Yaso-san versus the Meiji state

The question of patriotism in the roots of the Non-Church Movement

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Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) was as unapologetically Christian as he was a Japanese patriot. In one of the last of the fifty volumes the scholar and apologist wrote, he included what has become his famous "Two J's" essay. "I love two J's and no third: one is Jesus, and the other is Japan," he wrote, "I do not know which I love more, Jesus or Japan."[1] Uchimura struggled over this issue since he became a Christian six decades prior as a student at Sapporo Agricultural College. It seemed, from his experience, that to be a Christian was to be an enemy of his country. "I am hated by my countrymen for Jesus' sake as *yaso*."[2]

Christianity: the "non-mixer" in the modern Japanese state.

Yaso-san, as Jesus was known in Japan, was a divider, a "non-mixer," as British missionary Raymond Hammer called him in 1961.[3] Jesus as a "non-mixer" was part of Christian doctrine and the division that so consumed Uchimura's life would have been expected by the missionaries who taught him at Sapporo. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' teachings promised division. "From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other," Luke records.[4] The divisive nature of Christianity goes against the experience of Japan, which underwent the successful indigenization of Confucianism and Buddhism, both foreign in origin and, by Uchimura's lifetime, more or less acculturated with indigenous Shintō.[5] Uchimura knew that unless he could Japanize Jesus, his faith and his fellow Christians would be thrown aside by the growing tide of nationalism that swept the post-Meiji Japan in which he lived his life.

Yaso-san's career in modern Japan provides a clear lens through which to view the changing thought behind Japan's rapid modernization and polity-building following the Meiji Restoration, a project that continued through the pluralistic yet reactive Taishō era. Uchimura was born at the beginning of this time,

Uchimura Kanzō leaning on some of the fifty religious and patriotic volumes he authored.

the eldest son of a lower-class samurai in the Takasaki domain, which was loyal to the shogun during the Boshin War, which saw his ouster.[6] It was the samurai class from these loyal domains, their positions in peril, who were most open to the foreign religion, seeing it as a path back to power.[7] Instead of access to Western power, these converts, Uchimura among them, became suspect in a Meiji social order based on the attempted creation of a collective polity, which could be mobilized and utilized by the state to impose its will and policies. Confucian ideals of obedience to the emperor, along with the fact that the emperor was the high Shintō priest, made the Emperor Meiji the perfect focus for the Japanese collective. Christianity's focus on the individual conversion experience and the focus on Christ made it a threat to the Meiji concept of *kokumin*, meant to unify. Hozumi Yatsuka, the preeminent Meiji political thinker, identified the existence of private morality as a serious threat to the state.[8] Yaso-san was, from the Meiji point of view, not only a moral outrage, but also a source of non-

[1] "Two J's" (1926), quoted by Shibuya Hiroshi ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan: The Social and Theological Thought of Uchimura Kanzo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013): *x*.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Raymond Hammer, *Japan's Religious Ferment: Christian Presence amid Faiths Old and New* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962): 91.

[4] Luke 12:51-3.

[5] Walter Skya, *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shinto Ultranationalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009): 74.

[6] Shibuya Hiroshi, "A Biographical Sketch of Uchimura Kanzō," from *Living for Jesus and Japan: The Social and Theological Thought of Uchimura Kanzo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013): 1-2.

[7] Irwin Scheiner, *Christian Converts and Social protest in Meiji Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970): 5-6.

[8] Skya: 72-3.

conforming political opponents. After all, as Max Weber pointed out, Jesus taught that the way to salvation was "absolute indifference to the world and its concerns," a philosophy that squarely contradicted the goals of the Japanese state, which hoped to extend its influence in the world and its concerns.[9]

The Meiji movement was about building a modern state which could defend Japan from the potential foreign domination which ruined Chinese sovereignty. Such a modern state requires the ability to mobilize the masses to wage war and industrialize and realize other projects dictated by the state. The people, it was thought by critics such as Hozumi Yatsuka, must be directed by the state, and must be tied together by allegiance to the emperor alone. Where is there room for allegiance to transcendental non-state entities like Yaso-san, who taught his followers to reject the world? It is no surprise that Uchimura's students, who rejected "this-worldliness," as Weber put it, were among the most vocal critics of the Russo-Japanese War and that Japanese Christians were the first to speak out against the militarism and quest for a Pan-Asian empire that marked the Japanese state in the early Shōwa period.[10] Hozumi, a one-time student in Strasbourg at the frontier between rivals France and Germany, observed the coalescing polity in the newly unified German state struggling with the same issue as they instituted the infamous policy of *Kulturkampf*, to sweep from German culture the non-state influence of the Catholic Church.[11]

Uchimura saw no such struggle between Japan and Yaso-san. Japan and Jesus were inexorably tied together by a mission to transform the world. Uchimura tried to counter attacks on his fellow Christians by attempting to Japanize Christianity with his Mukyōkai movement, to accomplish what had been accomplished with Shingon Buddhism and the neo-Confucianism of his youth.[12] His goal was the "grafting" of Christian thought and practice so that it would be compatible with the formation of the Japanese state, but his pacifist stances put him at odds with the goals of the state.[13]

The Charter Oath of 1868 and the Re-introduction of Christianity in Japan.

The reason Hozumi was studying in Germany while his contemporary Uchimura went to study in the U.S., was to satisfy the fifth and last article of the newly enthroned Emperor Meiji's famous Charter Oath of 1868. The foundational document of the Meiji state directed that "knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundations of imperial rule."[14] The order may seem to contradict the "Order to Expel Barbarians" made by his father, the Emperor Kōmei, only five years prior. Kōmei was riding the anti-foreigner wave of support which reasserted the emperor as the center of Japanese politics, if at least as a figurehead, at the end of the Boshun War. Almost as soon as the age-old anti-foreigner slogan "Sonnō Jōi"[15] had come back into fashion, leaders of the Restoration movement dropped the controversial slogan.[16] The very people who cursed the foreigners in 1863 were in 1868 seeking out foreign knowledge in an official push to modernize Japan and make it among the powers of the world.

Western experts, called *oyatoi gaikokujin*, were sought out and hired to provide new agricultural, technological, and ideological innovations to the rapidly modernizing Meiji state.[17] Dr. William S. Clark, an agricultural expert from New England, was hired by the Meiji Colonization Office in 1876 to found the Sapporo Agricultural College in order to teach the latest innovations in farming and husbandry to potential future bureaucrats, almost all of which, like young Uchimura were pulled from the *bushido* class.[18] During his eight months in Japan, Clark's influence on his students was incredible, and his final words to his students, "Boys! Be ambitious," are still memorialized in Sapporo.[19] Clark, extra-legally made use of the Bible during instruction on ethics, and he led the first Sapporo class to sign a "Covenant of Believers in

[9] Max Weber. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978): 633.
[10] Yagyu Kunichika, "Prophetic nationalism: Uchimura between God and Japan," from Hiroshi, ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan*: 87.
[11] Michael B. Gross, "Kulturkampf and Unification: German Liberalism and the War against the Jesuits," *Central European History* 30, no. 4 (1997): 547
[12] Shibuya Hiroshi, "Uchimura and His Mukyokai-Shugi," from Hiroshi, ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan*: 140.
[13] Grafting is the word Uchimura chose to use to describe his goal., per Ibid.
[14] Charter Oath of the Meiji Restoration (1868); from Wm. Theodore de Bary, et. al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia U Press, 1964): 137.
[15] "Revere the emperor, expel the barbarians!"
[16] Albert Craig, "The Restoration Movement in Choshu," *Journal of Asian Studies* 18, no. 2 (Feb., 1959): 197.
[17] George Oshiro, "Nitobe Inazo and the Sapporo Band: Reflections on the Dawn of Christianity in Early Meiji Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34, no. 1 (2007): 102.
[18] John Maki, *A Yankee in Hokkaido: The Life of William Smith Clark, (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2002): 131, 151.*
[19] Oshido: 102

The now famous statue of Dr. William S. Clark in Sapporo urging all who see it to "be ambitious."

Jesus," gifting each student with their own personal copies of the Bible.[20] His student saw Christian values as supplemental and complimentary to the *bushido* values taught to them by their parents. For them, Christianity not only was a means to an end, but also was beneficial and "graftable," to use Uchimura's word, to their native ethos.[21] Whether Christianity was part of the foreign knowledge Japanese students were directed by the Charter Oath to seek was still up for debate. In fact, three bands of *bushido* converts can be identified in this early period, with the Sapporo Band being the most isolated in Hokkaido.[22] For the time being, along with the new technological innovations that *oyatoi gaikokujin* like Clark brought from the West to Japan, they also carried with them, and wore on their sleeves, their Christian faith. Christianity, however, was not a new innovation in Japan and its history in Japan proves that the exclusive religion of Yaso-San was already subject to a process of indigenization.

Persecution of the first indigenous Christian churches in Japan.

Christians had visited Japan during the wars which led to the establishment of the Tukogawa state four centuries prior to Meiji's Charter Oath and the development of the Sapporo College. The Portuguese Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier, managed to build a thriving mission in the war-torn country in the mid-1500s, under the protection of feuding daimyos who were interested in the international trade that missionaries brought with them. The faith flourished for decades, made acceptable in part because Xavier's interpreter translated the Portuguese "Deus" as "Dainichi," the name for Buddha in the Japanized Shingon sect.[23] Toleration continued until Hideyoshi united the country under his thumb by 1590. A series of bans accompanied the political change, climaxing with the 1614 ban by the shogun Ieyasu who proclaimed Japan "the country of the kami and of Buddha."[24] Christians were considered traitors to Japanese tradition and were forced to recant by trampling an image of Yaso-san or face excruciating deaths, which included the lowering of the head into piles of excrement.[25] After the Shimabara Rebellion of 1638, disgruntled rebel farmers carried a flag adorned with the Portuguese phrase "Praised be the Blessed Sacrament" and were met with massacre at the hands of the shogun. As 40,000 suspected rebels were put to death, Christianity was consequently destroyed, as it was seen as a threat to the Neo-Confucian Tokugawa order.[26] Any Japanese Christians who managed to escape subsequent waves of persecution and toleration over the next century and a half went into hiding where they privately observed their own holy days, saints, rituals, and church structure.[27]

These Christians, known as the Kakure Kirishitan, emerged only after the West's opening of Tokugawa Japan and the Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1858, which legalized Christianity in port cities so long as evangelism was limited to ex-pats.[28] Foreign Christians were placed under police surveillance, but eventually native Nagasaki residents began showing up at the newly built churches.[29] Fifteen Kakure arrived at the door of a small church built by Bernard Petijean, a French Catholic priest and evangelical pioneer working in the treaty port of Nagasaki, in the spring of 1865.[30] Later they brought Petijean a copy of their holy book called *Tenchi Hajimari no Koto*,[31] which proved to be a curious amalgamation of faded memories of 16th century Franciscan meditations and prayers, Buddhist cosmology, ancestor worship, Shintō mythology, and bits and pieces of the Bible. Its text includes magical

[20] The complete text of this covenant can be found in Oshido: 104-6.
[21] Scheiner: 44.
[22] Ibid.: 107.
[23] Christal Whelen, *The Beginning of Heaven and Earth: The Sacred Book of Japan's Hidden Christians*. (Honolulu: University of Hawa'I Press, 1996): 4-5.
[24] Whelen: 8.
[25] Stephen Turnbill, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan* (Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1998): 41-2.
[26] Ibid.: 40.
[27] Whelen: 12.
[28] Hammer: 101.
[29] Anesaki Masaharu, *Religious Life of the Japanese People* (Tokyo: Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, 1961): 84.
[30] Whelan.: 13.
[31] Translates to "Beginning of Heaven and Earth."

A Marian image of the Hanare Kirishitan recorded by researcher Stephen Turnbill.

stories of lion-dog statues carrying the lame son of a king across the sea and more Biblical accounts that refer to a Noah-like "Pappa Maruji" and the death of "the Holy One" on a "Cross tree."[32] The stories take place wholly in Japan, referring often to the creation of familiar places, and holding up Japan as a sacred place, the site of Paradise.[33]

Eventually, in the atmosphere of the changing government brought about by the Meiji Restoration, over 50,000 people emerged. They received Petijean's catechism and made offerings before his statues of the deity they called "Maria-sama," the shaman turned goddess, depicted by the *Tenchi*, who was based on memories of the Virgin Mary.[34] Of these 50,000, only half of them decided to throw away their "incorrect" Kakure religion in favor of the institutionalized Catholic doctrine, showing their rededication by burning their Buddhist altars and *kami* shelves.[35] The other half preferred the Japanized religion with which they had grown up and chose to continue their secret worship, sharing their communion with the *kami* that Catholic priests labelled as devils. These Hanare Kirishitan, that is "separated Christians" continued to hold secret funerals, only after performing Buddhist funerals.[36] Frustrated missionaries found these unapologetic Hanare practitioners particularly frustrating, one of them complaining in 1878 that the Japanized Christians "were further from conversion than the pagans."[37]

The existence of the Kakure and Hanare Kirishitan and their *Tenchi* prove that Christianity was not impervious to indigenization, but their beliefs, rituals, and organization so deviate from anything resembling Christianity, it is hard to prove they are Christian at all. Their small and far-flung numbers and secretive nature made them little threat to the Meiji state, but even they received persecution at the hands of the authorities. After the discovery of the Kirishitan, the Meiji took a hard line on the Japanese "Christians," ignoring attempts by Western missionaries to protect them, banishing the Kirishitan from their homes, resettling them, and re-educating them by the thousands.[38]

There was no room for the foreign Yaso-san among the kami of the state Shintō set up by the Meiji government. The Meiji revolutionaries were adherents to the teachings of Aizawa Seishisai, among the first Japanese scholars to define the elements of the polity as a sacred *kokutai*, handed down to the emperor by the sun goddess Amaterasu. Writing during the period of the West's gunboat diplomacy, Aizawa saw all foreign religious influences from Christianity to Buddhism as the source of a lack of vigilance which infected the Tokugawa polity and that kept them immobilized and unready to defend Japan from foreign incursions.[39] Even in the inner circle of the shogunate there was skepticism that Christian influence would serve to break down the hierarchy and very structure of Japan's government. Tukogawa Nariaki urged the Shogun to rebuke Christians, reminding him of their 17th century expulsion. Nariaki described Christianity as "witchcraft" that "would disorder the minds of men and steal their countries."[40] As the enemies of the Tokugawa attempted to justify their restoration of the emperor into the center of Japanese affairs, they turned to Aizawa's neo-Confucian writings for inspiration, and proclaimed the emperor a living god, or *Tennō*, who represented the state, and whom must be obeyed.[41]

Growing independence of the Bushido Christians.

Young Uchimura Kanzō, born in 1861, to a samurai family, had been raised expecting to serve the shogun, but instead the Meiji Restoration left his father in ruins and he found himself in the second class of the government's Sapporo Agricultural College in 1877. While Clark had recently vanished from the scene, his charge the first class at Sapporo to "be ambitious," did not fall on deaf ears. The first class was determined to honor their sensei and forcefully cajoled the second class into signing the Christian covenant Clark left with

[32] Whelan: 59-60.
[33] Ibid: 42-3.
[34] Ibid.: 14.
[35] Turnbill: 50.
[36] Whelan: 14 and Turnbill: 172, 220.
[37] Turnbill: 216.
[38] Anesaki: 84-5.
[39] Donald Keene, "A Plan for Tasks at Hand: Aizawa Seishisai's Jimusaku," *Monumenta Nipponica* 62, no. 1 (Spring, 2007): 75-6.
[40] Naraiki, quoted by Kiri Paramoure, *Ideology and Christianity in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2009): 122-3.
[41] Helen Hardacre, "Religious Nationalism and the Making of the Modern Japanese State," *theory and Society* 37, no. 4 (Aug., 2008): 360.

them. Uchimura said, "They tried to convert the 'freshies' by storm," but the young, patriotic Uchimura held out until he was the last 'freshie' standing.[42] It was loneliness that brought him to accept the covenant, even though such a vow was not taken lightly. "I early learned to honor my nation above all others, and to worship my nation's gods and no others. I thought I could not be forced even by death itself to vow my allegiance to any other gods than my country's," he wrote in 1895. Uchimura knew that he had vowed to be "a traitor to my country and an apostate from my national faith by accepting a faith which is exotic in origin."[43]

Uchimura grew up during the Sonnō Jōi-era Meiji proscription on Christianity that was only strengthened after the discovery of the Kakure Kirishitan. The Meiji junta ruling the country began a "Teaching Subjects Campaign" in 1871 in an effort to coerce the public to subscribe to an evolving state Shintō religion.[44] Christianity was a threat to this effort. Anti-Christian placards would have been noticeable in public places by young Uchimura. There were arrests and even death sentences carried out when Japanese were found in violation of the proscription. Bible studies were being broken up by authorities in Tokyo in 1871 and Westerners in the treaty ports found their Bibles being confiscated.[45] The legendary Confucian teacher Sokken Yasui warned the Japanese to resist a rising call among those in the samurai class and some in Meiji junta to lift the proscription on Christianity. One of his final works, 1873's *Benbō*, criticized the samurai converts as being responsible for the weakening of the state and moral order:

> *"The followers of Western learning do not understand what loyalty, filial piety, benevolence and righteousness are… so, never giving up their liking for difference, they become Christians. And not giving up Christianity, they fall into becoming people who forsake their sovereigns and forsake their fathers."*[46]

Uchimura wrote of the very issue Sokken commented on when he recalled in his autobiography the shame he felt for leaving his Christian wife after a short and bitter marriage and staying in his parents' household as a result of a bad marriage.[47] It seemed to him that the filial piety that so defined the Shintō order was in direct contradiction to the Bible's words "a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife."[48] A battle between the Confucian ethics and Christian ethics raged within the young Uchimura.

Because of the pleas of neo-Confucians like Aizawa and Sokken to continue the proscription against Christianity, pressure on the state to lift the ban by diplomats from the Western powers failed. Change could only prevail if it came from inside the tight-knit Meiji junta. The Meirokusha, a think tank founded by Meiji educator and diplomat Mori Arinori upon his return from diplomatic service to the U.S., promoted a rededication of the state to the fifth article of Emperor Meiji's Charter Oath which sought to increase knowledge of the wider world. A member of the group, Confucian scholar Nakamura Masanao, who had visited Britain in 1868 and converted despite the proscription in 1871, petitioned the emperor on behalf of the dispersed Kakure and persecuted Protestant missions, reminding the emperor of the Charter Oath. "The condition of Western countries," he wrote, "is but the outward leaf and bloom of their religion."[49] When Iwakura Tomimi was sent out in 1872 to renegotiate treaties with the Western powers, he was met with resistance based on the complaints to their respective government by Western missionaries. Iwakura wrote back to the Meiji about his difficulties and saw to it that the proscription against Christianity was officially lifted in 1873.[50]

Even though the proscription against Christianity was lifted, the years of persecution had a profound impact on even the Japanese who might be open to Christian conversion and accounted for Uchimura's nervousness to sign the Sapporo band's covenant when he entered the college and the internal ethical struggle that dominated his early years as a Christian. The fact that Christianity was a foreign, barbarian religion was hard to shake for many potential converts. Still, many in the samurai class *did* convert and were eager students of the Bible and Christian thought.

Western missionaries, sensing the rising nationalism in Meiji Japan, publicly hoped for the organization of an indigenous Japanese Church

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[42] Uchimura Kanzō, *Diary of a Japanese Convert* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895): 20.
[43] Ibid.: 20-1.
[44] Hardacre: 360.
[45] Schiener: 15, 16.
[46] Sokken Yasui, 1873, from Kiri Paramoure, *Ideology and Christianity in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2009): 127.
[47] The custom was for newly married couples to live with the husband's parents. His wife and mother were prone to fighting and Uchimura chose to divorce his wife.
[48] Shibuya Hiroshi, "Biographical Sketch..," from Hiroshi, ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan*: 6 and Ephesians 5:31.
[49] Scheiner: 17.
[50] Ibid.: 19.

independent of Western efforts.[51] Their converts like Paul Sawayama pressured indigenous missionaries to turn away money from Western missionary societies and urged Japanese Christians to support their own churches financially. "The spirit of self-support makes Christians think the church is their own and it cultivates an independent and diligent spirit toward our duties," Sawayama explained at an 1881 missions conference after having championed the establishment of a self-supporting indigenous Church for nearly a decade.[52]

When the Nippon Kyōkai broke off from the Western-supported Presbyterian Church in Tokyo, it was done based on an "enforcing [of] an extreme anti-foreign principle of independence."[53] Japanese Christians, like their Shintō and Buddhist counterparts in Japan were wary of foreigners and domination by Westerners. They expressed the nationalism that so defined the Meiji era when they followed Sawayama's advice and founded indigenous versions of Protestant churches. In some ways, they may have been responding to their Shintō neighbors who derided them as "rice Christians" who were simple puppets of uncivilized barbarians.[54]

Young Uchimura during his visit to America.

Indeed, even Uchimura's high expectations of the West were dashed by what he called the "un-christian features of Christendom" that he discovered during a sojourn to the U.S. from 1884 to 1888.[55] He was upset by the profanity that poured from American mouths, crime, and urban materialism.[56] Racial prejudice in America bothered him more than anything. He wrote in his memoirs abut an encounter in Chicago, "Upon telling my friend that this making a sharp racial distinction appeared to me very Pagan-like, his emphatic answer was that he would rather be a Pagan and live separate from 'niggers' than be a Christian and live in the same quarters as them!"[57] Rather than letting frustrations disenchant him from his new-found faith, Uchimura began to rethink Christianity and the role of the West in Christendom. He quoted a Chinese sage in his diary, "He who stays in a mountain knows not the mountain. So with one's own country."[58] Instead of seeing Japan as a sub-par third rate nation, as Western missionaries always made him feel it was, he saw Japan as occupying a central role in God's plan:

> *"But looking at a distance from the land of my exile, my country ceased to me to be good for nothing. It began to appear superbly beautiful… occupying a definitive space in the universe with its own historic individualities. Its existence as a nation was decreed by heaven itself and its mission in the world and human race was, and is being, distinctly announced."*[59]

He called this mission for Japan *tenshoku* and, while Uchimura certainly was not from the right-wing, *tenshoku* resembled the pan-Asianist ideas that formed in Japan in the very years of Uchimura's political awakening. *Tenshoku* also resembled the mixture of mission and patriotism than underlie the American idea of "an errand in the wilderness," an idea that Uchimura would have been met with while studying at Amherst during his tour.[60] Uchimura concluded that his modernizing homeland seemed to be in a unique and divinely-inspired position to act as arbiter between the West and the rest of Asia.[61] Instead of the war and conquest of the Pan-Asianists, Uchimura saw the promise of peace and civilization and he saw Japan as the nation set by God to deliver that promise. After all, Uchimura mused that "nine-tenths" of Japanese history was "a history of peace."[62] America's mission was not to be the "City upon a Hill," it seemed after his visit, but was simply to awaken a great Japan which would be then oriented toward Christ. The source of Japan's

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[51] Ibid.: 32.
[52] Jinzo Naruse, *A Modern Paul: An Account of the Life and Work of Rev. Paul Sawayama* (Boston: Congregational Sunday School & Pubishing Society, 1893): 130.
[53] Scheiner: 34.
[54] Scheiner: 38.
[55] Uchimura, *Diary of a Japanese Convert*: 114.
[56] Ohyama Tsunao, "Uchimura Kanzo and American Christian Values," from Hiroshi, ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan*: 48.
[57] Uchimura, *Diary of a Japanese Convert*: 107-8.
[58] Ibid.: 116.
[59] Ibid.: 118
[60] For a great analysis of this concept in American history, see George McKenna. *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).
[61] Andrew Barshay, "Japan for the World," from Hiroshi, ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan*: 26.
[62] Ibid.: 29.

perceived stagnation (and that of Europe), it was written in 1883 by a contemporary Christian, Niijima Jō, was that not enough of the Japanese people were oriented sincerely toward Yaso-san.[63]

Uchimura was not only experiencing a religious rebirth, but also a rebirth of patriotism and a new world view. In his diary is included a scribbled note in English and Japanese, "To be inscribed upon my tomb: I for Japan, Japan for the World, The World for Christ, and All for God."[64] This world view corresponds with that identified by historian Helen Hardacre in the Shintō and Buddhist inspired New Religious movements that were happening across Meiji Japan.[65] In the center of the New Religious world view stood the individual whose quality of life could influence affected the harmony of the greater world. Uchimura also looked at the individual as an entity that could contribute to the polity, which could affect the world by its *tenshoku* of peace, which then would please God as the world lived out the promise of Christian peace. The idea of self-cultivation and ensuing harmony that marked the focus of New Religions like Kurozumikyō was accomplished by Japanized Christians who were diligent in doing their Christian duty, as Uchimura's contemporary in the indigenized Christian movement Paul Sawayama, had hoped Christians could accomplish by untying themselves from the decadent West. In fact, because of this world view, some scholars categorize indigenized Christianity as a New Religion, despite its Western foundation.[66]

Uchimura refuses to accept the emperor as Tennō.

A decade after the end of proscription missionaries convening in Osaka predicted, "Christianity will be able to win a victory within eight years."[67] The pastors and missionaries who attended the Osaka Conference, while optimistic that every Japanese person was convertible, tempered their confidence. Rev. J.D. Davis, an American working in Kyoto spoke about the greatest challenge to the mission in Japan. "We wrestle here not just against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against power, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The government of Japan, while tenuously tolerant at the present, was certainly no fan of the movement which many elites saw as a distraction from the nationalist agenda. "There is no doubt Satan is alarmed for Japan," Davis warned as he transitioned to explain the solution.[68] Davis echoed the sentiment of Japanese Christians like Uchimura and Sawayama that growth could only be sustained with an indigenous Church, led by the best class of Japanese natives.[69] "Our young men," he said, 'should be taught Greek and Hebrew so that they can go to the sources and examine for themselves the Bible in the languages in which it was written." [70]

Niijima Jo, the connected and influential leader of the Kumamoto Band of Christians.

Another attendee of the Osaka Conference and champion of the indigenous church was Niijima Jō, the first Japanese native to be ordained as a Christian minister. Niijima acted as interpreter for the Iwakura Mission and may have been influential in influencing Iwakura to call off the proscription against Christianity in 1873. Like Uchimura, his samurai family was aligned with the shogun during the Boshin War, his wife Yae fighting valiantly and notably at the battle of Aizu. Niijima spent the 1880s trying to influence the circle of liberal luminaries, mostly former samurai like himself, who made up the Jiyu Minken-Ha Movement. He counseled fellow Aizu samurai Numa Morikazu and Itagaki Taisuke that the only way Japan could modernize was to emulate the West, including the West's codes of morality.[71] His disciples, called the Kumamoto Band, were taking activist positions against

[63] Schiener: 174.
[64] Uchimura, *Diary of a Japanese Convert*: 179. This message *is*, in fact, inscribed on his tomb.
[65] Helen Hardacre, *Kurozumikyō and the New Religions of Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986): 12-4.
[66] Mark Mullins, "Christianity as a New Religion," from Mark Mullins, et. al., eds., *Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Selected Readings* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1993): 257-72.
[67] Anesaki: 86 and Scheiner: 101.
[68] *Proceedings of the General Conference of Protestant Missionaries of Japan, held at Osaka, Japan* (Yokohama: R. Meiklejohn & Co., 1883): 202.
[69] Ibid.: 200.
[70] Ibid.: 208.
[71] Scheiner: 178-9.

the Meiji junta, calling for modernization and the adoption of liberalism, including toleration of Christianity.

He wrote Itagaki, pleading for the leader of the Jiyu Minken-Ha to maintain his openness to Christianity in Japan, "Men who worry about humanity should cry when they examine the situation in Japan. I wish to clean the dirty human mind."[72] Like Uchimura, Niijima saw patriotism for Japan and Christian morality as intertwined and related concepts. Christian morality, he felt, could open the door to prosperity for a stagnant nation. But Uchimura criticized Niijima for his American connections and accused Niijima of going against God's will. "God does not want our national characters attained by the discipline of twenty centuries to be wholly supplanted by American ideas," Uchimura wrote. "The beauty of Christianity is that it can sanctify all the peculiar traits which God gave each nation." Clearly Uchimura did not feel compelled to "cry when he examined the situation in Japan," as Niijima did. He concluded, "Japan too is God's nation."[73]

While most of the liberal reforms called for the Freedom and People's Rights movement failed, in order to quiet the agitators a constitution was written and adopted by the Meiji government, but it would not be the liberal document for which Niijima hoped. Many on the drafting committee worked with Niijima while he was a translator on the Iwakura Mission, but Niijima refused to get involved deeply in in political causes, preferring the educational sphere. Inoue Kowashi, foremost of the men on the drafting committee, shared Niijima's view that education was the cornerstone of a great nation, but he believed that education should direct the Japanese citizen to the kokutai principle. He wrote, "Nothing but the kokutai can be the keynote of education. No other country has a history like ours."[74] Article 28 of the 1889 Meiji Constitution guaranteed "freedom of religious belief," but only if a subject, in exercising that right, was "not antagonistic to their duties as subjects."[75]

Freedom of religion, meant in practice, freedom of any religion that is not Christianity. Christians were, by definition, antagonistic to their duties as subjects, having divided loyalties. To defend

Reading of the Imperial Rescript on Education in a school, met with bows and reverence.

his views on education, Inoue Kowashi lifted up the words of Mori Arinori, of the Meirokusha think tank, the very organization that led the way for the lifting of the proscription in 1873. Mori saw education as a means to an end; and that end was the strengthening of the state. Inoue added that the state was the emperor who represented the sacred kokutai of Japan.[76] Mori had recently been assassinated by Shintō radicals upset with his advocacy for his attempts to secularize their shrines, but now his words were being used to bring Shinto closer to becoming a sort of state religion.[77] Religious dissent like that of Niijima and Uchimura would not be allowed by Article 28 of the new Constitution.

Philosopher Inoue Tetsujirō became the foremost critic of Christianity as the new Constitution went into effect, claiming it was an "inherently disloyal" religion that went against traditional *kōteishushin* (loyalty and filial piety), the glue that held the country together.[78] He saw the polity as a family-state and disobedience was intolerable and unconstitutional.[79] Mobilization for war was an important duty and every Japanese subject, Inoue Tetsujirō argued, should be prepared "to give up one's life bravely, as if it were no more than dust" for the emperor.[80] But Christianity forces its adherent to "hoist foreign flags", Inoue wrote, and "lacks the nationalistic

[72] Scheiner: 176, 178.
[73] Hiroshi, "A Biographical Sketch…,": 9.
[74] Scheiner: 185.
[75] Article 28, Meiji Constitution (1889), from Mullins, et. al, *Religion and Society in Modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1993): 61.
[76] Scheiner: 185-6.
[77] Patrick Smith, *Japan: A Reinterpretation* ((New York: Pantheon, 1997): 88.
[78] Scheiner: 36.
[79] Skya: 68.
[80] Takashi Shogimen, "The Legacy of Uchimura's Patriotism," from Hiroshi, ed., Living for Jesus and Japan: The Social and Theological Thought of Uchimura Kanzo (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013): 96.

spirit, it is opposed to it."[81] Meirokusha thinkers piled on their criticisms to that of Inoue. Fukuzawa Yukichi, concluding that "Christianity is baneful to our national power" and was a hindrance to mobilization.[82]

Inoue Kowashi, influenced by Inoue Tetsujirō, composed the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890, to be distributed to all schools in Japan. The Rescript was the culmination of a "Preservation for National Inheritance" movement, led by neo-Confucians and Buddhists to define national (and non-Western) moral principles to be taught in schools.[83] Elites in the Meiji state like Inoue saw the benefit of boxing out the individualist, other-worldly Christian faith. Inoue specifically attacked Christians seeing them as avenues for their Western sponsors to influence the people and direct the state away from kokutai.[84] There also was a clear rejection of Niijima's belief that Christianity was a prerequisite for other Western philosophies and technologies.[85] The Rescript called for a re-dedication to "a firmly implanted virtue" that defined "the fundamental character of our Empire." It directly called for the *kōteishushin* that were cornerstones of neo-Confucianism.[86] Japanese Christians, battling questions from nationalists, saw patriotism as the substitute for *kōteishushin* loyalty and individuality as the answer to *kōteishushin* filial piety.[87] Uchimura, for one, as nationalistic as he was and critical as he was to Westernizers like Niijima, would refuse to accept the emperor as his moral leader. He criticized Inoue Tetsujirō when he wrote in 1893, "I prefer being a man who actually loves the country rather than someone who preaches patriotism."[88]

When the Rescript was read at the school where he found himself teaching in 1891, he made a light bow, refusing to bow deeply fearing it was "tantamount to idol worship."[89] He criticized the Rescript's defining of the emperor as "the heavenly emperor."[90] He was pressured by school administration, after 128 newspapers across Japan reported on his blasphemy. Buddhist teachers distributed pamphlets chastising the insubordinate Christian for the rest of 1891.[91] Uchimura never meant to take a political position, but his love of Yaso-san now lumped him together with dissenters he formerly despised as being anti-Japan. Inoue Tetsijirō jumped on the situation to prove that Christians were incapable of displaying kōteishushin. Inoue made Uchimura's name a national byword, commenting that the young teacher proved Christians were "not nationalistic and far too egalitarian," and not able to do their duties as subjects. Thereby, restricting Christianity was not a violation of Article 28 of the Constitution.[92]

During the 1890's Uchimura became a voice in the wilderness as he tried to apologize Christianity to those in the government and academia who wanted state Shintō as a sort of national faith, because it eased the ability of the state to mobilize its people. It was no surprise to Uchimura when the state tested its strength at war with China and then Russia. He wrote anti-war editorials for several newspapers, and became the senior columnist for *Yorozu Chōhō*, one of the most widely read periodicals in Japan. Following the infamous bowing episode, he was now seen as a national curiosity and a spokesman for unapologetic Christians.[93] As one dissenter after another fell quiet after Japan's conquest of Korea, the Christian Uchimura's pen continued to assault a government he felt was corrupting its *tenshoku*, the mission it was given by Yaso-san to act as a pathway to world peace. Instead he saw intrigue, Zai-batsu corruption, assassination and the death of thousands of soldiers and Koreans alike.[94] After quoting a Bible verse in one of his most read article denouncing the state of affairs after the Sino-Japanese War, he criticized the mobilization for constant war:

> *"Building the warships would bring us not much benefit… Let the poor lead at least a bit better life. Let the people have honest and trustworthy educations. Make the tax rates fair ones. Avoid purveyors….*

[81] Inoue Tetsujiro quoted by Scheiner: 37.
[82] Scheiner: 38.
[83] Anesaki: 86.
[84] Takashi: 97.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Imperial Rescript on Education (1890), from Mullins, et. al, Religion and Society in Modern Japan (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1993): 61.
[87] Scheiner: 187.
[88] Takashi: 97.
[89] Hiroshi, "A Biographical Sketch…,": 11.
[90] Kunichika Yagyu, "Prophetic Nationalism," from Hiroshi, ed., *Living for Jesus and Japan: The Social and Theological Thought of Uchimura Kanzo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013): 78.
[91] Ibid.: 79.
[92] Takashi: 97.
[93] Hiroshi, "A Biographical Sketch…,": 13.
[94] Kunichika: 85.

eradicate the corruption and the bribes. 'And ye shall live.'"[95]

His response to the mobilization for the subsequent war with Russia was even more critical, but this time his opposition was based on a general pacifism. He was not against this war for these reasons, he was against *all* war. His position on the Russian war was published as war was declared, "Killing of human beings is a great sin. No man or state could gain long-lasting profit by committing such a great sin."[96] He had crossed the threshold completely into the Weberian "other-worldly" religious viewpoint. He began the journey when he refused to bow to the "this-worldly" deity of the emperor.

He dedicated his remaining years to strengthening and reimagining a uniquely Japanese and transcendental type of Christianity so that Japan could realize its *tenshoku*, despite the corrupt state that was actively misguiding the people away from Yaso-san. He called himself a true patriot because he was Christian who saw Japan as an instrument of Christian peace for the world. Men like Inoue and the Meiji oligarchs were, what he called, "so-called patriots" because they relied on "the sword."[97]

As the people awaken so does the Mukyōkai-Shugi.

Even before the Hibiya Riot of 1905 that ushered in a new age for the participation of the Japanese people in the fate of their government, Uchimura was writing, now in his own magazine, the *Seisho no Kenkyū*, about the power of the people, at the expense of the oligarchs, who were morally corrupt. This was due in no small part, he believed, to their idol worship of the emperor as a god. As Uchimura grew more and more disenchanted with the emperor and Meiji oligarchs, he grew more optimistic with the swelling up from below that defined Japan in the period beginning at the end of the Russo-Japanese War. "The real substance of strength of a nation," he wrote, "is made only by the hands of farmers and merchants."[98] It would be the people that could change Japan and eventually fulfill its *tenshoku* and not the authorities. The people, as evidenced by the events in Tokyo during the Hibya affair, were now "aware" of their power and Uchimura felt it was a matter of time before they would free themselves from the yoke of corruption.[99]

His earlier accusations that Niijima and other mainline Christians were Western sycophants made the popular writer a man without a church. He left the Sapporo band after the bowing incident at the school and attempted unsuccessfully to join the Hongō Congregational Church led by Ebina Danjō, but they did not accept their controversial, troublesome applicant. "I became Mukyōkai when I was cast off by the Christian Church," he wrote of the affair in one of his autobiographies.[100] He had grown the growing chorus of Japanese Christians rejecting denominationalism, but Uchimura went in an even more anarchical direction than any of his contemporaries.

In the absence of organized religion Uchimura found a path for the survival of a Japanese Church in the political climate which saw waves of persecution. If Japanese converts dedicated their lives to worship of Jesus, tried to live clean lives, and attempted to realize the Bible's teachings, they did not need an institution or pastors or church buildings that might need defending. He began to teach his Mukyōkai, or Non-Church strategy, at Bible studies near his home in Tsunohazu. His popularity as a political writer caused him to gain many disciples or *deshi* who considered him their *sensei*.[101] In some ways he was planting the seeds of a New Religion.

Uchimura's *deshi* was united by the fact they were "newly born in Christ through the Holy Spirit," and nothing else.[102] Another uniting factor was their belief that the Mukyōkai movement would be successful because it was Japanese in origin and in practice. The Mukyōkai had no rituals, no sacraments, no official dogma, and had no clergy. It was merely a moral and ethical system of beliefs that required no financial support. Each *deshi* could carry the spirit of Yaso-san within himself and need not attend to a fragile institution that would become damaged by history or war or government.

Most importantly, the Mukyōkai had no ties to Western churches, which served only to corrupt and lead the Japanese away from their divine mission. The Mukyōkai *deshi* did not "surrender their souls" to any Western missionary. Uchimura explained:

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[95] Uchimura, quoted by Kinichika: 85.
[96] Ibid.: 87.
[97] Takashi: 99.
[98] Ibid.: 89.
[99] Andrew Gordon, "The Crowd and Politics in Imperial Japan: Tokyo 1905-1918," *Past and Present* 121 (Nov., 1988): 146, 147.
[100] Shibuya Hiroshi, "Uchimura and his Mukyokai-Shugi," from *Living for Jesus and Japan: The Social and Theological Thought of Uchimura Kanzo* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013): 129-30.
[101] Hiroshi, "A Biographical Sketch…": 14.
[102] Ibid.

> *"Missionaries come to us to patronize us, to exercise lordship over us, in a word to 'convert' us; not to become our equals and friends, certainly not to become our servants and wash our feet…. Unless through God's grace we save ourselves, we shall not be saved; certainly not by foreign churches and missionaries."*[103]

There was nothing like the Mukyōkai coming from the Westerners. He felt Mukyōkai not only made Christianity more Japanese, and hopefully acceptable to the Japanese; but also more in line with what the Bible demanded of its adherents: "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."[104]

In Uchimura's nationalistic teachings, Japan was a special place and not some backwater for an American to count converted heathen souls, and the time to fulfill Japan's destiny for God was nearing. Japanese Christianity, he said, was not from some foreign missionary, but came to Japan "directly from God without any foreign intermediary, no more no less." He felt that "no nation will ever be saved by other nations' religions."[105] His rejection of the West only caused more and more people to come to his suburban study hall to hear his revelations, which grew more and more apocalyptic as history unfolded. As Japan entered World War I, Uchimura felt the time was coming soon for Jesus' second coming. In a huge 1918 rally at the Tokyo YMCA he explained, "Christ will come and accomplish it. Peace shall at last be realized through His Second Coming." This shift in rhetoric attracted national media attention and opposition from mainline Japanese Christians. He was asked by the YMCA to discontinue his series and he moved to a large hall outside the city.[106]

His *deshi* took different approaches as they went out to teach their own students. A break with one of them toward the end of his life over the issue of salvation caused an irrevocable split in the unified group that was not healed after Uchimura died in 1930.[107] His students, however, exercised influence in universities and in politics as the country drifted back to ultranationalism, militarism, and imperialism in the 1930s. The Mukyōkai movement became a cornerstone of dissent as its adherents worked toward the fulfillment of Japan's *tenshoku* of peace. One of them Yanaihara Tadao lost his position as a professor at Tokyo Imperial University when he criticized the government's invasion of China in 1936 and 1937. "Disaster will haunt us for generations," he protested in the newspapers, "will inflict suffering on China, and will destroy the peace of Asia."[108] The Mokyōkai's second generation's focus on peace made it a target for the militarists, but they continued to speak out throughout World War II. Mokyōkai's success influenced the rise of other indigenous non-church versions of Christianity including the Pan-Asianist Society of the Way and Nakada Juju's Holiness movement. Nakada, who was a close associate of Uchimura in his early years, held firm against intrusion by ultranationalists and suffered great persecutions in the 1930s when their leaders refused to attend to Shintō shrines and to move Christmas so that they could celebrate the emperor's birthday on December 25th.[109]

The government eventually attempted to try syncretization over proscription. In 1936, they pushed Christian leader and another former Uchimura associate Ebina Danjō to visit Shintō shrines. Ebina once marched lock and step alongside Uchimura against worship of the emperor as idol worship, hoping for "the liberation of the individual and human dignity in society," but now he cautiously led his congregation in performing rituals at shrines to the *kami*.[110] The government announced the establishment of the "Imperial Way to Christianity," a government-sponsored indigenous Christianity in which service to the emperor was stressed as being equal to service to Yaso-san.[111] The "Imperial Way" offered Christians a safe place to avoid persecution. The *deshi* of the Mokyōkai, though, having no institutions to protect like Ebina, did not compromise with the rise of ultranationalism and continued to speak out against war and for social justice even in Japan's darkest days, even if they stopped short of civil disobedience. [112]

The legacy of Uchimura Kanzō came from a struggle between Japan and Jesus, a struggle that

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[103] Mullins: 261-2.
[104] Micah 6:8 NIV
[105] Uchimura, quoted by Mullins: 266.
[106] Hiroshi, "A Biographical Sketch…": 16.
[107] Ibid.: 18.
[108] Skya: 307.
[109] Mark Mullins, "Ideology and Utopianism in Wartime Japan: An Essay on the Subversiveness of Christian Eschatology," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 2/3 (1994): 261, 266.
[110] Ibid.: 139.
[111] Carlo Caladora, "Pacifism among Japanese Non-Church Christians," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41, no. 4 (Dec., 1973): 508.
[112] Ibid.: 507, 518.

changed shape as the history of Japan unfolded. What resulted from that struggle was a completely new, and purely Japanese, way of looking at the Church as a non-Church. As historian Carlo Caladora noted, this caused a double alienation for Uchimura and his followers. They were rejected by Christianity and doubly rejected by the state. But Uchimura saw it differently. The world was materialistic and collapsing in on itself and it was the Mukyōkai who were not only true prophets of Yaso-san, but also the true patriots for Japan. Uchimura's charismatic message and other-worldliness made him a pilgrim in Meiji Japan, but he laid the foundation for a safe place from which to criticize the increasingly authoritarian state. Post-war missionaries like Raymond Hammer learned from the experience of Uchimura and yield to the power of indigenized churches in Japan. "If the Christian Church is truly to be present in Japan, and not simply to be a 'caller' at the doorway, it must meet with Japanese society," Hammer wrote to students in 1961. He concluded by echoing the struggle of Uchimura Kanzō's life, "[The Church] must show how the Christian can be 'foreign' and yet 'not foreign.'"[113]

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[113] Hammer: 118-9.

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