Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusion

In the introduction to this book, I raised three major research questions in connection with Japanese Pan-Asianism and the Philippines. The first question was about the role that the Philippines played in Japanese Pan-Asianism before the war and the prospect of the archipelago becoming part of the GEACPS in the eyes of Japanese Pan-Asianists. To answer this question, I examined the history and development of Japanese Pan-Asianism. I showed how Pan-Asianism had never been a monolithic ideology but had been constantly subject to change within itself. It went from an idea based on solidarity between Japan, China and Korea to a concept in which Japan was to take the leadership in the liberation of the whole continent, along with the creation of a New World Order. By the mid-1930s, two main factions had developed within the pan-Asianist community: the ‘exoteric’ faction (traditionalists or culturalists) and the ‘esoteric’ faction (rationalists or realists). Their perception of Southeast Asia and their assessment of the chances for an integration of this region into the framework of Greater Asia differed remarkably. This was especially true for the Philippines, an archipelago that was culturally very specific in Southeast Asia. It was the only country in the region with a mainly Catholic population. Furthermore, the impact of Spanish and American colonial rule in the islands was extraordinary strong. There is arguably no other country that could provide a more adequate example to highlight the diverging views within the Japanese pan-Asianist community regarding the establishment of the GEACPS. While the ‘exoteric’ pan-Asianist faction in Japan was convinced that Filipinos would appreciate the concept of the GEACPS automatically, as they were just misled Orientals waiting for liberation, the ‘esoteric’ faction emphasized the cultural differences between the archipelago and Japan. In fact, the ‘esoteric’ Shōwa Kenkyūkai opposed the integration of the South Seas region into the GEACPS because they believed that the conditions for such a step did not yet exist. Thus, by the time of the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, there was no consensus among the Japanese pan-Asianist community on the question of Philippine membership in the GEACPS.

The second research question dealt with the impact of Pan-Asianism on the Japanese Military Administration in the Philippines and the administration of the so-called Second Philippine Republic. First, I examined how both the Japanese army and navy planned the occupation of the Philippines and what role Pan-Asianism played in these early stages of planning.
The Japanese navy and army conducted research on how to administer the regions in the South Seas prior to the war. The *Treatise on the GEACPS* that a group of intellectuals worked out for the navy did not reflect the ‘exoteric’ pan-Asianist approach of a common cultural heritage and racial affinity between Japan and the Philippines. The treatise was rather shaped by the ‘esoteric’ canon. There was a strong emphasis on Japan’s superior role in the GEACPS and a limited degree of independence for countries like the Philippines. The army, on the other hand, was more amicable to the ‘exoteric’ approach during its planning of the occupation. Its first priority was to win over both the Philippine population and government. The Army General Staff even shared the hope of the *Dai-Ajia Kyōkai* that Philippine President Manuel Quezon could be convinced to change sides and cooperate with the Japanese in the integration of his country into the GEACPS. As in the first months of the occupation it became apparent that the ‘exoteric’ assumptions would not be fulfilled, the government in Tokyo sent a Research Commission headed by the influential *Shōwa Kenkyūkai* member Rōyama Masamichi, arguably the most prominent proponent of the ‘esoteric’ pan-Asianist faction in Japan, to the Philippines. The Japanese administrators enacted some of the suggestions of the Research Commission regarding reforms of the clergy and education but the Second Philippine Republic was too short-lived to show any change of attitude amongst Filipinos towards their self-perception as Orientals. In contrast with the occupied regions of the Sino-centric core of Asia, the Japanese did not try to assimilate the population, but simply to reawaken the Oriental spirit of the Filipinos and make them become aware again of their identity as Asians. The ways in which the Japanese administrators dealt with Philippine Catholicism provides a good example of this attempt to adapt Japanese Pan-Asianism to Philippine circumstances. By removing clergy and personnel from teaching positions in private schools and by continuing the secularization of the administrative body that had already begun under American rule, the Japanese intended to weaken the influence of the Catholic Church on Philippine society. This was a long-term goal as it was obvious to the Japanese administrators that they could not remove Catholicism overnight. This very pragmatic approach is typical of the ‘esoteric’ Pan-Asianism of Rōyama Masamichi and the *Shōwa Kenkyūkai*, and widely followed the recommendations of the Philippine Research Commission under Rōyama’s leadership. Tokyo sent the Research Commission to the Philippines while the occupation of the archipelago was in progress. Furthermore, most of the personnel in the propaganda corps possessed no deep knowledge of the Philippines and relied on the expertise of the few Filipinos who took part in the propaganda efforts.