

***Religious Contributions to Political Reconciliation in East Asia:
Towards an Analytical Framework***

C. K. Martin Chung

Hong Kong Baptist University

ckmartin@hkbu.edu.hk

Introduction

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, which was of course anything but a purely religious event. Even in its commemoration, the political legacy or dimension is far from being peripheral: among the dignitaries accompanying German Chancellor Angela Merkel to celebrate the German Protestant Kirchentag in Berlin last month was former US President Barack Obama. The political symbolism in an ostensibly religious event is only further highlighted in an election year in which the main opposition (and coalition partner) has found a credible candidate in Martin Schulz, former President of the European Parliament, whose campaign theme of “social justice” (*soziale Gerechtigkeit*) has inspired many, despite the rather disappointing results in the Landtag elections so far this year.

The influence of religions, religious ideas, religious networks and even theological disputes on European politics has been long recognized. Wolfram Kaiser, among others, demonstrates forcefully the link between Christian democracy and the origins of the European Union, tracing its history to 19th century transnational Catholicism.¹ The close interaction of the spiritual and the temporal realms is at times associated with some of the worst bloodshed in history – the (first) Thirty Years War (1618-1648) during the Reformation is but one of the better remembered examples. The mixed legacy of religion in politics, however, also includes the

¹ Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding after violence. The phenomenon of “truth and reconciliation commissions” in various post-conflict contexts in Africa and Latin America, among other regions, is inexplicable without religious contributions, regardless of where one locates oneself within the restorative-vs-retributive justice spectrum.²

Though less conspicuous, in the case of post-1945 Europe, religion has also arguably played an important role in shaping the paths toward political reconciliation. A few prominent examples: the establishment of Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, or Action Reconciliation Service for Peace, in divided Germany in 1958, which was based on the biblical idea of “atonement” (Sühne)³ and sent out German volunteers to rebuild facilities and relationships destroyed by the Nazis; the publication of the so-called *Ostdenkschrift* in 1965 by the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Bensberger Memorandum in 1968 by lay German Catholics, which delivered *inter alia* the theological refutation of German claims to the disputed territories now within Polish borders;⁴ and the famed exchange of “letters of reconciliation” between Polish and German bishops in late 1965, when the Second Vatican Council was approaching its end.⁵ In all these civil society actions, religion was *leading* politics and the wider society toward international reconciliation. Political taboos were broken; hitherto impossible scenarios became realistic policy options. In the words of Willy Brandt, “the conversation of the churches and their communities was ahead of the dialogue by politicians.”⁶

² John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1997); Jennifer J. Llewellyn and Daniel Philpott, eds., *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³ Leviticus 23:27. Gabriele Kammerer, *Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste. Aber man kann es einfach tun*. (Göttingen: Lamuv Verlag, 2008).

⁴ Kirchenkanzlei der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, *Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn. Eine evangelische Denkschrift* (Hannover: Verlag des Amtsblattes der EKD, 1965); Bensberger Kreis, *Ein Memorandum deutscher Katholiken zu den polnisch-deutschen Fragen* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1968).

⁵ Robert Zurek and Basil Kerski, “Der Briefwechsel zwischen den polnischen und deutschen Bischöfen von 1965. Entstehungsgeschichte, historischer Kontext und unmittelbare Wirkung,” in *‘Wir vergeben und bitten um Vergebung’. Der Briefwechsel der polnischen und deutschen Bischöfe von 1965 und seine Wirkung*, ed. Basil Kerski, Tomasz Kycia, and Robert Zurek (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2006).

⁶ Willy Brandt, *Begegnungen und Einsichten. Die Jahre 1960-1975* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1976), 240-241. Unless otherwise stated, all citations from non-English sources are my own translation.

Compared to their counterparts in postwar Europe, religions in East Asia have been observed as lacking such influence in politics.⁷ The civil society role of broadening policy options for international reconciliation has either been neglected or exercised with limited effect. Generally speaking, religion has been playing a larger role shaping civil society in Europe and the US than in Japan.⁸ Though one might conveniently find ready answers in numbers – that is, religious memberships in Japan and China, for instance, are nowhere comparable to even “secular” Europe – qualitative differences, however, remain to be accounted for. After all, if transnational religious networks (such as the multifarious gatherings of Catholic bishops) have facilitated intra-religious communication among international opponents in Europe, why the selfsame or similar networks/platforms (e.g. the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference)⁹ have failed to perform such a facilitating role in East Asia? Have there been different concerns (such as economic development and democratization) therefore the issue of international reconciliation is not prioritized? Have there been different approaches to political reconciliation, such as private instead of public exchanges of reconciliatory gestures? In other words, while numbers may explain the difference in social impact, they do not explain the occurrence or absence of reconciliatory communications.

The present research project – of which this paper is a part – aims to categorize, analyze and compare these qualitative differences involving religious networks, actors and ideas in East Asian reconciliation politics. The primary aim is to contribute to theories of peacebuilding focusing on the role of intellectual resources – religious and philosophical – in postwar European and East Asian settings. The secondary aim is to accumulate a body of concrete resources (i.e. historical examples of different social actors drawing from different traditions and “role models” to overcome enmity and persistent injustice from past conflicts) for future social actors carrying on with the work of reconciliation. A third aim is to develop a more

⁷ See for instance HE Yanan, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). All East Asian names follow the convention of placing the family name first before the given name.

⁸ Susan J. Pharr, "Conclusion: Targeting by an Activist State: Japan as a Civil Society Model," in *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, ed. Frank J. Schwartz and Susan J. Pharr (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 322.

⁹ In East Asia, FABC’s members or associate members include Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Hong Kong and Macau.

comprehensive framework for the appreciation and evaluation of religious contributions to political reconciliation.

Whereas the author's previous works have found strong indication of such resources (i.e. the Jewish idea of "repentance") at work in German "coming to terms with the past" (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) and identified some problems of applying the traditional Chinese concept of "apology" (i.e. xiezui) in present-day international relations,¹⁰ the present paper focuses on religion and civil society for international reconciliation in Japan. To be sure, there is no shortage of academic studies on Japanese "coming to terms with the past" and the development of civil society in postwar Japan.¹¹ It seems, however, that religious contributions to the process of reconciliation in East Asia, especially with regard to the intellectual resources employed to overcome particular obstacles to reconciliation, have been relatively understudied.¹² This paper proceeds from a general overview of civil society in postwar Japan in general, before zooming in to religious civil society organizations (CSOs) in particular. It then introduces four categories of religious contributions to political reconciliation in East Asia with selected examples. The general argument being developed here is that given the tradition of and difficulties facing civil society in Japan, the accomplishments of different CSOs with regard to international reconciliation in East Asia are extraordinary. Religion as a resource for reconciliation – or, expressed negatively, for overcoming obstacles to reconciliation – has been employed by some social actors also in this region, not only in Europe. To increase the impact of minority religious actors, however, who possess great potentials as pioneers of East Asian

¹⁰ C. K. Martin Chung, *Repentance for the Holocaust: Lessons from Jewish Thought for Confronting the German Past*, Signale (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2017 forthcoming); "Apology and Confession: Comparing Sino-Japanese and German-Jewish intellectual resources for reconciliation," in *Reconciling with the Past: Resources and Obstacles in a Global Perspective*, ed. Annika Frieberg and C. K. Martin Chung (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

¹¹ Among the more recent research outputs see KOGA Yukiko, *Inheritance of Loss: China, Japan, and the Political Economy of Redemption after Empire* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016); HASHIMOTO Akiko, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Kamila Szczepanska, *The Politics of War Memory in Japan: Progressive Civil Society Groups and Contestation of Memory of the Asia-Pacific War* (London: Routledge, 2014); Susanne Maria Kilian, *Japan und Deutschland - Zwischen Schuld und Verantwortung. Vergangenheitsbewältigung im Vergleich* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012).

¹² Compare, for instance, the study of contributions by secular concepts such as "shimin" in Simon Andrew Avenell, *Making Japanese Citizens: Civil Society and the Mythology of the Shimin in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

reconciliation, one needs to better utilize transnational religious networks: i.e. collaborating with religious partners in “victim nations” of militarist aggression in the past.

Religion and Civil Society in Japan

Concerning the overall development of civil society in Japan, Kage Rieko observes a remarkable upsurge in the immediate postwar period (1945-1955).¹³ Responsible for the upsurge were, according to her, civic skills acquired during wartime mobilization, existence of CSOs (such as YMCA) in pre-militarist Japan, and postwar support for civil society development by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP).

Despite this postwar upsurge, however, CSOs in Japan tend to be smaller in scale compared to other industrialized countries. Robert Pekkanen attributes this to what he calls “state structuring of incentives”.¹⁴ Even though, echoing Kage cited above, the SCAP made it easier for the formation of religious groups independent of state intervention, for a long time until the 1998 “NPO law” it was difficult for them to obtain the status of Public Interest Legal Persons (PILPs), which presented religious groups the problem of legitimation in the eyes of the wider public.¹⁵ His overall assessment of CSOs in Japan (not only religious ones) is that they are not effective “advocates” under these legal and structural circumstances, i.e. those capable of influencing policymaking through participation in public debates.

On top of these structural constraints limiting the growth and effectiveness of Japanese CSOs in general, there are specific difficulties for overtly religious groups, who face a generally mistrustful public and a hostile press, especially after the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin gas attack by members of Aum Shinrikyo. According to Helen Hardacre, religious groups’ role in restraining the state (or correcting its domestic and foreign policies) has been limited in postwar Japan for a number of reasons: first, the traditional timidity of the “first sector” (i.e.

¹³ KAGE Rieko, *Civic Engagement in Postwar Japan: The Revival of a Defeated Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ Robert Pekkanen, *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members Without Advocates* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

the three established religions of temple Buddhism, shrine Shinto and, to a lesser extent, Christianity); second, the active but short-lived (until 1995) vitality of the “second sector” (i.e. “new religions” or new religious outgrowths such as Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai); third, the damage of religion’s image as a whole by the “third sector” (i.e. “new new religions” or religious movements such as Aum Shinrikyo); and fourth, the tendency of mainstream media in Japan to portrait religion in a negative light.¹⁶ Hence, despite the initial expansion of civil society after the war, including religious groups, under a newly liberalized legal environment (Kage), by the late 1990s, the conservative government under the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was able to (re)introduce legislative measures to tighten the grip on religious organizations, to the disadvantage of politically active second sector religious actors such as Soka Gakkai.¹⁷ And by the early twenty-first century, the public sphere in Japan has been “thoroughly poisoned against religion”.¹⁸

Religious Contributions to Japanese “Coming to Terms with the Past” and Political Reconciliation in East Asia

Despite the structural and historical limitations of religious CSOs in Japan outlined above, there are ample examples of religious contribution – broadly defined in terms of ideas, resources, personnel and organization – to the ongoing process of dealing with the militarist legacies and achieving reconciliation with “victim nations” of militarist aggression. This paper adopts the following framework to categorize such religious contributions and attempts to outline the tasks of analysis for each category:

1. Organized religious groups engaging in reflection on past wrongdoings, remembrance of the victims of militarist aggression, demanding justice for the survivors, and other reconciliation efforts with East Asian neighbours;
2. Religious individuals initiating or participating in CSOs that engage in such reflections, gestures and activities;

¹⁶ Helen Hardacre, “After Aum: Religion and Civil Society in Japan,” in *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, ed. Frank J. Schwartz and Susan J. Pharr (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁷ Ibid., 147-150.

¹⁸ Ibid., 153.

3. Religious ideas being applied in such reflections, gestures and activities; and
4. Religious institutions and transnational religious networks functioning as platforms for such reflections, gestures and activities.

Organized religious groups for political reconciliation

Examples in this category include “second sector” or “new religions” (Hardacre) such as the Buddhist organizations Soka Gakkai and Rissho Koseikai, both of which are active in peace and development activities. Hardacre estimates that membership in the second sector groups amounts to a quarter of Japan’s population, with the two being the largest in this sector (ca. 12 million and 6 million respectively).¹⁹ Of the two, Soka Gakkai is particularly well-known in China, with its former president and current international president Ikeda Daisaku regularly contributing articles in the Chinese press and being received by high-ranking Chinese Communist Party leaders including Zhou Enlai and Hu Jintao. The analytical tasks in this category are relatively straightforward: to identify in the canonical texts of these religious groups, including their founders’ authoritative interpretations of the sacred scriptures, elements relevant to political reconciliation, and then to locate them in the actual undertakings of these organizations, in order to distinguish between potential resources or mere pronouncements and actual deeds and expressions.

For instance, in *A Buddhist Approach to Peace* by Niwano Nikkyo, founder of Rissho Koseikai, one can identify elements of anti-nationalism based on his interpretation of Buddhist teachings. “The first problem confronting those who wish to establish a truly peaceful world, especially men of religion, is the transcendence of nationalism.”²⁰ “It is limited thinking to regard sovereignty more highly than the lives of men.”²¹ In times of renewed nationalism and territorial disputes in the region, these are potentially powerful exhortations against nationalist groups and nationalist governments. The next step of the analysis will then have to locate these

¹⁹ Ibid., 139.

²⁰ NIWANO Nikkyo, *A Buddhist Approach to Peace*, trans. NEZU Masuo (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 1977), 122.

²¹ Ibid., 24.

pronouncements in the actual activities of Rissho Koseikai with the effect of fighting nationalisms and rebuilding postwar international relationships in the region.²²

Religious individuals in civil society for political reconciliation

In this category are religious individuals or individual social actors with religious backgrounds who engage in civil society for political reconciliation between Japan and those nations who suffered under militarist Japan. Often times, these are intellectuals distinguished in their particular fields of work who make use of their expertise or professional influence in search for truth and justice for the victims. Potential candidates in this category include Matsui Yayori (1934-2002), veteran journalist for Asahi Shimbun and lead initiator of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in Tokyo in 2000; and Ienaga Saburo (1913-2002), renowned historian and plaintiff in the epic legal battles against the Japanese state for the unconstitutional censoring of history textbook publication.

The analytical tasks in this category are more intricate than the first. To begin with, the religiosity and religious motivation of these individuals often do not come to the foreground of their civic engagement, for their influence does not hinge on their religious authority or identity – hence unlike the first category – but their professional credibility, moral integrity and their ability to mobilize the wider non-religiously affiliated public under ostensibly secular themes. Take Matsui Yayori, for instance, who did not habitually employ religious symbols or theological arguments in her endeavors for justice on behalf of the so-called “ianfu” or “comfort women”, or for women's rights in Asia in general.²³ For people who know her and research on her work, however, religious inputs were an essential element of her lifelong achievements. Yamane Kazuyo, for example, asserts that “Yayori's family background provided the foundations for her activism.”²⁴ Matsui's parents were Christian converts during wartime Japan and had suffered

²² An example given by Niwano himself was young members of Rissho Koseikai building the Bataan Friendship Tower in the Philippines in 1975, as a healing measure for the wound inflicted by the Bataan Death March of 1942. Ibid., 114.

²³ See for example MATSUI Yayori, “Women's international war crimes tribunal on Japan's military sexual slavery: Memory, identity, and society,” *East Asia* 19, no. 4 (2001); and *Women in the New Asia: From Pain to Power*, trans. TOYOKAWA Noriko and Carolyn Francis (London: Zed, 1999).

²⁴ YAMANE Kazuyo, “Yayori Matsui and the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace,” *Social Alternatives* 29, no. 1 (2010): 25.

persecution due to their opposition to violence; both were active pacifists in the postwar period.²⁵ Likewise, Yun Chung-Ok, one of Matsui's cooperation partners in Korea, believes that her thirst for justice was "the result of her parents' education".²⁶ Needless to say, such assertions need more substantiation in terms of closer alignment of Matsui's feminist activism and her concrete religious education experience. But the result could be intriguing in the sense of showing how religious contributions are also to be found in ostensibly secular civic engagement for international reconciliation.²⁷

Religious ideas for political reconciliation

Obviously, this category also encompasses those ideas, narratives and theological interpretations derived from the first two categories. However, the main focus here is reflective activities in philosophy, political, social and cultural criticism dealing squarely with the problematic national past, and artistic forms of such critique. The point here is not to trace the religious motivation of particular social actors; rather, it is about finding out how certain religious ideas or concepts with religious roots are being applied to shape critical discourse, or how theological argumentation is being embedded in such criticism. Examples in this category include Tanabe Hajime's (1885-1962) and Nambara Shigeru's (1889-1974) philosophical and political reflections after the war.

One of Japan's most distinguished philosophers, Tanabe lived through two World Wars and published in 1946 his most important work, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, based on the Buddhist idea of *zange*, or "repentance". A philosophical treatise dealing with reshaping philosophy after the national catastrophe, it was at the same time a public confession of the philosopher's own perceived failure as an intellectual in Japan during the WWII.²⁸ Among the incisive ideas expressed in *Metanoetics* is the notion that repentance cannot be accomplished by self-power

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ YUN Chung-Ok, "In memory of Yayori MATSUI," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (2003): 190.

²⁷ Matsui obviously saw her work as making such contributions. MATSUI Yayori, "WIWCT," 139.

²⁸ For a philosophical assessment of Tanabe's work for reconciliation, see Dermott J. Walsh, "Repentance as a post-philosophical stance: Tanabe Hajime and the road to reconciliation," in *Reconciling with the Past: Resources and Obstacles in a Global Perspective*, ed. Annika Frieberg and C. K. Martin Chung (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

(*jiriki*) alone, but it is “realized only according to the prompting of Other-power” (*tariki*).²⁹ The reliance on the other for one’s own repentance is a fundamental religious insight from Shin Pure Land Buddhism that is also pronounced – with significant variance notwithstanding – in other religions such as Judaism and Christianity.³⁰

A leading conspirator for an early end to the war, Nambara Shigeru was the first postwar president of the University of Tokyo (1945-1951) and the inaugural president of the Japanese Political Science Association (1948-1960).³¹ He was thus among the towering figures on whose shoulders the responsibility for intellectual reconstruction in postwar Japan rested. According to Richard Minear, who translated his works into English, Nambara was a Christian intellectual heavily influenced by his faith.³² Indeed, it is not difficult to note the profuse use of Judeo-Christian concepts in his exhortations (mainly to university students) during and after the war. In one of his first messages as university president he urged his students to accept defeat and the difficult postwar realities as necessary conditions for “national redemption”:

Indeed, our trials and tribulations now and in the future must be a national atonement, a “national redemption” laid on the altar of truth and reason. We must accept these hardships forthrightly and drain the bitter cup to its last drop. ... The enemy in this new bitter struggle is of course not the United States and Britain, but “we ourselves.”³³

The turning inward of antipathetic energies would not have “made sense” within the logic of victory and defeat, but only in the framework of right and wrong, an essential distinction which Nambara also never failed to emphasize to his audience.³⁴ The themes of national atonement and redemption would recur in his later speeches, which sometimes he replaced with what he

²⁹ TANABE Hajime, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, trans. TAKEUCHI Yoshinori (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 8.

³⁰ Chung, *Repentance for the Holocaust*.

³¹ See Richard H. Minear, ed. *War and Conscience in Japan: Nambara Shigeru and the Asia-Pacific War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 19-20.

³² *Ibid.*, 21.

³³ *Ibid.*, 160-161.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 175.

called the “true cross” carried by the people, in relation to the “nation’s guilt” against others.³⁵ By going further into the exploration of religious contents in postwar Japanese intellectual reflection, one can possibly identify not only the differentiated contributions of various religious traditions to this reflective process, but also compare the relative merits of these ideas when it comes to generating social change.

Religious institutions and transnational religious networks for political reconciliation

The last category proposed in this paper concerns religious contributions arising from the transnational character of world religions. It is important to explore these transnational networks as resources because, according to Ku Yangmo, social actors have the best chance of influencing a state’s history policy towards reconciliation when there is progressive ruling coalition in the “perpetrator state” and strong transnational activism.³⁶ Being transnational actors by nature, world religions have the potentials to capitalize on their intra-religious linkages for international reconciliation where inter-state relations suffer from the admixture of national interests, popular resentment and political calculus. The main analytical task in this category is to explore how well the existing networks and institutions are being exploited to drive international reconciliation forward. It is also here, however, that the present author finds the most under-utilization.

Possible examples in this category include the network of Catholic Justice and Peace Commissions. As a product of the Second Vatican Council, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace is to “promote justice and peace in the world, in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the Church”.³⁷ As such, its work is based on what is commonly referred to as Catholic Social Teaching, a body of principles derived mainly from papal communications from the late 19th century onwards.³⁸ Local justice and peace bodies have been called into being

³⁵ Ibid., 176, 203.

³⁶ KU Yangmo, “National Interest or Transnational Alliances? Japanese Policy on the Comfort Women Issue,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15 (2015): 249.

³⁷ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_pro_20011004_en.html

³⁸ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

since then, with mainly lay Catholic members concerned with issues of human rights, social justice and active participation in social issues and political debates. The Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace (JCCJP), for instance, was created in 1970, whereas the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese (JPCHK) was established in 1977. Several of the national JPCs are members of the umbrella network Pax Christi International.³⁹

Of the notable undertakings of JCCJP concerning international reconciliation was their public letter of repentance, “Towards a New Beginning: A Declaration from the Japanese [sic] Catholic Council for Justice and Peace on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the End of World War II”.⁴⁰ This was in response to the message of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan (CBCJ) of the same year, entitled “Resolution for Peace: On the 50th Anniversary of the End of the War”.⁴¹ Since then, the CBCJ has issued follow-up messages of peace every ten years, the latest being publicized in 2015.⁴²

Of all these Catholic pronouncements, the 1995 JCCJP declaration of repentance is most intriguing. Though both the declaration and the CBCJ resolution of the same year expressed apology, repentance and the resolve to do reparation, the self-portrayals of the church during WWII are markedly different. In the bishops’ version, under the section “Responsibility as Church Community”, one reads of the church being “oppressed and persecuted” as a foreign religion, “pressed by the military to cooperate with the war effort”, failing only to realize how “inhuman” the elements of nationalism were in Japan at that time, and lacking “an awareness of the prophetic role it should have fulfilled”.⁴³ In other words, the Church in Japan was also victim, unwilling cooperation partner of the war effort, and sinner in terms of omission rather than commission. In the JCCJP version, however, one is told a somewhat different story. Under the first section: “The Church’s War Responsibility under the Emperor System and Nationalism”, one reads excerpts of official church publications during the war, from the 1935 “All Japan

³⁹ <http://www.paxchristi.net/member-organisations#zoom=2&lat=17.64402&lon=-4.57031&layers=00BT>

⁴⁰ https://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/1995new_begin.pdf

⁴¹ <https://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/resolut4peace1995.pdf>

⁴² http://www.jccjp.org/jccjp/home_files/Peace%20message%20E,%2070%20years.pdf

⁴³ CBCJ 1995: 198.

Diocesan Heads' Joint Message" to the 1943 "Japanese Catholic Church Guide to Wartime Activity", which amounted to an open and enthusiastic espousal of militarist Japan's "holy war":

The present holy war is not being waged because of so-called imperialism and aggression; rather it is completely and utterly a fight for right against wrong, a war for a great cause; it aims to manifest the only Imperial Way, is based on morality, and its purpose is the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁴⁴

The JCCJP declaration, therefore, was not only echoing the CBCJ resolution, but possibly correcting what the members saw as a misleading portrayal of the church's guilt in the bishop's version.⁴⁵ Such a correction would be necessary in view of reconciliation with Japan's Asian neighbours, for, theologically speaking, repentance cannot proceed under a general reflection on "war is bad; all are victims", but from a specific, self-reflective point of departure. A comparable phenomenon within the wider Catholic church can be found in the Bensberger Memorandum of 1968, which was itself a response to the (inadequate) answer of the German bishops to the Polish bishops' 1965 letter of reconciliation.⁴⁶

On the question of network utilization, the available documents from both the JCCJP and CBCJ pose intriguing questions. For instance, it is mentioned in the 1995 CBCJ resolution that Cardinal Shirayanagi Seiichi (1928-2009) had made use of the 1986 FABC plenary session in Tokyo to deliver a public confession as the Japanese Catholic prelate.⁴⁷ The question then is, how was this confession *received* by the audience? Did they give the confessor a solemn response, one commensurate with the solemnity of the confession? Did they bring this message back to their respective communities, who had an interest in exactly that kind of confession? On this point, the author's initial contacts with Catholics in both Hong Kong and Macau have so far yielded only ignorance: none has heard of such confession, nor the JCCJP declaration, and the CBCJ resolution and subsequent messages of peace. Further research is

⁴⁴ JCCJP 1995: 15.

⁴⁵ On this point, the author intends to conduct interviews with the drafters of the JCCJP declaration for verification.

⁴⁶ Bensberger Kreis, *Memorandum*; Zurek and Kerski, "Briefwechsel."

⁴⁷ CBCJ 1995: 196-197.

needed to answer these questions, which may shed light on the problem of network utilization in this category of religious resources.

Conclusion

An analytical framework of religious contributions to political reconciliation is proposed here, i.e. the four categories of religious groups, religious individuals, religious ideas and religious networks. Initial assessment of religion and civil society in the case of postwar Japan is that, given the tradition of and difficulties facing civil society in Japan, the accomplishments of different CSOs with regard to international reconciliation in East Asia, such as the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal in 2000 and persistent efforts to protect Article 9 of postwar Japan's peace constitution from being altered or interpreted "liberally", are remarkable. Religion as a resource for reconciliation – or, expressed negatively, for overcoming obstacles to reconciliation – has been employed by some social actors also in the region of East Asia, not only in Europe. To increase the impact of minority religious actors, however, who possess great potentials as pioneers of East Asian reconciliation, better utilization of transnational religious networks is called for: i.e. collaborating with religious partners in "victim nations" of militarist aggression in the past.

References

- Avenell, Simon Andrew. *Making Japanese Citizens: Civil Society and the Mythology of the Shimin in Postwar Japan*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010.
- Bensberger Kreis. *Ein Memorandum deutscher Katholiken zu den polnisch-deutschen Fragen*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1968.
- Brandt, Willy. *Begegnungen und Einsichten. Die Jahre 1960-1975*. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1976.
- Chung, C. K. Martin. "Apology and Confession: Comparing Sino-Japanese and German-Jewish intellectual resources for reconciliation." In *Reconciling with the Past: Resources and Obstacles in a Global Perspective* edited by Annika Frieberg and C. K. Martin Chung, 54-68. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017.
- . *Repentance for the Holocaust: Lessons from Jewish Thought for Confronting the German Past*. Signale. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2017 forthcoming.
- Hardacre, Helen. "After Aum: Religion and Civil Society in Japan." In *The State of Civil Society in Japan* edited by Frank J. Schwartz and Susan J. Pharr, 135-153. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- HASHIMOTO Akiko. *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- HE Yinan. *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- KAGE Rieko. *Civic Engagement in Postwar Japan: The Revival of a Defeated Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Kaiser, Wolfram. *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kammerer, Gabriele. *Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste. Aber man kann es einfach tun*. Göttingen: Lamuv Verlag, 2008.
- Kilian, Susanne Maria. *Japan und Deutschland - Zwischen Schuld und Verantwortung. Vergangenheitsbewältigung im Vergleich*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012.
- Kirchenkanzlei der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland. *Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn. Eine evangelische Denkschrift*. Hannover: Verlag des Amtsblattes der EKD, 1965.
- KOGA Yukiko. *Inheritance of Loss: China, Japan, and the Political Economy of Redemption after Empire*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- KU Yangmo. "National Interest or Transnational Alliances? Japanese Policy on the Comfort Women Issue." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15 (2015): 243-269.
- Lederach, John Paul. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington D.C.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1997.
- Llewellyn, Jennifer J., and Daniel Philpott, eds. *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- MATSUI Yayori. *Women in the New Asia: From Pain to Power*. Translated by TOYOKAWA Noriko and Carolyn Francis. London: Zed, 1999.

- . "Women's international war crimes tribunal on Japan's military sexual slavery: Memory, identity, and society." *East Asia* 19, no. 4 (2001): 119-142.
- Minear, Richard H., ed. *War and Conscience in Japan: Nambara Shigeru and the Asia-Pacific War*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.
- NIWANO Nikkyo. *A Buddhist Approach to Peace*. Translated by NEZU Masuo. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 1977.
- Pekkanen, Robert. *Japan's Dual Civil Society: Members Without Advocates*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Pharr, Susan J. "Conclusion: Targeting by an Activist State: Japan as a Civil Society Model." In *The State of Civil Society in Japan* edited by Frank J. Schwartz and Susan J. Pharr, 316-336. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Szczepanska, Kamila. *The Politics of War Memory in Japan: Progressive Civil Society Groups and Contestation of Memory of the Asia-Pacific War*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- TANABE Hajime. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. Translated by TAKEUCHI Yoshinori. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986.
- Walsh, Dermott J. "Repentance as a post-philosophical stance: Tanabe Hajime and the road to reconciliation." In *Reconciling with the Past: Resources and Obstacles in a Global Perspective* edited by Annika Frieberg and C. K. Martin Chung, 83-93. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017.
- YAMANE Kazuyo. "Yayori Matsui and the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace." *Social Alternatives* 29, no. 1 (2010): 25-28.
- YUN Chung-Ok. "In memory of Yayori MATSUI." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 4, no. 2 (2003): 190-192.
- Zurek, Robert, and Basil Kerski. "Der Briefwechsel zwischen den polnischen und deutschen Bischöfen von 1965. Entstehungsgeschichte, historischer Kontext und unmittelbare Wirkung." In *'Wir vergeben und bitten um Vergebung'. Der Briefwechsel der polnischen und deutschen Bischöfe von 1965 und seine Wirkung* edited by Basil Kerski, Tomasz Kycia and Robert Zurek, 7-53. Osnabrück: Fibre, 2006.