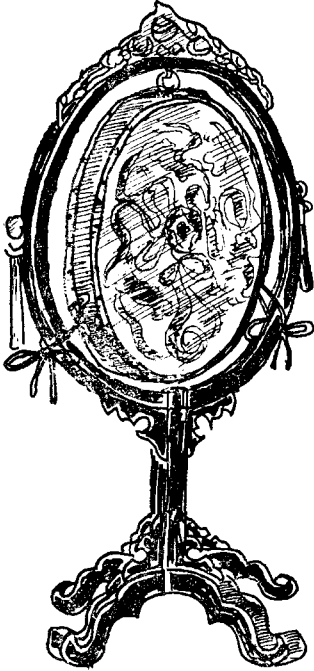


## From the Editorial Board



The need for a scholarly, non-sectarian English language journal devoted to Japanese religions has been obvious for a long time. Indeed, view of the widespread interest in the subject, it is surprising that there are not several in the field already. The fact is, however, that at present there is no periodical of this nature on the market. There are, of course, several magazines published by sectarian groups which deal with one or more religions but, as **Contemporary Religions in Japan** makes its debut, there is no other non-sectarian periodical covering the entire field of religion in this country.

**Contemporary Religions in Japan** is sponsored by the *International Institute for the Study of Religions*, an independent, non-profit, non-sectarian foundation. The general purpose of the *Institute* is to promote mutual understanding between persons of different faiths and to develop international understanding on a religious level by the study of religions in Japan and abroad. Primarily, the *Institute* assists foreign scholars, religious leaders, and other interested persons in gaining a better understanding of religions in Japan. This journal has been inaugurated by the *Institute* as one means of fulfilling this purpose. The *Institute* also endeavors to assist Japanese in the understanding of religions abroad, and to this end it publishes a Japanese language bi-monthly "International Religious News" (*Kokusai Shukyo News*).

FROM THE EDITOR

**Contemporary Religions in Japan** is intended to serve all who are interested in this general field. Suggestions for its improvement and how it can better meet the readers' needs will be appreciated. Your cooperation in making the journal a success is earnestly solicited.

Hideo Kishimoto

Chairman, Editorial Board

**From the Editor**

The purpose of **Contemporary Religions in Japan** is to provide material and information that will assist foreign religionists, scholars and other interested persons in understanding religions in Japan. In attempting to do this the Editorial Board does not presume to have all the answers. Neither does it have any preconceived idea as to what necessarily constitutes a correct understanding. Moreover, it does not intend to imply that religions in Japan are particularly misunderstood, or that the necessity of understanding religions in Japan is any greater than elsewhere.

The Editorial Board is unaware of similar journals in other parts of the world, but hopes that, if such

do exist, liaison can be established with them and that together, within the framework of prescribed objectives, a contribution can be made toward increasing international and intercultural understanding on a religious level.

In regard to its contents, **Contemporary Religions in Japan** proposes to publish :

1. Essays and addresses, mainly translations, which will present the results of contemporary scholarship in the field of religion. (However, original works in English, such as Mr. Naofusa Hirai's article in this issue, and the research of foreign scholars also will be published occasionally.)

2. Essays and addresses by Japanese Religious leaders on specific

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religions or phases of religion in Japan, which set forth the tenets and practices of the faiths represented and thus will constitute "first-hand" sources (in translation) regarding these faiths.

3. The results of research carried out by the staff of the *International Institute for the Study of Religions*.

4. Book reviews, news, reports of activities, facts, and translations of documents related to religions in Japan.

5. Matters related to the International Institute for the Study of Religions.

As a rule articles will not be solicited. Instead, first place will be given to the results of Japanese scholarship in the field of religion already published in Japanese. Readers can thus feel assured that for the most part the material has not been prepared for foreign consumption.

It is expected that in the future the space required for "Questions and Problems" may increase considerably. Readers are invited to send in their questions. If comments of interest to the general readers are received, these also may

be published,

Editorial comment will be devoted primarily to the presentation of background information deemed necessary or useful in guiding readers in their understanding of religions in Japan.

In regard to the name, a different one was announced in the advance notices, but the proposed name was so similar to a magazine already in the field that the present name has been adopted. As a matter of fact, this also is somewhat similar to others already in use. Apparently some similarity can not be entirely avoided.

The idea of producing a quarterly journal in place of the **Institute's** bulletins first occurred about two years ago. It arose when it became evident that a more flexible medium was required to meet the needs of the membership and to reach a larger class of readers. Unfortunately, however, it was not possible to make the change at once. Some projects already in process had to be completed first and arrangements had to be made for the necessary personnel to handle the additional work.

FROM THE EDITOR

**Contemporary Religions in Japan** is not a propaganda organ. It does not associate itself with any particular philosophical, theological or religious point of view, or any theory of religion. Questions concerning the truth or falsity of a religious teaching or religious system, and value judgements regarding them are not within the province of this journal. On the positive side its point of view is that of objective, factual reporting and scholarly analysis and description. In regard to general style, a middle course, which is neither too academic nor too "popular" will be followed.

In assuming the responsibilities of editor, the undersigned makes his debut in the world of journalism with mixed feelings of exuberance,

confidence, and not a little trepidation: exuberance, because of the wide opportunities which lie ahead and the thrill of adventuring into a relatively unexplored field; confidence, because of the assurance of cooperation on the part of many competent Japanese religious leaders and scholars who are eager to make the venture succeed; trepidation, because of a very obvious lack of qualifications for this very difficult undertaking. Therefore, he earnestly craves the sympathetic cooperation and constructive criticism of the reader in order that the venture itself may be a success.

*William P. Woodard*