

The High Price of Peace: The Catholic Church and Japanese Nationalism 1926-1945

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MEP (*société des missions étrangères de Paris*)はフランスのカトリック教徒の伝道の社会でした。1850年代に MEP は近代日本のカトリック教会を設立しました。当初は、多くの問題がありましたが、日本のカトリック教会は20世紀の初めまでに大いに成長しました。昭和の最初の20年は日本にとっては、過激な国家主義と戦争の時代でした。MEPのカトリック教会と宣教師はこれらの諸問題に対処しなければなりませんでした。国家神道と日本人のカトリック教徒の司教への対応は特に重要な問題でした。日本のカトリック教会は、バチカン市国の方針と、日本人の聖職者と、MEPの間で分割されました。この論文はこの時代に日本のカトリック教会と MEP によって採用された異なった戦略を検証します。カトリック教会がこの敵対的環境で平和に生き残るのは、ひじょうに困難なものでした。

The MEP (*société des missions-étrangères de Paris*), a French Catholic missionary society, had founded the Catholic Church in modern Japan in the 1850s. Despite many challenges the Catholic Church in Japan had grown significantly by the beginning of the twentieth century. The first twenty years of the Showa period, however, were a time of extreme nationalism and war for Japan. The Catholic Church and particularly the missionaries of the MEP had to deal with these pressures and especially with the issues of State Shinto and the indigenization of the Japanese Catholic hierarchy. The MEP were caught between the policies of Vatican diplomacy, the aspirations of the indigenous Japanese Clergy, and their own (often divided) assessment of the situation. This article looks at the different strategies adopted by the Catholic Church in Japan and the MEP in this period, and at the high price they both had to pay to secure the peaceful survival of the Catholic Church in this often-hostile environment.

“On the occasion of the Fourth Assembly of the FABC, we, Catholic Bishops of Japan, as Japanese and as members of the Catholic Church, sincerely ask forgiveness from God and from our brothers and sisters of Asia and the Pacific for the tragedy brought by Japan during World War II. As parties involved in the war we share in the responsibility for more than 20 million victims in Asia and the Pacific. Furthermore we deeply regret having damaged the lives and cultures of the people of these regions. The trauma is not healed yet”.
- Homily delivered by Archbishop Seichi Shirayanagi, President of the Bishops' Conference of Japan at the Eucharist celebrated on Sept. 21, 1986 at the Cathedral of Tokyo.

More than forty years after the end of hostilities in East Asia, the head of the Catholic Church in Japan apologized for the support given by the Catholic Church in Japan to the nationalist governments of the Japanese Empire during the wartime period. Important though this long-delayed apology undoubtedly was, it could not explore in any great depth the nature, extent, and reasoning behind this complicity. Despite this apology, it was to be a further 13 years until, in a study released without fanfare (to say the least) that the Bishops' Conference of Japan commented further on the background of this apology¹. The

¹ 歴史から何を学ぶか：(Nagoya:Shinseido, 1999).

current article will attempt to clarify the questions as to exactly what the attitude of the Catholic Church in Japan was to Japanese nationalism in this period, how it arrived at this position, and how it fitted with the more general attitude of the Catholic Church throughout this very difficult period for the Church and the world. Its primary point of reference is the role of the MEP (*société des missions-étrangères de Paris*) as the principal Catholic missionary group active in Japan during this period.

The last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first three of the nineteenth century were times of great difficulty for the Catholic Church and its institutions. From the French Revolution through to the Kulturkampf, the attacks against the Church seemed to come in endless waves. Each attack left the Church somewhat more weakened and diminished in influence than it had been before. From the perspective of Europe, this culminated in the final years of the pontificate of Pius IX who died in 1878 a self-proclaimed 'prisoner of the Vatican' marooned in his papal palace adrift on a hostile sea of republicanism, modernism, nationalism, and anti-Catholicism. Without questioning much of the validity of this, the state of the Catholic Church in the world as a whole was not quite so bleak and subsequent popes were intent to capitalize on this. Above all, the successors to Pius IX concentrated on two things: establishing the best possible basis for church-state relations in Europe (despite the challenges) and fostering the work of the Church outside of Europe. The former consisted in the creation of a long series of concordats with European states which guaranteed the Catholic Church a privileged place in the lives of these states, especially in such vital areas as education and family life; the latter meant fostering the mission work of the Church and attempting to separate the lives of these missions from the potentially hostile vagaries of European politics. This in turn meant encouraging the growth of indigenous clergy and hierarchies which, though strictly loyal to Rome, would be less and less dependent on European missionaries. When the time was considered right, this could also lead to the establishment of diplomatic and concordat relationships between the Holy See and the governments of those mission countries that could be considered viable. In most cases, of course, these mission countries were European colonies and, as such, beyond the reach of individual concordats nevertheless preparations were being made for the future.

Such papal policies carried with them several implicit and explicit consequences. Firstly, if a government or regime were willing to accept a specific or even a privileged role for the Church, the Popes in turn would be willing to work with it. As such the specific variant of nationalism, imperialism, conservatism, etc espoused by a government was of no significance. The statement of Jesus: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21) was frequently invoked. In that respect, the Popes saw themselves as being neutral or above the fray. This, however, did not and could not extend to regimes (above all Communist or Communist inspired ones) that rejected any role for the Church at all. While prompted in part by bitter personal experience (such as that of Achille Rato [the future Pius XI] in Warsaw and that of Eugenio Pacelli [the future Pius XII] in Munich) the experiences of the Church in the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Spain weighted the attitude of the Church heavily against dealing with Communists and the Left more generally. Given the climate of the times, the 'neutrality' of the Church was of its nature less than perfectly neutral. This was perhaps augmented by the fact that leading 'democratic' countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States were hostile to the concept of concordats, while the concordat of 1801 with France had been brutally severed by the French

government. It is in this context that the relations of the Catholic Church with the increasingly nationalist governments of Japan should be set.

The Catholic Church in Japan in 1926

On Christmas Day, 1926, the Showa Era began with the accession to the throne of the Emperor Hirohito whose father (the Emperor Taisho) had reigned since 1912. The Catholic Church had been reestablished by French missionaries of the MEP in 1859 and had been able to build on the hitherto forgotten survivals of the sixteenth and seventeenth Portuguese and Spanish missionaries. The situation of the Church in Japan had been regularized into two Vicariates (northern and Southern Japan) in 1876 and then still further into four Arch/Dioceses in 1889. The numbers of faithful were now in excess of 90,000 though 60% of the total were to be found in the Archdiocese of Nagasaki in Kyushu where the legacy of the Iberian missionaries was concentrated. The MEP, largely because of their own inability to adequately staff the Church in Japan, had begun to progressively cede some of its territories to other religious orders, beginning with the cession of Shikoku to the Spanish Dominicans. This was finalized in 1904. The process of cession continued with further areas in Hokkaido, Honshu, and Kyushu being reassigned to German and Italian Catholic missionary societies. In 1926, however, the MEP still retained their control of the Catholic Church in Japan with the two Archdioceses (Nagasaki and Tokyo) and the two Dioceses of Osaka and Hakodate in their hands. The other religious orders had to be content with Prefectures Apostolic (Shikoku, Niigata, Nagoya, and Sapporo).

The control of the MEP had been, however, much contested at least since the anti-clerical legislation of the French Third Republic and, furthermore, the cataclysm of the First World War in Europe had undermined much of the claim to authority of the society. The former had coincided with a massive drop in clerical recruitment to the MEP and in a corresponding loss in financial contributions to the *Oeuvre de la propagation de la foi*, which since the 1830's had provided most of the funding for French Catholic missionary ventures. These had affected the missions of the MEP (and other French missionary societies) around the world. Specifically in Japan, the role taken by France with respect to the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, and especially the alliance of the French Third Republic with Czarist Russia prior to the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, had placed France, and with it the MEP and (perhaps) Catholicism in general, in a negative light. Briefly, the MEP in Japan had even been in a virtual state of siege in many areas due to threats of violence against the property and persons of the missionaries. While this overt hostility quickly abated, Catholicism and especially the MEP remained to some degree suspect. The First World War, on the other hand, had seen France and Japan as allies. The response of the MEP and of the French Catholic Church in general had been a massive outpouring of devotion and service to the *patrie* with missionaries serving in the military not only as chaplains but also as regular soldiers. Undoubtedly this had helped to heal some of the wounds of the early anti-clerical period in France itself and had vindicated the loyalty of the Catholic Church to the state, but in Japan this had served to underline both the ready acceptance of the MEP of the call to patriotism, and the fact that this was to France and not to Japan. How patriotic was the MEP and the Catholic Church in Japan to the Japanese nation and state?

If France had suffered major devastation and loss as a result of the First World War (1.3 million dead, 740,000 maimed, 289,000 houses destroyed, and three

million acres of agricultural land made unfit for cultivation)², Japan had only benefits from the war. At no cost in Japanese lives, Japan had acquired both new territories and even greater influence in Asia and the Pacific. Apart from the Pacific Islands mandates, Japan's primary gains had been in China. In 1915, the Japanese government under Prime Minister Shigenobu Okuma had succeeded in gaining substantial concessions from a weakened Chinese government, even though the United States had made it give up on some of its more extreme demands. In 1918, Japanese Prime Minister Masatake Terauchi had negotiated a joint-defense treaty with China in the light of the proposed threat from the nascent Soviet regime in Russia. Using this treaty, and combining it with sending a substantial army (eventually totaling 70,000) to Siberia as part of the Allied Expeditionary Force, Japanese troops could be found in large areas of China³. A primary goal of post-war Japanese governments was how to hold on to these gains (and exploit them) against the probable opposition of the Western nations, especially the United States. France wanted security and reparations for its losses; Japan wanted security and protection for its gains. Neither was to be happy with what they got.

The Great Depression hit Japan, like France, hard though the onset was not as delayed in Japan as it was in France⁴. In some respects, though, the Great Depression in itself was of less significance because it was the last (or nearly the last) in a series of economic crises that reached back to the immediate post-war period. In fact, the 1920s is often referred to as a period of recurring panics of greater or lesser magnitude. Financial crises, bank closures, bankruptcies, and job losses were recurrent themes. Small companies were pushed to extinction, though the big *zaibatsu* companies (Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda) had the reserves and government connections to weather these storms and retain or even gain economic power. The composite of all these economic woes was a depression, which was the worst in Japanese history. Much publicized were the roles of 'dollar speculators' and Britain's withdrawal from the Gold Standard, which added to Japan's woes. It seemed that these might be linked to foreign displeasure with Japan's foreign policies. This strengthened the claims of the nationalists and the army as to who the enemies actually were and of the necessity (and rightness) of adopting a policy of aggression in China and other parts of Asia. Nationalism (and the army) appeared to have the right formula to restore Japan's economy, and therefore its self-respect, while protecting Japan from exploitative foreigners who wanted to restrict the country's role in Asia.

Of course, there was much more to Japanese attitudes as the Japanese moved through the 1920s into the 1930s than economics. Other nations, like France, explored a variety of different responses to economic depression and social uncertainty. As discussed earlier, successive Japanese governments from the middle of the Meiji period had been concerned as to what the best social policies were that would both minimize social conflict, and maximize a sense of common purpose (and obedience) in their citizens. They were determined to minimize the influence of socialism and other radical ideas. The Great Treason Trial (1911) was the final death knell for the desperately small Anarchist movement in Japan, and the start of the Soviet Revolution in Russia (with the Japanese sending an Expeditionary Army to Siberia to combat it) ensured that Communism would have no foothold in Japan.

² J.P.T. Bury, *France 1814-1940* (London, 1985) 244.

³ Ikuhiko Hata 'Continental Expansion 1905-1941' in *The Cambridge History of Japan Volume 6: The Twentieth Century* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Peter Duus (ed.).

⁴ Takafusa Nakamura 'Depression, recovery, and war, 1920-1945' in Duus (ed.) (1988).

But it was obvious that there was a need, not just to repress unwelcome social tendencies, but also to establish (and enforce) positive ones, particularly nationalism. An increasingly important aspect of this was religion. While Buddhism could be relied upon to support the nationalist agenda and, since the 1890s and especially since the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, had regularly done so, more was needed. The hostility towards Buddhism in some areas and its virtual absence in others (for example Amami-Oshima) made it a useful adjunct, but not a perfect instrument. That instrument could only be found in State Shinto and, since that same war, Japanese governments had increasingly honed it and put it to this use.

State Shinto and the Catholic Church in Japan: The First Stage

This was a major problem for some, especially Catholics, who viewed Shinto as not just a demonstration of non-religious patriotism, but as an alternative religion to their own. This potential for conflict had nearly come to a head during the First World War. In 1915 the Governor of Nagasaki had initiated a formal conversation with Bishop Combaz⁵ about this issue. Despite the contentions of the Governor that the State Shinto shrines and rites were solely civil and not religious, Bishop Combaz reiterated the ban on Catholic participation in a pastoral letter of 1916. The Vatican's Office of *Propaganda Fide* dispatched Monsignor Petrelli⁶ to Tokyo to smooth things over bearing an official letter of felicitations to the Emperor. However, Bishop Combaz was unconvinced, declaring in 1918: 'We regret exceedingly that as Catholics we cannot accept the interpretation of shrine worship given by the government nor can we visit the shrines and engage in the services for the dead nor can we ever pay respect to the so-called gods'⁷. There the matter rested, the government adamant that shrine observance should be mandatory of all loyal Japanese though protesting that it was non-religious, the MEP adamant that it was religious and therefore not possible for Catholics though protesting the loyalty of the Catholic Church in Japan to the state.

The visit of Monsignor Petrelli, however, was a sign of things to come with the establishment of direct relations between the Vatican and Japan and the residence of Monsignor Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi⁸ as Apostolic Delegate from 1919 to 1921. This Apostolic Delegation was also to include the Japanese Imperial territories of Korea and Taiwan, thus pragmatically accepting the realities of Japanese Imperialism. From his elevation to Cardinal in 1933 to his death in 1960, Fumasoni-Biondi was the Prefect of the Congregation *Propaganda Fide* and so a key influence on Japanese-Vatican relations throughout this period. The inauguration of direct diplomatic links meant, though the MEP in Japan only slowly incorporated this fact, that issues to do with State Shinto were now to be handled through the Apostolic Delegate (and thus the Vatican) rather than through the diocesan bishops (and thus the MEP). It was, in part at least, a realistic recognition of the centrality of the Vatican to Catholicism and equally a recognition of the loss of French claims to

⁵ Jean Combaz was born in the Archdiocese of Chambřry in December 1856. He died in Nagasaki in 1926.

⁶ Joseph Petrelli was born in the Marche in 1873. He was a curial official from 1915 until his death in 1962.

⁷ George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago, 1985) 130.

⁸ Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi was born in Rome in 1872. He was elevated to Cardinal and became Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1933. He died in office in 1960.

represent the Catholic Church in Asia. Though a barely noticed change, it was to prove an important one.

The first move of Bishop Fumasoni-Biondi's successor as Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Mario Giardini⁹), which impacted on this issue, was the calling of the second provincial synod in 1924 (the first had been held in 1895). It was not to offer much in the way of a solution to the impasse concerning State Shinto in which the Catholic Church in Japan now found itself. Clearly the desires of the Apostolic Delegate and the Japanese clergy were not entirely commensurate with those of the MEP. A compromise between these two positions was sought and the resulting documents reflect this¹⁰. Basically, certain acts of 'passive' or solely 'material' participation in certain shrine rites could be tolerated (*tolerari potest* in accordance with Canon 1258) especially for soldiers or government workers but 'signs of reverence' could not. The acts of reverence for the war dead were prohibited (despite some disagreement) because of their continuing religious nature. Catholic students in state schools were not allowed 'material' participation in any form. While hope was held out for the future when all State Shinto rites would lose their religious or quasi-religious character, the synod could not reach agreement and they could not see their way to deciding upon a common guideline (*Communis autem regula nulla ratione statui posse videtur*)¹¹. Even this limited compromise, inadequate from both the Japanese and the Apostolic Delegate's perspective, was not well received in certain quarters. The section of the synod documents dealing with State Shinto, because they involved questions of faith, were separated from the other documents and forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office for consideration.

While *Propaganda Fide* wanted a quick, realistic decision to help the Japanese church in an increasingly nationalistic and militaristic environment, the Holy Office had no such concerns but wanted to preserve the integrity of its decisions of the eighteenth century concerning the Chinese Rites. So, nothing happened and the Japanese Catholic Church remained divided and highly suspect in the eyes of the authorities. In 1931, a new Apostolic Delegate (Bishop Edward Mooney¹²) took office and, instead of waiting for some kind of response from the Holy Office, decided to call a new synod. In doing so, he did not just express his own and *Propaganda Fide*'s sense of urgency about the situation, but also the fact that a new synod would reflect the changes in the Japanese Catholic Church since the last synod. *Propaganda Fide* had taken action in Japan that changed the balance of power in the synod; the process of indigenization of the hierarchy had begun. Any documents coming out of this new synod would reflect these changes.

The Indigenization of the Hierarchy: The First Stage

The MEP (and *Propaganda Fide*) had always been clear that one of the goals of the mission was to lay the foundations for what would become self-governing

⁹ Mario Giardini was born in Milan in December 1877. He became Archbishop of Ancona in 1931. He resigned in 1940 and died in 1947.

¹⁰ The documents of this synod were never published, this account of the documents relies on the summary found in George Minamiki *The Chinese Rites Controversy* Chicago: Loyola University, 1985 and on Josef Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea: 1570-1931* (Paderborn, 1980) 268-292.

¹¹ Metzler (1980) 283-284.

¹² Edward Mooney was born in Maryland in 1882 and was ordained in 1909. He became Archbishop of Detroit in 1937 and was made a Cardinal in 1946. He died in 1958.

dioceses under indigenous Bishops. The question was how to judge when the time was right for this transition to take place. How self-sufficient did a prospective diocese have to be? How could you know when the indigenous clergy were ready to take control? In normal circumstances these decisions would be difficult ones to make, but Japan in the 1920s could not be considered 'normal'. However, it was this very lack of normality that pushed *Propaganda Fide* who in turn pushed the MEP into urgent consideration of action. The obvious first choice for such an action was the Diocese of Nagasaki, the jewel in the MEP's crown and, for that reason if for no other, likely to be a contentious choice. The MEP had in fact initiated a Japanese administered area in the diocese (the Goto Islands) during the war but some in the MEP (including Fr. Fernand Thiry¹³) were convinced that it had had negative effects both in terms of administration and religion¹⁴. Despite this skepticism, the MEP was in no position to block the decision that had been clearly made by *Propaganda Fide* (and thus by Pope Pius XI).

Initially, Bishop Combaz at least appeared to think that the MEP was about to cede Hakodate to another religious society (as had been done with Sapporo in 1915) and pleaded with the Superior General of the MEP (Bishop Guébriant)¹⁵ to keep the rest of the MEP's territories 'together and not separate them one by one to another congregation, especially of a different nationality'¹⁶. The visit of the Apostolic Delegate (Fumasoni-Biondi) to Nagasaki made him begin to accept that the plans of the Vatican might be otherwise. Bishop Combaz was acutely aware of the fact that Fumasoni-Biondi had only been in Japan a short while and did not understand in depth the 'numerous obstacles opposing the conversion of the Japanese or the government's attitude to the Catholic religion'. He implies that the Apostolic Delegate was caught up 'in the middle of Japanese obsequiousness'. He also noted the visit of the Prince Imperial (soon to be Emperor Hirohito) to the Vatican at the same time as Fumasoni-Biondi was on tour in Japan¹⁷. He soon made the connection however and realized that Vatican backed change was on the way in Japan whatever he might have preferred to. But what change and how much were still unanswered questions at the end of 1920, that was not to remain the case for long.

By the following year, Bishop Combaz realized that two alternative, though inter-related plans were under discussion. One was the further sub-division of the diocese with parts of it going to other mission societies. The other was the erection of a diocese under a Japanese Bishop. Yet it was still not clear to Bishop Combaz and the other MEP in Japan as to how these two were related, what exactly was meant, and what the timetable would be. During the course of 1921, it became apparent that *Propaganda Fide* had approved the transference of part of the diocese to the Canadian Franciscans¹⁸. The Salesians of Don Bosco were also encouraged by the Apostolic Delegate to take on a mission independent from the MEP in part of the

¹³ Fr. Fernand Thiry was born in September 1884. He was Vicar General to Bishop Combaz. Nominated Bishop of Fukuoka in 1927, he died in 1930.

¹⁴ Letter of Fr. Thiry to MEP 06/07/1926 he is writing on behalf of Bishop Combaz who was too sick to write himself. MC [*Missionary Correspondence*] 571a (1926).

¹⁵ Jean-Baptiste Budes de Guébriant was born in December 1860 to a distinguished Breton family. In 1921 he was chosen as Superior General of the MEP in which capacity he served until his death in 1935.

¹⁶ Letter of Bishop Combaz 02/22/1920 in MC 571a (1920).

¹⁷ MC 571a (1920).

¹⁸ *Comptes Rendus* (1921).

diocese¹⁹. Initially, in 1921, the Canadian Franciscans were sent to Kagoshima, which was expected to be their new mission territory. But Kagoshima on its own was relatively unpromising territory for them, so they worked towards extending the territorial base of their proposed independent mission. Their primary goal, once they realized the lie of the land, was to take possession of the flourishing mission of Amami-Oshima²⁰. Finally, it was 'agreed' that the Franciscans would have Kagoshima (including Amami-Oshima), Miyazaki, Oita, and Kumamoto prefectures²¹. Though the MEP missionaries in Nagasaki Diocese were not happy about the loss of Amami-Oshima, they would have been happier if this loss had been counter-balanced by the loss of less fertile mission territory as well (such as Kagoshima, Miyazaki, and Oita). They didn't want to have another missionary society 'take the jam and leave them with the dry bread'²². There was also some division about whether ceding Kumamoto was appropriate in geographical and transportation terms. If the four prefectures were to be ceded to the Franciscans, what was to be ceded to the Salesians and who was responsible for making the final decision?

The provisional head of the Canadian Franciscan mission in Japan (Fr. Maurice Bertin), though willing to keep Kagoshima Prefecture in its entirety, wished to shift the center of the new mission to Amami-Oshima. He was also content that the Salesians should have Oita and one other Prefecture, and therefore recommended that Miyazaki as well should be added to the Salesian mission²³. This would leave Kumamoto Prefecture as territory to be decided. But the Superior General of the Canadian Franciscans disagreed with Fr. Bertin and wanted to keep Miyazaki Prefecture for his order. This would mean a Franciscan mission of two prefectures (Kagoshima and Miyazaki) and a Salesian mission of two prefectures (Oita and Kumamoto). There was understandable opposition to this on the part of the MEP in Japan²⁴. One part of this opposition centered on how the decision on this division would be made, Article 19 of the MEP rules stipulated that the society itself should make these decisions while Article 39 noted that it should be the Holy See²⁵. Concerns ran so high that Fr. François Bertrand²⁶ (claiming to represent six other MEP missionaries) went over Bishop Combaz' head to write directly to the MEP in Paris about the proposed division²⁷. These concerns were communicated to Bishop Combaz very shortly thereafter following a meeting of the Missionary Council. The missionaries made it clear that they wished to 'keep something at least equal to other societies'²⁸. In the end, the MEP intervened with Propaganda Fide to insure that the MEP would retain Kumamoto Prefecture (along with Saga and Fukuoka Prefectures), so which of the two articles applied was never truly clarified. The only thing that the MEP in Japan was definitely sure about is that they must maintain

¹⁹ Letter of Bishop Combaz to MEP 23/09/1923 MC 571a (1923).

²⁰ *Comptes Rendus* (1921).

²¹ *Comptes Rendus* (1923).

²² MC 571a (1921).

²³ MC 571a (1924).

²⁴ Correspondence of 28/07/1924 and 16/08/1924 (Fr. Lemarie) in MC 571a (1924).

²⁵ Correspondence of 28/06/1923 in MC 571a (1923).

²⁶ Fr. François Bertrand was born in August 1866. Following a long illness, he died in February 1940 at Yatsuhiro.

²⁷ Fr. Bertrand to MEP 07/12/1923 in MC 571a (1923).

²⁸ 23/09/1923 MC 571a (1923).

Fukuoka, as it was the only larger settlement in the three prefectures at the time. In the smaller towns in the countryside 'everyone is enrolled in Shinto-Buddhist associations' and it was 'difficult if not impossible' for the missionaries to get results. On the other hand, 'towns of 15,000 to 20,000 and above have more liberty, more independence, and are more open to Christian ideas' so that 'there at least we advance slowly but surely'²⁹. One thing that made the discussion even sharper was the realization that Fumasoni-Biondi had promised that there would be a Japanese Diocesan Bishop during his visit in 1921 and that *Propaganda Fide* were intent on delivering on that promise. The Diocese of Nagasaki was to be taken out of the hands of the MEP and given to the Japanese clergy.

In 1926, the die was cast and it was made clear that the Apostolic Delegate (Bishop Mario Giardini) with the authority of *Propaganda Fide* was intent on implementing the transition to a Japanese controlled diocese in Nagasaki as soon as possible. Bishop Combaz seems to have been largely accepting of the project, though he was too sick to take part in the practical discussions leading to implementation. In fact, the scheme was of necessity postulated on his no longer being the Bishop of Nagasaki. In fact, because of ill health, he died in August 1926, and there was no need to discuss his demission. That did not mean, however, that it would be plain sailing to transfer the diocese into Japanese hands. Fr. Thiry (as Vicar General) led the charge against the intentions of *Propaganda Fide*. While he would have been a natural successor to Bishop Combaz (and did become the first Bishop of Fukuoka) there is no real reason to think that his attempts to counter the transition were motivated by personal factors; rather his concerns were with the continued smooth functioning of the diocese and with the timing and appropriateness of the change.

His primary contention was that *Propaganda Fide* was attempting to move too fast without adequately considering the situation in the diocese. While ultimately there was no doubt that the diocese should have a Japanese bishop, now was not the time and, not only that, there was in fact no pressure (he believed) from the Japanese clergy to make this change at this time. He wrote that 'the healthy (*saine*) majority of the Japanese clergy of Nagasaki are completely opposed to any precipitate action in this matter'. He went on to note that *Propaganda Fide* and the MEP in Paris should be aware that the Japanese clerical administration of the Goto Islands had been 'a setback in religious and administrative terms' irrespective of what had been officially reported in the *Comptes rendus*. The correct solution was a new MEP Bishop of Nagasaki Diocese to be followed by the division of the diocese at a later time³⁰. Implicit here was the idea that Bishop Combaz had 'gilded the lily' somewhat in his official reports on the Goto Islands and that this had moved *Propaganda Fide* to adopt a more favorable stance towards indigenization of the diocesan administration. He further noted the opposition of the missionaries based on the lack of adequate numbers of priests, there being no suitable candidate for Bishop among the Japanese clergy, and the problems of administrative competence (or the lack of it) noted in the *Gotos*³¹. He also raised the more 'personal' problems of the missionaries many of whom were 'more or less aged' and, though they had years of experience, found that the current disruptions had diminished 'the fire of enthusiasm of their youth'. They were, after all, 'still men' which meant that the

²⁹ 07/12/1923 MC 571a (1923).

³⁰ 06/07/1926 MC 571a (1926).

³¹ 22/07/1926 MC 571a (1926).

current situation was very bad for the morale of the MEP missionaries in Nagasaki Diocese³².

The main problem, however, for Fr. Thiry and the other MEP missionaries that he represented, was more to do with the inadequacies of the Japanese clergy than the reluctance of the French clergy. Of the 29 Japanese clergy of the diocese, seven were over 60 and three of them were over 70. A further three were assigned to the seminary and thus not engaged in parochial work while another two could 'only be employed very discretely' because of 'very delicate reasons'. Stretching logic perhaps a little too far (given the practice of the Catholic Church in general not least in France) 'nearly all of them were from the prefecture which meant keeping them in the same prefecture could be a source of grave moral difficulties'³³. Based on this, he suggested a European Bishop for the diocese as a whole with a Japanese Auxiliary Bishop with special charge of the Gotos, Hirado, Kuroshima, and Sasebo³⁴.

Despite this spirited, and perhaps reasonable, opposition, Fr. Thiry was soon made aware of its irrelevance. In December 1926 he received a letter from Bishop Giardini 'in the name of the Pope' (sub sigillo pontificio) that the decision had been made and that a Japanese Bishop for the whole Diocese of Nagasaki would be appointed. All that was required of the MEP missionaries were nominations for the episcopate³⁵. Despite two previous votes against the proposal, the opposition of the MEP missionaries was of no avail. The somewhat desperate appeal of Fr. Thiry to have a 'temporary double administration' with the MEP retaining the seminary was clearly beside the point by this time³⁶. Other than nominations, the only things left for the MEP were to plan their exit from Nagasaki (and its timing) and to set about creating a viable new diocese in Fukuoka.

The MEP in Japan nominated Fr. Moriyama and Fr. Urakawa, both of whom were rejected in favor of the choice of *Propaganda Fide* (Fr. Kyunosuke Hayasaka). However, Fr. Michael Urakawa did become Bishop of Sendai in 1941³⁷. At least Fr. Hayasaka was not a native of Nagasaki but of Sendai, so one of Fr. Thiry's concerns at least had been addressed. The suggestion was made by the MEP in Paris that the missionaries might wish to stay on in the Diocese of Nagasaki at least for a period of transition, but that was rejected because 'though the Europeans have enough humility to stay in their posts, the Japanese don't have enough to let them'³⁸. Fr. Thiry acted as one would expect him to act and accepted the decision of *Propaganda Fide* as final and thus beyond discussion, reiterating the old maxim that 'Rome has spoken, discussion is closed' (*Roma locuta, causa finita*). Despite some continuing resistance and rearguard action ('intrigues and deceptions') the rest of the MEP complied as well³⁹. The Sisters of the Infant Jesus of Chauffailles notified Fr. Thiry of their unwillingness to leave their novitiate under Japanese direction, but that was

³² 23/07/1926 MC 571a (1926).

³³ 07/10/1926 MC 571a (1926).

³⁴ 15/12/1926 MC 571a (1926).

³⁵ 23/12/1926 MC 571a (1926).

³⁶ 10/05/1927 MC 571a (1927).

³⁷ Bishop Michael Urakawa was born in April 1876. He served in Nagasaki for 35 years until he became Bishop of Sendai in 1941. He retired in 1954 and died in the following year.

³⁸ 10/05/1927 MC 571a (1927).

³⁹ 24/11/1927 MC 571a (1927).

the end of the trouble⁴⁰. Fr. Thiry asked for and received additional financial aid from Paris for purchasing land and building new churches as the 'work of evangelization and other existing works had slowed down because of a lack of resources'⁴¹. He was ordained Bishop of Fukuoka in December 1927, though his was not to be a long tenure of office. In July 1927, Fr. Hayasaki Kyunosuke⁴² became the first Japanese Bishop of Nagasaki.

The reasons for over-riding the objections of the MEP in Japan and for swiftly executing the policy of indigenizing the 'flagship' Diocese of Nagasaki are not difficult to discern. Pope Pius XI was acutely aware of the dangers of modern nationalism to the Catholic Church in Europe and throughout the world. He was seconded in this by his Secretaries of State (Cardinal Pietro Gasparri [1922-1930]⁴³ and Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli [1930-1939])⁴⁴. The Vatican believed that the best way to secure the best position for the Church was through direct negotiations with national governments with the aim of achieving detailed written agreements (preferably Concordats) with them, which would provide guarantees for the Catholic Church at the national level. From 1916, and especially from 1919, the Vatican had been working towards this end in Japan with increasing urgency, as nationalism appeared to increase in strength. To achieve this goal, in Japan as elsewhere, would mean some concessions to 'give a mark of respect and show confidence in the government'⁴⁵. It was even felt that not to do so might lead to a schism or the creation of a 'National' Catholic Church in Japan⁴⁶. How viable a threat this was must remain an open question, but it was not a question that the Vatican wished to leave open. Schismatic breakaways from the Catholic Church that rejected the authority of the Papacy had been a feature of Catholic life in Europe since the time of the Jansenists⁴⁷. They were especially prominent at the time of the First Vatican Council in 1870 in the Netherlands and parts of German speaking Europe. Such schisms were not, however, restricted to Europe as the Polish National Catholic Church (in the United States) and the Aglipayan Church (in the Philippines) demonstrated. However, although it may have been an empty threat, it was not one that could be dismissed summarily by the Pope or by *Propaganda Fide*. It was also a question that was to recur over the next few years as the position of the Catholic Church in Japan became even more precarious in the face of the rising tide of extreme nationalism.

State Shinto and the Indigenization of the Hierarchy: Stage Two

Since the end of the First World War, the MEP in Japan had been in a very difficult financial position due to inflation and a collapsing exchange rate, which

⁴⁰ 15/07/1927 MC 571a (1927).

⁴¹ 12/10/1927 MC 571a (1927).

⁴² Bishop Hayasaka was born in Sendai in 1883. He was appointed Bishop of Nagasaki in 1927 at the age of 43. He resigned in 1937 and died in 1959.

⁴³ Cardinal Pietro Gasparri was born in May 1852. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1907 and became Secretary of State in 1914. He retired in 1930 and died in 1934.

⁴⁴ Cardinal Pacelli was born in March 1876. He became Secretary of State in 1930 and was elected as Pope Pius XII in 1939. He died in 1956.

⁴⁵ *Comptes Rendus* (1927).

⁴⁶ 23/06/1926 MC 571a (1926).

⁴⁷ John Neale, *History of the So-Called Jansenist Church of Holland* (New York, 1958).

made things very difficult everywhere perhaps especially in Tokyo⁴⁸. The comparatively low level of missionary departures (averaging 20 a year or less in both the 1920s and 1930s) meant that there was a growing shortage of MEP missionaries and Japan had no special claim above that of other missions. Further territorial concessions were made to other missionary societies; in 1922 the Diocese of Nagoya was carved out of the Tokyo Archdiocese and given to the German based Divine Word Missionaries. In 1923, the Diocese of Hiroshima was created out of the western part of the Diocese of Osaka and assigned to German Jesuits. By 1930, the number of MEP priests had fallen by nearly 20% compared with prewar levels and they represented exactly half of the number of foreign Catholic missionaries. They had experience on their side but increasingly little else and even that was starting to ebb away. In Kyushu in the same year in the final deal agreed to by *Propaganda Fide*, Kagoshima was entrusted to the Canadian Franciscans (including the fertile mission field of Amami Oshima), and the Italian Salesians of Don Bosco took over the decidedly less promising territory of Miyazaki. The granting of Nagasaki to the indigenous clergy was clearly in response to the nationalist mood of the times and was a demonstration of 'confidence in the (Japanese) government'⁴⁹. As a concession it was a major one but, in the increasingly radicalized environment of the 1930s in Japan, it was not enough. It became clear that what was expected was the handing over of all of the Catholic dioceses to Japanese control. If foreign missionaries were to be tolerated at all, they could certainly not be tolerated when they were in charge of Japanese. It seemed to some (especially the Apostolic Delegates) that the future of the Catholic Church in Japan was at stake, while to at least some of the missionaries the mere survival of the institution was perhaps a high price to pay for giving up the principles upon which the MEP had built up the mission at such great cost. At the time, however, there was little scope for an in depth discussion to take place.

The Manchurian Incident of 1931 was the active beginning of the Greater East Asia War. The army (and the navy) increasingly influenced all of the decisions of the government. With the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi in May 1932, civilian government virtually ended in Japan. The Japanese nation was put on a permanent war footing and all sectors of the economy were directed at the war effort. To mobilize a nation and to keep it mobilized is not an easy task since an accessible set of beliefs and practices, which are inclusive of all the people of the nation need to be put into place and maintained. In Japan, this set of beliefs and practices was to be found in State Shinto. The military-based governments were intent on imposing State Shinto throughout Japan and, in fact, throughout the Japanese Empire, and so the Catholic Church had to deal with this. It was a matter of urgency and it would no longer be possible to let the decision disappear into the files of the Holy Office. The transfer of Nagasaki Diocese had proved the willingness on the part of the Pope to make reasonable compromises for a greater good, now was the time to consider State Shinto.

Matters came to a head in May 1932, just before the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai. A group of sixty Sophia University students had been led on a march as part of the compulsory military training program. When they reached Yasukuni Shrine they were required to present arms as a show of homage to the war dead, but two or three Catholic students refused to do so⁵⁰. In response, the Army

⁴⁸ *Rapport annual des évêques* (Tokyo, 1921).

⁴⁹ *Comptes Rendus* 1927.

⁵⁰ This account is based on Minamiki (1985) who in turn used an unpublished account of the affair written Fr. von Kuenburg the Rector of Sophia University.

Ministry threatened to cancel the position of military training officer at the school, which would have effectively meant its closure. Bishop Ross, the new German Jesuit Bishop of Hiroshima, intervened with a more liberal interpretation of the rules (Canon 1258) governing these matters⁵¹. Archbishop Chambon⁵² of Tokyo agreed to go along with this and permission was granted 'by word of mouth and for this instance' (*mündlich und pro casu*) for Sophia students to perform homage at shrines pending a decision of all of the ordinaries. As the next synod was not scheduled until 1934, Archbishop Chambon wrote directly to the Ministry of Education requesting clarification of the purpose and meaning to be attached to shrine visits. They replied that the 'bow that is required of the group of students of the higher schools and the students of the middle and primary schools has no other purpose than that of manifesting the sentiments of patriotism and loyalty'⁵³. This was sufficient for the Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Edward Mooney) to issue his approval, which the synod of 1934 then approved in its turn. In 1935, the then Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Paolo Marella⁵⁴) requested revisions of the previous guidelines governing shrine visits from *Propaganda Fide*. The reply, in the form of an instruction (*Pluries instanterque*), was issued by the Prefect of *Propaganda Fide* (Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, a previous Apostolic Delegate to Japan). It was declared lawful for Catholics to attend and participate in shrine ceremonies since they were solely of a 'civil nature'. Catholics could also take part in other private rites (funerals, weddings, etc), which had also lost their religious nature. The norms given in these instructions were not just recommendations; Bishops were required (*debere*) to observe them. The final seal was placed on this in February 1937 when Monsignor Marella and the new Archbishop Designate of Tokyo (Archbishop Takeo Doi⁵⁵) visited the Yasukuni Shrine along with a number of Catholic clergy and laity. Perhaps an even more tangible symbol of the acquiescence of the indigenous led Catholic Church in Japan was the campaign, launched by the first Japanese Bishop of Nagasaki (Bishop Hayasaka) to purchase a military plane to be donated to the government to demonstrate "Catholic patriotism". Under considerable pressure undoubtedly, the policy strictly adhered to by the MEP since its arrival in Japan and ably defended just a few years before, had been overturned. The nature of Shinto rites, the separation of Religion and the State, and the relationship of the Catholic Church to them remains a debate to the present day⁵⁶.

At the Yasukuni visit in 1937, Archbishop Doi led the Catholic clergy at the shrine visit, and the MEP had been pushed into further concessions. Very shortly more were to come. As the nationalist and militarist hold on the country deepened, the Japanese government was getting impatient with the slow rate of change towards Japanese control of the Catholic Church in Japan. The first move designed to hasten the process came in 1936 when the Canadian Franciscans withdrew under

⁵¹ *Codex iuris canonici* (Rome, 1909).

⁵² Jean-Baptiste Chambon was born in March 1875. He became Archbishop of Tokyo in 1927. On the division of the diocese in 1937 he became Bishop of Yokohama. He surrendered his diocese in 1940 and retired. He died in Japan and in 1948.

⁵³ Minamiki (1985) 145.

⁵⁴ Paolo Marella was born in Rome in 1895. He was appointed to the Roman Curia and elevated to be a Cardinal in 1959. He retired in 1983 and died in the following year.

⁵⁵ Archbishop Peter Doi was born in 1892 and ordained in 1921. In 1937 he was appointed Archbishop of Tokyo. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1960 and died in 1970.

⁵⁶ Matsumoto Saburo 'The Roman Catholic Church in Japan' in Kumazawa Yoshinobu and David Swain [eds] *Christianity in Japan, 1971-1990* (Tokyo, 1990).

considerable pressure and a Japanese Administrator Apostolic (Fr. Paul Yamaguchi)⁵⁷ was appointed. The center of the Kagoshima mission was the island of Amami-Oshima, which the MEP had been reluctant to concede to another missionary society because the rate of conversions had been so high. Amami-Oshima was declared a militarily sensitive zone and all foreigners were excluded which spelt the end of the mission. Where the charge of being ruled by foreigners was most galling was in the capital city of Tokyo. Archbishop Chambon was only sixty in 1935 and in good health so there was a problem with waiting for time to take its course. In 1937, the Archdiocese was divided with the MEP (under Bishop Chambon) keeping the new Diocese of Yokohama⁵⁸ while the Japanese clergy took control of Tokyo itself. The final blow would come in 1940 when all the foreign ordinaries were required to give up their sees to Japanese clergy, a process that was complete by 1941. As Japan entered the latest and, as it turned out, final stage of the war, the Catholic Church in Japan was solely led by Japanese and more fully integrated into the 'national project' than ever before.

The Final Stage: The Catholic Church in Japan 1940-1945

It was against this background of war and nationalism that the final decision was made to indigenize all the Japanese dioceses and to do it immediately. It is worth reiterating that the MEP, along with *Propaganda Fide*, had made clear all along their commitment to eventual indigenization. The problems lay with the word 'eventual'. Was the Catholic Church in Japan truly ready to 'stand on its own feet'? Did it have enough motivation? Was the decision to indigenize a reflection of the readiness and maturity of the Catholic Church in Japan or was the decision based on *real politik*, which in turn might indicate a fundamental unreadiness? Clearly, the decision no longer rested with the MEP, even in an advisory capacity, and *Propaganda Fide* had reached a decision. Whatever doubts could legitimately be entertained over this decision, it was not without its supporters. Both important elements of the Japanese clergy and some of the non-MEP heads of mission were strongly in its favor since they were convinced of both its timeliness and its appropriateness. However, some among the MEP, most notably Bishop Castanier of Osaka, remained unconvinced and instituted some delaying action that gave some color and tension to the final stages of the process.

Archbishop Doi of Tokyo was responsible for orchestrating the final demission of the non-Japanese Bishops and heads of missions. Initially it seemed that the plan was for a piecemeal series of demissions beginning with the dioceses of Hiroshima, Kyoto, and Osaka and then proceeding to the others and circumstances permitted. This was the plan communicated to Bishop Castanier by the Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Marella) in September 1940. He noted the agreement of Bishop Chambon to this but shared his unhappiness over the decision: 'You understand well that it's neither Rome nor me who requires this, but our shared resolution to agree to all the sacrifices (necessary) to save whatever can be saved in this Church'⁵⁹. Bishop Castanier replied noting his own wish to remain as Bishop, but acknowledging the government's clear intention of replacing foreigners with Japanese Bishops especially in the major towns. He believed that the decision

⁵⁷ Paul Yamaguchi was born in 1894 and ordained in 1923. He was appointed Bishop of Nagasaki in 1937. He became the first Archbishop of Nagasaki in 1959. He retired in 1971 and died in 1976.

⁵⁸ The Diocese of Yokohama was to be divided again very shortly afterwards (in 1937-1939) when the Prefecture Apostolic of Urawa (now the Diocese of Sendai) was created and given to the Canadian Franciscans.

should rest with Rome, and clearly believed that it would still be the graduated series of demissions envisaged by Monsignor Marella, which would start immediately⁶⁰. To clarify this point, Bishop Castanier wrote directly to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi at *Propaganda Fide*.

The reason for his confusion was that at an earlier meeting of the Bishops (on the 11th of September) the gradual solution was discussed, as was the idea, championed by Bishop Doi, that all of the Bishops and Heads of Missions should submit their resignations at the same time and immediately. They requested the advice of *Propaganda Fide* or at least confirmation that across the board resignations were what Rome required of them. The response of *Propaganda Fide*, delivered by telegram on the 23rd of September, was the message communicated by Monsignor Marella to Bishop Castanier on the same date: demission should be 'little by little (and) by stages'⁶¹. Despite the fact that, as Bishop Castanier acknowledged 'leading Catholics believe total demission is a *sine qua non*' for the Catholic Church in Japan, it would appear that Rome did not entirely agree. The source of this lack of agreement probably lay in the reasons used in favor of general demission: '1) Japan is a power of the first order (and) shouldn't have foreigners in charge of anything – Catholics are obstinate; 2) If they demit, maybe the missionaries can stay [to foster good relations with other countries]; 3) The Bishops have agreed (!) so they should keep their word; 4) Not to demit would raise the possibility of schism'⁶². In particular the last reason, because it seemed like a threat on the part of the Japanese government and maybe on the part of elements in the Catholic Church in Japan itself, no doubt disposed *Propaganda Fide* to a slightly less conciliatory line.

However, the decision had been effectively removed from the hands of *Propaganda Fide* as well. After the meeting of the 11th of September, and without waiting for confirmation from Rome, Bishop Doi had informed the Japanese government (and announced in a Japanese Catholic newspaper) that it would be a general demission⁶³. Bishop Castanier agreed to submit his demission (which would have been required under either plan) in order to save Bishop Doi's embarrassment, though clearly suspicious of the way in which Bishop Doi had conducted himself during the whole affair. The first demissions (Hiroshima, Kyoto, and Urawa [Saitama]) were received immediately, but even that was not a smooth process. After having resigned, Monsignor Ambrose Leblanc (of Urawa) then had second thoughts when he began to suspect that it was Bishop Doi rather than the Japanese government who was behind the general demissions strategy. This, along with the telegram from *Propaganda Fide*, made him call the whole general demissions plan 'an invention' and even led to him questioning the validity of demissions made under these circumstances⁶⁴. Bishop Castanier was under increasing pressure to resign, Bishop Chambon visited him to urge him to do so in October, noting that this was

⁵⁹ Letter of Monsignor Marella to Bishop Castanier 23/09/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶⁰ Letter of Bishop Castanier to Monsignor Marella 28/09/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶¹ Telegram of 23/09/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶² Memorandum of Bishop Castanier to Bishops Doi and Chambon n/d but probably October 1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶³ Letter of Bishop Castanier to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi 25/10/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶⁴ Letter of Monsignor Leblanc to Bishop Castanier 25/11/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

what both Bishop Doi and Monsignor Marella wanted, the latter largely because of Bishop Doi's pre-emptive contact with the government and the press. By November, Bishop Doi was becoming increasingly desperate and wrote to Bishop Castanier that only he and Bishop Lemieux (The Canadian Dominican who was Bishop of Sendai) had not submitted their resignations⁶⁵. The latter had indicated his willingness to do so but was out of the country. Bishop Castanier, in a gesture which indicated his feelings, replied and soothed Bishop Doi with the news that he had indeed submitted his resignation, but directly to *Propaganda Fide* and not to Monsignor Marella⁶⁶. This resignation was accepted in December, after a telling lag of a month, and Fr. Paul Taguchi was appointed as his successor. He was ordained to the episcopate on December 14th 1941 a week after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Osaka was the last of the Japanese dioceses to accept an indigenous bishop and it was the last of the MEP dioceses in Japan. An era was over and clearly a period of great challenge for the Catholic Church and the MEP in Japan lay ahead.

France surrendered to the German Armed Forces on June 22 1940 and Marshal Pétain became Chief of State of the French government, which was allowed to control the southern half of France from the city of Vichy. On September 27 1940, Japan signed the Tripartite Treaty with Germany and Italy forming the 'Axis Alliance'. In September 1940, the Japanese Army with consent of the Vichy government entered French Indochina where they remained in effective occupation until 1945. In October 1940, the Thai Air Force attacked Vichy French forces in Southeast Asia, which was followed by a ground assault in January 1941. The Vichy French forces retaliated and gained territory but, in the resulting peace treaty of May 9 1941 signed in Tokyo and brokered by the Japanese, these territories were all returned. Vichy was a collaborationist state with the Axis in Europe and this was also the case in Southeast Asia. It was not an equal partner, but a tolerated assistant whose skills could be valuable but whose weakness was manifestly clear. This would clearly impact on the status of the MEP in Japan.

At the opening of hostilities in Europe in September 1939 there was a total of 67 MEP priests actually living in Japan. An additional seven were out of the country on furlough (six in France and one in the United States). With the signing of the Axis Alliance a year later they became officially citizens of a 'friendly' nation, as did the German and Italian Catholic missionaries. The Salesian Prefect Apostolic for Miyazaki, Vincenzo Cimatti, even went so far as to compose the first ever Western style opera in Japanese 'Grazia Hasegawa' to celebrate the signing of the Axis Treaty. It was first performed in Tokyo that year⁶⁷. This 'friendly nation' status for these missionaries continued after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the British and Dutch possessions in Southeast Asia. Catholic and Protestant missionaries from America and Britain (as well as Belgium and Ireland) were subject to internment but this did not apply to the MEP⁶⁸. Some missionaries from 'enemy' nations were interned and then deported⁶⁹. In August 1942, and again in September 1943, some of these missionaries were exchanged at sea for captured or interned Japanese civilians, while others remained interned for the duration of the

⁶⁵ Letter of Bishop Doi to Bishop Castanier 03/11/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶⁶ Letter of Bishop Castanier to Bishop Doi 06/11/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁶⁷ Vincenzo Cimatti was born in 1879. He came to Japan in 1925. During the war he was under virtual house arrest in Tokyo. He stayed on in Japan for a further 20 years after the war dying there in 1965.

⁶⁸ Letter of Bishop Breton to MEP Superior General 20/09/1945 in MC 571b (1945).

⁶⁹ Sister Aimee Julie, *With Dedicated Hearts* (Ipswich [MA], 1963) 202-232.

war. Although being from a 'friendly' country prevented deportation or internment, the MEP were subject to considerable harassment and difficulty. Two were arrested in December 1941 (Bishop Breton and Fr. Marcel Houtin)⁷⁰ and imprisoned for four months. At the same time, Fr. François-Xavier Brenguier was arrested in Saga and imprisoned for three months⁷¹. Two missionaries had been conscripted in 1939 (Fr. Clément Fonteneau in Vietnam and Fr. Alfred Mercier at the French Embassy in Japan)⁷². All of the other missionaries were subject to various restrictions ranging from house arrest to intensive surveillance. Frs. Frédéric Bois, Anatole Heuzet, and Henri Léoutre were put under house arrest at the Cathedral of Fukuoka sharing their place of residence with some Japanese police who reported their words and actions⁷³. Fr. Bonnet was arrested and imprisoned for 19 days, on the denunciation of his catechist with whom he was not on good terms. The nature and extent of the harassment varied at the whim of government officials and policemen around the country 'some (missionaries) were not allowed to leave their posts while others had to leave and take refuge in the mountains'⁷⁴. Father Bonnet noted that the police in his parish of Izuka were always 'correct' in their treatment of him⁷⁵, though the same could not apply to the police dealing with Fr. Breton who, it seems, was particularly disliked by them and was even physically beaten in prison. However, even this story had a happier side as he was released on the instructions of a senior government official, was given gifts of beer, fruit, and candies and returned to the Cathedral of Fukuoka with a policeman to carry his bags⁷⁶. The MEP continued to function, however, and remained in groups organized by diocese.

Two things were of particular help to the MEP during the war. One was the continued interest on the part of the Japanese government in maintaining

⁷⁰ Fr. Marcel Houtin was born in 1890 and ordained to the priesthood in 1920. He served in various positions in the Archdiocese of Tokyo where he died in 1951.

⁷¹ Fr. François-Xavier Brenguier was born in 1871. He served in various posts in Kyushu until his death in 1946.

⁷² Fr. Clément Fonteneau was born in 1913 and ordained to the priesthood in 1937. After a brief stay at Fujieda he served in the French Army until 1945. After his return from Vietnam he served in various positions in the Diocese of Yokohama until his death in 2001. Fr. Alfred Mercier was born in 1905. He was mobilized in 1940, though he was demobilized after three months. In May 1945 he was arrested and tortured by the police. After his release in August 1945 he served in various parishes until his death in 1977.

⁷³ Letter of Fr. Maxime Bonnet to MEP Superior General 19/09/1945. Fr. Maxime Bonnet was born in 1878. He served in various positions in the Dioceses of Nagasaki and then Fukuoka. He retired in 1952 and died at Shindenbaru in 1959. Fr. Frédéric Bois was born in 1887. He was mobilized into the French Army from 1914 to 1919. On his return to Japan he served in Kumamoto and then Fukuoka. After the end of World War Two, he served in Yahata from 1948 to his retirement in 1975. He died in Shindenbaru in 1977. Fr. Anatole Heuzet was born in 1870. He served at Kianousa for 18 years before he was mobilized into the French Army in 1915. He was demobilized in 1917 and returned to Japan where he served in a variety of positions. He died in Fukuoka in 1944. Fr. Henri LÉoutre was born in 1907. He served in various positions before his health problems became severe. He died in 1944.

⁷⁴ Note (no date) in papers of Bishop Combaz.

⁷⁵ In fact, Fr. Bonnet attempts to portray his life as a largely pleasant one with a big garden, chickens, rabbits, goats, and bees. Despite his tendency to 'look on the bright side' it would seem that life, though always uncertain, was not always unpleasant for all of the MEP missionaries. Letter of Fr. Maxime Bonnet to MEP Superior General 19/09/1945.

⁷⁶ Letter of Fr. Maxime Bonnet to MEP Superior General 19/09/1945.

diplomatic links with the Vatican. Bishop Breton believed that his release from prison was connected to the appointment of Harada Ken (Councilor of the Japanese Embassy in France) as the first Minister Plenipotentiary to the Vatican⁷⁷. The other was the continued support of the French Government that, under Marshal Pétain, was favorable towards the Catholic Church. In fact, through the assistance of M. Gallois at the French Consulate in Yokohama, the MEP received regular monthly cash subventions⁷⁸. While not treated by the Japanese government as favorably as the German Jesuit missionaries (as Fr. Henri Unterwald noted)⁷⁹, the help of the Vichy government was important for the physical survival of the MEP missionaries during these difficult times. In return, they were supportive of the requests of Vichy for interpreters in Indochina and of saying a mass for the war dead at the special request of Marshal Pétain⁸⁰.

As opposed to this, there were two things that were particularly irksome to the MEP during the war. The first was the attitude of the Catholic Church in Japan towards Japanese nationalism and the wartime government. In the words of Bishop Breton: 'Hierarchy and clergy cooperated heartily with the militaristic and racist elements of the country, not a single one daring to say "no" to a government official. Lack of character, lack of principles, a real game of opportunism all through, I should say rather of servilism (sic)'⁸¹. Following the orders of the government, the Catholic Church had restructured itself in May 1941 as the 'Japanese Catholic Religious Body' (*Nippon Tenshu Kokyo Kyodan*) with Archbishop Doi as its first president. In every way, from participation in 'pacification delegations' to the South Pacific and Indonesia, to making all Church buildings available for the use of the military from offering prayers for victory at mass to official visits to State Shinto shrines for the same purpose, the Catholic hierarchy seemed to be wholeheartedly supportive of the war. Its numerous publications, especially those of Bishop Taguchi of Osaka⁸², during this period reflect this. Bishop Taguchi was a particularly zealous supporter of the militarist government and its actions, especially in Southeast Asia. Archbishop Doi, though not a participant in the actual 'pacification missions', made his support for the government's actions clear in print.

The second issue was the way in which the Japanese clergy had treated the missionaries during the war. In the words of Bishop Breton concerning his imprisonment 'On the part of the native Bishop and of his clergy, there was complete indifference, not even the least request to the competent authorities to obtain my release or that of my fellows'⁸³. This was reflected throughout the country: whether out of fear, cowardice, or nationalist commitment, the Japanese clergy did nothing to help the missionaries and distanced themselves as far as possible from them. The support of the Japanese clergy for the 'pacification delegations' requested by the Japanese government in 1941 and 1943 for the Pacific

⁷⁷ Letter of Bishop Breton to MEP Superior General 20/09/1945 in MC 571b (1945).

⁷⁸ Letter of Bishop Chambon 23/08/1944 in papers of Bishop Chambon.

⁷⁹ Fr. Henri Unterwald was born in 1908 and ordained to the priesthood in 1933. He served in various parishes in the Diocese of Osaka. He retired in 1971 and returned to Alsace. He died there in 1998.

⁸⁰ Letter of Bishop Chambon 03/09/1941 in papers of Bishop Chambon.

⁸¹ Letter of Bishop Breton to Bishop O'Hara and Bishop Heady 20/07/1946 in MC 571b (1946).

⁸² Bishop Taguchi was born in 1902. He became Bishop of Osaka in 1941 and then Archbishop in 1969. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1973 and died in 1978.

⁸³ Letter of Bishop Breton to MEP Superior General 20/09/1945 in MC 571b (1945).

and Indonesian territories captured by the Japanese army was not appreciated by the MEP. This was particularly the case for Bishop Taguchi and Bishop Yamaguchi of Nagasaki both of whom left on one such mission in August 1943, and who were still actively involved with it in September 1945⁸⁴. It would take some of the missionaries a while to adjust to this after the war was over, Bishop Breton, for example, strongly believed that non-Japanese bishops should be brought back to serve as moral examples to the Japanese hierarchy and Church⁸⁵. Fr. Bonnet also believed that General MacArthur would institute this course of action because of the moral weakness shown by the Japanese⁸⁶. It was not however, a piece of advice that he intended to follow.

With the end of the war, the MEP and the Catholic Church entered a new and very different era in Japan. A total of 16 MEP priests had died in Japan during the war and all of the others had suffered varying degrees of hardship. Their treatment had worsened during the last few months of the war after the defeat of Nazi Germany and the disappearance of Vichy France. All of the missionaries had been interned in special camps in July 1945 from which they were released after Japan's surrender. Now decisions had to be made about the future and the need to find a new vision for their mission and for the Catholic Church in Japan. Whatever these were to be, and whatever their relationship with the indigenous hierarchy was to be, the MEP was unwilling to sever its links with Japan; links that had been forged over nearly a century and whose quality had been severely tested.

⁸⁴ Letter of Fr. Maxime Bonnet to MEP Superior General 19/09/1945.

⁸⁵ Letter of Bishop Breton to Bishop O'Hara and Bishop Heady 20/07/1946 in MC 571b (1946).

⁸⁶ Letter of Fr. Maxime Bonnet to MEP Superior General 19/09/1945.