthly magazine. As a matter of fact, the second page of this magazine is often devoted to an account of recent activities of the imperial family, written in extremely respectful language. Similarly, the publishing house associated with Nippon Kaigi, Meiseisha 明成社, has published a book for children, which deals with the topic of the origins of Japan. The author, the aforementioned Nitta Hitoshi, explains

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47 Interview conducted on 21 November 2014 at the city hall in Tsu.
48 Bellah 1967.
49 Interview conducted on 3 March 2015.
50 Interview conducted on 11 November 2014.

that all countries in the world have their own typical features. Some countries have much political power, others are strong culturally, and others are good at sports. The unique characteristics of Japan, he argues, are grounded in the fact that the country has such a long history, and that the gods have been worshipped since ancient times. Most of all, those characteristics are based on the existence of the emperor.[51]

This point of view may remind one of former Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō. On 26 May 2000, he gave a press conference in order to justify, based on the logic of civil religion, his statements that Japan is the country of the gods, centered on the emperor.[52] In the perception of Mori, the belief in deities (kami 神) and the faith in the reassuring presence of the emperor do not have explicitly religious connotations, as these are nothing but the concrete manifestations of the national tradition: "The expression 'country of the gods' did not refer to any religion in particular. I wanted to express a very ancient way of thinking in our country, which consists of seeing the presence of elements that transcend human beings in natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers, and the sea."[53] Mark Mullins analyzed Mori's statement similarly: "Mori's concluding statement is representative of a widespread understanding of Shintō as something 'non-religious' (in the sectarian sense, that is), but still regarded as something that is essential for defining what it means to be Japanese."[54] MP Mori Eisuke, member of the Liberal Democratic Party and vice-president of the parliamentary association of Nippon Kaigi, illustrates this point of view well. When we met, I presented him with a list of MPs affiliated with Nippon Kaigi, and asked whether the people represent a diversity of ideological positions. Mori replied as follows: "Yes, they do, but I do think there is a common spirit. There is a shared nostalgia and attachment to Shinto shrines. They are a bit like the 'homeland of our hearts' (kokoro no furusato 心の故郷)."[55]

Presented by the nationalist circles as the only legitimate site for the commemoration of the war dead, Yasukuni Shrine is also often perceived from a civil religious perspective. Nippon Kaigi rejoiced in the fact that more than 200,000 people visited the shrine on 15 August 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of Japan's defeat.[56] The same issue of Nippon Kaigi's magazine contains an article written by former diplomat Okazaki Hisahiko, pleading for a resumption of imperial visits to Yasukuni, concluding as follows: "If the official visits of the prime minister to Yasukuni Shrine take root, they would pave the way to visits by his majesty the emperor. Such imperial visits would constitute a proof of the spiritual regeneration of our country as a sovereign state. I wish our statesmen would become deeply aware of this fact."[57]

By way of conclusion, I would like to quote the municipal councilor of the city of Tsu whom I already introduced in the previous section. It was he who—probably

51 Nitta 2004, pp. 59–60.
52 The controversial statements had been made ten days earlier, in front of members of the parliamentary organization of Shintō Seiji Renmei.
53 Guthmann 2010; Guthmann 2014, p. 54.
54 Mullins 2012a, p. 79. On the topic of Shinto as a non-religion, see also the articles by Ernils Larsson and Aike Rots in this volume.
55 Interview conducted on 23 March 2015.
56 *Nippon no ibuki*, September 2005, p. 2. On this day in 2013, there were about 175,000 visitors (*The Wall Street Journal viewed online at* http://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2013/08/15/huge-crowds-pour-into-yasukuni-shrine-on-war-anniversary/. Accessed 2 July 2016).
57 *Nippon no ibuki*, September 2005, p. 7.

involuntarily—put his finger on the "civil religious" dimension of the popular devotion to the imperial family when he said: "I believe that a majority of the Japanese feel a natural love and respect (*keiai suru* 敬愛する) for the imperial family. I also think that, contrary to most other countries, there is no true religion in Japan; the imperial family plays that role." [58]

Conclusion

When it comes to individual Japanese, there is no denying the fact that the majority are increasingly cut off from religion, as a result of the process of secularization that started at the end of the war. However, as I have tried to show in this article, for nationalist circles in Japan—whose influence has grown since the end of the 1990s—the secularization of the political sphere has never been a feasible option. For them, as I wrote, State Shinto survived Japan's wartime defeat, especially in the form of emperor worship and ceremonies for the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine. I proceeded by explaining that today's nationalist circles, headed by Nippon Kaigi, draw primarily on the ideological sources of State Shinto. In the second part of the article, however, I pointed out that even among the supporters of Nippon Kaigi, the ideological links with State Shinto fall on a spectrum, ranging from a political-religious nationalism close to the one that existed in the past to nationalist manifestations of a Japanese-type civil religion.

In Japanese nationalist circles, we can observe a constant moving back and forth between a religiously grounded nationalism and the affirmation of the legitimacy of civil religion. The pendulum movement between these two positions is well illustrated by the responses of the president of Nippon Kaigi, Takubo Tadae 田久保忠衛, to the numerous criticisms and attacks recently levied at the group. In a recent article, President Takubo confirms that, throughout Japanese history, the emperor has only rarely had real political power, even though he has always been a source of authority. He then asks the following question: "Is it forbidden to respect the eternal unbroken line of the Imperial House?" This is a reference to the Imperial House as the historical unifying force of the Japanese nation, made from the perspective of civil religion. In the same article, Takubo writes about visits to Yasukuni Shrine:

> Some people say visits to Yasukuni Shrine are scandalous. However, this is a "shrine where the spirits are invited to come together" (*shōkonsha* 招魂社); therefore, there are no more Class A war criminals, and no Class B war criminals either.[59] These visits express nothing but the will to respect the memory of those who died during the war, and who have said: "Let's meet again at Yasukuni!" Criticism [towards Yasukuni] is based on a total lack of understanding of what Japanese Shinto is.[60]

To justify official visits to Yasukuni Shrine, the president of Nippon Kaigi here relies on an understanding of life and death belonging to a particular religion, Shinto, while simultaneously stating that visitors are only motivated by a desire to commemorate those

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58 Interview conducted on 21 November 2014 at the city hall in Tsu.
59 Shōkonsha is the original name of Yasukuni Shrine.
60 Takubo 2016, pp. 36–37.

Figure 4. Front cover of *Nippon no ibuki*, no. 334, September 2015. Illustration by Takenaka Toshihiro.

who died for their country. This is an example of how a position that initially is based on a civil religious sensitivity can be caught up in a nationalist argument that is fundamentally religious.

It should be noted that, ultimately, contemporary Japanese nationalism often rests on nostalgia for a golden age. Raoul Girardet has described this sentiment and related political mythmaking, which is probably universal, as follows: "Opposed to the image of a present experienced and described as a time of sadness and decline, stands the absolute of a past characterized by plenitude and brightness."[61] This is well exemplified by the front covers of the monthly magazine of Nippon Kaigi, *Nippon no ibuki*, which always feature a large drawing showing children or a family engaging in activities of the past such as using a hand pump to get water from a well, catching dragonflies, and laying out freshly harvested rice to dry in the sun. The message conveyed by these front page illustrations is unequivocal: in the old days, the Japanese were happier and more virtuous than today. The Japan presented here is one of bygone days, without TV, video games, or cars, when families were simply happy doing their daily activities together. The front cover of the September 2015 issue shows a mother with three children in a traditional house during a thunderstorm. We see the mother on the veranda, surrounded by her children; she has opened the wooden sliding door, and is closing the external shutters, also made of wood. Of course, the large majority of Japanese families today no longer live in such traditional houses, which are generally considered to be cold and impractical. The Japan desired in nationalist circles exists in a past that has taken on legendary proportions. "Images of a mythicized past; visions of a present and a future defined in terms of what was or what is believed to have been"—this is the state of mind of those who believe in the myth of the golden age.[62]

According to Nippon Kaigi as well as nationalist circles in general, it is crucial for the future of the country that the values of the past be restored. The past idealized by them is the prewar period, during which Japan was a powerful colonial empire (Dai Nippon Teikoku 大日本帝国). Devotion to the emperor on the one hand, and to the war dead at Yasukuni Shrine on the other, constitute the links that bind today's Japan to this golden age of the Japanese nation. Now, as I have attempted to show, these two essential elements of State Shinto still contain important religious dimensions. Therefore, the secularization of the nationalist circles appears to be completely impossible.

Translated by Aike P. Rots

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61 Girardet 1986, p. 98.
62 Girardet 1986, p. 97.

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Jinja Honchō and the Politics of Constitutional Reform in Japan

Ernils Larsson

Since early January 2016 Jinja Honchō has participated in a campaign led by Nippon Kaigi to establish popular support for constitutional reform. In this essay, I seek to understand Jinja Honchō's involvement in this campaign through a reading of the postwar Supreme Court cases related to the separation of religion from the state. I argue that amendment of Articles 20 and 89 was never considered a priority for most of this period, since the prevalent paradigm in the Supreme Court was that Shinto was something *other* than a religion; but following the break with this paradigm in the Ehime Tamagushiryō case in 1997, and the subsequent confirmation of the validity of this precedent through the ruling on the Sunagawa I case in 2010, those seeking a closer relationship between the Shinto establishment and the state have had to find new routes. The rise of Nippon Kaigi as one of Japan's largest conservative lobby groups coincides with this development in the Supreme Court, and the organization's focus on constitutional reform can therefore partly be understood in this light. Should Nippon Kaigi eventually produce a draft for their vision of a new constitution, it is likely that the idea of Shinto as something other than a religion will be reflected in this draft.

Keywords: Shinto, Supreme Court of Japan, Nippon Kaigi, Jinja Honchō, Japanese secularism, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), constitutional reform

Petitioning for Constitutional Reform: Why *Religion* Matters

When people in Japan flocked to their local shrines for their first visits of the New Year in early January 2016, many were surprised to find there a petition for constitutional reform. On large white banners decorated with orange cherry blossoms, under the heading "aim for a proud Japan" (*hokori aru Nippon o mezashite* 誇りある日本をめざして), visitors were encouraged to offer their support for the project of amending Japan's postwar constitution. Although the banners were signed Jinjachō 神社庁 (local branch of the Jinja Honchō 神社本庁, the Association of Shinto Shrines), the campaign—*Kenpō kaisei o jitsugen suru 1000 mannin nettowāku* 憲法改正を実現する1000万人ネットワーク (Network of 10 million people to realize constitutional reform, henceforth "Kenpō1000")—was in fact run by Utsukushii Nippon no Kenpō o Tsukuru Kokumin no Kai 美しい日本の憲法をつくる国民の会 (Citizens' Association for the Creation of a Constitution for a Beautiful Japan), a Nippon Kaigi

Figure 1. Banners calling for constitutional reform, under the heading "aim for a proud Japan." The banners in this picture were seen in June 2016 at the Akasaka Hikawa Shrine 赤坂氷川神社 in Tokyo. Photo by the author.

日本会議 workgroup for constitutional reform.[1] Considering the fact that a number of prominent officials from Jinja Honchō hold leadership positions in Nippon Kaigi, it is hardly surprising that this association would also participate in a campaign sponsored by Nippon Kaigi, but it does serve as an inroad to a broader question about the postwar secular order in Japan.[2] Why would Jinja Honchō invest in the question of constitutional reform? What does Jinja Honchō have to gain from participating in this project? Why is this happening in 2016?

One key to answering these questions can be found in the debates about state-religion relations in postwar Japan. Through the Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shinto, issued by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) on 15 December 1945, "State Shinto"—defined in the document as "that branch of Shinto which by official acts of the Japanese Government has been differentiated from the religion of Shrine Shinto and has been classified as a nonreligious national cult"—was disestablished and replaced solely by "Shrine Shinto (jinja shintō 神社神道)," which would be "recognized as a religion if its adherents so desire and will be granted the same protection as any other religion in so far as it may in fact be the philosophy or religion of Japanese individuals."[3] Through this distinction, the form of Shinto which had previously been defined by the Japanese state in terms of ideology and which had been excluded from the legal category of religion from the Meiji period and up until the end of the war, was disestablished and replaced by (Shrine) Shinto, a religion. After 1945 much of what had previously been included in the national ideology of "State Shinto," described by Isomae Jun'ichi as "an ambiguous system, clearly classifiable as neither 'religion' nor 'secular,' born out of trial and error and adopted as a means by the native elite in Japan to unify the people," came to be considered aspects of one religion, with the same legal rights and privileges as other religions enjoyed.[4] Major institutions that had enjoyed substantial patronage from the state throughout the modern period, including the shrine complex at Ise and Meiji Shrine in Tokyo, had their official ties to the state cut and were forced to find new ways of surviving without public support.

Jinja Honchō was established as a response to the forced disestablishment of Shinto. Originally founded in 1946, following the promulgation of the Religious Juridical

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1 Kenpō1000 2016. For details on the organization, see also Tsukada 2015, pp. 57–67.
2 According to the Nippon Kaigi homepage, Jinja Honchō leaders currently acting as officials in the organization include Takatsukasa Naotake 鷹司尚武, chief priest of the Ise Shrines, Kitashirakawa Michihisa 北白川道久, representative (tōri 統理) of Jinja Honchō, and Hattori Sadahiro 服部貞弘, chairman of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership (Shintō Seiji Renmei 神道政治連盟). Nippon Kaigi 2016a.
3 The Shinto Directive 1945.
4 Isomae 2007, pp. 93–102.

Persons Act (*shūkyō hōjin hō* 宗教法人法) in April 1951, Jinja Honchō was registered as a Comprehensive Religious Juridical Person (*hōkatsu shūkyō hōjin* 包括宗教法人).[5] Acting as an umbrella organization for around 80,000 of Japan's shrines, the organization was intended to maintain Shinto institutions across the country after state patronage had been cut, but it also resulted in a new form of institutionalized Shinto centered on the Ise Shrines. Although the Ise Shrines, like all other shrines, were registered as a Religious Juridical Person, under Jinja Honchō they enjoyed the position of *primi inter pares* as the *honsō* 本宗—"supreme sanctuary"—of Japan.[6] Jinja Honchō is also a central actor tied to what John Breen and Mark Teeuwen in various publications have referred to as "the Shinto establishment."[7] The Shinto establishment can be used to describe a number of "self-consciously 'Shinto'" actors devoted to the idea that Shinto is a vital part of Japanese identity. Reproducing a view of Shinto based in the state-sanctioned Shinto of the prewar era, many of the actors connected to the Shinto establishment also have a high degree of interest in reinstating state sponsorship of key Shinto institutions, in particular the Ise Shrines and Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. According to Breen and Teeuwen, the Shinto establishment lays claim to "some 110 million Shinto practitioners," yet it is uncertain to what extent the often nationalistic agenda of this establishment is actually supported by those ordinary people in Japan who worship at shrines.[8]

One key issue of constitutional reform where Jinja Honchō is involved regards Articles 20 and 89, the two articles that together establish the legal framework for the postwar secular order in Japan. Written with the specific purpose of raising a wall of separation between religion and the state, and thus preventing a return to Shinto as the national ideology of the Japanese state, Paragraph 3 of Article 20 establishes that "the State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity."[9] Although the question of how Articles 20 and 89 have been interpreted throughout the postwar period has been explored by numerous scholars, this essay will offer a condensed analysis of key legal cases in order to better illustrate those legal developments that have contributed to the active participation of Jinja Honchō in the current attempts at constitutional reform.[10] The focus of this analysis will be on discourses of religion and Shinto and how these concepts are used in court, and what the consequences are for the relationship between state and religion in postwar Japan. As has been argued by Winnifred Sullivan, disestablishment and freedom of religion require clearly distinguishable categories of religion in order to work, but at

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5 Although the Religious Juridical Persons Act was established following the enactment of the postwar constitution, it built on the *Shūkyō hōjin rei* 宗教法人令 of 28 December 1945. Under this directive, Jinja Honchō was registered as a Religious Juridical Person in 1946.

6 Teeuwen and Breen 2017, p. 214.

7 Although Breen and Teeuwen have used a number of different definitions for the Shinto establishment in earlier publications (c.f. Breen and Teeuwen 2009, 2010, or Breen 2010), in their latest work they define it, within the specific context of the Ise Shrines, as a set of three "distinct but related agents": The priest administrators of the Ise Shrines, the functionaries of Jinja Honchō, and the members of the Ise Supporters' Association (*Ise Jingū shikinen sengū* 伊勢神宮式年遷宮). See also Teeuwen and Breen 2017, p. 211.

8 Breen and Teeuwen 2009, pp. 1–3.

9 For a more detailed account of the process of disestablishment in the new constitution, see Dower 2000. For a contrasting view further emphasizing the Japanese contribution to the process, see Beer and Maki 2002.

10 See for instance Forfar 2003; Takahata 2007; Van Winkle 2012; Ravitch 2014.

the same time the courts play a key role in establishing normative understandings of these categories.[11]

Before we turn our attention to the question of how the Supreme Court has argued with regards to the categories of Shinto and religion, we must first clarify these categories in a Japanese context. Regardless of whether the idea that the world can be divided into a religious and a secular sphere existed in Japan before the encounter with Western modernity, the Japanese term *shūkyō* 宗教 was not agreed upon as the equivalent of the Western concept of religion until the latter half of the nineteenth century.[12] At the same time, the adoption of the term *shūkyō* was not simply a matter of importing a foreign idea. As Jason Josephson has argued, the category of religion in Japan was produced through a process of negotiation by Japanese intellectuals, policymakers, and leaders, which resulted in the idea of religion as the negotiated middle ground between the secular/the real and superstition/delusion. This process resulted in a number of "religions," but it also resulted in the conceptualization of certain forms of Shinto as "secular," and hence was excluded from the legal category of religion.[13] Thus despite the fact that the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (1890) had a provision for "freedom to believe in religion" (*shinkyō no jiyū* 信教の自由), this was still conditioned by adherence to the official ideology of the state. Imperial subjects were free to believe in religions—or teachings (*kyō* 教)—but they also had to adhere to the secular order of the state, which included many elements of Shinto.

Since Kuroda Toshio in his 1981 article "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion" began questioning the paradigm of Shinto as the ancient and native—sometimes referred to as racial—religion of Japan, arguing that Shinto through much of Japanese history should rather be seen as an aspect of *kenmitsu* 顕密 Buddhism, a critical school of Shinto studies has gained much ground in academic circles.[14] Through the work of scholars like Helen Hardacre (1991), Mark Teeuwen (2002), Shimazono Susumu (2005, 2010), and Isomae Jun'ichi (2007, 2012), the genealogy of Shinto in Japanese history has been further explored. Parallel to this development has been the rise of critical religion theory, headed by scholars including Russell T. McCutcheon, Talal Asad, and Timothy Fitzgerald. Arguing that the categories of religion and the secular are closely connected to the process of Western modernity, scholars within this tradition suggest that the uncritical application of these concepts—indicating a binary view of society as easily divided into two spheres—to a non-European context is highly problematic. Rather than assuming normative understandings of what religion is and is not, critical religion seeks to establish contextually founded genealogies of these concepts. As Asad has put it, "the secular is neither singular in origin nor stable in its historical identity, although it works through a series of particular oppositions."[15]

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11 Sullivan 2005.

12 See for instance Christoph Kleine's criticism of critical religion theory in Kleine 2013.

13 Josephson 2012, pp. 251–62.

14 For instance, Ono Sokyō of Kokugakuin University wrote in an English-language monograph on Shinto that is still widely available: "Shinto is a racial religion. It is inextricably interwoven with the fabric of Japanese customs and ways of thinking. It is impossible to separate it from the communal and national life of the people. Among the kami of Shrine Shinto many have a special claim to worship from the Japanese people alone and are not such as can be venerated by the peoples of the world in the sense that the Japanese people do" (Ono 2004, p. 111).

15 Asad 2003, p. 25.

In her study, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, Winnifred Sullivan uses critical religion theory to problematize legal discourses on religion in the United States. In her view, the major problem with laws regulating religion—regardless of whether they concern freedom of religion or the relationship between religion and state—is that they require stable and essentialized religion. The problem is that religion is an unstable category.[16] Asad has argued along the same lines: "The nation-state requires clearly demarcated spaces that it can classify and regulate," and yet "the space that religion may properly occupy in society has to be continually redefined by the law because the reproduction of secular life within and beyond the nation-state continually affects the discursive clarity of that space."[17] Disestablishment requires the category of religion, but the category can never be essentialized beyond the normative viewpoint of those seeking to define it. In a Japanese context, where religion is part of the vocabulary of the constitution, it falls on the individual justices of the Supreme Court to define and interpret legally which acts are restricted under Articles 20 and 89 of the constitution. Before moving on to the subject of constitutional reform, it is therefore essential to understand what interpretations the Supreme Court has so far produced on the subject of Shinto and religion.

1952–1997: Defining Shinto and Religion in Court

Although it was not the first Supreme Court ruling to involve Articles 20 and 89, the 1977 ruling in the Tsu groundbreaking case was to set a precedent with regards to the separation of religion and state in Japan.[18] The case concerned a groundbreaking ceremony (*kikōshiki* 起工式) in January 1965 at the site of a new public gymnasium in the city of Tsu in Mie Prefecture. Commissioned by the local city council, the ceremony was officiated by priests from the local Ōichi Shrine 大市神社 and their fees (¥4000) as well as the offerings (*kumotsuryō* 供物料) made by members of the city council (¥3663) were paid from public funds.[19] The original complaint was brought by Sekiguchi Sei'ichi 関口精一, a city counselor who, together with more than a hundred other local officials, had participated in the ceremony. Sekiguchi, born in 1915 and a survivor of the war, was a member of the Japanese Communist Party, which throughout the postwar period has remained strongly opposed to renewed ties between the state and religion. In his lawsuit, Sekiguchi argued that using public funds for the groundbreaking ceremony not only violated the ban in Article 89 against state support for religious organizations, but that it was also a clear violation of the Article 20 ban against "religious activities."

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16 Sullivan 2005.

17 Asad 2003, p. 201.

18 The first time the Supreme Court produced a ruling concerning Article 20 was on 5 May 1963, when the Shōwa 36 (*a*) 485 was resolved. The case concerned a female priest who during an exorcism on a mentally ill girl caused her patient to suffer a fatal heart attack. This became a leading ruling with regards to freedom of religion, but since the case is not of immediate concern for the current discussion, I will not discuss it further here. For a brief discussion of rulings on religious accommodation in Japan, see Takahata 2007. It should also be noted that Japan does not hold precedents to be legally binding and that each court is at liberty to independently interpret the text of the constitution in order to solve a dispute. However, Supreme Court rulings still hold a "tremendous amount of influence" over the lower courts, and it is in fact rare for lower courts to disregard a clear Supreme Court precedent. See Matsui 2011, pp. 22–24.

19 Shōwa 46 (*gyō-tsu*) 69, p. 2; all court cases are listed at the end of the references.

Figure 2. Entrance to Ōichi Shrine in Tsu City. In January 1965, four priests from this shrine conducted the groundbreaking rites at the sites of the new public gymnasium. Photo by the author.

Figure 3. The Tsu City public gymnasium. Photo by the author.

In the first instance ruling, presented in Tsu District Court, the court ruled against the plaintiff, arguing that while to the outside viewer the groundbreaking ceremony might appear to be a "religious event" (*shūkyōteki gyōji* 宗教的行事), it was in fact a "secular event" (*sezokuteki gyōji* 世俗的行事) devoid of religious purpose, and was therefore allowed under Article 20. The court also claimed that the compensation paid to the shrine priests was too low to carry any real meaning, and that it was therefore not in violation of Article 89. The second instance court did not share this view, and in their 1971 ruling they argued that the groundbreaking ceremony did surpass the limits of "simple social ritual (*shakaiteki girei* 社会的儀礼) or secular event" and that it should be viewed as a "religious ceremony characteristic of Shrine Shinto." According to the court, the purpose of the postwar constitution was to enforce the "nonreligious nature" (*hishūkyōsei* 非宗教性) of the Japanese state, and therefore the ceremony—as conducted by shrine priests—was a clear violation of this principle and should be viewed as unconstitutional under Articles 20 and 89.[20]

The Supreme Court reversed the second instance ruling, arguing that although the state has to remain "religiously neutral," a "total separation of religion from the state is in practice close to impossible" and the state may therefore still maintain some degree of connection with religion.[21] Although this reasoning might seem contradictory to the phrasing in the constitution, which states that the state must "refrain" (*shite wa naranai* してはならない) from religious activities, the justices might simply have been attempting to establish a workable relationship between political and religious actors in Japan. As has been argued by Andrew B. Van Winkle, a hardline interpretation of Article 20 forcing the complete separation of religion and state would also necessitate a "repeal of the Religious

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20 Shōwa 46 (*gyō-tsu*) 69, p. 2.
21 Shōwa 46 (*gyō-tsu*) 69, pp. 5–6.

Juridical Persons Law, because the Law contains numerous privileges conferred by the state on religions."[22]

Based on the majority view that a complete separation of religion from the state is impossible, the ruling in the Tsu groundbreaking case also established a "purpose and effect" standard (*mokuteki kōka kijun* 目的効果基準) which has been used in all subsequent cases concerning Articles 20 and 89. In short, the standard aims to decide "whether the government purpose behind the challenged conduct was to advance religion or whether it had that effect."[23] The court argued that the phrasing "religious activity" should not be understood as including "all activities by the state and its organs which bring them into contact with religion," but rather those activities that exceed certain limits. These limits include the promotion and subsidizing of specific religions, or any attempt at "oppression or interference." Consequently, when deciding whether an act constitutes a proscribed "religious activity," it is not enough for it to be officiated by a religious professional. Rather,

> the place of the activity, the religious evaluation of common people with regards to the activity, the actor's intent and purpose with the activity as well as whether and to what degree there exists a religious consciousness, and the effect and influence on common people, are all circumstances that should be considered to reach an objective judgment based on socially accepted ideas.[24]

Besides clarifying the position of the state as religiously neutral, the Supreme Court also argued that "for the people of our country, many citizens believe in Shinto as members of a local community, and in Buddhism as individuals." Despite this, they also agreed that in general people in Japan do not have a very high "degree of religious interest" (*shūkyōteki kanshindo* 宗教的関心度). This apparent contradiction was solved by suggesting that Japanese religiosity, in particular with regards to Shrine Shinto, was different from other forms of religiosity in that it was more focused on ritual (*saishi girei* 祭祀儀礼) than on "international activities such as active propagation and missionary work." In their conclusion, the justices conceded that the groundbreaking ceremony was "conducted by priests who were religious specialists, wearing prescribed garments, in a ceremony conforming to Shrine Shinto" and this made it "impossible to deny that it has a connection to religion." However, despite the fact that the "groundbreaking ceremony is a ceremony with a religious source in a festival to pacify the kami of the land," common people do not perceive the ceremony as having a "religious meaning" (*shūkyōteki igi* 宗教的意義). Rather, to people in general a groundbreaking ceremony is "a completely secular ritual conducted in accordance with general social customs."[25]

Through their use of the views of common people as an objective measure for the nature of Shinto, the justices rely on the assumption that the views they present correspond to the conventions through which people interact linguistically; that is, when Japanese people *in general* speak of Shinto, they do not understand it to be *a religion*.

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22 Van Winkle 2012, p. 381.
23 Kobayashi 2005, p. 698.
24 Shōwa 46 (*gyō-tsu*) 69, p. 6.
25 Shōwa 46 (*gyō-tsu*) 69, p. 9.

Norman Fairclough has referred to such assumptions as ideologies, defined as "a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power, simply through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power differences for granted."[26] The assumption that most Japanese people do not consider Shinto to be a religion is the essence of the ideology of Shinto as something beyond the discourse of religion, as something connected to the Japanese ethnos in a way that religions are not. This ideology is what I refer to as the "Shinto normative," the idea that to be Japanese is also to be Shinto.

The paradigm of the Shinto normative came to dominate in Supreme Court rulings on the separation of religion and state for two decades after the Tsu ruling. The first ruling to use this case as a precedent was the June 1988 ruling on the SDF enshrinement case. The case concerned the enshrinement in Yamaguchi Prefecture's Gokoku Shrine (*gokoku jinja* 護国神社) of the spirit of Nakaya Takafumi 中谷孝文, an officer in the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) who died in an accident while on duty.[27] The enshrinement (*chinzasai* 鎮座祭), which was carried out as a joint ceremony enshrining the spirits of a total of twenty-seven service members of the SDF from Yamaguchi Prefecture between 19 and 20 April 1972, was administered by the Yamaguchi branch of the SDF Friendship Association (Taiyūkai 隊友会) in accordance with the wishes of Nakaya's father. The controversy arose because while Nakaya himself had not been religious, his wife Nakaya Yasuko 中谷康子 was a Protestant Christian belonging to the United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan 日本基督教団).[28] Following her husband's death, Yasuko attempted to stop the enshrinement ceremony from taking place, but failing to do so she eventually filed a lawsuit against the SDF Friendship Association and the local liaison office of the SDF.[29]

Both rulings in the SDF enshrinement case concluded that enshrinement at the Gokoku Shrine carried a "fundamentally religious meaning," and that the actions taken by the SDF Friendship Association therefore constituted a crime against the constitutional guarantee on the freedom of religious belief and hence infringed upon Nakaya Yasuko's personal religious rights.[30] However, through a strict reading of the Tsu precedent the Supreme Court completely overturned this ruling, arguing that the enshrinement ceremony would not be restricted by Article 20, because the *purpose* of the ceremony was not to promote religion but to "increase the social position and to raise the morale of the SDF servicemen." Furthermore, the court argued that Article 20 "does not directly guarantee freedom of religion itself to individuals, but rather it is an attempt to indirectly guarantee

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26 Fairclough 2001, p. 2.

27 A Gokoku shrine is a shrine that before the Allied occupation of Japan served as a sort of "branch shrine" to Yasukuni Shrine. Although many of these shrines originated in the Meiji Restoration, they were not designated as Gokoku ("nation-protecting") shrines before 1939. The establishment of such shrines, as well as local-level shrines for the war dead (*shōkonsha* 招魂社) and monuments dedicated to the spirits of the war dead (*chūkonhi* 忠魂碑), was part of "a concerted and sustained effort to promote a cult of the war dead and historic loyalists." (Hardacre 1991, pp. 90–93.)

28 Shōwa 57 (*o*) 902, pp. 1–3.

29 Based on their conversations with Mrs. Nakaya, O'Brien and Ohkoshi write the following on her motivations: "[She] was a Christian, a religious minority. She faced a certain uphill battle, against virtually insurmountable odds. Yet Mrs. Nakaya claims not to feel put upon because she is a Christian minority in Japan, for, as she points out, all 'Christians don't think alike.' Instead, she feels set apart because she thinks differently from most Japanese." (O'Brien and Ohkoshi 1996, p. 143.)

30 Shōwa 57 (*o*) 902, pp. 4–5.

the freedom of religion through the guarantee on the separation of state and religion which sets the confines of actions which the state and its organs may not carry out." Consequently, unless an act *directly* infringes upon a person's constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion, for instance by compelling the individual to take part in a religious service, the actions of the state need not be deemed unconstitutional under Article 20.[31]

One significant turn in the SDF enshrinement case came with regards to Nakaya Yasuko's argument that the enshrinement was a violation of her personal freedom of religion. The court turned this argument around, claiming that it was in fact Yasuko who was attempting to restrict the freedom of religion enjoyed not only by her late husband, but also by the Gokoku Shrine where the rites were being conducted. This argument is partly grounded in the fifth fact established early in the ruling: "Nakaya Takafumi did not believe in *religion* during his life."[32] The court established this position as opposed to the religiousness of Yasuko, who (actively) had faith in *one religion* (Christianity). Yasuko had originally kept her husband's ashes in a small Buddhist altar (*butsudan* 仏壇) in her house, partly to appease her father-in-law, but after some reflection she removed the altar and instead placed her husband's ashes in a crypt at her church, in accordance with her own Christian faith.[33] This form of religious activity was perceived as exclusionary by the justices, who argued that "the guarantee of freedom of religion requires tolerance of the religious actions of others, whose beliefs might be inconsistent with one's own beliefs, as long as they do not interfere with one's own freedom of religion through compulsion or by conferring disadvantages." As far as the justices were concerned, no one had attempted to coerce Yasuko to participate in any "religious events at the Gokoku Shrine," and in turn they expected her to respect the enshrinement of her husband's spirit at the Gokoku Shrine as protected by the shrine's freedom of religion.[34]

The justices' normative interpretation of what a religion *should* be like included tolerance (*kan'yō* 寛容) in order to enjoy the constitutional freedom of religion, religion must be inclusive and open rather than exclusionary and closed. Wendy Brown has argued that tolerance cannot be understood as a "transcendent and universal concept," but should be seen as "a political discourse and practice of *governmentality* that is historically and geographically variable in purpose, content, agents, and objects." Tolerance, she writes,

> is exemplary of Foucault's account of governmentality as that which organizes "the conduct of conduct" at a variety of sites and through rationalities not limited to those formally countenanced as political. Absent the precise dictates, articulations, and prohibitions associated with the force of law, tolerance nevertheless produces and positions subjects, orchestrates meanings and practices of identity, marks bodies, and conditions political subjectivities.[35]

In the SDF enshrinement case ruling, the justices in effect position a foreign, intolerant, and exclusionary, religion—Christianity—against the tolerance professed by the religion

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31 Shōwa 57 (*o*) 902, pp. 7–8.
32 Shōwa 57 (*o*) 902, p. 1.
33 Forfar 2003, pp. 257–58.
34 Shōwa 57 (*o*) 902, p. 9.
35 Brown 2006, p. 4.

of the Gokoku Shrine. Through this ruling, a Shinto subject is produced which stands as a representative of the tolerant Japanese majority, pitted against the intolerance of the religious minority. Yet the Shinto subject is not only tolerant, it is also the norm with which other religions must comply, should they wish to enjoy equal freedom of religion.

The second time the Tsu precedent was used in a Supreme Court ruling was in the Minoo memorial case, resolved in 1993. The case was initiated through a series of suits filed in the mid-1970s by Kamisaka Reiko 神坂玲子 and Satoshi 哲, local citizens of the city of Minoo in Osaka Prefecture, against a plan by the local government to relocate the local *chūkonhi* memorial using public money, as well as providing a new location for the memorial free of charge. The Minoo *chūkonhi* was originally constructed in 1916 and was restored in 1950, having been taken down immediately after the war. Although it was originally connected to the state-sponsored cult of the war dead, since 1955 rites to console the spirits (*ireisai* 慰霊祭) have been conducted here by representatives of Shinto as well as Buddhist and nonreligious groups.[36] The fact that Buddhist priests conducted some of these rites is significant, in that it makes the Minoo case the first Supreme Court case in which Buddhist rites fall under the category of "social ritual"—a category which otherwise appears to be reserved for Shinto rites.[37]

The justices in the Minoo case followed the Tsu precedent and used the purpose and effects test to reach their final conclusion: the purpose of a *chūkonhi* memorial was to honor and remember those who died in war, and therefore it was not religious. Since the group responsible for organizing the *ireisai* rites, the Nippon Izokukai 日本遺族会 (Japan War-Bereaved Families Association), was not a religious organization, the justices concluded that for public officials to participate in these rites was nothing more than "a social ritual for the families of those who died in war" and that it could therefore not be seen as restricted by the constitution. Furthermore, given the secular purpose of the rites, it was reasonable that the mayor of the city of Minoo had used public funds.[38] Through their dismissal of the plaintiffs' claim that ceremonies connected to prewar state-sponsored Shinto should be considered religious, the justices in their ruling on the Minoo case confirmed the Supreme Court position that although it might at times *appear* religious, Shinto was in fact something *other* than religion and that it was therefore not restricted by Articles 20 and 89 of the constitution.

The Ehime Tamagushiryō Ruling of 1997: A Change in Paradigm?

In 1997 the Supreme Court introduced a line of argument that has since come to form a new precedent in the legal interpretation of Articles 20 and 89. The Ehime Tamagushiryō case concerned the offerings paid to Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo and the local Gokoku Shrine in Ehime Prefecture between 1981 and 1986 by members of the Ehime prefectural government, including Governor Shiraishi Haruki 白石春樹 and the head of the Ehime prefectural office in Tokyo, Nakagawa Tomotada 中川友忠. The contributions to the shrines included nine offerings of *tamagushiryō* 玉串料 at Yasukuni Shrine during the spring and autumn festivals, for the total sum of ¥45,000, and four separate offerings of

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36 Shōwa 62 (*gyō-tsu*) 148, p. 2.
37 Shōwa 62 (*gyō-tsu*) 148, pp. 11–12.
38 Shōwa 62 (*gyō-tsu*) 148, pp. 12–13.

kentōryō 献灯料 during the Mitama Festival みたままつり in July, as well as nine offerings of *kumotsuryō* at the local Gokoku Shrine in Ehime Prefecture during festivals in spring and autumn dedicated to the spirits of local citizens who died in battle.[39] The case was filed by a group of twenty-four plaintiffs headed by Anzai Kenji 安西賢二, a Shin Buddhist priest. Shin Buddhism has remained critical of the state sponsorship of religion—in particular the cult of the war dead—throughout the postwar era, from the first LDP bills on renewed state sponsorship for Yasukuni Shrine in the 1960s to the visits by former Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō 小泉純一郎 to the shrine between 2001 and 2006. During the fifteen years between filing the Ehime suit in 1982 and its resolution in 1997, Anzai and the other plaintiffs received continuous support from Shin Buddhism.[40]

The district court producing the first instance ruling argued that the actions of the Ehime prefectural government, even when seen in light of the cultural and social conditions of Japan, did in fact supersede the limits on state interaction with religion imposed by Articles 20 and 89 of the constitution. Not only was it impossible to deny the religious meaning of the offerings paid to the shrine, but the public funds used to pay for these offerings were considered substantial enough to count as "support and promotion of the religious activities of Yasukuni Shrine and the Gokoku Shrine" and they were subsequently considered a violation of Article 20 as well as Article 89. The second instance court overturned this ruling, arguing that although the offerings might be said to have religious meaning, "for common people, making offerings such as *tamagushiryō* when worshiping at shrines can—if not overly excessive—be accepted as social ritual." Furthermore, the court argued that "the effect and influence of these actions on common people would not awaken any special concern or spirit to revive the legal status that Yasukuni Shrine had during World War II or to support and promote Shinto." In short, the second instance court considered the sum of money to be too small to count as "support" and viewed the rites as "social ritual" rather than "religious activity," meaning that the actions of the prefectural government were not prohibited under Articles 20 and 89.[41]

In the majority ruling on the Ehime case, the Supreme Court focused on Yasukuni Shrine's status as a Religious Juridical Person—that is, as one of a large number of corporations equal before the law. Although Yasukuni Shrine has close ties to Jinja Honchō, it is not incorporated under this Comprehensive Religious Juridical Person. Rather, Yasukuni was established as an Individual Religious Juridical Person (*tanritsu shūkyō hōjin* 単立宗教法人), under Shrine Shinto.[42] The justices in the Ehime ruling retained many of the arguments from the Tsu groundbreaking case, including the idea that Article 20 should be interpreted as promoting a position of religious neutrality for the state as well as

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39 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, p. 1. *Tamagushiryō* is a special offering of branches of the evergreen *sakaki* tree with paper strips tied to them. *Kentōryō* are offerings dedicated specifically to funding the lanterns that are lit at shrines and temples during specific events, such as the Mitama Festival. The ceremony at the Gokoku Shrine was an *irei taisai* 慰霊大祭, a "great festival for the comfort of spirits." The "modern" custom of festivals dedicated to spirits of the war dead (*eirei* 英霊, "heroic spirits") goes back to 1862, when the leaders of the anti-shogunate forces requested that Emperor Kōmei sponsor a ritual for those soldiers who died during the campaign against the Tokugawa shogunate. The first *irei no saigi* 慰霊の祭儀 was conducted in Kyoto by Buddhist and Shinto priests. See Nelson 2003.

40 Dessì 2007, pp. 149–55.

41 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, p. 2.

42 Bunkachō 2015, p. 2.

the general outline of the purpose and effects standard, yet at the same time they sought to evaluate whether donations paid for using public funds would infringe the relationship between state and religion—this time interpreted as the relationship between the state and *any* Religious Juridical Person.[43]

Even though the justices acknowledged that some offerings at a shrine, such as throwing small coins before praying, might be considered cultural acts, the fact that the prefectural government chose to offer *tamagushiryō* at Yasukuni and *kumotsuryō* at the local Gokoku shrine would "give common people the impression that these religious groups were something different from other religious groups." The justices interpreted Article 20 in light of the close relationship between Shinto and the state established during the Meiji period, and concluded that regardless of whether "a considerable number of people might wish for it," the state is still not allowed to interact with a specific religious organization.[44] Justice Ōno Masao 大野正男 also stressed the central role of Yasukuni Shrine in "State Shinto," and stated that the argument that "shrines are not religion" is tied to the prewar ideology whereby Shinto rites and ceremonies were considered "secular customs" and therefore "duties of the subjects," regardless of the subject's individual creed. In concluding his statement, he wrote that "it is a fact that there are people in our society who have a sense of reverence with regards to Yasukuni Shrine, and this is something that is guaranteed by the freedom of religion." However, in this case it was clear that "public organs had a special relationship with a specific religious organization," and such a relationship was prohibited under the constitution.[45]

In concluding the Ehime ruling, the justices argued that the fact that the offerings paid to these shrines "could not escape their religious significance" meant that the prefectural government had overstepped the limits of the "cultural and social conditions of our country" as established in the Tsu framework, and that hence the actions were in violation of the Article 20 ban on "religious activity." [46] In his review of the Supreme Court cases related to Articles 20 and 89, Frank Ravitch has called the Ehime ruling a "landmark case" that together with the Tsu case served to divide the postwar era into two distinct periods—"Shinto as culture" from 1977 to 1997, and "Shinto as religion" following the Ehime ruling. Commenting on the new precedent set with the Ehime ruling, he writes that this was a "vast improvement" over the previous approach, not least since the Ehime justices "addressed the historical reasons for [their] decision going back to the problems created by State Shinto," but also because the approach was "far more consistent with the actual language of Articles 20 and 89" than was the previous Tsu precedent.[47]

1997 and Beyond: Is the Ehime Precedent Valid?

Since 1997, the Supreme Court has ruled on Articles 20 and 89 with regards to two sets of cases, but with quite different results. The first of these, with rulings presented in 2002 and 2004, is a set of three similar cases related to the enthronement rites of the current emperor

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43 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, pp. 4–5.
44 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, pp. 6–7.
45 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, pp. 14–16.
46 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, p. 8.
47 Ravitch 2014, pp. 519–20.

after the death of Hirohito 裕仁, the Shōwa emperor, in 1989.[48] These rites, which took place between 1989 and 1990, contained many elements of Shinto and were the subject of much criticism from the more vocal minorities in Japan—in particular Christians, but also some Buddhists and others. Eventually the criticism of government sponsorship of the rites resulted in three court cases—which I will refer to as the Daijōsai cases—filed by local citizens in Ōita, Kagoshima, and Kanagawa Prefectures. The cases concern the visits made and offerings paid by their respective prefectural governors at the time of the enthronement of Akihito 明仁, the Heisei emperor, in 1990. It is important to note that the cases did not concern the constitutionality of the role of the emperor in these rites, but that they focused exclusively on the participation of public officials.

The rulings in these cases—those concerning the Ōita and Kagoshima prefectural governors served as precedents for the Kanagawa case two years later—were produced several years after the Ehime case, but contain no references to this case. Instead, they begin by offering the Tsu purpose and effects test as a framework for interpreting Articles 20 and 89. Following this, the Ōita and Kagoshima rulings present a short discussion on the nature of the *daijōsai* 大嘗祭, in which the justices acknowledged that the rites included the emperor praying to and giving thanks to "the imperial ancestors and the gods of heaven and earth (*tenjin chigi* 天神地祇)" and that they were conducted "according to Shinto rites in a ritual space (*saijō* 斎場) with shrine (*shinden* 神殿) installations." Although this meant that they clearly had some "connection to religion," the justices concluded that they did not favor any one "specific religion." Since the *daijōsai* were viewed as "traditional rites that commonly take place at the time of imperial succession," participation in these rites should be considered "a social ritual to the emperor, symbol of the Japanese state and of the unity of the Japanese people." Consequently, "in light of the social and cultural conditions of our country," participation in the *daijōsai* rites did not go against the principles of Japanese secularism as stipulated in Articles 20 and 89.[49]

It is possible that the Daijōsai cases should be considered an anomaly in the post-Ehime legal history in Japan. Frank Ravitch omits the cases from his review;[50] Andrew B. Van Winkle, although summarizing the cases, suggests that they simply show the continued vitality of the purpose and effects test in Japan.[51] It is also worth noting that three of the justices supporting the majority ruling in the Ehime case—Ijima Kazutomo 井嶋一友, Fujii Masao 藤井正雄, and Fukuda Hiroshi 福田博—took part in or presided over the petty benches ruling on two of the Daijōsai cases, while still referring back to the Tsu precedent in their interpretation of Articles 20 and 89 rather than to the Ehime ruling. Perhaps the best explanation for this can be found in the sensitive subject of the emperor, main actor of the ceremony. The justices in the Daijōsai cases—although not explicitly—do refer to those articles of the constitution which define the role of the emperor in the postwar Japanese state. Referring to the emperor as the "symbol of the Japanese state and of the unity of the Japanese people" relates directly to Article 1 of the constitution, and their descriptions of the *daijōsai* as traditional ceremonies (*dentō gishiki* 伝統儀式) support the constitutionality

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48 The three cases are Heisei 11 (*gyō-tsu*) 77, Heisei 11 (*gyō-tsu*) 93, and Heisei 14 (*gyō-tsu*) 279. For a more detailed discussion on the rites in question, see Breen and Teeuwen 2010, pp. 168–98.

49 Heisei 11 (*gyō-tsu*) 77, p. 1–3.

50 Ravitch 2014.

51 Van Winkle 2012, p. 377.

of the claim by referring to Article 7:10.[52] If anything, these three cases show the problems inherent in having a monarch ideologically rooted in the prewar Shinto order conducting ceremonial functions in the strictly secular society of postwar Japan.[53] During the modernization process of the nineteenth century the emperor might have been transformed "from a deity ... in the pantheon whom people had traditionally manipulated, into *the* Deity endowed with sacredness and inviolability" who presided over the Japanese nation, yet it would seem that the emperor's modern role retains much of its validity in postwar Japan, decades after the Shōwa emperor declared his humanity.[54]

The rulings that would eventually cement the Ehime line of argument as legal precedent were handed down by the Supreme Court in January 2010, and concluded two cases that had been initiated by private citizens Taniuchi Sakae 谷内栄 and Takahashi Masayoshi 高橋政義 in 2004.[55] The cases related to two shrines, the first to Sorachibuto Shrine 空知太神社 ("Sunagawa I") and the second to Tomihira Shrine 富平神社 ("Sunagawa II"), and they had been initiated in 2004 after the two plaintiffs had tried for years to reach an out of court agreement with the local city council. The two shrines were constructed on government-owned land in the city of Sunagawa in Hokkaido, and the cases actually originate in the attempts made by the local Sunagawa city council to comply with Articles 20 and 89. Tomihira Shrine had originally been erected by local citizens in 1894 as a small shrine dedicated to Ōkuninushi no Mikoto 大国主命 in order to pray for a good harvest. In 1935, the land on which this shrine was located had been transferred from the local citizens to the city council to erect an apartment complex for teachers at the local school. The Sunagawa II case concerned the attempt by Sunagawa City Council in 2004 to transfer the shrine grounds back to local citizens. The transfer was conducted in 2005, when the shrine grounds were handed over as a grant to the Tomihira Neighborhood Association (*chōnaikai* 町内会), on condition that the association also became responsible for the administration of the shrine. This was done, as the Supreme Court ruling makes clear, "in order to solve a situation where city-owned grounds were used as the site of the shrine."[56]

The Sunagawa I case is similar to the Sunagawa II case in that it concerns an attempt by the city of Sunagawa to relocate a shrine from public grounds. Sorachibuto Shrine was erected at around the same time as the Tomihira Shrine, with the oldest building—a small shrine (*hokora* 祠)—constructed in 1892 in order to pray for a bountiful harvest. In 1897, local citizens applied for the lease of land to build a larger shrine, and after gaining such a permit they erected a shrine dedicated to Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神. A few years later,

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52 It is interesting to note that the adjective used to describe the ceremonies has shifted to "traditional" in the Supreme Court ruling. In the lower instance court, which considered participation in the rites prohibited under the constitution via references to Ehime, the ceremonies were referred to as "religious ceremonies of the emperor" (*tennō no shūkyō gishiki* 天皇の宗教儀式). See the Fukuoka High Court ruling on the Ōita case for further details; Heisei 6 (*gyō-ko*) 12.

53 For details on the process of turning the Shōwa emperor into the constitutional head of state under the postwar constitution, see Dower 2000, chapters 9, 10, and 11.

54 Ohnuki-Tierney 2002, p. 89.

55 All documents detailing the plaintiffs' side of this case were collected and published in 2013 under the title *"Shiyūchi ni jinja wa iken!" Sunagawa seikyō bunri soshō no kiseki* (Sōma 2013). My discussion on the motivations of the two plaintiffs is based partly on their own statements in this publication (pp. 28–41), and partly on interviews conducted with Taniuchi Sakae in June 2016. For an English-language discussion on the Sunagawa rulings, see Breen 2010.

56 Heisei 19 (*gyō-tsu*) 334, pp. 3–4.

Sorachibuto Primary School was built on adjacent grounds, and when the school buildings were to be extended in the years after World War II, the need to relocate the shrine arose. In 1950, Sorachibuto Shrine was relocated to neighboring lands belonging to a private citizen, but in an attempt to avoid paying tax for this land, the grounds were donated to the Sunagawa City Council in 1953. Although the maintenance of the shrine has been the responsibility of the local Sorachibuto Neighborhood Association, the grounds remained the property of the city council and were offered as the site of the shrine buildings without compensation.[57]

Figure 4. Taniuchi Sakae, plaintiff in the Sunagawa cases, and the Reverend Katō Masakatsu at Tomihira Shrine. Photo by the author.

Taniuchi and Takahashi were Christian members of the same Presbyterian church in the city of Takigawa, and having both experienced the war they shared the concern that state patronage of Shinto shrines might lead to a return to the militaristic regime in which they grew up. Takahashi was a soldier in the Japanese army fighting in China and, after he returned from the war, fourteen years after leaving Japan at the age of twenty-one, he began reflecting critically on his own actions during the war. Before he became involved in the Sunagawa cases, Takahashi spent much of his spare time giving lectures about his experiences in China, speaking openly about not only the horrors he had seen but also about what he himself had done. Taniuchi, born in 1930, was too young to be drafted into the imperial army, but had been working in the military factories in Hokkaido. One of his older brothers had been fighting in Manchuria and was killed after the Japanese surrender, and his spirit was later enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine. After the war, Taniuchi became a Christian and for many years he was the chairman of the Association of War Bereaved Families Opposed to War and Praying for Peace (Heiwa o negai sensō ni hantai suru senbotsusha izoku no kai 平和を願い戦争に反対する戦没者遺族の会), formed as an alternative to the Nippon Izokukai by the bereaved who are opposed to state support for the cult of the war dead. Taniuchi and Takahashi considered the imperial Shinto of prewar Japan to have been a key factor contributing to the war, and their involvement in the Sunagawa case was rooted both in their ideology of pacifism and in their identity as members of a minority religion. Although Taniuchi and Takahashi were the only plaintiffs in the Sunagawa cases, it is important to note that they did have a substantial group of supporters, both locally and throughout Japan. Katō Masakatsu 加藤正勝, the minister of their congregation, states that many people informally backing the two plaintiffs were worried about their relationship to the local community, and that this was why only two senior citizens initiated the case.[58]

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57   Heisei 19 (*gyō-tsu*) 260, pp. 3–5.
58   Sōma 2013, pp. 11–12.

Although the justices of the same grand bench reached different verdicts in the two cases—in Sunagawa II they deemed the acts of the city council constitutional, whereas in Sunagawa I they concluded that the acts were prohibited under Articles 20 and 89—it is worth noting that both rulings are clear on the religious nature of the shrines. In the Sunagawa II ruling, the justices agreed that Tomihira Shrine and the festivals conducted there should be seen as having "religious functions," but they argued that the neighborhood association responsible for the administration of the shrine was not to be considered a religious organization. In granting the neighborhood association the land, the Supreme Court concluded that the city council navigated between their obligation to uphold the religious freedom of the local parishioners (*ujiko* 氏子), which might have been infringed upon by the relocation of the shrine, and at the same time ensuring that the city did not own religious property. The *purpose* of the grant was not to support a specific religious organization, and the justices did not consider the *effect* of such a grant—based along Tsu lines of the "view of common people"—to be the promotion of a specific religion.[59]

In the Sunagawa I case, the court concluded that the buildings on the government land should be considered a Shinto shrine, and that the events taking place there contained too many elements of Shinto to consider them "simple secular events with a weak religious meaning." The court then emphasized the fact that the group responsible for conducting these festivals was not the neighborhood association, but the local parishioners organized in an "*ujiko* group" (*ujiko shūdan* 氏子集団) under the neighborhood association. Because the primary purpose of this group was "religious activity," the justices concluded that the group was a "religious institution or association" under Article 89 of the constitution. Consequently, in lending the land free of use to the neighborhood association and thereby the *ujiko* group, the Sunagawa City Council was in fact aiding one specific religion.[60] An interesting aspect of this ruling is how the justices evaluated the options available to the city council, and essentially ruled on the city councilors' inability to comply with Articles 20 and 89 of the constitution.[61]

In the Sunagawa I ruling, the justices tasked the city council with finding an alternative solution that would better comply with Articles 20 and 89 of the constitution. Just days after the Supreme Court ruling, on 22 January 2010, members of the city council met with representatives for the *ujiko* group and the Sorachibuto Neighborhood Association in order to discuss such a solution. By 16 July, the city council announced that a compromise had been agreed upon, according to which the *ujiko* group would lease the patch of land on which the *torii* 鳥居 gate was located for a reasonable rent, and that the other shrine buildings would be relocated to this patch. This land would be enclosed by a rope, to make it clear that it was distinguished from the surrounding public grounds. Further measures included the removal of the name of the shrine from a public building on the grounds as well as changing the inscription on a stone monument from *jijingū* 地神宮 ("shrine to kami of the land") to *kaitaku kinenhi* 開拓記念碑 ("memorial stone for the clearing [of the land]"). All of the expenses involved would be covered by the shrine.[62] Two

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59 Heisei 19 (*gyō-tsu*) 334, pp. 4–5.
60 Heisei 19 (*gyō-tsu*) 260, pp. 8–9.
61 Heisei 19 (*gyō-tsu*) 260, pp. 10–11.
62 Heisei 23 (*gyō-tsu*) 122, pp. 3–4.

years after the Sunagawa I ruling, on 16 February 2012, a minor bench of the Supreme Court, containing three justices from the 2010 grand bench, presented a ruling on an appeal that the measures agreed upon in July 2010 would in fact benefit one specific religious group—the *ujiko* group responsible for the shrine—and that the implementation of these measures was therefore unconstitutional.[63] The Supreme Court opted to dismiss this appeal, on grounds similar to the Sunagawa II ruling. Following the agreement of July 2010, the shrine had become the responsibility of

Figure 5. Sorachibuto Shrine in June 2016. The enclosed patch of land is leased to the local *ujiko* group for an annual fee of ¥35,000. Photo by the author.

the *ujiko* group, and the justices considered the rent agreed upon for use of the land—¥35,000 per year for the fifty-two square meters on which the shrine was now located—to be a reasonable compromise between the religious freedom of the *ujiko* group and the disestablishment clause of the constitution. Without denying the religious nature of the shrine or of the festivals that might take place there, the justices argued that the measures implemented were substantial enough to ensure that, "in the eyes of the common people," Shinto did not receive special privileges from the state.[64] Like in the Sunagawa II case, the purpose and effects test proved its continued validity.

Revising the Constitution in Response to a New Paradigm

The postwar cases that have dealt with the question of whether Shinto should be considered a religion or not have one thing in common that is worth emphasizing: they all deal with Shinto actors or activities that have a connection to the state-sponsored Shinto of prewar Japan. Every case from Tsu to Sunagawa has been concerned either with the prewar cult of the war dead (the SDF Enshrinement case, the Minoo Memorial case, and the Ehime Tamagushiryō case) or, in the Daijōsai cases, the prewar idea of the emperor as Shinto-oriented head of state. The two exceptions to this are the Tsu groundbreaking case, where the rites were conducted by priests from Ōichi Shrine, and the Sunagawa cases. In the case of Sunagawa I and II, the question at hand was never whether Shinto was a religion or not. However, while the cases mainly concerned how the city had chosen to deal with a property situation that was considered in violation of the constitution, the motivations of the plaintiffs Taniuchi and Takahashi were clearly related to the close relationship between Shinto and the state in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus despite the fact that the shrines were not strictly speaking part of the cult of the war dead, in the eyes of the plaintiffs there existed a clear connection between any Shinto shrines and the militarism of imperial Japan.

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63 Justices Miyakawa Kōji 宮川光治, Sakurai Ryūko 櫻井龍子, and Kanetsuki Seishi 金築誠志.
64 Heisei 23 (*gyō-tsu*) 122, pp. 5–7.

Since the ruling on the Ehime case in 1997, there have been a number of lower instance rulings that have involved shrines with prewar connections to the cult of the war dead. One such case is the 2004 ruling presented by the Fukuoka District Court regarding former Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō's first visit to Yasukuni Shrine during his time in office.[65] Similar to the Supreme Court rulings discussed in this essay, the case was filed by plaintiffs representing a number of minority groups opposed to renewed ties between Shinto and the Japanese state, including families of war dead, Buddhists, Christians, and Zainichi Koreans. The three judges ruling on the case found Koizumi to be at fault, using the Ehime precedent to conclude that although "in the consciousness of common people, Shinto is not perceived to be a religion as much as other religions," it was still "impossible to deny the religious meaning of Shinto" and therefore visits to Yasukuni in the official role of prime minister could not be tolerated.[66] Despite the many attempts throughout the postwar era by the Nippon Izokukai and LDP politicians to renationalize Yasukuni Shrine, the most central shrine of the national cult of the war dead in prewar Japan remains a Religious Juridical Person.[67]

Matsui Shigenori has expressed doubts over whether it would be necessary to revise the postwar constitution, given that "almost every reform could be accomplished by means of constitutional interpretation."[68] Before 1997 this was apparently the case with regards to state sponsorship of Shinto; through the prevalence of the paradigm of Shinto as something other than religion, public officials were at liberty to sponsor Shinto institutions openly without the risk of legal reprimands. The Ehime ruling was the first time that this paradigm was broken in the Supreme Court, and the rulings on the two Sunagawa cases in 2010 confirmed the Ehime view that Shinto—regardless of whether "common people" consider it a religion or not—must be put on equal terms with other religions. Those who have supported official patronage of Shinto-based rites and ceremonies on the assumption that these are not religious activities have clearly suffered a major setback over the last two decades, and those actors who have a vested interest in the continued public support of Shinto have had to find new ways of reaching this goal. Since constitutional interpretation is no longer an option, the only route open to proponents of closer state-Shinto relations is constitutional reform. The Kenpō1000 campaign to gather support for constitutional reform amongst shrine visitors can be seen as a result of this development.

According to Tsukada Hotaka, three factors contributed to the establishment of Nippon Kaigi in May 1997: the debates related to the imperial succession ceremonies, the defeat of the LDP in the 1993 election, and the ruling on the Ehime Tamagushiryō case earlier the same year.[69] Through the Society for the Protection of Japan—one of the two organizations that in 1997 merged into one organization—Nippon Kaigi has a connection to the imperial system that is older than the organization itself. The Society for the

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65 For a more detailed review of these cases, se Breen 2011.
66 Heisei 13 (*wa*) 3932, p. 10. In the end, the claim by the plaintiffs that the Koizumi visits had interfered with their own constitutional rights was completely dismissed by the court, and therefore, despite it being ruled that visiting the shrine in the official role of prime minister was a violation of the constitution, there were no further legal ramifications for Koizumi himself.
67 Breen 2007.
68 Matsui 2011, p. 273.
69 Tsukada 2015, pp. 57–62.

Protection of Japan, originally formed in 1974 as a union of religious groups opposed to Sōka Gakkai 創価学会, participated actively in the debates preceding the implementation of the Era Name Law (*Gengō hō* 元号法) in 1979.[70] In fact, in his recent book on Nippon Kaigi, Sugano Tamotsu has argued that the movement supporting the *gengō* system can be seen as the very origin of Nippon Kaigi.[71] After the death of the Shōwa emperor in 1989, the inherent problems of the emperor's close connections to Shinto even as he served as secular head of Japanese state again rose to the surface, in particular through the legal cases related to the public finances used in connection to the funeral and succession rites. Most of these cases had been filed soon after the Heisei emperor ascended the throne, and by 1997 they had been resolved in the first instance courts and were being processed by the second instance courts. Although the Daijōsai cases would not be finally resolved until 2002 and 2004, the role of the emperor in the postwar Japanese state was a topic for debate at the time of the establishment of Nippon Kaigi.

Nippon Kaigi, described by Tsukada as "currently the largest conservative joint movement in the country," is an organization of people from a wide range of backgrounds with a few common goals.[72] For instance, although the five-member advisory board of Nippon Kaigi includes Kitashirakawa Michihisa, representative of Jinja Honchō, Takatsukasa Naotake, head priest of the Ise Shrines, and Hattori Sadahiro, permanent advisor of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership, the current president is Takubo Tadae 田久保忠衛, professor emeritus of international politics at Kyorin University. The organization's own list of officials includes persons from religious and Shinto organizations, politicians, scholars, and businessmen. Although the members of the organization might have their internal differences, the central issues that keep this diverse group together are essentially three: the position of the emperor, the protection of Japan's borders, and revision of the postwar constitution.[73] On their homepage, Nippon Kaigi write with regards to the emperor that:

> The hearts of the Japanese people, filled with love and respect for the imperial family, have remained unchanged through all ages.... The existence of the imperial family, unbroken through an eternal history of 125 generations, must be called a treasure, without parallel in the world, of which our nation should be proud. We Japanese have endeavored to create a nation embracing a sense of unity as one ethnicity with the imperial family at the center.[74]

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70 Mizohata 2016. For further details on the involvement of Jinja Honchō and the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership in this process, see Breen 2010.

71 Sugano 2016, pp. 40–41. This view is supported by Nippon Kaigi, who on their homepage describe their progress from the founding of Nihon o Mamoru Kai in April 1974. Up until the establishment of the Era Name Law in June 1979 this progress was closely tied to the movement supporting this law. Nippon Kaigi 2016c.

72 Tsukada 2015, p. 57.

73 The organization presents six goals on their homepage, but it can be argued that three of those are more or less related to the three key issues outlined above: reforming the education system to better support Japanese traditional values, fostering of world peace through active participation in peacekeeping operations, and the goal of friendship between nations based on mutual trust and benefit. Nippon Kaigi 2016b.

74 Nippon Kaigi 2016b.

This statement can be read as a response to those who questioned the constitutionality of public support for the participation in the Daijōsai rituals. The emperor is far more than the secular symbol of the state envisioned by the Allied occupation authorities. He is the very center of Japanese homogeneity, a treasure that has kept the Japanese nation together throughout the ages. As both Tsukada and Sugano have argued, the imperial system is central to the ideology of Nippon Kaigi—influenced by the Jinja Honchō-sanctioned view of the emperor as a descendant of Amaterasu Ōmikami, the 125th emperor in a direct line.[75] As Isomae Jun'ichi has suggested, "modern Japanese society, presupposing the dichotomy of religion/secular, can be said to uphold the façade of a society endorsing freedom of religion, but as regards the god incarnate emperor at the apex of the state, this sphere called the secular again falls under the shadow of the religious." [76]

From the outset, Nippon Kaigi has been devoted to the issue of constitutional reform.[77] Soon after handing down the ruling on the Ehime Tamagushiryō case, Chief Justice Miyoshi Tōru 三好達, the sole justice to disagree completely with the majority ruling, retired from the Supreme Court and became the president of Nippon Kaigi, a position he held from 2000 until 2015.[78] In his dissenting opinion, Justice Miyoshi argued that the majority decision was mistaken in its assumption that Yasukuni Shrine and the local Gokoku Shrine were religious sites. He emphasized the role of these shrines when mourning those who died for the nation as well as when consoling their spirits, arguing that although it was hard to say that "consoling spirits" was something completely different from religion, the wish to honor those who have fallen in battle for the nation and to console the families of the deceased is "a universal sentiment of human nature surpassing religion, religious sect, ethnicity, and nation." Most importantly, because the spirits enshrined at the shrines were those of men who fell in service to the nation, venerating them is beyond the confines of any one religion.[79] Justice Miyoshi argued for this position partly by referring to visits by Christian prime ministers like Yoshida Shigeru 吉田茂 and Ōhira Masayoshi 大平正芳, but his key argument rested on the idea that to most people in Japan, paying respect to the deceased on days such as the Mitama Festival or *obon* お盆 is a common ritual "separate from belief in a specific religion." [80]

Venerating the emperor and paying respect to the heroic spirits (*eirei* 英霊) of those who gave their lives for the nation are, as far as Nippon Kaigi is concerned, the national duties of all Japanese citizens, and as such this should be reflected in the Japanese constitution. The

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75 Jinja Honchō is open about its view on the divine origins of the emperor. See for instance its short English-language introduction to Shinto, *Soul of Japan*. Jinja Honchō 2013.

76 Isomae 2012, p. 187.

77 It should be mentioned that Nippon Kaigi is in no way unique in wanting to reform the postwar constitution. There have been numerous attempts at reform since the end of the American occupation, with the first being headed by LDP Prime Minister Hatoyama Ichirō 鳩山一郎 in 1955. In fact, were it not for the strict limits on constitutional reform stipulated in the constitution, with a two-thirds majority required in both Houses to initiate amendment, as well as for the persistent opposition to reform presented by the political left, there would have been ample opportunity throughout the postwar era for rewriting the constitution. See Matsui 2011, pp. 257–73, and Boyd and Samuels 2005.

78 Since stepping down in 2015, he now holds the title of "honorary president" (*meiyo kaichō* 名誉会長).

79 Throughout his opinion, Justice Miyoshi refers to these spirits as *kuni ni junjita hitobito no mitama* 国に殉じた人々の御霊, that is, "the spirits of people who sacrificed themselves (or 'became martyrs') for their country."

80 Heisei 4 (*gyō-tsu*) 156, p. 39.

Citizens' Association for the Creation of a Constitution for Beautiful Japan was established as a workgroup by Nippon Kaigi in October 2014 and includes among its members Miyoshi Tōru as well as prominent members of a number of religious organizations, including Tanaka Tsunekiyo 田中恆清, President of Jinja Honchō, and Uchida Fumihiro 打田文博, Secretary General of the Shinto Association of Spiritual Leadership.[81] The workgroup has yet to produce a draft on how they envision the new constitution, but it is clear that although revising Article 9 is a primary goal, there are other parts of the constitution that also necessitate reform. Among these we find a "separation of state and religion that has gone too far."[82]

Without access to Nippon Kaigi's own draft for constitutional amendment it is impossible to know exactly how they propose to solve these issues, yet given the membership overlap between Nippon Kaigi and the LDP we might assume that their draft will not deviate much from the "Draft for revision of the Constitution of Japan" (*Nihonkoku kenpō kaisei sōan* 日本国憲法改正草案) published by the LDP in April 2012. In particular the proposed amendments to Articles 20 and 89 give us an idea on how the problems arising from the strict separation of religion and state could be averted. The text in the first two paragraphs of Article 20 is more or less identical to the current constitution, yet paragraph 3 is slightly altered:

> It is unacceptable for the state and the local governments as well as for other public organizations to conduct education or other religious activities for the benefit of a specific religion. However, that which does not surpass the confines of social ritual or manners and customs (*shakaiteki girei mata wa shūzokuteki kōi* 社会的儀礼又は習俗的行為) is not affected by this restriction.[83]

The revised version of Article 89 further adds that:

> Public money or other public property must not, with the exception of cases under the stipulations given in Article 20 Paragraph 3, be disbursed to or offered for the use, benefit, or support of organizations involved in religious activities or for [religious] organizations.[84]

It is difficult not to read these paragraphs as a direct response to the outcome of the Ehime Tamagushiryō case. The revised constitution offers a way past the post-Ehime paradigm of Shinto as one of "the religions," and gives the Supreme Court the opportunity to interpret Shinto as that which lies within the confines of "social ritual," "manners," and "customs."

Based on the central position of the emperor in Nippon Kaigi ideology, it is likely that their ideal for a revised constitution would also reflect this. Although the LDP draft from 2012 does not attempt to increase the political power of the emperor in postwar Japanese society, two alterations to the text are worth noting. First, besides retaining his current

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81 Tsukada 2015, pp. 57–62.
82 Nippon Kaigi 2016b.
83 Jiyūminshutō 2012, p. 7.
84 Jiyūminshutō 2012, p. 22.

role as "symbol of the State and of the unity of the People," the draft would also make the emperor "the head of the Japanese state" (*Nihonkoku no genshu* 日本国の元首). Second, in line with the Era Name Law of 1979, a new article is added: "As determined by the law, the Era Name (*gengō*) shall be established at the time of succession to the imperial throne (*kōi no keishō* 皇位の継承)." [85] Both of these changes are in line with current Nippon Kaigi discourse on the emperor—as symbolic head of the state and a symbol of Japan's unique traditions and heritage.

Following the success enjoyed by the LDP and its allies in the 2016 House of Councilors election, Prime Minister Abe Shinzō 安倍晋三—himself a member of Nippon Kaigi—is now closer than ever before to his goal of initiating constitutional reform. Although we do not yet know the extent to which the LDP will try to revise the constitution, it is likely that an attempt will be made to alter the language in Articles 20 and 89 the better to allow for state patronage of Shinto. In January, Jinja Honchō made their stance public by participating in a campaign that seeks to establish a popular base for the general effort to revise the constitution. Although the Kenpō1000 campaign is rather vague on the specifics of the new constitution, considering that the campaign is tied to Nippon Kaigi—and hence to Jinja Honchō and to the ruling faction of the LDP—it can be assumed that these reforms will reflect current discourse within these organizations. Although media discussions are likely to focus mainly on the revision of Article 9, the fact that the Shinto establishment openly supports this process of constitutional reform suggests that we should also pay attention to the implications of a revised constitution for the relationship between Shinto and the state.

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85 Jiyūminshutō 2012, p. 2.

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CONTENTS

COVER IMAGE:
A policeman checks the papers of foreign buddhas and deities:
"Where is your original census registration hmm?
Right, so what is your occupation? Good, but you'll have to submit
all the papers for your change of residency within
ten days of moving hmm mm!"
From Daigo Etan, *Hotoke-sama no koseki shirabe*,
Nishōdō Shoten, 1918.