

Edited by Kevin M. Doak

Xavier's Legacies: Catholicism in
Modern Japanese Culture



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This image is a work by an anonymous Japanese artist working from plates imported from Europe and was completed in Japan probably in 1622. However, it was lost and not discovered until 1920 in the Higashi family home in Takatsuki and is now a Japanese National Cultural Treasure, housed in the Kobe City Art Museum. As such, it captures in one picture the many words of this volume that try to explain what “Xavier’s legacies” in modern Japanese culture can mean.

Source: Portrait of St. Francis Xavier, SJ (1506-52), Important Cultural Treasure, Kobe City Museum, Kobe, Japan.

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Introduction: Catholicism, Modernity, and Japanese Culture

Kevin M. Doak

Catholicism reached Japan in 1549 when Francis Xavier, SJ, landed at Kagoshima City.¹ It was 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Xavier remained in Japan for two years and three months, and with the help of a native Japanese convert, Anjirō (Yajirō), he translated into Japanese the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Apostles' Creed, cardinal Church teachings, and various prayers. He travelled throughout the country, even to the capital city, Kyoto, converting Japanese to the faith everywhere he went. It is estimated that, in those few years, Xavier converted 800 Japanese and established good relations with influential men such as the Buddhist monk Ninjitsu and Shimazu Takahisa, Lord of Satsuma, and Ōtomo Yoshihige, Lord of Bungo, who would later convert to the faith.² Not only did Xavier plant the seeds of Christianity in Japan, but he also laid the foundations for the field of Japanese studies by taking up the study of the Japanese language and with his insightful writings on the character of the Japanese people, their cultural, social, and political institutions. In his wake, other Jesuits built on those foundations, including João Rodriquez, SJ, whose 1608 *Arte da lingua de Iapam* was "the starting point of the scientific study of Japanese as a language."³ During what has come to be called "the Christian century," Catholic influence on Japanese culture was surprisingly deep. Not only did samurai (including the Taikō Hideyoshi) adopt Western dress (including Christian symbols), food, and drink, but some even adopted Christian names. There has long been speculation that the tea ceremony, as reconstituted by Sen no Rikyū (1522-91), was influenced by the rituals of the Catholic Mass.⁴ It is a matter of historical record that five of Rikyū's seven top disciples were Christians or allies of the Christians, including Hosokawa Tadaoki, whose wife was the famous Gracia Hosokawa.⁵ It has been estimated that by the 1630s there were 760,000 Catholics after only

eighty years of missionary work, nearly 6.3 percent of the total population. As Miyazaki Kentarō notes, that is approximately ten times the percentage of Catholics in present-day Japan.⁶

One of the greatest challenges for historians of Christianity's influence on Japanese culture is to assess the impact of Catholicism during the "closed country" period of 1640 to 1873. Once systematic persecution began in 1614, at least 2,138 Catholics were martyred (of that number, 71 were Europeans).⁷ However, these figures might be gross underestimations as they reflect only the numbers found in available public records of persecutions of Catholics. Presumably, many Catholics were caught and tried during the Tokugawa period, but we will never know since hidden Christians were almost never publicly identified as Christians but were tried on other, vague charges. These numbers do not include periodic persecutions prior to 1614, including the notorious crucifixion of the Twenty-Six Martyrs of Nagasaki in 1597, nor do they include the estimated 27,000 people who were slaughtered in the Christian-led Shimabara Uprising of 1637-38. The best estimation is that between 1600 and 1873 the number of Catholics in Japan declined from as many as 760,000 to about 50,000.⁸ How many of them were executed, how many apostatized, or how many simply drifted away over the years is impossible to know. But since about half of the surviving Catholics refused to unite with the Church after 1873, the actual number of Japanese Catholics who survived the long period of persecution to form the basis of the modern Catholic Church in Japan was probably only about 20,000. We do know that in 1876, when early-Meiji-period persecutions had ended, there were 18,435 Catholics in Japan.⁹ We may never know what happened to hundreds of thousands of Catholics over the course of the two centuries when Japan was closed to Christianity.

Because of the difficulty in assessing the position of Catholicism during the Tokugawa period, and because of the salience of Catholicism in the decades prior to the closing of the country, historians have tended to limit their interest in Catholicism in Japan to the "Christian century" from 1549 to 1650. Thereafter, Christianity is not seen as playing a major role in Japanese culture until the advent of the West after 1854 (mainly in the form of British and American forces). Consequently, Christianity in modern Japan is largely told as a story of the advent of Protestantism, which is often presented as a more "modern" alternative to the Catholic Church.¹⁰ From this perspective, the intellectual and cultural options facing Japanese in the modern period were (1) secular materialism in the vein of Fukuzawa Yukichi (which ultimately came to include social Darwinism, Marxism, and a range of modern "scientific" forms of materialism); (2) Protestant Christianity;

and (3) a possible third option by those who sought to make Buddhism a modern Japanese religion.¹¹ From this modernist perspective, Catholicism is relegated to a thing of the past or, when it is unavoidably visible, regarded as a strange, marginal, and largely “French” thing (because of the monopoly that French missionaries had over the Catholic Church in modern Japan until the twentieth century) of little consequence to modern Japanese society and culture.

This volume presents a different, and long overdue, perspective: far from being marginal or irrelevant, Catholicism has provided Japanese from the mid-nineteenth century to the present with an important, alternative way of negotiating with modernity. Because Catholicism had established roots in Japanese tradition for over 300 years when Protestant missionaries arrived, it offered a unique relationship with what, after the nineteenth-century advent of “civilization and enlightenment,” would be deemed “Japanese tradition.” From this Catholic vantage point, Japanese tradition was neither something to leave behind nor something to cling to in the face of the challenges of modernity: it had encompassed the Catholic faith centuries earlier, even as both the Church and Japanese culture had grown in subsequent years. This depth of investiture in Japanese tradition gives Catholicism in modern Japan a very different cultural significance than that of Protestantism. But because Catholicism was reintroduced to Japan in the late nineteenth century by French missionaries – thus drawing on the prestige of all things Western at that time – Catholicism also presented nineteenth-century Japanese with a way of being fully modern that, at the same time, was grounded in over 300 years of Japanese tradition and history. Moreover, as a minority cultural form in Japan, it presents comparative social scientists and historians with an excellent opportunity for rethinking a theory of modernization that all too often posits a binary opposition between tradition as indigenous and modernity as Western (i.e., what might be called the “missionary thesis”). In late-nineteenth-century Japan, Catholicism had a stronger claim on indigenous identity than the newly arrived Protestantism, and a modernity that was heavily informed by the latter was more easily criticized as a particularist and contingent ideology deeply connected to a specific Western modernity. From the perspective offered by this book, we gain a better understanding of the appeal of Catholicism not merely among the farmers and fishermen who might have felt left out of the main benefits of the modern transformation of Japanese society but also among the social elite – especially diplomats, intellectuals, and even the imperial household – who not only benefited from the modern transformation but also could draw from the moral resources of the Catholic

Church in helping to steer Japan away from the extremes of a nineteenth-century modernism that had few roots in Japanese cultural tradition.

As a result of the tendency to relegate Catholicism in Japan to the “Christian century,” studies on Christianity in modern Japan often work from an implicit narrative of the initial missionary conquest in the sixteenth century, the subsequent failure of Japan to embrace Christianity (*sakoku*), and the dominance of secularization in the modern period (with a small but vocal Protestant intellectual group as the exception that proves the rule). In this narrative – whose influence extends beyond religious history to inform much of Japanese studies – modern Japan signifies the dominance of secularism or, in a different inflection, the dominance of Protestantism among the few Japanese Christians who struggle against both secularism and indigenous cults, notably the *tennō-sei*. This is a surprising narrative since the actual number of Catholics in Meiji Japan compared favourably to Protestants: the Catholic missionaries started with an advantage of thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of *kakure kirishitan* (hidden Catholics), so it is not surprising that Catholics significantly outnumbered Protestants in the early Meiji years. Yet, even after thirty years of intense activity by Protestant missionaries, the number of Catholics was certainly not marginal: by the early twentieth century, Catholics still were nearly double the number of Protestants (58,261 to 31,631).¹² Yet, from most histories, one gets the impression that Catholicism simply disappeared in Japan sometime during the early seventeenth century. At most, literary scholars are aware of Endō Shūsaku as a quixotic Catholic writer whose historical novels frequently focus on the “Christian century” (thereby reinforcing the putative ties of Catholicism to Japan’s premodern past). In contrast, historians of modern Japan know of many Protestant Japanese intellectuals, especially of the Meiji period (e.g., Ebina Danjō, Nitobe Inazō, Niihima Jō, Uchimura Kanzō). But little is known of Catholic Japanese from the late nineteenth century to the present. This is a shame since, as this volume reveals, Catholic Japanese have had a tremendous impact on their society and culture in the modern and contemporary periods, especially in the fields of literature, philosophy, education, science, diplomacy, and politics.¹³ For example, it is striking that Japan has had more Catholic prime ministers (Hara Kei, Yoshida Shigeru, Asō Tarō) than the United States has had Catholic presidents – yet how many people know this? How widely is it known that the current empress was raised and educated as a Catholic (and undoubtedly baptized) and thus likely has baptized her son, the crown prince?¹⁴ How much information do we have on key diplomats, intellectuals, and novelists (other than Endō)

whose Catholic values have had tremendous influence on contemporary Japanese culture and society? Truth be told, not much.

Catholicism, Modernity, and Japan

To appreciate what the Catholic difference meant to Japanese in the middle to late nineteenth century, we need to take a broad perspective on the events, ideas, and people whose influence forged the particular constellation of Catholicism in modern Japan. This broad view needs to include the teachings of the Catholic Church on modernism as well as the cultural, social, and political orientations of the French Catholics who had exclusive rights over missionary activity in Japan at this time. In addition, we need to consider the difference between the approaches of Protestant missionaries who saw Japan as virgin territory and Catholic missionaries' concern to locate the long-rumoured *kakure* Catholics and, once found, serve their needs at a time when it was illegal for Christians to minister to Japanese. We need to recognize the complex role of French diplomats who enjoyed particularly close relations with the *bakufu*, the very authorities responsible for the laws that oppressed Japanese Catholics, and how this affiliation with *bakufu* retainers encouraged a positive view of Catholicism after the Restoration, when those retainers suddenly found themselves on the losing side of the modern transformation.

For the origins of Catholicism in modern Japan, we must begin in Paris. In 1653, only a few years after the close of the "Christian century" in Japan, the Paris Society for Foreign Missions (Société des missions étrangères du Paris; MEP) was established with the goal of sending missionaries to Asia. Indeed, until Spanish Dominicans arrived in Japan in 1904, MEP had exclusive rights to Catholic missionary work in Japan, much as the Jesuits had during the sixteenth century. Exercising that right was not easy, as the imprisonment and death of the missionary Giovanni Battista Sidotti in 1715 demonstrated. But MEP never lost sight of the goal of returning to the orphaned Catholics in Japan, and in 1825 the Asiatic Society of Paris published *Eléments de la grammaire japonaise*, M.C. Landresse's edited French translation of Rodriguez's *Arte da lingua de Iapam*. In 1832, a real opportunity to return to Japan seemed at hand when the Vatican placed Korea and the Ryūkyū islands under MEP's authority as an apostolic vicariate. Finally, the 1842 Treaty of Nanking provided a means of exercising this opportunity, particularly when it was followed by the Treaty of Whampoa on 24 October 1844, securing Chinese toleration of Catholicism. Earlier, on 28 April of that year, Theodore-Auguste Forcade, MEP, and a Chinese convert, Augustin

Ko, had arrived at Naha City in the Ryūkyū islands, where Forcade devoted himself to the study of the Japanese language for the next two years (one can assume that he already had the benefit of Rodriguez's grammar of the language). This moment marks, in a sense, the return of Catholic missionaries to Japan, as the Ryūkyū islands were at that time a kingdom that, while neither Chinese nor Japanese, enjoyed close ties to the Satsuma domain. In 1846, Pope Gregory XVI elevated Japan to the status of apostolic vicariate and appointed Forcade in charge as "bishop of Samos." Bishop Forcade immediately tried to enter Nagasaki but was not permitted to land. The following year he visited the pope in Rome but due to illness was not able to return to Asia.

The first Catholic missionaries to set foot on Japanese soil (excepting Okinawa) since Sidotti were Eugene Emmanuel Mermet de Cachon, MEP, and Prudence-Séraphin-Barthélemy Girard, MEP, who accompanied Baron Gros on his mission to conclude a Treaty of Commerce and Friendship with Japan in 1855. Mermet went to Hakodate, where he served the French Catholics in the foreign concession there while teaching French to Japanese. Girard remained in Yokohama, where in January 1862 he built the first Catholic church there. Hundreds, perhaps a thousand, Japanese flocked to the building to admire its unusual architecture, statues, and paintings. In case the Christian message was not sufficiently conveyed through the visual aids, Girard also preached in Japanese to a broad spectrum of society: peasants, merchants, and even samurai. One month later thirty-six of his Japanese followers were arrested for violating the prohibition against the "evil cult" and sentenced to death. After intervention by the head of the French diplomatic mission, De Bellecourt, the Japanese officials agreed to release the thirty-six on the condition that Girard no longer preach in Japanese. He might have felt compelled to accept this compromise, but he also appealed directly to officials back in Paris to urge Emperor Napoleon to intercede on behalf of religious freedom in Japan.

The issue of religious freedom was a major point of debate among Catholic theologians in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although the current status of the scholarship on these French missionaries does not permit us to draw direct lines of influence, an understanding of issues debated among French Catholic priests and theologians during the years when the missionaries received their training helps us to understand the preconceptions that they brought with them to Japan. The critical years were from 1835 to 1865. The earliest MEP missionaries to come to Japan had their theological training in the late 1830s (e.g., Forcade, Furet, Mermet de Cachon), but they were not the ones who stayed the longest or had the greatest influence on

Japanese converts. Girard and Pierre Mounicou were both ordained in the momentous year 1848, but neither remained in Japan after the prohibition on Christianity was lifted in 1873, limiting their influence on Japanese converts. The three most influential of the early generation of missionaries were Bishops Bernard Petitjean (1829-84), Joseph Laucaigne (1838-85), and Jules Cousin (1842-1911). All three were in Japan during the “closed country” period when Christianity was illegal, and all three served as bishops in Japan well into the 1880s (in the case of Bishop Cousin, until 1911). Bishops Laucaigne and Petitjean are known for their early catechisms (1865 and 1868, respectively) and Bishop Cousin for his influence in training Japanese priests. They received their theological training in Paris between 1850 and 1865, precisely when the issue of religious freedom, the authority of the pope, the limitations on national authority, and related issues were hotly debated among leading Catholic intellectuals.

It is safe to assume that the most important intellectual influence on these early missionaries to Japan was that of the Dominican priest Jean-Baptiste Henri Dominique Lacordaire. Lacordaire has been called “the greatest pulpit orator of the nineteenth century” and, along with Félicité Robert de Lamennais, dominated French Catholic theology of the early nineteenth century.¹⁵ Lamennais had outlined a rational, common-sense foundation for the one true religion, and he joined with Lacordaire after the Revolution of 1830 in founding a journal, *L’avenir* (“The Future”) to promote this rational philosophical defence of religious liberty of people against the extremes of French nationalism (Gallicanism). In this sense, Lacordaire and Lamennais were allies in supporting ultramontanism (defence of the pope and the magisterium of the Church as universally valid). But when Pope Gregory XVI condemned the excessively populist and modernist ideas in *L’avenir*, Lamennais hardened his position, ultimately leaving the Church, while Lacordaire repented and was soon invited by the archbishop to deliver a series of lectures from the pulpit of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. These lectures, which took place regularly between 1835 and 1852 (with an interval of a few years), were attended by the most influential men in France, and we can be sure that they were widely discussed among seminarians, priests, and others in Paris. Most important to the Church was that Lacordaire found a way to respond from within the Church to the challenges represented by the rise of populism in the 1848 Revolution, in contrast to Lamennais, who was unable to resist those pressures. Most relevant for MEP was Lacordaire’s homiletic innovation: rather than preach to the converted, as was the custom, he emphasized apologetics, a defence of the Church with the unbeliever as the intended audience. Lacordaire exemplified how to “take the Church to

the peoples," and he did so with what was regarded as heroic style and passion. In his last lecture, delivered in 1853, he attacked the Second Empire of Napoleon III and because of this critique was forced to leave Paris. In his latter years, he taught patriotism and religion in a military school, and in his last year he was rewarded with a seat in the academy, thus raising him to the height of respectability in French society.

What are we to make of this Catholic intellectual milieu out of which MEP missionaries came to Japan? In the first place, Lamennais probably had much less influence on them than Lacordaire, since he had renounced his priesthood and the Church decades earlier. To young French seminarians with an eye to spreading the faith in Asia, surely Lacordaire was a real cultural hero, a defender of the Church in the face of the challenges of modernism, populism, and extreme nationalism. But Lacordaire was also a complex man: a republican Catholic, an ultramontanist who rejected monarchy. There is reason to believe that his nuanced response to modernity – accepting some parts, rejecting others – would appeal to young priests. But there is equal reason to believe that Lacordaire was also influential among missionaries who listened deeply to his lectures on the need to engage those who did not believe and to defend the faith from false beliefs and paganism.

But of course we should not conclude that intellectual reasons were the only motivations for young French priests to leave their country for the distant Far East. A more religious motivation likely came from the widely publicized and numerous accounts of MEP missionaries martyred in the Far East between 1815 and 1862. These martyrdoms “were described in Europe by books, pamphlets, annals, and journals, arousing the pity of some and the anger of others, and inspiring numerous young men either with the desire for martyrdom or that of evangelization.”¹⁶ Or, of course, both. Nor can we discount the possibility that many young priests responded to these martyrdoms at least as much from a sense of outrage over the violations of the right to religious freedom as from a longing for the purity of faith or a nostalgia for an earlier, premodern Church. Modern and anti-modern attitudes overlapped in the lectures of Lacordaire and in the implicit lessons of these martyrdoms. But both were specifically Catholic experiences and Catholic values that stood in sharp contrast to a much less critical view of modernity that stemmed from the growing influence of liberal theology among nineteenth-century Protestant thinkers.

The most important influence in shaping attitudes toward modernity among nineteenth-century Catholic missionaries to Japan was the official

Church engagement with the modernist ideas spawned by the 1848 Revolution. In this sense, the French theological debates of Lamennais and Lacordaire were part of this broader picture. The year following the 1848 Revolution the Provincial Council of Spoleto pushed for an official Church response to new arguments being raised against the Church, and Pope Pius IX was petitioned to provide guidance on how a Catholic should respond to these new ideas circulating throughout Europe. Preparation for what would later be known as the Syllabus of Errors began as early as 1852, and in 1860 the bishop of Perpignan issued “Pastoral Instructions on Various Errors of the Present” to his clergy. These instructions were the basis for reflection by 300 bishops who gathered in Rome in 1862 for the canonization of the twenty-six Japanese martyrs who had been crucified in 1597. Surely, French missionaries interested in propagating the faith in Japan paid attention to this episcopal meeting in Rome and, at the same time, were not able to ignore the Church’s response to these new, modern heresies. On 8 December 1864, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pius IX had the syllabus sent to all the bishops of the Church, who in turn were responsible for ensuring that all their clergy – especially missionaries – were familiar with it.

It is not known how long it took for the Syllabus of Errors to reach missionaries in Japan at the time, but certainly warnings against modern heresies (including the heresy of modernism itself) would have been familiar to priests and seminarians in France from 1849 to 1864. The canonization of the twenty-six Japanese martyrs in Rome on the eve of issuing the syllabus brought to the fore the connection between the past and the present: the willingness of the sixteenth-century martyrs to shed their blood in defence of the Church and the need in the nineteenth century to protect the Church from modernist heresies. The risks of martyrdom were never far from the Catholic experience in Japan during the 1860s. Of course, murder and assassination were threats facing all Westerners in Japan during the early 1860s, but martyrdom was implicitly a characteristic of the Catholic experience due to the continued presence of hidden Japanese Catholics who, if discovered, faced immediate execution. At a time when most Protestant ministers focused on servicing their Western brethren,¹⁷ Catholic missionaries also felt a serious obligation to seek out the existing Catholic Japanese and provide for their sacramental needs. Many questioned whether any Catholic had survived the 200 years of persecution, but the French missionaries were fired up with a zeal for discovering the long-lost legacy of St. Francis Xavier, SJ. The legend of these hidden Catholics certainly gave

rise to a strong desire to discover them, if they indeed existed, but it also encouraged an effort to return to the past, to encounter the Catholic faith centuries before the corruptions of modernity had begun to influence the Church. But did these crypto-Catholic Japanese even exist, or was this merely another myth like that of Prestor John?

A moment that would forever change the history of Catholicism in Japan, and shape Japanese Catholic attitudes toward modernity, took place on a spring day in Nagasaki in 1865. Here is what happened at the Ōura Catholic Church, as recalled by the principal witness, Father Bernard Petitjean:

On March 17, 1865, about half past twelve, some fifteen persons were standing at the church door. Urged no doubt by my guardian angel, I went up and opened the door. I had scarce time to say a Pater when three women between fifty and sixty years of age knelt down beside me and said in a low voice, placing their hands on their hearts:

“The hearts of all of us here do not differ from yours.”

“Indeed!” I exclaimed. “Whence do you come?”

They named the village, adding, “All there have the same hearts as we.”

Blessed be Thou, O my God, for all the happiness which filled my soul! What a compensation for five years of barren ministry! Scarcely had our dear Japanese opened their hearts to us than they displayed an amount of trustfulness which contrasts strangely with the behaviour of their pagan brethren. I was obliged to answer all their questions and to talk to them of O Deusu Sama, O Yasu Sama, and Santa Maria Sama, by which names they designated God, Jesus Christ, and the Blessed Virgin. The view of the statue of the Madonna and Child recalled Christmas to them, which they said they had celebrated in the eleventh month. They asked me if we were not in the seventeenth day of the Time of Sadness (Lent); nor was Saint Joseph unknown to them; they call him O Yasu Sama no Yofu, “the adoptive father of our Lord.” In the midst of this volley of questions, footsteps were heard. Immediately all dispersed; but as soon as the newcomers were recognized, all returned laughing at their fright.

“They are people of our village,” they said, “They have the same hearts as we have.”

However, we had to separate for fear of awakening the suspicions of the officials, whose visit I feared.¹⁸

Father Petitjean had discovered the hidden Christians, Catholics who had kept alive their faith for over 200 years without the help of priests or any sacrament save baptism! He soon found that they had quite accurately

maintained key teachings of the Church, including the Apostles' Creed, prayers (in both Latin and Japanese) such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the fifteen decades of the rosary, and how to confess one's sins, and other details of Catholic life that had been transmitted to their ancestors no later than the early seventeenth century.¹⁹ The entire Catholic Church was elated by the news of the discovery of the Japanese Catholics, and, in recognition of the importance of this work, Father Petitjean was elevated to bishop of Japan on 22 June 1866. Until Japan was divided into two vicariates in 1876 (at his request), Bishop Petitjean had apostolic authority over all Catholics in Japan.

This sensational moment is known as "the discovery of the hidden Christians." But as Jennes has pointed out, it is more accurate to say that it was the Japanese Catholics who "discovered the missionaries and recognized them as the legitimate successors of the Padres, preaching the same Faith that had been announced to their forefathers, and for which they had suffered martyrdom and persecution for over two hundred years."²⁰

Jennes's perspective helps us to understand the complex attitude that both missionaries and Japanese Catholics had toward the modern era, which was about to dawn on Japan. Whereas for Protestants (both missionaries and Japanese) the Meiji Restoration of 1868 marked a fresh baseline, a new beginning as it were, Catholics already owed much to the past. For all the persecution under Tokugawa rule, the *ancien regime* was analogous to medieval Europe in the sense that there was no schism among Japanese Christians at this time: if one was Christian, one was Catholic. This relationship with the past was also expressed in the Japanese language used to refer to Catholicism and Protestantism in the Meiji period: the former was called *kyūkyō* ("old doctrine") and the latter *shinkyō* ("new doctrine"). Most importantly, among the estimated 50,000 hidden Catholics who now gradually came out in the open, and even among the roughly 25,000 of them who immediately reunited with the Church,²¹ traditional Japanese culture had been deeply enmeshed with the practice of their faith. For them, learning a foreign language such as English, cutting one's hair, or wearing Western clothes were not historically linked to the practice of their Catholic faith. Moreover, their faith was connected to a heroic moment in the past, when the great St. Francis Xavier and other Jesuits had sacrificed so much to transmit the enduring truth of their faith, not to mention the sacrifices (often in blood) paid by their ancestors for their Catholic beliefs. For most Japanese Catholics in the late nineteenth century, and especially for those in western Japan, the past was a fecund period of religious belief, the present was significant to the extent that it remained faithful to the past and brought

them priests, and the future was a very uncertain proposition (until 1873, their faith was still illegal). Whatever they may have come to know about Pope Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors, they were not positioned particularly well to embrace modernity without reservation.

But there was no overlooking the modernity in these French missionaries with their strange clothes and long, dark beards. (Those crypto-Catholics who rejected the French missionaries and modernity clung to their past practices and became *hanare* or "schismatics.") The world had not yet changed in 1865, but certainly the present promised certain advantages over the immediate past for those crypto-Catholics who united with the Church. For one thing, Catholics could now receive the sacraments from priests, and they flooded into the Ōura Church from surrounding villages for Mass and prayer. The *bakufu*'s prohibition against the Christian religion was still in effect, however, and in 1867 leaders of the Urakami Christians (so-called from the area where they lived) were imprisoned, and eventually 3,304 of these Catholics were forcibly removed from their homes and dispersed over twenty-one separate provinces in western Japan. This "fourth Urakami" persecution took place right through the years of the Meiji Restoration, beginning under the *bakufu* but mainly taking place in the early years of the Meiji "modern" government that began with Shinto nationalist aspirations of a restoration of the emperor as a Shinto priest-ruler. Finally, in 1873, after intense diplomatic pressure from Western powers, including France, the ancient signboards prohibiting Christianity came down, and the Catholics were allowed to return home. By then, at least 664 of the group had died. Modern Japan did not begin on an altogether high note for Japanese Catholics. In contrast, the relationship to the new modern society and government for Protestants was considerably different: English (not French) became the language of success and power for Meiji Japanese, and most Protestant missionaries spoke English and promoted English-language Bibles. For some ambitious young Japanese, the Protestants were at least as attractive for their English lessons as for their doctrinal lectures. But most importantly, the sacrifices of the Urakami Catholics had earned the right of all Christian missionaries to proselytize among Japanese and the right for any Japanese to practise Christianity in whatever form he or she wished. Modernity, for Protestants in Japan, was a much less mixed bag than it was for Catholics.

It is remarkable, then, that even though it was not completely in keeping with the trends of the times the Catholic Church enjoyed significant growth during the early and mid-Meiji period, even before religious freedom was guaranteed by Article 28 of the 1889 Constitution of Greater Imperial Japan. The two dioceses instituted in 1876 were further divided into three dioceses

in 1888 and into four dioceses in 1891. Twenty-three Japanese men were ordained priests between 1881 and 1894, many of whom came from families that had held leadership positions in the hidden Catholic communities over the previous centuries. In 1904, Catholics in Nagasaki, with their deep ties to the past, were three times more numerous than Catholics in the rest of Japan, and even as late as 1927 they were still the majority, representing 63,698 of the total 97,581 Catholics in Japan.²² Two other salient points from the demography of Christians during the late nineteenth century are worth noting in this regard. First, the Catholic Church enjoyed a growth rate of 37 percent during the final decade of the nineteenth century, whereas the Protestant numbers declined 7 percent. Second, the real story is told in the raw numbers: by the early twentieth century, there was nearly double the number of Catholics (58,261) than Protestants (31,631).²³ The point is not “who won” in converting souls to Christ (in fact, there are now slightly more Protestants than Catholics in Japan). Rather, it is to suggest how Catholic attitudes critical of modernism and progressivism were no obstacle to continued growth of the Catholic Church during this period of general intoxication with all things modern.²⁴ The Catholic Church may well have encompassed one of the broadest yet least studied sources of critical attitudes toward modernity in Meiji Japan.

As noted above, Catholics in Nagasaki represented the majority of Japanese Catholics during this period, and their understanding of the faith was much more tied to tradition than was the case for Catholics in the east and certainly more so than Protestants. Catholic missionaries in Yokohama vied with Protestant missionaries for the educated, modernizing elites, while the Nagasaki Catholics tended to be more rural and uneducated – precisely the social stratum that gained the least during the early stages of modernization in Japan. These differences played out in concrete ways. For example, Catholic missionaries in Yokohama preferred the vocabulary for Catholic terminology that had been worked out in China in preparation for evangelizing in Japan. In the west, Bishop Petitjean insisted on preserving the Portuguese and Latin terminology that was already familiar to the Nagasaki Catholics from their centuries underground.²⁵ By 1883, however, the newer terminology favoured in the east had won out and was in general use among all Japanese Catholics.

Characteristic of Catholic missionary work, in contrast to Protestant missionary work, was the emphasis on serving the disadvantaged, the poor, orphans, and especially those suffering from Hansen’s disease (i.e., leprosy). Most representative was Father Germain Léger Testevuide, MEP, who worked with victims of Hansen’s disease at Gotemba. As Ballhatchet notes,

The rural, philanthropic focus ... was probably linked to the conservatism of Catholicism in general and French Catholicism in particular. As a result in the long term converts were likely to be attracted more by Catholic compassion for the poor ... than by its links with the new world view introduced as a result of the opening of the treaty ports.²⁶

Ballhatchet then points to the Sisters of the Charitable Instruction of the Infant Jesus as an example of reaching out, educating girls from 1872 on (see Ann Harrington's chapter in this volume). Given Ballhatchet's assessment of conservative impulses underlying this work in the eastern part of the country, we cannot impose a binary opposition of "traditional Catholicism" in the west and "progressive Catholicism" in the east. Testevuide's work was in the greater Tokyo area, and his charity work was not inconsistent with a critical view of modernism, progressivism, and the state-centred ideologies that were embraced by much of the Meiji elite. Indeed, Catholic charitable work often served to highlight the gaps in modernist politics that often simply ignored the plight of those suffering from disease, poverty, social discrimination, and physical handicaps.

During the late nineteenth century, when liberal theologies were dominant in most American Protestant seminaries, the contrast with Catholicism could not have been more stark. Throughout the pontificates of Pius IX (1846-78), Leo XIII (1878-1903), and St. Pius X (1903-14), the Church struggled against a modernism that provided intellectual cover for an atheism often expressed in a narrow scientific rationalism. The First Vatican Council (1869-70) strongly supported the ultramontanists and rejected Gallicanism, but it also emphasized the need for "a proper collaboration between faith ... and reason," noting the continued relevance of both reason and revelation.²⁷ The council neither rejected reason in favour of fideism nor celebrated the modern intoxication with reason as a step beyond what some thought of as the superstitions of the past (i.e., faith). The fight against modernism and atheism in the "age of science" continued to characterize Catholic theology throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A key moment in this battle was the syllabus of Pius X, "*Lamentabili sane exitu*," issued on 3 July 1907. It condemned the chief tenets of modernism, a position that was strengthened in November of that year when Pius X "prohibited the defence of the condemned propositions under the penalty of excommunication."²⁸ "*Lamentabili sane exitu*" was followed by the encyclical "*Pascendi*" of 8 September 1907 and by the oath against modernism, prescribed on 1 September 1910 and required of all Catholic priests.

These efforts to resist the extreme claims made in the name of modernism, unpopular as they may have been in Europe, faced additional challenges in Meiji Japan, where all things modern were often celebrated without qualification. Even establishing a Catholic voice in the media was not easy. One reason was that a large percentage of the Catholics in Japan were rural people of limited education, whereas the Protestant missionaries, with their English Bibles and rather uncritical stance toward modernity, found it easier to attract many of Japan's more ambitious young minds. One can debate endlessly whether these social realities limited the number of Catholic intellectuals or whether the Catholic Church's position on modernism and rationalism limited its appeal for Japanese intellectuals. In either case, it is fair to accept Hanzawa's conclusion that no major Catholic intellectual emerged in Japan until the Taisho period (1912-26).²⁹

But Hanzawa does not assert that there was no Catholic presence in Japanese culture: rather, his point is that there was no major Japanese intellectual who expressed Catholic views in public discourse during the Meiji period. In fact, Hanzawa details the extensive Catholic media that emerged in the late nineteenth century, especially the influential Catholic newspaper *Kōkyō Bampō* ("The Catholic Monitor") (1881-93) and the magazine *Koe* ("Voice") (1891-present). The force behind the *Kōkyō Bampō* and the leading Catholic influence on Japanese media during the Meiji period was François Alfred Ligneul, MEP (1847-1922). Ligneul came to Japan in 1880 and stayed until 1912, dividing his energies between the Tsukiji seminary, which he headed, serving as spiritual director of the Saint Maur sisters, and developing Catholic publications in Japanese. With Maeda Chōta, one of the first Japanese ordained a priest in the modern period, he co-wrote *Shūkyō to kokka* ("Religion and the State") in 1893 to offer a Catholic refutation of Inoue Tetsujirō's allegation that Christians could not be loyal citizens.³⁰ Ligneul changed the name of the *Kōkyō Bampō* to the *Tenshu Bampeī* ("The Soldier of God") and emphasized apologetics so that Catholics could defend their faith against the challenges of the modern age. *Koe* began in the Osaka Diocese and was designed by Bishop Midon to be "a Voice crying out in the desert ... [to] fight against the invasion and influence of the heretics."³¹ Presumably, by "influence of the heretics" he included the Protestants who had become much more active in publications and intellectual work. But these publications were not exclusively directed against fellow Christians. Rather, their harshest adversaries were Japanese: "rationalistic thinkers like Yasui Sokken (1788-1877), materialists such as Katō Hiroyuki and sceptics [sic] like Inoue Tetsujirō [who] began attacking the very bases of

religion ... The favorite bone of contention of the sectarians was that the Church was the enemy of science."³² In this context, the chapter in this volume by James Bartholomew helps to fill an important gap by highlighting the work of Japanese scientists of the time, such as Noguchi Hideyo, Takamine Jōkichi, and Nagai Nagayoshi, who were Catholic.

The first influential Japanese Catholic intellectual was Iwashita Francis Xavier Sōichi (1889-1940). Iwashita attended the Catholic Morning Star (Gyōsei) school in Tokyo and was baptized into the Catholic Church in 1901, his second year at middle school, taking the name of St. Francis Xavier. He then proceeded through the course for modern Japan's intellectual elite, beginning at the First Higher School. While at this school, he organized the Catholic Study Group with five other Morning Star graduates there and worked under the direction of Father Emile Eck, who had taught him at Morning Star. This Study Group, and the Vincent de Paul Society that he established around the same time, became the foundation for the Catholic Youth Association (Kōkyō Seinen Kai), which is credited with the large increase in Catholics in Japan during the mid-1920s.³³

Iwashita then matriculated at Tokyo Imperial University, where he studied philosophy under the fabled Professor Raphael Koeber, a convert to Catholicism. His classmates included his lifelong friend Kuki Shūzō and other cultural and intellectual luminaries, such as Watsuji Tetsurō, Amano Teiyū, Kojima Kikuo, and Mitani Takamasa, and two years behind him was Tanaka Kōtarō, with whom he often socialized (see my chapter on Tanaka).³⁴ After graduation, he taught English in Kagoshima and then in 1919 left Japan for postgraduate study with Catholic professors in France, Germany, Belgium, England, and Italy (he turned down a government scholarship and went on his own money as he did not want to be obligated to work as a professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University). While in Europe, Iwashita formed the Bon Samaritain Society with other Japanese, including his Morning Star classmates Totsuka Vincent Bunkyō, a medical student, Ogura Shintarō (who accompanied Iwashita on the trip to Europe), and Hasegawa Luke Ryūzō, who was in Paris to study art. Still in Europe, Iwashita decided to become a priest, so he studied theology at Rome's Angelico University and was ordained in Venice at the San Marco Cathedral in 1925. On his return to Japan that year, he opened his home in Tokyo to Catholic students, promoted the study of Catholicism, published Catholic works at his own expense, and expanded the network of Catholic Study Groups in the region. He served as editor of *Koe*, *Katorikku Shimbun*, and *Katorikku Kenkyū*; he taught at the Tokyo Seminary; and, even after he became the

director of the Kōyama (aka Kamiyama) Resurrection Hospital, caring for victims of Hansen's disease, he made monthly trips back to Tokyo to continue directing the spiritual work of young Catholic students such as Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko (see his chapter in this volume). After a brief trip to China, he fell ill and passed away on 3 December 1940 (the feast day of his baptismal namesake, St. Francis Xavier, SJ). Iwashita was fifty-one years old.

Although his life was short, his influence through the many organizations that he founded or participated in and through his prolific writings was immense. So many Catholics who had a great impact on Japanese culture were influenced by Iwashita that it would be little exaggeration to say that he was the intellectual fount of modern Japanese Catholicism. He certainly articulated in powerful terms the general tendency among many modern Japanese Catholics to adopt a measured critique of modernity. His negative assessment of modernity focused on the ethical pitfalls of modern subjectivism, which Iwashita found particularly troubling in Protestantism. But as Hanzawa also notes, he was not inclined to idealize a Catholic medieval period.³⁵

Iwashita's appraisal of modernity can be summarized around two key arguments, one about the limits of science, the other about the limits of individuals. Iwashita was modern enough to accept the legitimate contributions of scientific advances in the modern era, but at the same time he recognized that much of modernism stemmed from an arrogation in the name of science of that which properly belonged to God alone. "All scientific truths," he maintained, "ultimately come back to first principles that are themselves self-evident proofs. Whether we understand the details, we must accept their results ... This acceptance is necessary. However, the Truth which is the object of faith is a mystery concerning God."³⁶ Iwashita's criticism of scientism (*kagaku shijōshugi*) was based not on an absolute mysticism or even a rejection of science itself but on the argument that scientism was not reasonable. This view enabled, even encouraged, many Catholic Japanese to become scientists without any crisis of religious faith or conscience (see Bartholomew's chapter, this volume). One hallmark of Iwashita's thought was its rigorous application of the principle of reason to the created world as a legitimate means of discovering both nature and the supernatural.

Just as science must not be severed from the broader supernatural world from which it derives its origin and meaning, so too the individual cannot be conceived in radical separation from the community or society. Of course, Iwashita held that this true community was found in the *ecclesia*, the Catholic

Church as founded by Jesus Christ himself. Although the Church was historical in foundation and growth, it was also the sign of God's continuous presence among humans through time. There was nothing here of the modernist assumption of a radical break or discontinuity. Hence, Iwashita rejected the modernist and secularist arguments that (national) society had replaced religious community, and in fact he argued that "what Catholics call the Church is the perfect society. It is an association of people that exists for the achievement of common goals. But it is not an accidental organization ... Christ himself personally established this Church as a society."³⁷ Precisely for this reason, Iwashita was, as Hanzawa notes, a consistently harsh foe of nationalism, by which he meant *minzokushugi*.³⁸ This form of ethnic nationalism had emerged in early-twentieth-century Japan as a surrogate for civil society, an often secularized (or Shintoized) form of national society.³⁹ In essence, Iwashita was implying a sense of the Church as an alternative to modernist society but not one premised on a rejection of history, reason, or awareness of global responsibility. In one way or another, many of these views have been shared by most Japanese Catholics down to the present day.

Legacies of Francis Xavier(s): An Overview of the Chapters

The rest of this volume may be said, in a sense, to explore the legacy not only of St. Francis Xavier, SJ but also of his namesake, Francis Xavier Iwashita. After Harrington's opening chapter, which looks again at the French influence but through the lens of a gendered analysis that focuses on the role of women religious, we take up the role of Catholic scientists (Bartholomew's chapter). Here the reader is invited to keep in mind the issues that Iwashita raised about the positive and negative intersections of science with the Catholic faith as well as his own association with Catholic scientists such as Totsuka Vincent Bunkyō. The next two chapters deal with two intellectuals who were most directly influenced by Iwashita: the legal scholar Tanaka Kōtarō, whose jurisprudence was deeply informed by Iwashita's idea of the *ecclesia* as the perfect society, and Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko, who developed a neo-Thomist critique of modernism. Ikehara's chapter on Kanayama Masahide notes the personal influence of Iwashita and Yoshimitsu on Kanayama and reveals how influential Catholics such as Kanayama and Rear Admiral Stephen Shinjirō Yamamoto (1877-1942) were at the highest levels of Japanese government. Yamamoto's chapter on Father Inoue Yōji introduces a very important contemporary Japanese theologian whose books are popular among Catholic and non-Catholic Japanese.

The chapters by Williams and Sunami look at the extraordinary influence of Catholicism on postwar Japanese fiction. Williams presents a new perspective on Endō Shūsaku, certainly the best-known Catholic writer and possibly the best-known Catholic Japanese. Endō can be considered Iwashita's spiritual grandson, as his spiritual director and house master during university days was Yoshimitsu, who had received his spiritual direction from Iwashita. It is safe to assume that what most Japanese know about Catholicism they have learned from Endō's works. Sunami's chapter, translated into English for this volume, gives us an overview of a contemporary Catholic female writer, Sono Ayako. Sono is not only a popular writer whose works frequently take up Catholic themes in an explicit manner but also the wife of Miura Shumon, himself a Catholic writer and former high-level government official. Sono was baptized Mary Elizabeth Chizuko on 26 September 1948 when she was a seventeen-year-old student.⁴⁰ She and her husband are perhaps Japan's most famous and influential Catholic couple.

Finally, Mullins' closing chapter surveys the status of the Catholic Church in Japan today, particularly in light of the sociological and demographic challenges arising from the increased globalizing forces in Japanese society. In the process, Mullins raises an intriguing question that cuts right to the heart of this volume: is there a *Japanese* Catholicism today? And if so, is such a national framework for the Catholic (katholikos = universal) Church necessary in our increasingly globalized world?

As in any anthology, there will inevitably be gaps in our coverage.⁴¹ Some important Catholic Japanese are not included in this volume, as much from the space limits of a single volume as from the particular interests of the contributors. Therefore, before closing this introduction, I will provide a brief overview of some of those Catholic Japanese who did not receive particular attention here but whose Catholicism and influence on modern Japanese culture are matters of public record. I hope that such an overview will provide a broader sense of the extensive impact of Catholic Japanese in various realms of modern Japanese culture and society. Notes for further reading on these Catholics, where available, will also be provided.

Unsung Legacies: Those Left Out

One of the most intriguing cases of a Catholic in modern Japan is that of Yosano Akiko (1878-1942). Yosano is well known as a leading Japanese writer, most famous for her poem "Please Do Not Die" addressed to her brother during the Russo-Japanese War. But it has not been noted in the

major studies of her life that she converted to Catholicism in 1940 and has passed the faith down through her family to the present.⁴² Yosano's contemporary, Yamaguchi Shikazō (1870-1953), was trained in Catholic theology, worked as a journalist for *Koe*, and was an active participant in the intellectual circles of his time.⁴³ Another literary figure from Yosano's time, the translator and literary critic Tsujino Hisanori (1909-37), was converted by Iwashita, taking the name of St. John shortly before his death at the age of twenty-seven.⁴⁴ At the time of his death, Tsujino was heralded as one of the brightest literary minds of his time. One of the most active Catholics of the period was the aforementioned Yamamoto Stephen Shinjirō, who rose to be a rear admiral in the Imperial Navy and was a close adviser to Emperor Hirohito. Yamamoto was related to Iwashita: his younger brother Saburō had married Iwashita's younger sister Masako. He was only one of many Catholic influences close to the imperial family that Ben-Ami Shillony has chronicled in his recent book on the Japanese monarchy.⁴⁵ In addition to the current empress, who was raised and educated as a Catholic by her parents, Prince Asaka Peter Takahiko and his wife, Princess Tōdō Lucy Chikako, converted to Catholicism in the early postwar years.⁴⁶

Those years were a boon for conversions to Catholicism. Clearly, works such as Nagai Takashi's *Bells of Nagasaki* helped the cause, for it became not only a best-selling book but the basis for a popular movie and song, too. Nagai himself was a powerful metaphor for the spiritual relevance of Catholicism in postwar Japan. He has even been called "the saint of the atomic wasteland" (*genshino no seija*).⁴⁷ But an equally strong case for canonization can be made for Kitahara Satoko (1929-58). Her life spans a narrative that moves from the centre of modern Japan to its margins. Satoko was born into privilege and affluence, the daughter of a university professor who had moved into the Suginami suburb of Tokyo. One day, while accompanying her younger sister to her Catholic school (the Kitahara family was not Catholic, however), she asked one of the nuns there about the faith and soon found herself taking lessons in Catholicism. She was baptized Elisabeth in October 1949, and her story might well have ended there, one among a growing number of middle-class Japanese converts to Catholicism in the early postwar years. But her conversion was only the beginning. While staying with her older sister in Asakusa, she was attracted to the figure of the dishevelled Brother Zeno Zebrowski, who walked the streets ministering to the least fortunate in the city. Soon enough Satoko was working alongside him and then living among the poorest of the poor in an area of Tokyo known as "Ant's Town." She helped in every way she could, not

only with their efforts at eking out a living at “rag picking,” but also teaching the children of Ant’s Town. She was soon known as “Maria of Ant’s Town” and beloved by the entire community. In style and substance, Satoko embodied an ambivalence to the modernizing impulses of early postwar Japan. When the city sought to simply brush away the “filth” of Ant’s Town, she spoke up for the importance of community and human values that she, Brother Zeno, “Boss” Ozawa, Matsui Tōru, and others had built in the shadows of the new Tokyo. Her dedication to the poor cost her her health, for Satoko developed tuberculosis and died from it in 1958 at the young age of twenty-nine. Her impact on postwar culture was substantial, with books and a major movie about her life, but she remains little known outside Japan due primarily to a lack of English-language works about her.⁴⁸

Across town, yet in an entirely different world, the rising writer Shimao Toshio was struggling with marital difficulties. Shimao began writing personal accounts of these problems in 1955 with “Out of the Depths I Cry” (*Ware fukaki fuchi yori*), a none-too-thinly veiled reference to Psalm 130. Other than the titles of his works, his writings were hardly Christian in any explicit sense. But his life and his “fiction” merged until the lines were often difficult to perceive. In either case, it was clear to the literary world that Shimao had an affair with another woman, that the anguish it caused seemed connected to his wife Miho’s mental instability, and that Miho (and then he) had entered a mental hospital for an extended time. For the next several years, Shimao wrote about this incident in what became known as his “sick wife stories” (*byōsai mono*), though critics have suggested that they would be more accurately called “sick couple stories” (*byōfu mono*) since Shimao makes it clear that his wife’s suffering was inextricably connected to his own sins. These essays were collected in his masterpiece, *The Sting of Death* (*Shi no toge*), the title referring to the effects of sin recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:55-56. In fact, Shimao had worked things out with his wife, agreeing to leave Tokyo (and, it seemed, his career) for her hometown on Amami Ōshima, which they did in October 1955. The following year, in Amami, Shimao converted to Catholicism, the faith of his wife’s family. Miho followed him back into her childhood faith soon after. Shimao was not only able to rebuild his family life but also went on to have a remarkable career as one of postwar Japan’s most important writers, even though he spurned life in Tokyo (de rigueur for any ambitious writer, then or now), choosing to live in the remote islands of western Japan. In marked contrast to Endō, Shimao might be thought of as Japan’s best writer who happened to be (a converted) Catholic. Although many literary critics seem unaware of the importance of Catholi-

cism in his works, there is no question that Catholic values shaped his writing, particularly on the sanctity of marriage, the seriousness of sins against chastity, the importance of atonement, and a willingness to eschew the material benefits of modernity to protect these fundamental moral values.

Although Kitahara found an alternative modernity in the ghettos of Tokyo and Shimao rejected the modern mecca of Tokyo and its materialism, Yamamoto Kōichi (1940-83) represents an even more subtle way in which Catholicism challenged dominant ideas of modernity from the margins of a newly affluent Japan during the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s.⁴⁹ He was one of the first Japanese to join the lay Catholic organization Opus Dei (“The Work of God”), and his life story is deeply intertwined with the founding of Opus Dei in Japan. Although this organization and its work are not the usual things found in a cultural history of Japan, they are appropriate since Opus Dei, as a lay organization, by design works to change culture by working from within everyday secular occupations. Assessing its influence on postwar Japanese culture may not be as simple as tracing the work of prominent Catholic Japanese writers and intellectuals, but a full picture of the influence of Catholicism in modern Japanese culture must include consideration of its work.

Opus Dei was founded by the Spanish priest Josémaría Escrivá on 2 October 1928, but it was not until 1958 (the year of Kitahara’s death and only two years after Shimao’s conversion) that the work began in Japan. Again it was two Spanish priests, José Ramón Madurga and Fernando Acaso, who came to the Osaka area at the request of the local ordinary, Bishop Paolo Yoshigorō Taguchi. Yamamoto began associating with the group in mid-1959. He was baptized on 14 April 1963 and asked to join Opus Dei on 20 October after graduating from Kwansei Gakuin University. (The first Japanese to join Opus Dei, on 28 December 1962, was Sōichirō Nitta, ordained a priest in 1972.) Yamamoto’s godfather was Antonio Villaceros, the Spanish ambassador to Japan, and Yamamoto received a grant from the Spanish Embassy to study at the Institute of Spanish Language and Culture at the University of Navarra in 1966 before moving to the Roman College of the Holy Cross, where he studied theology until 1970. After his return to Japan, Yamamoto played a key role at the Opus Dei Seido Language Institute, established in Ashiya in 1962. Although the institute also offered English classes, the most popular language among Japanese students, the linguistic and cultural orientation of Opus Dei was Spanish, making it unusual among such institutions in postwar Japan.

In a sense, we might say that Yamamoto found an alternative modernity in the Spanish orientation of Opus Dei that paralleled the alternative modernity that Catholic Japanese had earlier found in the French orientation of the MEP. In 1971, the Seido Language Institute was absorbed into the newly formed Seido Foundation for the Advancement of Education, which now had a publication department along with the Okuashiya Study Centre, and it soon included Seido Gakuen and a catering school in Nagasaki. During the growth decade of the 1970s, these institutes played a key role in the conversions of many people to Catholicism and influenced many more Japanese who did not convert. Yet what stands out about these activities in a broader historical context is the alternative that they presented to a dominant Anglo-American culture of modernity, one that was especially centred on the Tokyo area. In ways remarkably similar to Kitahara and Shimaō, Yamamoto offered Japanese who lived outside this privileged circle of Tokyo a spiritual life that was in certain respects at odds with the dominant American-oriented culture of modern Japan.

As with any thesis, there are limits to my argument about Catholicism as an alternative way of coming to terms with modernity in Japan. Particularly in the wake of the Vatican II reforms, one finds especially in eastern Japan (i.e., the Tokyo region) a greater propensity to embrace various aspects of modernity, if not always modernism, among Catholics.⁵⁰ Yet even in Japanese Catholic circles where modernity seems most welcome (often in the form of ecumenical projects, interfaith dialogue, and theological innovations), there remains a different kind of resistance to modernity expressed in various efforts to articulate a quasi-indigenous critique of the West. One of the most intellectually intriguing is the effort by the Dominican priest and Tokyo University professor of philosophy Miyamoto Hisao to reconstruct philosophy on the basis of a Hebraic concept of being (*hayah*) rather than the Greek notion of *ontos*. Miyamoto offers his theory of *hayah* *ontology* as a deconstruction of the Western foundations of modern philosophy in ontology.⁵¹

This effort to separate Japanese Catholics from the West (if not modernity *tout court*) has in recent years reached the highest levels of Church governance in Japan. When, in preparation for a meeting with the Asian synod, Pope John Paul II sent an outline in advance of the meeting (the *Lineamenta*), the Japanese bishops met to discuss the *Lineamenta* in an extraordinary plenary session on 18-21 February 1997. At that meeting, they rejected the pope's agenda for the synod, declaring that they would present their own issues for discussion. The following quotation from the Japanese bishops' response to the *Lineamenta* speaks for itself:

Since the questions of the *Lineamenta* were composed in the context of Western Christianity, they are not suitable. Among the questions are some concerning whether evangelization is going well or not, but what is the standard of evaluation? ... The judgement [sic] should not be made from a European framework, but must be seen on the spiritual level of the people who live in Asia.⁵²

Building on this “Asian spirituality,” the Japanese bishops outlined a position that became a major source of tension between the Vatican and the Asian bishops. Criticizing the *Lineamenta* (i.e., Pope John Paul II) for “a certain ‘defensiveness’ and apologetic attitude,” the bishops conceded that

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, but in Asia, before stressing that Jesus Christ is the TRUTH, we must search much more deeply into how he is the WAY and the LIFE. If we stress too much that “Jesus Christ is the One and Only Savior,” we can have no dialogue, common living, or solidarity with other religions.⁵³

The Japanese bishops presented these declarations, along with a list of eight major topics for the Church in Asia, to the Vatican on 23 July 1997.

This context of tensions between the bishops of Asia and the Vatican best explains the publication in 2000 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of *Dominus Iesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*. Although certain liberal Catholic theologians, particularly in the West, have often presumed that *Dominus Iesus* was aimed at them (it was, after all, penned by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, whom they derisively referred to as “God’s Rottweiler”), consideration of the *Lineamenta* controversy in Asia, and of the timing and substance of the document, suggest a broader concern by the Vatican over the unwillingness of Asian bishops to proclaim Jesus Christ as the universal truth for all humans – a non-negotiable for orthodox Catholics, indeed for all orthodox Christians. The matter is brought into greater clarity when one considers that (then) Cardinal Ratzinger also wrote *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religion* in 2002, presenting a book-length critical analysis of the claims of relativism, focusing on arguments for “Asian spirituality” as a limitation on the scope of Catholic dogma.⁵⁴

All this brings us back not to a conclusion but to an informing paradox of Catholicism in modern Japan. Even as many of Japan’s Catholic bishops intone a culturalist line of Asian resistance to the presumed dominance of the West, they inevitably fall back on cultural resources for their arguments,

which were first articulated by Western, and often Marxist, scholars. Whether cultural Orientalists or revolutionary nationalists, those who have tried to articulate a native non-Western sensibility are often caught in this epistemological dilemma: to free oneself from “the West,” one must imbibe more of the Western intellectual and cultural forms of liberation (for a deep critique of this intellectual problem, see Yamamoto’s chapter). Critical theorists in Japan who have considerable expertise in Asian history and thought have called into question whether there is in fact something that can be called “Asian values.”⁵⁵ Yet prelates in Japan, educated mainly in European languages, Catholic dogma, and canon law, seem more susceptible to the seductions first created by the Western imagination of an Asian other. Yet this irony is capped by another: one finds considerable consistency in the cultural theories of Pope Benedict XVI and Yoshimitsu Yoshihiko, who, writing half a century ago, pointed out that culture could never be opposed to the Church; rather, the Church itself constituted a culture of its own that was formed and sustained by historical time rather than by a transcendental cultural essence. Yoshimitsu would have appreciated Pope Benedict XVI’s call to retire the outmoded theory of “in-culturation” in favour of a more anthropologically and historically accurate model of “inter-culturation,” in which all social and cultural identities are merely historical contingencies dependent on the grace of God.⁵⁶

Notes

- 1 Francis Xavier, SJ (1506-52), was beatified by Pope Paul V on 25 October 1619 and canonized by Pope Gregory XV on 12 March 1622, a mere seventy years after his death, and thus now is formally known as St. Francis Xavier, SJ. However, I refrain from referring to him as St. Francis Xavier in my narrative when referring to events that happened prior to his canonization. No disrespect for him or the Catholic Church is intended.
- 2 Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan*, 13-16.
- 3 Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, 195-96.
- 4 See *God’s Fingerprints in Japan* (DVD).
- 5 There is reason to believe that Hosokawa Tadaoki himself was never baptized. See Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, 185.
- 6 Miyazaki, “Roman Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan,” 7. These figures are contested, however. Some sources have put the total number of Catholics in the early seventeenth century at 1 million (Charles Pierre, SJ), others upward of 700,000 (Alexander Brou, SJ), and others still as low as 200,000 (Bishop Cerqueira). See Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan*, 240-42.
- 7 Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, 448. Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan*, 246, counts only 2,126 martyrs in the period 1549-1639 but adds the important caveat that “this number is merely a strict minimum, listing only those martyrs whose name or identification is generally well known; it does not include the ‘many others’ mentioned in the lists without indicating the number.”

- 8 Fifty thousand Catholics is a Church estimate from 1892 that includes “about half” who were *hanare*, separatists who did not reunite with the Church after 1873. Cited in Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan*, 288. These *hanare* still numbered about 30,000 as late as 1945, but today only about 1,000 survive, almost all of whom reside in remote areas in and around Kyushu. See Miyazaki, “The Kakure Kirishitan Tradition,” 22-23.
- 9 Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859*, 23.
- 10 See Howes, *Japan’s Modern Prophet*; Scheiner, *Christian Converts and Social Protest in Meiji Japan*; Suzuki, ed., *Kindai nihon kirisutokyō meicho senshū* (the thirty-two-volume set of Christian archives from modern Japan, of which only a couple treat Catholicism); and Yamaji, *Essays on the Modern Japanese Church*.
- 11 See Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan*; and Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan*.
- 12 Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859*, 59. Van Hecken’s source for these numbers is Yanagita, *Christianity in Japan*, 48. This is a relative, as well as absolute, numerical superiority of Catholic over Protestant converts to that time, if we consider the generally accepted number of Catholics that came from the *kakure* group to be 18,435 and the number of Japanese Protestants around 1873 to be close to zero. That would yield a Protestant increase of 31,631 and a Catholic increase of 39,826. Of course, there were more than a few Protestant Japanese converts even during the early Meiji years, so the disparate growth rate is probably even greater.
- 13 This lack of information on Catholicism in modern Japan stems from the fact that there have been few English-language works on Catholicism in the modern period, and those that have been published are mostly out of print and difficult to obtain. Volume 1 of Cary’s *A History of Christianity in Japan* is one such treasure trove of information. But it was published in 1909 and is thus quite limited in its coverage of the twentieth century. And even in what it does cover, it focuses on the works of European (mainly French) Catholics working in Japan, and very little space is devoted to Japanese who were Catholic. Another valuable (and out-of-print) source is Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan* (1959), but only the last thirty pages cover the post-Edo period, and even then only up to 1873. The most comprehensive study of Catholicism in modern Japan is Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859* (1963). It is a chronicle of official Church activities (establishment of dioceses, schools, etc.), with only cursory attention to the role of Japanese Catholics. Drummond, *A History of Christianity in Japan* (1971), provides a historical introduction to the early “Christian century” before turning to his main focus on Protestants in the modern period, offering as an afterthought only thirty pages on Catholicism in the modern period, told mainly from a missionary perspective that (again) largely overlooks Japanese Catholics. This missionary bias even infects Japanese works on Catholicism in the modern period, such as Ikeda’s *Jimbutsu chūshin no nihon katorikku-shi* (1998), a wonderfully informative encyclopedia on key individuals in the history of Catholicism in Japan, but it lists only twenty-four Japanese among the sixty-six entries on individual Catholics of the modern period. In contrast, Hanzawa’s *Kindai nihon no katorishizumu* (1993), the standard work on the topic of Catholicism in modern Japan, takes up in depth three important Japanese Catholics (Iwashita, Tanaka, and Yoshimitsu) and does so with compelling analyses of their contributions to modern Japanese thought. It is nicely complemented by Kamiya, *Suga Atsuko to kyūnin no rerigio* (2007), which consciously seeks to complete Hanzawa’s work by extending the scope of analysis into the postwar period and including discussion on several Japanese women (including the empress of Japan). Also dealing with the postwar period is the controversial two-volume study by Onizuka, *Tennō no rozario* (2006),

- which alleges a postwar global conspiracy to convert the Japanese nation to Catholicism. There has been an explosion of interest in Catholicism in Japan in the Japanese media, but unfortunately none of these works is available in English. In that context, I must mention Kevin Hanlon's study based on his personal experience as a Catholic priest in contemporary Japan, supplemented with scholarly analysis of major Catholic works, *Gaikokujin shisai ga mita nihon no katorikkushintō* (2001). Hanlon's book has now appeared in English as *Popular Catholicism in Japan* (2004).
- 14 Empress Michiko (née Shōda Michiko) was born into and raised by one of Japan's most famous Catholic families. Her marriage to the current emperor was arranged by the Chamberlain Koizumi Shinzō, a Christian. Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*, 234. Although Shillony is correct that Koizumi exercised great influence over then Prince Akihito and was a Christian, he does not appear to have been Catholic, as Shillony claims on page 234. Sonoda, *Kakusareta kōshitsu jimmyaku*, 14, claims that Koizumi was "an Anglican, which is quite close to being a Catholic." Director of the Imperial Household Agency Usami Takeshi assured Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke (who was worried that Michiko was Catholic like the rest of her family) that Michiko (against all probability) had not been baptized, so the marriage could proceed as planned. Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*, 236, 239, notes that, even after the wedding, Princess Michiko "kept her Catholic practices and friends." Japanese scholars have been giving renewed attention to Empress Michiko's Catholicism: see Sonoda, *Kakusareta kōshitsu jimmyaku*, 14-40; and Onizuka's two-volume screed, *Tennō no roزاریo*, 2: 261-343.
 - 15 Scannell, "Jean-Baptiste-Henri Dominique Lacordaire."
 - 16 Launay, "Society of Foreign Missions of Paris."
 - 17 The earliest time of Protestant missionary activity among the Japanese was 1869, though the first Japanese Protestant converts were in 1872, on the eve of the lifting of the prohibition against Christianity. See Scheiner, *Christian Converts and Social Protest in Meiji Japan*, 16.
 - 18 Petitjean, cited in Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan*, 282-83. The original source is Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus Ressuscitée au Japon dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle*. The English translation presumably is Cary's. The village was Urakami, and these Catholics were thus known as the Urakami Christians. There is some uncertainty over the identity of the lady who approached Petitjean: most accounts give her name as Elisabeth Dzuru of Hamaguchi, as Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859*, does; Fujita, *Japan's Encounter with Christianity*, calls her Yuri Isabelina Sugimoto of Urakami.
 - 19 Japanese copies of these prayers and articles of faith can be found in the appendix of Urakawa, *Nihon ni okeru kōkyōkai no fukkatsu*, 1-62.
 - 20 Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan*, 215.
 - 21 These figures for *kakure kirishitan* (crypto-Catholics) and *hanare* (those who refused reunification with the Church after 1865) are from Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan*, 288. The figure of 25,000 Catholics in the late 1860s seems a reasonable estimate given that we have a rather reliable number of 18,435 Catholics in Japan as of 1876, following the persecutions of 1867-73. And Cary's estimate of the number of *hanare* Christians is reasonable in light of the later estimate of 30,000 *hanare* in Japan during the period 1925-45. The *hanare* community has dwindled to between 1,000 and 1,500 at present. Miyazaki, "The Kakure Kirishitan Tradition," 23. Miyazaki uses the anachronistic term *kakure* ("hidden" or "crypto-") for the group of Christians that after 1865 refused to join the Catholic Church. In fact, they were no longer hidden (*kakure*), especially after 1873, so the correct term for them is *hanare* ("separate").
 - 22 Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859*, 69.

- 23 Ibid., 59. Van Hecken's source for these numbers is Yanagita, *Christianity in Japan*, 48.
- 24 The more positive orientation of Protestants toward modernity during the late nineteenth century in contrast to Catholics was by no means limited to Japan. The debate over modernism shaped Catholic-Protestant relations in the United States at the time, as in Europe. Most relevant for Japan was Johann Caspar Bluntschli's condemnation of Catholicism for its anti-modern attitudes. See McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 101-4. Bluntschli's ideas were very popular among key modernizers in nineteenth-century Japan, especially Katō Hiroyuki.
- 25 Marnas, *La Religion de Jésus Ressuscitée au Japon dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle*, 550-53.
- 26 Ballhatchet, "The Modern Missionary Movement in Japan," 41.
- 27 O'Collins and Farrugia, *Catholicism*, 91.
- 28 A. Haag, "Syllabus," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1912.
- 29 Hanzawa, *Kindai nihon no katorishizumu*, 119-21, cited by Ballhatchet, "The Modern Missionary Movement in Japan," 41.
- 30 For a discussion and short translation from Ligneul and Maeda's work, see Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan*, 98-100.
- 31 Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859*, 132-33.
- 32 Ibid., 140.
- 33 Ikeda, *Jimbutsu chūshin no nihon katorikku shi*, 429.
- 34 Hanzawa, *Kindai nihon no katorishizumu*, 230.
- 35 Ibid., 228.
- 36 Iwashita, cited in *ibid.*, 244.
- 37 Iwashita, cited in *ibid.*, 268-69.
- 38 Hanzawa, *Kindai nihon no katorishizumu*, 242.
- 39 On the conceptual proximity of *minzoku* and society (*shakai*) in Japanese discourse, see Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan*, 127-63.
- 40 Tsuruha, *Kami no deku*, 55-56.
- 41 Some influential and well-known Catholic Japanese who are not treated in any depth in this volume, in addition to those listed below in note 47, include Prime Minister Hara "David" Takashi (1856-1921; baptized 1872), Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru (1878-1967), and his family. Yoshida had his family baptized but held off his own baptism until his deathbed, declaring that he was going to "steal heaven." He supported the Catholic Church in many ways, serving as co-chair of the fundraising committee to build St. Mary's Cathedral (established 1964). A Mass of Christian Burial was held for Yoshida at St. Mary's with Cardinal Doi presiding. Yoshida's granddaughter Asō Nobuko married Prince Tomohito, and his grandson Asō Tarō became foreign minister of Japan and Japan's third Catholic prime minister. Other influential Catholics in social and political affairs include Sadako Ogata (b. 1927), director of Japan International Cooperation Agency and former UN high commissioner for refugees, and her friend Yamamoto Tadashi (b. 1936), who has served as adviser to Prime Minister Obuchi, worked on the Trilateral Commission, and served as director of the Japan Center for International Exchange. Yamamoto comes from a large and influential Catholic family: his older brother Jōji became a priest, his older sister Yoshiko was a nun and president of Seishin Women's College, and another brother and sister were executives with the Bank of Tokyo. Another influential Catholic businessman in postwar Japan is Koyabashi "Antonio" Yōtarō (b. 1933), who has sat on the board of directors of major corporations such as Xerox, NTT, Sony, GM, and Swiss ABB. Another influential Catholic is Mushakōji Kimihide (b. 1929), who has served as vice-president of the United Nations University. Also,

- Motoshima Hitoshi, the mayor of Nagasaki who was shot in 1990 for remarks about the emperor, was a lifelong Catholic (see Field, *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor*). Other influential Catholic literary people include Tanaka Chikao (1905-95, though Tanaka might never have been baptized) and his wife Sumie (1908-2000); Yashiro Shizuichi (1922-98) and his daughter, the actress Mariya Tomoko (b. 1960); Kaga Otohiko (b. 1929); and Takahashi Takako (b. 1932).
- 42 See http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/t_kagawa100/1199247.html. Akiko's grandson, Yosano Kaoru, is a Catholic and was a Liberal Democratic Party representative in the National Diet until the upset election of 2009.
- 43 Ikeda, *Jimbutsu chūshin no nihon katorikku shi*, 340-44.
- 44 Kamiya, *Suga Atsuko to kyūnin no religio*, 201-2.
- 45 Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors*.
- 46 See Van Hecken, *The Catholic Church in Japan since 1859*, 110.
- 47 Ikeda, *Jimbutsu chūshin no nihon katorikku shi*, 461.
- 48 In 1973, Takagi Shirō wrote and directed an operetta at the Takarazuka Theatre called "The Town Where Stars Fell," based on Kitahara's life. Kitahara wrote a book on her experience in Ant's Town, *Ari no machi no kodomotachi* (with a foreword by Tanaka Kōtarō), and Shochiku produced a film on her life, *Ari no machi no maria*, with the film star Chino Kakuko in the lead role. English works on Kitahara are few and far between. The only in-depth study is Glynn, *The Smile of a Ragpicker*, which is out of print and difficult to find. More easily obtained is Taira, "Ragpickers and Community Development."
- 49 The information below on Yamamoto and Opus Dei in Japan comes from Mélich Maixé, "Koichi Yamamoto (1940-1983) and the Beginnings of Opus Dei in Japan." Since Mélich Maixé does not employ macrons, it is impossible to know whether Koichi and other Japanese names in the article are the correct romanization. Most likely, it should be Kōichi, and that is how I record the name here.
- 50 Kamiya's *Suga Atsuko to kyūnin no religio* is a welcome volume that, in many ways, serves as a necessary complement to Hanzawa's study on prewar Japanese Catholicism, which emphasizes a critical view of modernity. Whereas Hanzawa's objects of study (Iwashita, Yoshimitsu, Tanaka) are mainly on pre-Vatican II Catholic culture, Kamiya's book consciously focuses on post-Vatican II Catholic culture in Japan. In separate chapters, Kamiya introduces journalist and professor Suga Atsuko (1929-98), theologian and educator Inukai Michiko (b. 1921), professor of the history of science Murakami Yōichirō (b. 1936), writer Okawa Kunio (b. 1927), professor of philosophy Onodera Isao (b. 1929), translator and writer Takada Hiroatsu (b. 1900), and writer Serizawa Kōjirō (1897-1993), in addition to the current empress (née Shōda Michiko) and Inoue Yōji and Iwashita Sōichi, who are also discussed in this volume. One weakness of this effort to assert a more positive image of modernism and Catholicism is that the most modernist examples were often not so Catholic. Takada and Serizawa were never baptized, and Suga herself seems to have fallen away from the Church at the end of her life. But Kamiya makes a compelling case that their deep interest in Catholicism and their writings about Catholic values and faith nonetheless play a major role in enhancing awareness of, and respect for, Catholicism among the Japanese public today.
- 51 See Miyamoto, *Sonzai no kisetsu*.
- 52 Special Assembly for Asia of the Synod of Bishops, "Official Response of the Japanese Church to the Lineamenta."
- 53 Ibid. Emphasis is mine, but capitalization is in the original.
- 54 Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, especially 85-89, 223-31. Although Pope Benedict XVI (Cardinal Ratzinger) does not directly address Japan in this book, he uses India to

signify the Asian challenge to Western Christianity, a move that seems appropriate given that the challenge to the Vatican was broader than the Japanese bishops but issued in the context of the Asian bishops' synod.

55 See Aoki and Saeki, eds., "*Ajia-teki kachi*" to wa nanika.

56 See Yoshimitsu, *Bunka to shūkyō no rinen*; and Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance*, especially 55-79.

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