

## Constitutional Buddhism

### *Japanese Buddhists and Constitutional Law*

*Levi McLaughlin*

#### 12.1 INTRODUCTION: FINDING BUDDHISM IN JAPAN'S POSTWAR CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER

When it comes to constitutional law, Japan contrasts starkly with most other nominally Buddhist-majority polities. In spite of the fact that Japan conventionally numbers among countries with a population that is mostly Buddhist, Buddhism appears to have exerted a marginal influence on the composition and legal application of Japan's modern constitutions (enacted in 1890 and 1947). This chapter considers historical causes and effects of Buddhism's scant presence in the Supreme Court of Japan's deliberations on constitutional religion/state divides, and it considers the impact of the 1947 Constitution's strong separations between religion and state on the actions and attitudes of Japanese Buddhist actors. It discusses reasons why Japan's identity as a Buddhist nation should be reconsidered in light of Buddhism's low profile in its legal record, and it provides two case studies – of Buddhists' post-disaster aid mobilization and lay Buddhist engagement in electoral politics – to illustrate how Japan's postwar constitutional separations guide Japanese Buddhists as they mitigate legal challenges and confront concerns about violating constitutional norms. By highlighting ways Japanese Buddhist individuals and institutions have been shaped by concern for constitutional law, in spite of appearing rarely in court deliberations on religious freedom, I propose that Japanese Buddhism exhibits an inversion of tendencies found in many other Buddhist-majority regions. It thus serves as a necessary counterexample to include in a global overview of Buddhism and comparative constitutional law. In contrast to what Benjamin Schonthal terms a "Buddhist constitutionalism" evident in countries whose national constitutions have been drafted in keeping with forms of governance maintained by monastic lineages, Japanese Buddhist individuals and organizations represent what might be conceived as Buddhist constitutionalism's mirror opposite,

that of “constitutional Buddhism” (Schonthal 2017).<sup>1</sup> The institutional makeup of Japanese Buddhist organizations and the dispositions and tactics cultivated by their clerical and lay adherents indicate that explicitly non-religious constitutional law serves Japan’s Buddhists as an operative framework. It is one they continually adapt in order to establish their legitimacy in the face of potential legal challenges, a leery public, and a need to preserve their increasingly precarious traditions.

Let us explore how a distinctive relationship between Buddhism and constitutionalism emerged in Japan. Today, Japan distinguishes itself by having the world’s longest-ever unamended national constitution. Put into effect on May 3, 1947, the postwar Japanese Constitution is also notable for its multiple articles that lay out how religion is to be separated from the state.<sup>2</sup> This emphatic demarcation is a product of reforms carried out by the US Occupation (1945–1952) after Japan’s surrender to the Allied powers on August 15, 1945.<sup>3</sup> As its advisors deliberated on how to articulate rights guaranteeing freedom of religion, the Occupation sought to forestall any possibility that Japan would return to its wartime-era regime requirement that the people of Japan foster loyalty as imperial subjects by taking part in Shintō shrine-based rituals.<sup>4</sup> These requirements were sanctioned by Japan’s 1890 Constitution, in which Article 28 stipulated that “Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.”<sup>5</sup> Until 1945, Japan’s imperial subjects were promised the legal right to maintain private belief in Buddhism, Christianity, or other religions, but were nonetheless required to take part in ritual veneration of Shintō deities, including the Emperor, as civic obligations.<sup>6</sup> General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, and his advisors on religion characterized the wartime

<sup>1</sup> For discussions of monastic regulations as viable comparisons to national constitutions, see Schonthal 2021.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the 1947 Constitution (in English), which is reproduced throughout this chapter, see Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 1946.

<sup>3</sup> For analyses of the Occupation, the drafting and promulgation of the 1947 Constitution, and related developments in the immediate postwar years, see Dower 1999; Gordon 1993; Ruoff 2020; Thomas 2019.

<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I follow Thomas in adding the macron to Shintō (save in Occupation-era uses of “State Shinto”) to indicate the long vowel in Japanese, even though “Shinto” is recognized as an English-language term, to emphasize it as an entity distinguished from religion in pre-1945 Japan and one that remains distinctive in the present constitutional order (2019). I do not add macrons to “Soka Gakkai” or “Komeito” because these organizations do not use them in their own English-language publications.

<sup>5</sup> The English-language text of the 1890 Constitution (promulgated in 1889) is available at National Diet Library 2021.

<sup>6</sup> While the 1890 Constitution did not stipulate veneration at Shintō shrines as a legal requirement, Article 28 supported executive orders that required schools and other institutions to organize visits to shrines and other ritual practices. These requirements were enforced with increasing severity by Japan’s wartime government. See Nakai 2017 for examples of how Christians contended with these mandates.

requirement to uphold what they termed “State Shinto” as evidence that post-imperial Japan needed guidance to establish “true” religious freedom.<sup>7</sup> Jolyon Thomas demonstrates, however, that Japan’s 1890 Constitution was on par with international norms for qualified forms of religious freedom, as embodied in the constitutions of the imperial powers that served as models for Japan’s expansion into its own empire (2019). As a polity that installed requirements for civic engagement in ritual veneration of its deified sovereign, Japan’s contingent prewar and wartime religious freedoms were those of a normal constitutional government of the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

In contrast to its 1890 predecessor, the 1947 Constitution declares that sovereignty resides in the people of Japan and that the Emperor is relegated to “the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people.” Article 20 ensures that religious freedom is no longer limited by obligations for Japan’s citizens (no longer imperial subjects) to accommodate civic dedication to a non- or supra-religious Shintō, and that Shintō is demoted to a religion that is to no longer enjoy state support.<sup>8</sup> Article 89 prevents the Japanese state from subsidizing Shintō shrines, as it did during the imperial era, and Shintō instead now ranks alongside Buddhism and other religions that are guaranteed freedom but whose institutions must comply with the 1951 Religious Juridical Persons Law (revised significantly in 1996 and multiple times since) in order to enjoy privileges as *shūkyō hōjin*, or “religious juridical persons,” not least of which is relief from paying tax on revenue-producing property and faith-related activities.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the scholarship on religion and constitutional law in postwar Japan thus focuses on Articles 20 and 89 to identify issues related to religion/state separations. Some studies also investigate religious concerns with Article 9, Japan’s famed postwar “peace clause.” Commitments by religion-affiliated actors to defending, amending, or doing away with Article 9 have animated much activism and debate, while Articles 20 and 89 set religious activities, institutions, and objectives apart from state enterprises.<sup>10</sup> It is worth presenting the text of these three articles in full, given that their contents pertain to challenges Buddhists have faced continually in postwar Japan, and to specific instances in this chapter:

<sup>7</sup> Analyses of “State Shinto,” its construction by the Allied forces, and how the category has been elaborated upon in political and religious discourses, have developed in recent years. Valuable studies in English include Hardacre 2017; Josephson 2012; Mullins 2021; Rots 2017; Thomas 2019; Zhong 2016.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of legal and other ramifications of the shift from imperial subject to democratically enfranchised citizen, see Avenell 2010.

<sup>9</sup> The 1951 law was enacted as a corrective for a December 28, 1945, directive intended to eliminate “State Shinto” that made it excessively easy to register as a religious juridical person. For a clause-by-clause analysis of 1996 amendments to the 1951 Religious Juridical Persons Law, see LoBreglio 1997.

<sup>10</sup> See Larsson 2020 for extensive citations and discussions of research on religion and constitutional law in Japan. See also Hardacre et al. 2021; O’Brien and Ohkoshi 1996.

### Article 9

- (1) *Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.*
- (2) *In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.*

### Article 20

- (1) *Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority.*
- (2) *No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice.*
- (3) *The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.*

### Article 89

*No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority.*

Despite the importance of the religion-related clauses to Japan's Constitution, their application in Supreme Court cases has been sparing, and uneven. Cases brought before the Supreme Court of Japan that have involved rulings that interpret Articles 20 and 89 have almost exclusively concerned Shintō shrines and rituals (Hardacre 1989, 2017; Larsson 2017; 2020). The only religious freedom case in Japan's highest court that has involved a Buddhist defendant was *Nishida v. Japan* (1963), in which a faith healer ordained in Shingon Buddhism was convicted for inflicting a head injury on a young woman in the course of exorcizing her of a *tanuki* (raccoon dog) spirit. The court rejected the practitioner Nishida's claim that injuries resulting from her ritual practice did not qualify as a criminal act, even though her right to carry out exorcisms was protected by Article 20, stipulating in the decision that the Constitution's Article 12 confirms that people must refrain from abusing their freedoms and rights and must utilize them for public welfare.<sup>11</sup> The only other non-Shintō religious freedom case was decided on February 24, 2021, when the Supreme Court justices announced in a 14–1 ruling that a Confucian temple in a public park in Naha (Okinawa prefecture) operates as a religious facility,

<sup>11</sup> For details on *Nishida v. Japan*, see Larsson, 2020, 203; Takahata 2007. For accounts of female Buddhist exorcists practicing around the time of *Nishida v. Japan*, see Blacker 1975.

in spite of its registration as a “general incorporated association” (*ippan shadan hōjin*), and that a waiver of land usage fees it received from the city government violated the constitutional divide (Abe 2021; Kyodo 2021).

Some of the most high-profile cases concerning Shintō have involved suits by affiliates of other religions who have charged that their constitutional rights were violated by rituals carried out at shrines with the agreement or support of governmental representatives. The most heated controversy has tended to surround disputes related to Yasukuni Shrine, where spirits of Japan’s war dead, including Class A war criminals executed following the Tokyo Trials, are enshrined.<sup>12</sup> These cases also involve the network of prefecture-level “nation-protecting shrines” (*gokoku jinja*) at which the spirits of local residents who died in service to the Japanese nation are revered. Helen Hardacre chronicles the travails of the widow of an active-duty Japan Self-Defense Forces (the postwar Japanese armed services) member who was killed in a traffic accident in 1968. She sued the Yamaguchi Prefecture Veterans’ Association for deifying her husband via an apotheosizing rite (called *gōshi*) at the prefectural-level nation-protecting shrine, claiming that this violated her Christian beliefs. The Supreme Court ultimately decided against her, ruling that the shrine was also protected by the Constitution’s guarantee of freedom of belief and possessed the right to “seek the tranquility of that person’s soul through the religion that expresses one’s faith” (Hardacre 2017, 420–422; see also Field 1991).

Concern about transgressing the postwar constitutional religion/state divide has encouraged a disposition on the part of Japan’s religious professionals to proceed with extreme caution so as not to be accused of inappropriately pushing religion into public life. As I will discuss through attention to the chapter’s two case studies, a type of separation anxiety is especially apparent in the personal conduct and institutional undertakings of Japanese Buddhist clergy and lay activists. Buddhist practitioners in Japan typically foster an extreme aversion for entanglement with constitutional matters. The early postwar case of a practitioner who invoked freedoms guaranteed by Article 20 is exceptional. The defendant Nishida was marginalized on multiple fronts: by virtue of not being a temple priest, because she engaged in the stigma-laden practice of exorcism (which tends to be downplayed by temple-based clergy), and because she was an ordained woman in a clerical hierarchy dominated by men.<sup>13</sup>

Another Buddhist cleric made a notable appearance in Japan’s highest court, as a plaintiff in a case that involved a ruling on constitutional issues. Ernils Larsson details the activities of Anzai Kenjō, a Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land) Buddhist priest who distinguished himself as the organizational head of twenty-four plaintiffs

<sup>12</sup> For discussions of Yasukuni Shrine and post-1947 efforts on the part of the Association of Shinto Shrines to regain state support for it, see Mullins 2021.

<sup>13</sup> For discussions of women clergy and their quotidian engagements with local-level parishioners, see Rowe 2017; Starling 2019. For accounts of exorcism in Japanese Buddhism and its renewal in the wake of the March 2011 disasters in northeast Japan, see Takahashi 2016.

in a well-documented and long-lasting case called the Ehime Tamagushiryō lawsuit that culminated in the 1997 *Anzai v. Shiraishi* decision. Anzai and his fellow plaintiffs, with support from the Japan Buddhist Federation, were pitted against Shiraishi Haruki, governor of Ehime prefecture, who commissioned a *tamagushiryō* shrine offering ritual with public funds. Anzai and his allies decried this act as state patronage of Shintō that violated constitutional guarantees (Larsson 2017, chapter 7).<sup>14</sup> This instance of a Buddhist activist bringing a religious freedom case to the Japanese courts is extremely rare, and while there are numerous legal challenges pertaining to contracts, property, taxation, and other matters that involve Buddhist temples, their clergy, and their parishioners, Japan's Buddhists have generally avoided litigation over constitutional issues.<sup>15</sup> It is likely that this absence in the court record is an important reason why legal scholars tend not to scrutinize Japanese Buddhism in studies of constitutional law.<sup>16</sup>

## 12.2 CHALLENGES JAPAN PRESENTS TO TREATING BUDDHISM AS A FRAMEWORK FOR COMPARATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

How should we make sense of contrasts between Japan and other countries with large Buddhist populations in comparative constitutional law? Specifically, how shall we account for Japanese Buddhism's low profile in cases pertaining to religious

<sup>14</sup> A majority of ten Supreme Court justices found that the Ehime governor had violated the terms of Article 20. See also Abe 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Buddhists in Japan have been consistently embroiled in lawsuits that involve matters other than constitutionally guaranteed religious freedoms. One high-profile example that is relevant to this chapter's case studies are suits by and against Soka Gakkai. The largely negative public image of the lay Nichiren Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai has been profoundly impacted by the early tendency of the group to go after its religious and political rivals through threatened or real legal action, and the group has weathered a large number of legal challenges. Many of these conflicts surround defamation suits, particularly in matters that pertain to Soka Gakkai's leadership, as well as suits pertaining to its registry as a religious juridical person, often in connection to its object of worship. Numerous challenges have concerned the Gakkai's 1991 schism with its erstwhile temple Buddhist parent denomination Nichiren Shōshū, some of which involve efforts by Gakkai parishioners to move family graves away from the auspices of the Shōshū head temple Taiseikiji and other denominational properties to Soka Gakkai "memorial parks" (cemeteries). None of these many legal disputes have led to constitutional challenges in the Supreme Court of Japan. For information on Soka Gakkai's grave matters, see Shimada Hiromi et al. 2007; Tōyō Tetsugaku Kenkyūjo, 1993; 2006. Representative examples of the large volume of publications on Soka Gakkai-related defamation suits and connected legal challenges include Genron Shuppan no Jiyū o Mamoru Kai, 2012; Kurata Takuji et al. 2002; Matsumoto 1973; and Okkotsu 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Attention to cases below the Supreme Court level yields a limited number of lawsuits brought by Buddhists on religious freedom grounds. Mark Mullins details the lead-up to a February 26, 2009 decision in the Osaka District Court that struck down an attempt by an ecumenical group of plaintiffs (Buddhist and Christian) to sue Yasukuni Shrine for carrying out ritual enshrinements without permission (2021, 137–143).

freedom? A detailed history exceeds the capacity of this chapter, but a cursory overview is necessary to clarify reasons for Japanese Buddhism's all but complete absence from religious freedom-related court proceedings.

In the centuries immediately preceding Japan's rapid transformation into an imperial power following the 1868 Meiji Restoration, Buddhist temples enjoyed governmental support from the Tokugawa (1603–1867) regime. Clergy were responsible for maintaining a “temple registration system” (*terauke seido*) that functioned as a census, family registry, basis for taxation, and a means for officials to root out social undesirables, such as outcasts (*hinin*) and Christians.<sup>17</sup> From the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912), the new regime began to promote Shintō. A new policy of *shinbutsu bunri*, or “separation of the *kami* (Shintō deities) and buddhas,” contributed to violent uprisings led by nativists as part of the *haibutsu kishaku* (abolish the Buddha, destroy Śākyamuṇi) movement that saw the destruction of numerous Buddhist temples and their material holdings, the defrocking of priests or their transformation into Shintō clergy, and the seizure of Buddhist lands and other wealth.<sup>18</sup> Thereafter, throughout the Meiji, Taishō (1912–1926), and early Shōwa (1926–1989) eras, Shintō was designated by the nation's powerholders as Japan's primordial faith and was routinely contrasted to the “foreign” tradition of Buddhism.<sup>19</sup> Buddhists sought to demonstrate the relevance of their teachings and traditions by undertaking reforms to suit state priorities, pledging fealty to the nation, and taking part enthusiastically in imperialist exploits, including war and violence against civilian populations.<sup>20</sup>

Following World War II, Japanese Buddhism continued to experience upheaval. As religions were subjected to a new constitutional regime, parishioner bases shifted dramatically as millions emigrated from rural areas into Japan's cities, driving the country's postwar “economic miracle.” Even as numerous so-called new religions (many based in Buddhism), such as Reiyūkai, Risshō Kōseikai, Shinnyo-en, Soka Gakkai, and others attracted millions of converts in the postwar decades, these years saw a steady decline in denominational Buddhist patronage due to a reduction in temples' regional communities and a growing tendency in Japan toward disavowal of religious identity.<sup>21</sup> Aversion to self-identifying as religious was

<sup>17</sup> Leading scholarship on Buddhist temples during the Tokugawa era includes Hardacre 2002; Hur 2007; Tamamuro 2001; and Williams 2004.

<sup>18</sup> For investigations of *haibutsu kishaku* events and their effects, see Ketelaar 1989; Thal 2005; Yasumaru 1979.

<sup>19</sup> For origins of this ideological movement and its Meiji-era developments, see Sawada 2004.

<sup>20</sup> The consequences of Buddhists' support for the Japanese imperial project have inspired intense scholarly engagement. See Klautau 2014; Klautau and Krämer 2021; Victoria 2006. For counter-examples of Buddhists who at times opposed governmental authorities and promoted progressive ideals, see Shields 2017.

<sup>21</sup> For analyses of shifts in postwar Japanese temple-based Buddhism, including attention to rural depopulation and other demographic changes, see Covell 2005; Rowe 2011; Sakurai and Kawamata 2016. For discussions of the category “new religions” and its development in postwar Japan, see Baffelli and Reader 2019; McLaughlin 2019a.

exacerbated dramatically by events in the mid-1990s, most crucially the January 1995 Kobe-area earthquake and the sarin gas attacks by the apocalyptic new religion Aum Shinrikyō.<sup>22</sup> While religion's public image was salvaged somewhat by positive impressions of aid mobilization by Buddhists and other religious activists after the March 11, 2011 compound disasters in northeast Japan, the generations that came of age after Aum have retained what many refer to as a "religion allergy."<sup>23</sup> People in Japan today rarely describe themselves as religious, partly out of fear of triggering lingering associations with violence and social marginality.

The Japanese government's statistics on religion, and some measurements by well-known pollsters, tend to mask the Japanese public's distaste for explicit religious avowals. According to the 2020 *Shūkyō nenkan* [religion almanac], an annual report issued by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs, there were 84,329 Buddhist-based organizations in Japan, including temples and other entities registered as religious juridical persons. As a proportion of the total number of legally designated religious bodies in the country, this amounts to 42.7 percent. Moreover, these organizations claimed 84,835,110 parishioners, or just over 67 percent of the Japanese population. A decade earlier, Japan ranked as the third-largest Buddhist nation in the world, in terms of adherent numbers, according to measures provided by the Pew Research Center's 2010 Global Religious Landscape survey.<sup>24</sup> Going by these figures alone, it would seem appropriate to place Japan alongside Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet, and other identifiably Buddhist-majority countries and regions in a comparative framework.

However, popular Japanese nervousness about religion, including Buddhism, and prevaricating attitudes expressed both by those who deny religious affiliation and by self-described Buddhists, requires that we call this comparison into question. Most recent surveys cast Japan's identity as a Buddhist country into doubt. The Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project calculates that self-identified Buddhists in Japan comprised 36.2 percent in 2010 and projected a drop to 33.2 percent in 2020; in 2050, only 25.1 percent of a rapidly aging, and shrinking, Japanese population is predicted to identify as Buddhist, and 67.7 percent will be religiously unaffiliated (Global Religious Futures Project 2016). A survey undertaken by the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute in 2018 found that 38 percent of respondents affirmed belief in the buddhas, while 31 percent professed belief in the *kami* of Shintō. Ambiguity surrounds these NHK figures, given that respondents were mostly unwilling to firmly reject religion: only 32 percent confirmed that they "did not believe" in divine powers, 71 percent carried out ritual visits to (predominantly Buddhist) family graves, and only 12 percent did not perform religious activities

<sup>22</sup> For accounts of the impact of the Aum attacks on the category "religion," see Baffelli and Reader 2012.

<sup>23</sup> For discussions of aversion to the category "religion," as well as critiques of the statistical measures of Japanese religious identity I cite here, see Horii 2018.

<sup>24</sup> See Agency for Cultural Affairs 2020; Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life 2012.



of any type. The 2018 belief rates nonetheless conform to a broader trend of steady decline in reported religious activity observable in figures recorded from 1898, when close to 90 percent of the population claimed faith in the buddhas and *kami*.<sup>25</sup>

The other chapters in this volume speak to the significant legal and political influence of Buddhist clergy and lay proponents in other parts of Asia. In most cases, these chapters indicate a level of Buddhist influence on public life that differs markedly from that found in Japan today. Contrasts between Japan and Theravāda-dominant polities in Southeast Asia are perhaps most glaring. Khemthong Tonsakulrungruang points to the persistence underlining all of the Thai constitutions from 1932 to 2017 of presumptions about the *dhammarāja*, the Buddhism-based notion of kingly power, and *barami* (karmic bonds and consequences) as means to perpetuate non-democratic command by an authoritarian elite as morally justifiable. Krishantha Fedricks highlights conflicts in post-civil war Sri Lanka between rival Sinhalese Buddhists, including monastics elected to parliament, who engage in intra-Buddhist disputes to produce competing visions of Buddhism-based ethnonationalist ideals they propose for constitutional enshrinement. Iselin Frydenlund identifies a comparable imperative in Myanmar to protect Buddhism against perceived enemies of the dharma by enacting laws that establish the country as a de facto Buddhist nation. Frydenlund expands upon Schonthal's notion of "Buddhist constitutionalism" to outline how Burmese legal, military, and ecclesiastical forces have combined to privilege Buddhism as the state's foundation. These examples make clear that, at least in Southeast Asia, Buddhism endures as a non-negotiable, taken-for-granted starting point from which to create and interpret constitutional law.

Postwar Japan, formulated as a constitutional polity based in an unamended constitution written by an occupying government that rejected specific religious commitments in favor of commitment to universal values, could be characterized as the inverse of these Southeast Asian examples.<sup>26</sup> The Japanese situation contrasts also with Buddhism's legal profile in neighboring countries in Northeast Asia, which share Japan's Mahāyāna Buddhist heritage. Mark Nathan, for instance, chronicles appeals by monks to the Supreme Court of Korea to arbitrate in disputes over interpretation of monastic rules of conduct (*vinaya*) and emphasizes the importance of court battles in determining South Korea's contemporary system of Buddhist lay and monastic orders. And the legal profile of Buddhism in the People's Republic of China differs from its status in contemporary Japan, as Cuilan Liu details in her research on the potentially surprising extent to which Chinese courts lean toward benefiting Buddhist claimants in inheritance disputes and otherwise avoid

<sup>25</sup> See NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute 2020. For analyses of trends in data on postwar religious affiliation and participation, see Ishii 2008.

<sup>26</sup> See Thomas 2019 for more on the Occupation authorities' emphasis on universal values and the process by which its drafters came to reject specific religious priorities.

diminishing the legal authority of Buddhist institutions and lineages associated with the Buddhist Association of China, in spite of constitutional divisions between religion and state and the absolute dominance of the officially atheist Chinese Communist Party (Liu 2020).

Comparisons that take into account premodern Japanese regimes would position Japan closer to polities defined by Buddhist epistemologies. This volume's studies of pre-1950 Tibetan monastic political rule, the pre-2008 Drukpa State in Bhutan, and Mongolian precedents provided by Berthe Jansen, Richard W. Whitecross, and Daigengna Duoer suggest exciting potential for expanding the comparative constitutional law framework to include a comparison of premodern Japan with Tibetan and other non-Japanese premodern Buddhist political orders. Regulatory norms within northern Asian antecedents could be compared productively with those of Japan after the establishment of Buddhism in the archipelago from the sixth century. This comparison would require that we follow these scholars in broadening our understanding of "constitution" to accommodate regulations that contrast with jurisprudence modeled on European standards.<sup>27</sup> Japan, as it coalesced in antiquity as a polity controlled by the Yamato court, began as a bureaucracy that promoted Buddhist ideals of kingship. The early Japanese court supported a network of government-sponsored monasteries and nunneries dedicated to protecting the country from disease, invasion, and social upheaval, and it included administration of the monastic community as a foundational component of governance.<sup>28</sup> An expanded interpretive purview would accommodate Japan's Seventeen-Article Constitution of 604 and the Taihō Code of 703; while neither necessarily qualify as "proper" constitutions, both centralize monastic Buddhism as a foundational component of government, as do numerous edicts in the centuries that followed. Buddhist norms that informed early Japanese governmental structures, however, are not apparent in the country's contemporary constitutional order. Including Japan in a comparative constitutional law exercise thus requires clear historical specificity.

Despite contemporary Japanese Buddhism's comparative distance from law and government, and in spite of the fact that Buddhist priests and lay activists have appeared rarely in cases heard by Japanese courts, they and their organizations deserve attention in regard to present-day constitutional concerns. While Shintō has taken precedence in the courts, Buddhists have been forced to contend with constitutionally guaranteed divides in order to carry out individual and collective activities, formulate their institutions, and overcome popular suspicion propelled by

<sup>27</sup> For analysis of what this expansion of the category "constitution" into the *vinaya* entails, see Schonthal 2021.

<sup>28</sup> There is an extensive literature on inextricable connections between Buddhism and government that persisted throughout Japanese history prior to the Meiji and postwar constitutional orders. Representative examples include Kuroda 1996; Ooms 2008; Piggott 1997; and Sango 2015. See also Japan-relevant sources in the 2021 entry on "Buddhist Statecraft" (Benn and Balkwill 2021).

postwar expectations that religious activists will steer clear of government in all its forms. This has meant that Buddhism, and Buddhists, in Japan have been defined by constitutional wording and interpretation. Additionally, Japanese Buddhist contentions with the 1947 Constitution contrast in crucial ways with examples found in other nominally Buddhism-majority countries. They thus provide valuable nuance to a comprehensive comparative constitutional law inquiry.

Here, I present two contrasting examples of Japanese Buddhist activists whose efforts have been constitutionally defined. The first is aid mobilization and training for religious professionals by Buddhist priests and other denominationally affiliated volunteers in the wake of the January 17, 1995, Great Hanshin Earthquake disaster and the March 11, 2011, compound disasters in northeast Japan. Because of restrictions enshrined in Articles 20 and 89, Buddhist aid providers have faced steep challenges negotiating access to state or state-affiliated facilities that would allow them to distribute material aid to the living and perform rituals to pacify the deceased. Having learned harsh lessons from difficult experiences in 1995, most notably with damage to the category “religion” wreaked by Aum Shinrikyō, activists in northeast Japan were able to navigate constitutional divides to the extent that they transformed emergency measures implemented following the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear cataclysms into training programs for religious social welfare providers, the most prominent of which is now housed at a prestigious public university. This section outlines how constitutional concerns shaped the direction of these post-disaster initiatives. In particular, it demonstrates how uneasiness about direct religious engagement in public social welfare provision led, ironically, to use of sectarian resources to train Buddhist priests to “overcome religion” in order to secure positions in hospitals, hospices, and other caregiving settings. It also highlights uncertainty about the future of Buddhist-led care provider training programs and places for clergy in care provision teams, due in large part to persistent concerns about Japan’s constitutional religion/state divide.

The second example is the most well-known instance of sustained political engagement on a mass scale by a Japanese Buddhist organization, namely the actions of the lay Nichiren Buddhist organization, Soka Gakkai, and its affiliated political party, Komeito. This section considers the transformative impact of constitutional law on shifts undertaken by the religion and the party by chronicling a dramatic transformation that began with Soka Gakkai’s initial electoral forays in pursuit of an eschatological Nichiren Buddhist objective and led to Komeito’s rise to the position of casting vote in the National Diet. It also surveys politics surrounding constitutional law that are strongly affected by Komeito’s pivotal role in guiding successive governmental reinterpretations of Article 9. As the junior partner in the national-level governing coalition and a significant force in subnational politics, Komeito certainly represents the most prominent, and controversial, intersection of Japanese Buddhism and constitutional law. The case of Komeito also stands out as a promising example of Buddhist groups’ entanglements with constitutional law and

party politics that is ripe for transnational comparison. Finally, this section considers another aspect of Soka Gakkai and Komeito that invites comparisons between legal contexts, namely how Japanese Buddhist practitioners' mimesis of the constitutional form, the legal structures that gird it, and practices of commemorating and promoting the national constitution produces forms of "constitutional Buddhism." In the chapter's conclusion, I suggest ways Soka Gakkai and Komeito serve as a counterpoint to a pattern of "Buddhist constitutionalism" in order to productively complicate this volume's comparative project.

### 12.3 NAVIGATING CONSTITUTIONAL RELIGION/STATE DIVIDES BY "OVERCOMING RELIGION": POST-DISASTER INITIATIVES BY JAPANESE BUDDHIST AID PROVIDERS

Covid-19 was hard on training initiatives for Japanese Buddhists of all stripes, including those for Buddhist clergy and laity who provide clinical care. In a January 2021 email to the author, Taniyama Yōzō, Jōdo Shinshū priest and professor at Tōhoku University's Department of Practical Religious Studies in Sendai, lamented that training programs for *rinshō shūkyōshi*, or "Interfaith Chaplains," only went forward in 2021 at his department and at Ryūkoku University, a Jōdo Shinshū institution in Kyoto. Interfaith Chaplain training programs modeled on modules created in large part by him were on hold at the Jesuit institution Sophia University in Tokyo and at the headquarters of the Buddhism-based new religion Rishō Kōseikai. Declining enrolment in these certification programs can be blamed on an abrupt shift to online learning and difficulties finding clinical placements under pandemic conditions. But these initiatives faced challenges even before the onset of Covid-19, on account of uneasiness in Japan about religion in public spaces.

It is thus all the more notable that the care provider certification program founded by Taniyama and his colleagues found a place in a public university. Tōhoku University's Department of Practical Religious Studies serves as a principal coordinator for the Society for Interfaith Chaplaincy in Japan (Nihon Rinshō Shūkyōshikai), which Taniyama founded in 2016 in cooperation with fellow priests from temple-based Japanese Buddhist denominations, Christian clergy, and representatives from a number of new religions, notably Konkōkyō, Rishō Kōseikai, and Tenrikyō. They have collaborated with psychologists, grief care specialists, hospice care workers, and other clinical experts to provide services for the dead and the bereaved after the March 11, 2011 disasters.<sup>29</sup> Mostly referred to as "3.11," the Great East Japan Earthquake disasters left upwards of 24,600 people dead, injured, or missing, and

<sup>29</sup> For analyses of Interfaith Chaplaincy and its related initiatives, see Berman 2018; Graf 2016; Horie and Takahashi 2021; Kasai 2016; McLaughlin 2016a.

dealt a severe psychic blow to Japan. They also inspired Japan's largest mobilization of religious actors and their resources since the Pacific War.<sup>30</sup>

Interfaith Chaplaincy can be characterized as a constructive response to negative attitudes that Buddhist aid providers have confronted after disasters. This new class of post-disaster chaplains learned harsh lessons after the January 17, 1995, Great Hanshin earthquake, which devastated the city of Kobe and its surrounding area in western Japan. Approximately 6,400 people were killed in and around Kobe and many thousands were displaced. The national government failed to coordinate effectively, and the suffering of residents, which stretched into the months after January 17, underscored a woeful lack of state preparation.<sup>31</sup> Failure by state agencies to deliver reliable assistance inspired people from across Japan to contribute to an upsurge in volunteering. Organizations of many different types mark the Hanshin earthquake anniversary as *Hōsai no Hi*, or “Disaster Prevention and Volunteerism Day,” by engaging in volunteer activities across the country. Religious volunteerism emerged as a significant component of this post-Hanshin response.

Following the January 1995 earthquake, hundreds of volunteer groups from temple Buddhist sects, new religions, Christian organizations, and Shintō shrines, including many that lost their own affiliates and facilities, mobilized to rescue disaster victims. Religious organizations housed numerous displaced residents in homes, temples, churches, and other institutions, raised funds for relief, and otherwise cared for survivors and the deceased. However, Buddhist clerics described running up against an “allergy to religion” when it came to dealing with state agencies (*Chūgai Nippō*, 1996). Their testimony makes clear that negative sentiments about religion in Japanese public life find purchase in the language of the 1947 Constitution, which sets the standard for how to condemn religious influence in the public sphere. Japanese religious aid launched in January 1995 faced opposition from a public that suspected aid groups might be hiding covert proselytization agendas and from government agencies that were nervous about transgressing constitutional principles. Priests interviewed about their 1995 aid activism described receiving requests from representatives of government agencies to not display any overt signs of their religious affiliation, even as these clergy sought to perform sutra recitations over bodies of the deceased. This is a memorial act that is their vocational specialty, and Buddhist invocations over the dead remain conventional in Japan. One Jōdoshū (Pure Land Sect) representative emphasized the hostility religious organizations faced in dealing with governmental restrictions, recounting how he and fellow clerical aid providers were denied permission to carry out

<sup>30</sup> For a summary of statistical measures of the religious response to 3.11, see McLaughlin 2016b. Comprehensive figures on 3.11 casualties and reconstruction efforts in Fukushima, Miyagi, and Iwate prefectures are updated by Japan's Reconstruction Agency at [www.reconstruction.go.jp/](http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/). See also Kingston 2012; Gill, Steger, and Slater 2013.

<sup>31</sup> For overviews of the Hanshin disaster, its aftermath, and details on religious responses, see Kuroda and Tsuganesawa 1999; Miki 2001.

funerary activities in public facilities while wearing their vestments. As a result, bodies that were lying in repose did not receive memorial rites.<sup>32</sup>

Negative sentiments about religious aid provision prevented news about salutary efforts from making it into widespread media coverage. One notable example from Jōdo Shinshū, Japan's largest temple-based Buddhist denomination, received only scant public notice. The Japan Buddhist Federation (Zen Nihon Bukkyōkai) calculated that 536 Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha (Hongwanji lineage) temples were damaged or destroyed in the Hanshin earthquake, and that it lost twelve priests and clerical family members, the most of any denomination.<sup>33</sup> These deaths number among the 1,200 parishioners it lost, accounting for 19 percent of the total number of dead. In the absence of reliable government assistance, temple priests in the disaster area set about aiding local residents. Hongwanji-ha's single largest aid activity was initiated by its Hokkaido Parish Young Priest's Association. This group of volunteer clerics traveled more than 1500 km from the northern island of Hokkaido to Kobe, where they constructed twenty prefab housing units for refugees on the premises of the temple Kōenji, a facility that they called the Rokkō Hermitage (Rokkōan), named for the Kobe landmark Mount Rokkō. A total of 3,600 volunteers, including Jōdo Shinshū priests but also lay affiliates and other participants, cooperated to care for the material and psychological needs of victims housed in the prefab units. The Hermitage served as a base for the sect's volunteers, who delivered material goods and counseling to Kobe residents struggling to carry on in the most devastated regions of the city.

Though public distaste for news about religious activism rendered this initiative largely invisible, the Rokkō Hermitage created an important precedent upon which Japan's Buddhist denominations have built in responding to subsequent disasters. Importantly, especially in terms of attention to constitutional law, in spite of the fact that the complex stood on temple grounds, its Shinshū organizers intentionally designated it as a non-religious facility open to all in need. Secondly, resources at the Hermitage focused on the emotional and psychological needs of refugees rather than temple-based ritual responses. Hermitage residents were cared for by careful attention to a category that gained popularity in the broader context of the Hanshin disaster: *kokoro no kea*, or "care for the heart/mind/spirit," a catch-all term referring to counseling and related measures taken to aid bereaved survivors. To raise funds for the Rokkō Hermitage, Hongwanji-ha appealed to the emotional bonds between disaster survivors and empathetic fellow citizens by enjoining activists from across Japan to sacrifice part of their daily expenses to feed the large budget the Rokkō

<sup>32</sup> *Chūgai Nippō* 1996. See also McLaughlin, 2016a.

<sup>33</sup> These details and those that follow regarding Jōdo Shinshū aid initiatives following the Hanshin disaster are discussed in Miki 2012; Nishihonganji Hanshin/Awaji Daishinsai Fukkō Shien Renraku Kyōgikai 1998.

Hermitage required. Volunteer work thus rose to the fore as a means by which the True Pure Land sect could demonstrate its relevance to the Japanese public.

Religious responses to the March 11, 2011, disasters indicate that many religious organizations in Japan internalized the hard lessons of 1995 and put in place plans to dispatch aid in ways that mitigated public fears about violating constitutional prohibitions. Upon hearing news of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, the headquarters of every imaginable sort of Japanese religious organization immediately suspended ordinary operations to mobilize relief. Measurements of aid mobilization after 3.11 indicate that relief and reconstruction initiatives launched by religious organizations made up a significant portion of the humanitarian response (McLaughlin 2016b; Okamoto 2014). Japanese religious activists were among the first on the scene after the tsunami hit, opening their temples, shrines, churches, and other facilities to refugees as they dispatched volunteers to search mountains of wreckage for bodies and provide survivors with crucial emergency supplies. Long after most government agencies and other aid providers wrapped up their operations in northeastern Japan, religious practitioners continue to serve afflicted communities.

As they devised care initiatives, affiliates of Japan's Buddhist denominations understood the need to conform with the expectation that they limit obvious religious displays. This concern was evident in the immediate tsunami aftermath. For example, priests associated with the Sendai Buddhist Association who volunteered to perform sutras over bodies gathered at municipally-administered disaster response centers composed an ad hoc manual that called for clerics to limit their recitations to no more than ten minutes in order to avoid triggering accusations that they were violating constitutional provisions (Fujiyama 2020, 130–131). These same priests would contribute to the publication of a comprehensive disaster response guidebook for religious practitioners that includes attention to difficulties temples encounter being recognized as “designated evacuation shelters” (*shitei hinanjo*) by municipal and prefectural authorities (Buddhist NGO Network 2013, 33).

From March 2011, Japanese religion engaged in a double mobilization: while transporting personnel and emergency supplies to disaster-afflicted regions, religious groups and their advocates also mounted an elaborate print and electronic media campaign intended to disseminate images of aid work that would forestall the negative impressions that dominated coverage seventeen years earlier. In contrast to post-Hanshin prevarications over clerical involvement in first-phase relief work, accounts curated from 2011 by media-savvy religious activists and sympathetic academics cast Buddhist priests in ways that skilfully affirmed constitutional priorities. These media discourses tended to frame clerical contributions using neologisms such as *borantia* (volunteer), *kokoro no kea* (care for the heart/mind/spirit), the increasingly popular designation *supirichuaru kea* (spiritual care), and other categories that deliberately minimize Buddhist commitments (Berman 2018; McLaughlin 2016a). Importantly, media coverage tended to emphasize the contributions of

religious individuals over sectarian organizations. This approach preserved the religious liberties of the aid providers while it anticipated, and diffused, fears that these providers represented a coordinated conversion effort. The post-3.11 religion narrative also included a marked emphasis on ecumenical cooperation, which involved repeated use of phrases along the lines of “overcoming religious boundaries” (*shūkyō no waku o koe*) or “overcoming sectarian [divides]” (*shūha o koe*) in descriptions of Buddhist, Shintō, Christian, and other religious practitioners coming together to work with one another and with non-religious experts. There was a tendency to highlight praiseworthy efforts by innovative religious activists who were marginalizing their sectarian identities in favor of working with academics, medical professionals, and other nominally non-religious actors. In these accounts, religious action took the form of scientifically verifiable treatment that has immediate, this-worldly relevance – in other words, treatment appropriate for the needs of unaffiliated individuals rather than parishioners.

This carefully mediated post-3.11 religion narrative provided an alternative to images of religion as a threat to constitutional divides. The narrative’s emphasis on individual caregivers who side-lined their sectarian identities coheres with specific constitutional wording, notably of Article 20, which asserts that “No religious *organization* [emphasis added] shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority.” Ironies abound as clerics rely on organizational support to foster professionalization in clinic-based care that requires them to “overcome” their sectarian affiliations. The Institute for Interfaith Chaplaincy began in 2012 as the Kokoro no Sōdanshitsu, or “Consultation Room for the Spirit,” an aid outreach initiative in Sendai that relied on funding from a host of Buddhist and Christian denominations and other religious associations. Donations from religious juridical persons enabled the establishment of the Department of Practical Religious Studies at Tōhoku University. Presentations by the Department and its advocates nonetheless affirm Interfaith Chaplaincy as non-sectarian and driven by individual activists rather than religious organizations, and concern for constitutional divides is palpable in Interfaith Chaplaincy training. Taniyama emphasizes that “religious care” (*shūkyōteki kea*) requires chaplains to be ready to provide whatever services the recipient requires.<sup>34</sup> This means that a Buddhist priest should be ready to join an evangelical Christian hospital patient in a bedside prayer, and a Protestant minister must be prepared to chant “all praise the Amitābha Buddha” (*namu amida butsu*) with a Pure Land Buddhist hospice care recipient. The public sphere, Taniyama stresses, should be seen as an “away game” for the religious professional, while the professional’s own temple or church is home field. At home, clergy can make presumptions about how to lead services, and practitioners enjoy constitutional protection of freedom of religion. Because Article 20 stipulates that no person can be compelled to take part in a ritual or teaching, the chaplain must wait to be asked

<sup>34</sup> An example of Taniyama’s instruction is available in English in McLaughlin 2019b.



to perform the service in a public setting: following Taniyama's metaphor, he must be invited to play. The Interfaith Chaplaincy training materials insist that clear confirmation is required from all recipients before any religious act is performed in a caregiving situation outside sectarian boundaries.

Post-disaster activism confirmed for these instructors that the survival of their enterprises depends on how their actions are perceived in the public sphere. Retaining a place for Buddhist care providers in public forums remains a delicate balancing act, as indicated by the challenges these programs faced during the Covid-19 era. This precarity remains strongly determined by postwar constitutional mandates.

#### 12.4 HOW CONCERNS ABOUT CONSTITUTIONAL LAW STEERED A BUDDHIST PARTY INTO "NORMAL" POLITICS: SOKA GAKKAI AND KOMEI TO

Claiming a Japanese membership of 8.27 million households, Soka Gakkai (the "Value Creation Study Association") is a dominant presence in Japanese Buddhism.<sup>35</sup> It also exerts a significant influence in education, finance, publishing, and numerous other spheres. With a declared membership of close to two million Soka Gakkai International (SGI) adherents in 192 countries and territories, it may be Japan's most successful religious export, in terms of adherent numbers. In Japan, Soka Gakkai is perhaps best known for its affiliation with Komeito, the political party it founded in 1964.<sup>36</sup> The Gakkai's move into electoral politics invited heated critique from religious and political rivals. Much of this discourse has been informed by constitutional concerns. In turn, many of Soka Gakkai's and Komeito's institutional features have been shaped by attention to Japan's national constitutions.

Soka Gakkai is a lay association following Nichiren (1222–1282), a Japanese Buddhist reformer who confronted the temple-based traditions of his day to propagate the belief that only exclusive faith in the *Lotus Sūtra*, the putative final sermon delivered by Śākyamuni before a retinue of beings from across the Buddhist realms, serves as an effective means of salvation during *mappō*, the degraded Latter Day of the Buddha's dharma. The Gakkai maintains Nichiren Buddhist liturgies, such as chanting sections of the *Lotus* and repeatedly invoking its seven-syllable title,

<sup>35</sup> Discussions of Soka Gakkai's history, institutional makeup, member activities, and other details in this section rely on these sources and others cited below: Aera Henshūbu 1996; Asano 1974; Asayama 2017; Higuma 1971; McLaughlin 2019a; Nakano 2016; Nishiyama 1975; Shimada 2004; Sōka Gakkai Nenpyō Hensan Iinkai 1976; Sōka Gakkai Yonjūshūnenshi Hensan Iinkai 1970; Tamano 2008; and White 1970.

<sup>36</sup> Details regarding Komeito in this section rely on Asayama 2017; Ehrhardt et al. 2014; Hori [1973] 1999; Klein 2015; Kōmeitō Shi Hensa Iinkai 2014; McLaughlin 2015 and 2019a; Nakano 2016; Suzuki 1970; Tsukada 2015; White 1970; sources cited below.

*namu-myōhō-rengē-kyō*, and members rely on Nichiren’s writings as their primary Buddhist scriptural base. However, as the name “Value Creation Study Association” indicates, the group did not begin as a religion. It started as an educational reform movement, first called Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai (“Value Creation Education Study Association”), founded on November 18, 1930. The Gakkai’s first president was Makiguchi Tsunesaburō (1871–1944). He was a schoolteacher and intellectual who in 1928, with his fellow teacher and disciple Toda Jōsei (1900–1958), converted to lay affiliation under Nichiren Shōshū, a minority temple-based sect that reveres Nichiren as the Buddha of the *maḥpā* era. From the late 1930s, Makiguchi and Toda’s exclusivist convictions hardened, and Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai shifted away from educational reform to focus primarily on Nichiren Buddhist practices, including *shakubuku*, a forceful conversion tactic Nichiren prescribed for lands (such as Japan) that slander the *Lotus*. Conducting *shakubuku* led to conflicts with the wartime Japanese state, as did the group’s opposition to the governmental mandate that all religions enshrine *kamifuda* (deity talismans) from the Grand Shrine at Ise. Makiguchi and Toda were among very few adherents in wartime Japan to maintain Nichiren’s strict rejection of heterodox teachings and objects. They refused to enshrine the Shintō talismans and even encouraged converts to burn them, deeming them *hōbō*, or “slander to the dharma,” as they persisted in carrying out *shakubuku* conversions. The Gakkai leaders were arrested in July 1943 for violating the terms of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law. Both were incarcerated, and Makiguchi died of malnutrition in prison on November 18, 1944, on the anniversary of the Gakkai’s founding.

After World War II, Toda reformed the group as Soka Gakkai and drove institutional growth through a particularly hard-sell version of *shakubuku*. By the time of his death in April 1958, the religion had expanded to over one million adherent households. Converts were largely poor and socially atomized people who moved from the countryside into Japan’s rapidly growing cities. While the Gakkai’s aggressive proselytizing produced a massive surge in membership, it also created a negative public image. Public opposition to Soka Gakkai was driven in large part by the religion’s move into electoral politics from the mid-1950s, which led to the founding in 1964 of the political party Komeito, often glossed as the “Clean Government Party.” Today, Komeito qualifies as a “normal” political party, in the sense that it gathers votes by promoting policies that appeal to its constituents (Klein and McLaughlin 2022). Though it has wielded policy influence in national coalition with Japan’s majority Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since 1999, there is no evidence that Komeito has pursued an explicitly religious agenda in government, nor has it worked to undermine or otherwise transform Japan’s political structure. It nonetheless grew out of a Soka Gakkai campaign to satisfy a millenarian Nichiren Buddhist objective: the construction of a *honmon no kaidan*, or “true ordination platform.” This was to be a temple facility constructed at the Nichiren Shōshū sect headquarters at Taiseikiji, near Mount Fuji, at which the sect’s (and then also Soka

Gakkai's) principal object of worship was to be enshrined. This enshrinement would celebrate the conversion of the populace to exclusive worship of the *Lotus Sūtra*, a goal interpreted by the group as the nation's conversion to Soka Gakkai. Following Nichiren Buddhist dictates, a governmental decree ordering the construction of the ordination platform would be required. In postwar Japan, this entailed a majority vote in the Japanese Diet (Stone 2003). The Diet decree requirement appeared to violate the Article 20 prohibition on religious organizations exercising political authority or receiving privileges from the state, as well as the Article 89 proscription on public expenditure for the benefit of any religion.

Concern about potentially violating the then-recently promulgated Constitution did not stifle members' enthusiasm for institutional expansion in the immediate postwar years. From the early 1950s, as Soka Gakkai grew by leaps and bounds, Toda drove members to work toward the *kaidan* goal by sending them into politics. The group first fielded independent candidates for local elections in 1955. In 1956, three Gakkai administrators were elected to the House of Councillors (Upper House), and a surge of local- and national-level electoral victories followed. Members in early Gakkai campaigns transgressed multiple times against elections law, driven as they were by the objective to convert the populace to realize their Nichiren Buddhist aim. Murakami Shigeyoshi surmised that Soka Gakkai's *shakubuku*-driven efforts to gain a majority Diet vote and bring about the ordination platform was a case of substituting wartime refuge in the Emperor for a postwar effort from the ground up to install Nichiren Shōshū as Japan's national religion (1967, 155). In July 1957, Ikeda Daisaku (1928–), a Toda disciple who was then a Young Men's Division leader, was arrested alongside other young leaders, not on constitutional grounds, but for violating elections law prohibitions against house-to-house campaigning. Soka Gakkai came to eulogize Ikeda's legal tribulations as the "Osaka Incident," an episode they treat as the now honorary president's *hōnan*, or "persecution [for defending] the dharma." He was cleared of all charges in January 1962. By this time, Ikeda Daisaku was third president of Soka Gakkai, having taken the office on May 3, 1960.

May 3 has become one of Soka Gakkai's most significant commemorative dates. The importance of the Gakkai's May 3 memorials is emblematic of an ethic of constitutionalism that underlies the religion and, to a lesser extent, its affiliated political party. Both Toda and Ikeda ascended to the Gakkai presidency on May 3, the same day that the 1947 Constitution went into effect, and Japan's annual May 3 Constitutional Memorial Day also serves as Soka Gakkai's "Mother's Day," as well as the wedding anniversary of Ikeda and his wife Kaneko. A survey of other Gakkai and Komeito events on May 3 reveals the deep importance of the date for the religion and the party. This became particularly apparent under Ikeda's leadership, when the Gakkai's political engagement increased dramatically, keeping pace with the lay sect's explosive membership growth and institutional diversification. Between 1960 and 1970, Soka Gakkai in Japan grew from just over one million to

over seven million households, and the organization began to gain significant numbers of followers in countries overseas. On November 27, 1961, Gakkai politicians in the Diet organized as Kōmei Seiji Renmei (or Kōseiren), the “League for Just and Fair Politics,” enacting a new political body following a May 3, 1961 announcement at Soka Gakkai headquarters that established an institutionally distinct “culture bureau” (*bunkakyoku*) that would oversee political engagement (Kōmeitō Shi Hensa Iinkai 2014, 35–36). On May 3, 1964, Ikeda declared that henceforth Soka Gakkai would be a purely religious organization, that politics would be left to Kōmei politicians, and that the religion would soon establish an independent political party (Kōmeitō Shi Hensa Iinkai 2014, 35–41). This declaration, falling as it did on Constitutional Memorial Day, resonates with the constitutional guarantee separating religion and government. On November 17, 1964, the day before Soka Gakkai’s founding anniversary, Ikeda announced the dissolution of Kōseiren and the establishment of Kōmeitō.

Initially, Komeito did not separate religious and political objectives. Just as Soka Gakkai is heir to the twin legacies of Nichiren Buddhism and humanism, Nichiren Buddhist priorities and a modern ideal of securing world peace through democracy inform Komeito’s official founding statement. It reads (in part):

We hold the firm conviction that it is only through the singular path of the Buddhist philosophy of absolute pacifism – that is, the superior path of a harmonious fusion of government and Buddhism (*ōbutsu myōgō*) – that the world will attain salvation from the horror of war. The Clean Government Party, through the founding ideals of a harmonious fusion of government and Buddhism and Buddhist democracy (*buppō minshūhugi*), will fundamentally cleanse Japan’s political world, confirm the basis of government by parliamentary democracy, put down deep roots in the masses, and realize the well-being of the common people. (Kōmeitō 1964)<sup>37</sup>

From August 1, 1956, Toda Jōsei had issued an essay titled “*Ōbutsu myōgōron*” (“On the Harmonious Union of Kingship and Buddhism”) in which he asserted that this utopian goal was to be realized through conversion of the populace and construction of the ordination platform (Toda 1956, 204). Ikeda’s use of *ōbutsu myōgō* in Komeito’s November 1964 founding statement reaffirmed the goal to unite Buddhism and government, and members continued to be inspired by this millenarian aim as they worked for Komeito campaigns. From 1964, Komeito fielded candidates in both the Lower and Upper Houses, and it expanded its presence in local legislatures across Japan. By June 1969, Komeito was the third-largest party in the National Diet, and its proportion of votes in national and regional elections was still increasing. However, Komeito’s fortunes shifted abruptly. On May 3, 1970, following a scandal the previous year surrounding a failed attempt to quash the

<sup>37</sup> Printed transcript of founding statement. See also Ehrhardt et al. 2014, 67–68.

publication of a book titled *I Denounce Soka Gakkai*, Ikeda announced a formal institutional separation between Soka Gakkai and Komeito. The religion renounced its ordination platform plans, and Komeito eliminated its references to Buddhism and replaced them with a pledge to uphold the 1947 Constitution.

The party gained its largest-ever proportion of Diet seats in 1983, but suffered setbacks thereafter, and while Gakkai members have continued treating electioneering for Komeito candidates (and their allies) as a component of their regular practice, the party struggled to define its *raison d'être* until it entered into coalition with the LDP in 1999. In the meantime, constitutionalism grew into something of a Soka Gakkai constant. While Komeito began to prevaricate on its commitment to strict constitutional observance, Soka Gakkai consistently supported constitutional preservation. In particular, reverence for Article 9 continued to inspire Gakkai events and organizations. Early examples include the Youth Division's 1974 "May 3 Memorial Peace Constitution Preservation Central Committee Event" in Setagaya Ward, Tokyo, at which the Committee leadership asserted the need to protect the Constitution for its guarantee of religious liberty (Kiuchi 1974, 169).

A fierce loyalty to constitutionalism drove Gakkai institution-building and member dispositions over the course of Ikeda's leadership. Except for a small and rapidly diminishing number of elderly pioneers who converted under Toda, the present-day majority of the Gakkai's adherents, and almost all members who power Komeito's campaigns today, came of age as Ikeda disciples. From early in his presidency, Soka Gakkai transformed from an organization run *by* Ikeda into a group dedicated *to* him, and after Soka Gakkai split from Nichiren Shōshū in November 1991, member reverence for Ikeda grew ever more intense. Having left behind the Nichiren Buddhist ordination platform objective, Soka Gakkai clarified its commitment to the constitutional ideals Ikeda cherished, and the religion focused to an increasing extent on cultivating Ikeda's profile as an international statesman who reached across cultural and national boundaries to advance peace, in keeping with Japan's postwar international stance as pacifist exemplar.<sup>38</sup>

During Ikeda's most vigorous decades, from the 1960s into the early 2000s, members engaged in a tireless mix of peace-promoting activities. The group became famous for its "world peace culture festivals" (*sekai heiwa bunkasai*) in which thousands of costumed members swirled through stadiums in complex dance numbers as marching bands performed triumphal Gakkai anthems and attendees in the stands held up placards bearing peace messages. From January 1983, Ikeda began issuing annual *Peace Proposals*, treatises with detailed recommendations for multilateral action in the interest of resolving global conflicts. Nichiren Buddhism's

<sup>38</sup> For analyses of Japan's shifting security positions from the postwar into the present, see Le 2021; Midford 2020. For discussions of Buddhist pacifism and attitudes toward the peace clause of the 1947 Constitution, including those of Soka Gakkai members under Ikeda, see Kisala 2000.

status inversed, shifting from the group's guiding framework into a foundation undergirding Soka Gakkai's "three pillars": peace, culture, and education.

Even as Ikeda rallied Gakkai members around a peace platform that upheld the Japanese postwar Constitution's ideals, Komeito began to compromise on its support for pacifism. After its May 3, 1970, separation from Soka Gakkai, the party at first emphasized the absolute pacifism of its founding charter. It asserted that Japan should maintain neutrality and should establish alternatives to the 1960 US–Japan Security Treaty and maintenance of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (Kōmeitō 1973, 44–45). From 1978, however, the party came to acknowledge the legality of the US–Japan Treaty and the JSDF. Komeito's next significant adjustment came in 1992, when it supported the LDP decision to include JSDF troops in UN peace-keeping operations. After it entered into coalition government with the LDP from 1999, Komeito made more concessions, going along with Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō's decision to send troops to the Persian Gulf (2002) and Iraq (2004).<sup>39</sup> This policy shift inspired some of the first protests against Komeito by Soka Gakkai members (Nakano 2016, 68–69). On January 21, 2004, a group of adherents called the "Society for Preserving the Peace Constitution Opposed to the Iraq Troop Dispatch" (Irakku Hahei ni Hantai Shi Heiwa Kenpō o Mamoru Kai) submitted 1,800 signatures to Komeito headquarters protesting the party's policy reversal (Asahi Shinbun 2004; Nakano 2016, 67–69). The largest anti-Komeito protests by Gakkai adherents were triggered by the party's support of eleven security bills sponsored by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō that were rushed through the National Diet in September 2015. These laws allow Japan the "right of collective self-defense," which includes the ability for the JSDF to come to the aid of Japan's military allies. This is a security posture that radically reinterprets the Article 9 pledge to "forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes." Observers in summer 2015 were struck by the presence of protesters waving Soka Gakkai flags and bearing signs emblazoned with strident Nichiren Buddhist and Soka Gakkai slogans in demonstrations before the Diet and at other locations across the country. These were Gakkai adherents who endured harsh rejection by their fellow members as they rebuked the party their religion founded for abandoning its foundational pacifism (McLaughlin 2015).

Komeito now sidesteps clear-cut policy commitments when it comes to constitutional interpretation or revision. The party manifesto for the 2017 general election, for example, only included a short discussion in the final section that mentioned the potential for adding a third clause that acknowledges the legality of the JSDF, should this be supported by a majority of Japanese voters (Kōmeitō 2017). In the 2019 election manifesto, the only mention of the Constitution appeared as an appendix and simply stated that revision "should be discussed carefully from now on" (Kōmeitō 2019), and the manifesto for the October 2021 election only dedicated

<sup>39</sup> For a chronicle of Komeito's peace concessions, see Lindgren 2016.

the penultimate page of its seventy-two-page “Policy Compilation” (Seisakushū) to constitutional matters (Kōmeitō 2021). However, while constitutional fidelity as a Komeito priority seems to be fading, the party remains well known for its historical success as a brake against LDP constitutional revision attempts. Adam Liff and Ko Maeda compared the LDP’s 2012 constitutional revision draft to proposals made on May 3, 2017 by Prime Minister Abe (2019). Instead of pursuing the 2012 LDP amendment strategy of *kaiken* (wholesale revision), Abe’s 2017 proposal followed a modest plan first outlined by Komeito in 2005 to potentially add a third clause to Article 9 to acknowledge the legality of the JSDF, while leaving the first two clauses unchanged, should public opinion indicate approval for this course of action. Without at least 80 percent Komeito voter support for LDP politicians running in Single-Member Districts, the LDP would fall below a simple majority in both Houses of the National Diet and would lose the two-thirds super-majority typically retained by the coalition. So long as Komeito holds a significant number of Diet seats, and so long as Gakkai members continue to electioneer on behalf of LDP politicians, Gakkai member dedication to pacifist principles ensures that the LDP-Komeito coalition remains unlikely to revise or replace the 1947 Constitution.

As Komeito has shied away from explicit engagement with constitutional matters, Soka Gakkai has deepened its commitment to constitutionalism. One way the religion expresses its constitutional focus is by enacting its own constitution, which looks very much like its Japanese national constitutional predecessors. The Gakkai’s promulgation of a constitution is in keeping with how the group models itself explicitly along the lines of Japanese state institutions. Elsewhere, I have characterized Soka Gakkai as a “mimetic nation-state” to explain the comprehensive extent to which the religion replicates state and state-affiliated institutions within its own parameters (McLaughlin 2019a). These replicated institutions include a massive bureaucracy modeled on a civil service, doctrinal instruction and other forms of study derived from standardized education, de facto sovereign territory at its headquarters and other facilities protected by trained cadres and bedecked by a tri-color flag, and collective memory of the organization preserved in anthem-like songs and a massive and ever-expanding published record that functions akin to a national literature. The group also mandates donation practices labeled *zaimu* (finances, or taxes) and offers singular reverence to its apotheosized Honorary President Ikeda Daisaku.

A written constitution numbers among the Gakkai’s nation-like appurtenances. Announced on November 18, 2017, on the anniversary of the group’s founding in 1930, the “Constitution of the Soka Gakkai” establishes an orthodox understanding of its history and confirms the transcendent authority of its “eternal mentors,” the three founding presidents Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda.<sup>40</sup> Aspects of this document follow standards set out in Japan’s 1947 Constitution. For example, Article

<sup>40</sup> English text is available at The Constitution of the Soka Gakkai 2017.

15 stipulates that a vote of two-thirds of the members of Soka Gakkai's Constitution Amendment Committee is required to make any changes to the document, a rule that appears similar to Article 96 of the 1947 national Constitution, which requires a two-thirds vote in both Houses of the Diet and a referendum of 50 percent plus one vote in order to carry out a constitutional amendment. Notably, the Gakkai version of this clause makes no room for the voice of an electorate. Overall, Soka Gakkai's constitutional mimesis arguably takes its cue less from the postwar constitution than its 1890 predecessor. Like that of the Meiji Constitution, the preamble of the Gakkai equivalent outlines a genealogy that confirms the constitution's basis in primordial and transcendent authority. Where the 1890 Constitution speaks in the voice of the Emperor who "ascended the throne of a lineal succession unbroken for ages eternal," the Gakkai Constitution declares a "profound karmic connection" from Śākyamuṇi Buddha to Nichiren to Makiguchi and Toda, culminating in Ikeda. The Meiji Constitution repeatedly confirms the supremacy of the Emperor while deferring to the need for the populace to create and interpret appropriate laws. Similarly, the Gakkai's 2017 Constitution affirms the primacy of the three founding presidents while empowering the religion's administrative bodies to generate and oversee its internal regulations.

Ironically, Soka Gakkai's mimetic equivalent of a national constitution appears closer to the document upheld by the wartime state that martyred its founding leader and destroyed the wartime-era Gakkai. Soka Gakkai's 2017 Constitution appears to call for a utopian version of the very polity that victimized its originators.

## 12.5 CONCLUSION: "CONSTITUTIONAL BUDDHISM" AS A COUNTERPOINT TO "BUDDHIST CONSTITUTIONALISM"

On May 3, 1970, on the tenth anniversary of his appointment as third president of Soka Gakkai, Ikeda Daisaku affirmed the religion's policy of *seikyō bunri*, or "separation of politics and religion," the principle upheld in the Japanese Constitution that came into effect on the same day in 1947. In his address, Ikeda postulated that Soka Gakkai might adopt conventions from the Japanese political system and institute a practice of soliciting votes from the religion's membership. He suggested that, in the future, Soka Gakkai might put in place a term limit of three or four years for an elected Gakkai president (Kiuchi 1974). The 2017 Gakkai Constitution, however, stands as the culmination of decades spent solidifying Ikeda Daisaku as the religion's absolute authority. Its content and tone suggest that the referents for the Gakkai's mimetic processes are drawn not only from the postwar constitutional order and its defenses of pacifism and unconditional freedom of religion, but also from the prewar, Emperor-centric constitutional nation-state. Komeito has needed to compromise on constitutionalism in order to survive as a small party within Japan's postwar political system. Soka Gakkai has remained free to promote utopian visions inspired by multiple Japanese constitutional precedents.



While its 2017 Constitution may stand as the example that hews most closely to national models, Soka Gakkai is not the only Japanese Buddhist organization to promulgate a constitutional equivalent. Sōtō Zen, for instance, formulates its denominational regulations as a multi-article “Sōtō Sect Constitution” (Sōtōshū Shūken), and other temple-based denominations present their guiding rules in similar formats, albeit not always in documents that bear the title “constitution.” One might also posit that an ethic of constitutionalism is identifiable across the broad spectrum of Japanese Buddhism, whether or not an institution maintains a set of internal rules that functions in a *de facto* manner as a constitution.<sup>41</sup> The case study of post-disaster clerical aid makes clear that Buddhists in Japan formulate their public conduct and institutional practices to comport with national constitutional norms. This widely shared ethic is certainly the result of Buddhism’s fraught position in modern and contemporary Japan and is indicative of the need for Japan’s Buddhists to defend their continued relevance to the nation.<sup>42</sup> Soka Gakkai’s mimesis of a national constitution can also be read as a defensive posture adopted in response to being targeted by political rivals and the threat of legal challenges mounted within a state based in constitutional law. It is a distinctive instance of what is otherwise a widely shared Japanese Buddhist convention to internalize and manifest concern for the nation’s constitutional authority.

This chapter’s introduction included a brief discussion of Benjamin Schonthal’s theory of “Buddhist constitutionalism” that describes processes in Southeast Asia in which “Buddhist ideas and institutions figure prominently as topics of constitutional negotiation.”<sup>43</sup> In Southeast Asian nations, lawmakers, monastics, and other power-holders work to secure Buddhism as a foundation for the state, maintaining a principle of enshrining religious teachings and institutions that Schonthal compares convincingly with Islamic and other religiously informed state-building enterprises. I suggest that the cases in this chapter exemplify a contrasting ethic of constitutionalism that has emerged as a response to the comparatively precarious position Buddhism has occupied in Japan since the nineteenth century. There is an observable urge on the part of contemporary Japanese Buddhists to foster “constitutional Buddhism,” Buddhist constitutionalism’s opposite. The Japanese Buddhist cases, perhaps especially the case of Soka Gakkai’s constitutional mimesis, represent a countercurrent within what Schonthal identifies as global Buddhist fluidity between two putatively heterogeneous categories of religions and constitutions. In many Buddhist-majority countries, Buddhism persists as a foundational influence on the

<sup>41</sup> See Schonthal 2021.

<sup>42</sup> In his discussions of Japanese Buddhist prison chaplaincy, Adam Lyons describes this as a “statist” approach on the part of clergy who must observe constitutional divisions in their work within state institutions (Lyons 2021).

<sup>43</sup> Schonthal 2017, 707.

formation of national constitutions. By contrast, influence flows in the opposite direction in Japan, where Buddhist organizations take their cue from constitutions that set out an explicit religion/state divide. A full account of Buddhism as a lens through which to approach comparative constitutional law must account for Buddhism's circumstances in Japan.

## REFERENCES

- Abe, Keisuke Mark. 2011. "Separation of Church and State in Japan: What Happened to the Conservative Supreme Court?" *St. John's Law Review* 85 (2): 447–72.
- Abe Shunsuke. 2021. "Kōshibyō tochi shiyōryō menjo wa iken seikyōbunri soshōde saikōsai." *Asahi Shinbun*, February 24. Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.asahi.com/articles/ASP2S54RJP2KUTIL018.html](http://www.asahi.com/articles/ASP2S54RJP2KUTIL018.html)
- Aera Henshūbu, ed. 1996. *Sōka gakkai kaibō*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun.
- Agency for Cultural Affairs. *Shūkyō nenkan 2020*. Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.bunka.go.jp/tokei\\_hakusho\\_shuppan/hakusho\\_nenjihokokusho/shukyo\\_nenkan/index.html](http://www.bunka.go.jp/tokei_hakusho_shuppan/hakusho_nenjihokokusho/shukyo_nenkan/index.html)
- Asano Hidemitsu. 1974. *Watashi no mita sōka gakkai*. Tokyo: Keizai Ōraisha.
- Asayama Taichi. 2017. *Uchigawa kara miru Sōka gakkai to Kōmeitō*. Tokyo: Discovery Twenty-One.
- Avenell, Simon. 2010. *Making Japanese Citizens: Civil Society and the Mythology of the Shimin in Postwar Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Baffelli, Erica and Reader, Ian. 2012. "Editor's Introduction: Impact and Ramifications: The Aftermath of the Aum Affair in the Japanese Religious Context." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 39 (1): 1–28.
2019. *Dynamism and the Ageing of a Japanese 'New' Religion: Transformations and the Founder*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Benn, James A., and Balkwill, Stephanie. 2021. "Buddhist Statecraft." In *Oxford Bibliographies*. Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0269.xml](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0269.xml)
- Berman, Michael. 2018. "Religion Overcoming Religions: Suffering, Secularism, and the Training of Interfaith Chaplains, in Japan." *American Ethnologist* 45 (2): 228–40.
- Blacker, Carmen. 1975. *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Buddhist NGO Network, ed. 2013. *Ji'in to chiiki no kizuna de takameru ji'in bisai gaidobukku*. Tokyo: BNN.
- Covell, Stephen G. 2005. *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Dower, John W. 1999. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Ehrhardt, George, Klein, Axel, McLaughlin, Levi and Reed, Steven R., eds. 2014. *Kōmeitō: Politics and Religion in Japan*. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies.
- Field, Norma. 1991. *In the Realm of a Dying Emperor: Japan at Century's End*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Fujiyama Midori. 2020. *Rinshō shūkyōshi: shi no bansōsha*. Tokyo: Kōbunken.
- Genron Shuppan no Jiyū o Mamoru Kai, ed. 2012. *Fujiwara Hirotsu Sōka gakkai o kiru 41-nen no kenshō*. Tokyo: Nisshin Hōdō.

- Gill, Tom, Steger, Brigitte and Slater, David H., eds. 2013. *Japan Copes with Calamity: Ethnographies of the Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disasters of March 2011*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Global Religious Futures Project. 2016. "Japan." Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/japan/#?affiliations\\_religion\\_id=0&affiliations\\_year=2050&region\\_name=All%20Countries&restrictions\\_year=2016](http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/japan/#?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2050&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2016)
- Gordon, Andrew, ed. 1993. *Postwar Japan as History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Graf, Tim. 2016. "Buddhist Responses to the 3.11 Disasters in Japan." In *Disasters and Social Crisis in Contemporary Japan: Political, Religious, and Cultural Responses*, edited by Mark Mullins and Koichi Nakano, 156–81. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hardacre, Helen. 1989. *Shinto and the State, 1868–1988*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
2002. *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Japan: A Study of the Southern Kantō Region, Using Late Edo and Early Meiji Gazetteers*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
2017. *Shinto: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hardacre, Helen, George, Timothy S., Komamura, Keigo and Seraphim, Franziska, eds. 2021. *Japanese Constitutional Revisionism and Civic Activism*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Higuma Takenori. 1971. *Toda Jōsei/Sōka gakkai*. Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha.
- Hori Yukio [1973] 1999. *Kōmeitōron*. Tokyo: Nansōsha.
- Horie Norichika and Takahashi Hara. 2021. *Shisha no chikara: tsunami hisaichi "reiteki taiken" no shiseigaku*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- Horii, Mitsutoshi. 2018. *The Category of 'Religion' in Contemporary Japan: Shūkyō and Temple Buddhism*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hur, Nam-lin. 2007. *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- "Hyōgoken nanbu jishin kara ichinen zadankai." 1996. *Chūgai Nippō*, January 1.
- Ishii Kenchi. 2008. *Dētā bukku: gendai Nihonjin no shūkyō*. Tokyo: Shin'yōsha.
- Josephson, Jason Ananda. 2012. *The Invention of Religion in Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kasai, Kenta. 2016. "Introducing Chaplaincy to Japanese Society: A Religious Practice in Public Space." *Journal of Religion in Japan* 5 (2–3): 246–62.
- Ketelaar, James. 1989. *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kingston, Jeff. 2012. *Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan: Response and Recovery after Japan's 3/11*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kisala, Robert. 2000. *Prophets of Peace: Pacifism and Cultural Identity in Japan's New Religions*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Kiuchi Hiroshi. 1974. *Kōmeitō to Sōka gakkai*. Tokyo: Gōdō Shuppan.
- Klautau, Orion. 2014. "Nationalizing the Dharma: Takakusu Junjirō and the Study of Buddhism in Taishō Japan." *Japanese Religions* 34: 53–70.
- Klautau, Orion and Krämer, Hans Martin, eds. 2021. *Buddhism and Modernity: Sources from Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Klein, Axel. 2015. "Kōmeitō: Rock 'n' Row the Coalition Boat." In *Japan Decides 2014*, edited by Robert Pekkanen, Steven R. Reed, and Ethan Scheiner, 72–86. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Klein, Axel and McLaughlin, Levi. 2022. "Kōmeitō: The Party and Its Place in Japanese Politics." In *The Oxford Handbook of Japanese Politics*, edited by Robert J. Pekkanen and Saadia M. Pekkanen, 201–22. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Kōmeitō. 1964. "Printed transcript of founding statement." ed. 1973. *Kōmeitō handobukku*. Tokyo: Kōmeitō.
2017. *Shūinsen jūten seisaku*. Accessed on January 5, 2021. [www.komei.or.jp/campaign/shuin2017/manifesto/manifesto2017\\_1.pdf](http://www.komei.or.jp/campaign/shuin2017/manifesto/manifesto2017_1.pdf)
2019. *Shūinsen 2019 manifesuto*. Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.komei.or.jp/campaign/sanin2019/policy](http://www.komei.or.jp/campaign/sanin2019/policy)
2021. *Shūinsen seisakushū*. Accessed on January 5, 2021. [www.komei.or.jp/special/shuin49/wp-content/uploads/manifesto2021.pdf](http://www.komei.or.jp/special/shuin49/wp-content/uploads/manifesto2021.pdf)
- Kōmeitō Shi Hensa Iinkai, ed. 2014. *Kōmeitō 50 nen no ayumi*. Tokyo: Kōmeitō Kikanshi Iinkai.
- Kurata Takuji et al. 2002. *Hanketsu, soken no ranyō: danzai saretā gyōgen soshō*. Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha.
- Kuroda Toshio. 1996. "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23 (3-4): 271-85.
- Kuroda Nobuyuki and Tsuganesawa Toshihiro, eds. 1999. *Shinsai no shakaigaku: Hanshin/ Awaji daishinsai to minshū ishiki*. Kyoto: Sekai Shisōsha.
- Kyodo. 2021. "Top Court Says Free Land Offer for Confucian Temple was Unconstitutional." *The Japan Times*, February 24. Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/02/24/national/crime-legal/okinawa-temple-land/](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/02/24/national/crime-legal/okinawa-temple-land/)
- Larsson, Emils. 2017. "Jinja Honchō and the Politics of Constitutional Reform in Japan." *Japan Review* 30: 227-52.
2020. *Rituals of a Secular Nation: Shinto Normativity and the Separation of Religion and State in Postwar Japan*. PhD thesis, Uppsala University, Sweden.
- Le, Tom Phuong. 2021. *Japan's Aging Peace: Pacifism and Militarism in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Liff, Adam and Ko Maeda. 2019. "Electoral Incentives, Policy Compromises, and Coalition Durability: Japan's LDP-Komeito Government in a Mixed Electoral System." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 20 (1): 53-73.
- Lindgren, Petter. 2016. "Kōmeitō's Security Ideals and Collective Self-Defense: Betwixt Pacifism and Compromises." *East Asia* 33: 233-54.
- Liu, Cuilan. 2020. "The Fall of a Chinese Buddhist Monk: Law and State Governance of State Buddhism in Post-Imperial China." *Journal of Law and Religion* 35 (3): 432-49.
- LoBreglio, John. 1997. "The Revisions to the Religious Corporations Law: An Introduction and Annotated Translation." *Japanese Religions* 22 (1): 38-59.
- Lyons, Adam J. 2021. *Karma and Punishment: Prison Chaplaincy in Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McLaughlin, Levi. 2015. "Komeito's Soka Gakkai Protestors and Supporters: Religious Motivations for Political Activism in Contemporary Japan." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 13 (41/1): 1-28. Accessed on November 15, 2021. <https://apjif.org/Levi-McLaughlin/4386>
- 2016a. "Hard Lessons Learned: Tracking Changes in Media Presentations of Religion and Religious Aid Mobilization after the 1995 and 2011 Disasters in Japan." *Asian Ethnology* 75 (1): 105-38.
- 2016b. "Religious Responses to the 2011 Tsunami in Japan." In *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935420.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935420-e-29](http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935420.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935420-e-29)
- 2019a. *Soka Gakkai's Human Revolution: The Rise of a Mimetic Nation in Modern Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- 2019b. "Using Buddhist Resources in Post-disaster Japan: Taniyama Yōzō's 'Vihāra Priests and Buddhist Chaplains.'" In *Buddhism and Medicine: An Anthology of Modern Sources*, edited by Pierce Salguero, 164-76. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Matsumoto Katsuya. 1973. *Soshō saretā Sōka gakkai*. Tokyo: Gendai Burēnsha.
- Midford, Paul. 2020. *Overcoming Isolationism: Japan's Leadership in East Asian Security Multilateralism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Miki Hizuru, ed. 2001. *Fukkō to shūkyō: shinsaigo no hito to shakai o iyasu mono*. Osaka: Tōhō.
2012. "Hanshin Awaji daishinsai hisaichi ni okeru shūkyō no 'tōji' to 'ima.'" *Shūkyō kenkyū* 86 (2): 421–46.
- Mullins, Mark R. 2021. *Yasukuni Fundamentalism: Japanese Religions and the Politics of Restoration*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Murakami Shigeyoshi, 1967. *Sōka gakkai = Kōmeitō*. Tokyo: Aoki Shoten.
- Nakai, Kate Wildman. 2017. "Between Secularity, Shrines, and Protestantism: Catholic Higher Education in Prewar Japan." *Japan Review* 30: 97–127.
- Nakano Jun. 2016. *Sōka gakkai/Kōmeitō no kenkyū: jiko renritsu seiken no naizai ronri*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.
- National Diet Library. "The Constitution of the Empire of Japan." Accessed on November 15, 2021. [www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/co2.html](http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/etc/co2.html)
- NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute. 2020. *Gendai Nihonjin no ishiki kōzō* (9th ed.). Tokyo: NHK Books.
- Nishihonganji Hanshin and Awaji Daishinsai Fukkō Shien Renraku Kyōgikai, ed. 1998. *Hanshin/Awaji daishinsai fukkō shien katsudō hōkoku: rokkōan monogatari*. Kyoto: Nishihonganji.
- Nishiyama Shigeru. 1975. "Nichiren shōshū sōka gakkai ni okeru 'honmon kaidan' ron no hensens: Seijiteki shūkyō undō to shakai tōsei." In *Nichirensū no shomondai*, edited by Takashi Nakao, 241–75. Tokyo: Yūzankaku.
- O'Brien, David and Yasuo Ohkoshi. 1996. *To Dream of Dreams: Religious Freedom and Constitutional Politics in Postwar Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Okamoto Masahiro. 2014. "Higashi Nihon daishinsai ni okeru 18 shūkyō kyōdan no hisaisha/chi shien katsudō chōsa ni tsuite: chōsa hōkoku ni, jakkan no kōsatsu o kuwaete." JANPORA: Japan NPO Research Association Discussion Papers.
- Okkotsu Masao. 2003. *Kōmeitō = Sōka gakkai no shinjitsu 2: "Jisō" gōseiken o utsu*. Kyoto: Kamogawa Shuppan.
- Ooms, Herman. 2008. *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650–800*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, ed. 2012. *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Major Religious Groups as of 2010*. Washington DC: Pew Research Center.
- Piggott, Joan R. 1997. *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet. 1946. "The Constitution of Japan." Accessed on November 15, 2021. [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution\\_and\\_government\\_of\\_japan/constitution\\_e.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html)
- Rots, Aike P. 2017. *Shinto, Nature and Ideology in Contemporary Japan: Making Sacred Forests*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Rowe, Mark M. 2011. *Bonds of the Dead: Temples, Burial, and the Transformation of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2017. "Charting Known Territory: Female Buddhist Priests." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 44 (1): 75–101.
- Ruoff, Kenneth J. 2020. *Japan's Imperial House in the Postwar Era*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Sakurai Yoshihide and Kawamata Toshinori, eds. 2016. *Jinkō genshō shakai to jūin: sōsharu kyapitaru no shiza kara*. Kyoto: Hōzōkan.
- Sango, Asuka. 2015. *The Halo of Golden Light: Imperial Authority and Buddhist Ritual in Heian Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sawada, Janine Tasca. 2004. *Practical Pursuits: Religion, Politics, and Personal Cultivation in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Schonthal, Benjamin. 2017. "Formations of Buddhist Constitutionalism in South and Southeast Asia." *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 15 (3): 705–33.
2021. "The Case for Religious Constitutions: Comparative Constitutional Law among Buddhists and Other Religious Groups." *Law & Social Inquiry* 20: 1–29.
- Shields, James Mark. 2017. *Against Harmony: Progressive and Radical Buddhism in Modern Japan*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shimada Hiromi. 2004. *Sōka gakkai*. Tokyo: Shinchō Shinsho.
- Shimada Hiromi et al. 2007. *Ikeda Daisaku nakiato no Sōka gakkai*. Tokyo: Takarajimasha.
- The Constitution of the Soka Gakkai. 2017. Accessed on November 15, 2012. [www.sokanet.jp/info/constitution.html](http://www.sokanet.jp/info/constitution.html)
- Sōka Gakkai Nenpyō Hensan Iinkai, ed. 1976. *Sōka gakkai nenpyō*. Tokyo: Seikyō Shinbunsha.
- Sōka Gakkai Yonjūshūnenshi Hensan Iinkai, ed. 1970. *Sōka gakkai yonjūshūnenshi*. Tokyo: Sōka Gakkai.
- "Sōka Gakkai yūshi 'iraku hantai shomei' o kōmei ni teishutsu." 2004. *Asahi Shinbun*, January 21.
- Starling, Jessica. 2019. *Guardians of the Buddha's Home: Domestic Religion in Contemporary Jōdo Shinshū*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Stone, Jacqueline I. 2003. "'By Imperial Edict and Shogunal Decree': Politics and the Issue of the Ordination Platform in Modern Lay Nichiren Buddhism." In *Buddhism in the Modern World: Adaptions of an Ancient Tradition*, edited by Steven Heine and Charles Prebish, 193–220. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Suzuki Hiroshi. 1970. *Toshūteki sekai*. Tokyo: Seishin Shobō.
- Takahashi, Hara. 2016. "The Ghosts of Tsunami Dead and *Kokoro no kea* in Japan's Religious Landscape." *Journal of Religion in Japan* 5: 176–98.
- Takahata, Eiichiro. 2007. "Religious Accommodation in Japan." *BYU Law Review* 2007 (3): 729–50.
- Tamamuro Fumio. 2001. "Local Society and the Temple-Parishioner Relationship within the Bakufu's Governance Structure." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28 (3–4): 261–92.
- Tamano Kazushi. 2008. *Sōka gakkai no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Kōdansha.
- Thal, Sarah. 2005. *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573–1912*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thomas, Jolyon B. 2019. *Faking Liberties: Religious Freedom in American-Occupied Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Toda Jōsei. 1956. *Toda Jōsei-sensei kantōgenshū*. Tokyo: Sōka Gakkai.
- Tōyō Tetsugaku Kenkyūjo, ed. 1993. *Yūjinsō o kangaeru: Nihon ni okeru bukkyō to girei*. Tokyo: Daisan Bunmeisha.
- Tōyō Tetsugaku Kenkyūjo, 2006. *Yūjinsō no genzai: kawariyuku sōsō girei*. Tokyo: Tōyō Tetsugaku Kenkyūjo.
- Tsukada Hotaka. 2015. *Shūkyō to seiji no tentetsuten*. Tokyo: Kadensha.
- Victoria, Brian. 2006. *Zen at War* (2nd ed.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

- White, James W. 1970. *The Sōkagakkai and Mass Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Williams, Duncan Ryūken. 2004. *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen History in Tokugawa Japan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yasumaru Yoshio. 1979. *Kamigami no meiji ishin: shinbutsu bunri to haibutsu kishaku*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho
- Zhong, Yijiang. 2016. *The Origin of Modern Shinto in Japan: The Vanquished Gods of Izumo*. London: Bloomsbury.