

A Review Article

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

by Shūten Oishi

The New Religions of Japan by Harry Thomsen,
Tokyo, Japan and Rutland, Vermont: Charles
E. Tuttle Co., 1963, pp. 269, US \$5.00 (¥1,100)*

Introduction

The New Religions of Japan by Harry Thomsen is an unusually attractive, splendidly illustrated, and very interesting presentation of a subject about which there is a great deal of interest but very little factual knowledge. The Charles E. Tuttle Co., the publisher, is to be commended for its unusually fine format.

Since this is only the second volume in English to deal with the total situation, the book is certain to be read widely, and it will give the general reader a reasonably satisfactory overall picture of these modern sects. It is extremely unfortunate, however, that it is not as accurate and thoroughly reliable as it should be. Had the manuscript been submitted to any one of a number of competent scholars in the field before publication, some of the more serious errors at least could have been eliminated. And some of the inconsistencies would have been avoided had more care been taken to incorporate last minute additions in the body of the text as well as merely at the end of some chapters. For example, PL Kyōdan is credited with

* This book is available in Japan in paperback for ¥540.

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

600,000 believers on page 183 and 700,000 on page 197; and Daisaku Ikeda is only one of the Sōka Gakkai leaders on page 100, but he is the third president on page 107.

For the benefit of those who have not seen the book, it consists of an introduction (17 pp.), a somewhat detailed description of thirteen sects and a brief mention of eight others, (211 pp.), general information about each sect such as the address, name of the founder and present patriarch, statistics, official publications, and festival dates (5 pp.), references (8 pp.), a bibliography (6 pp.), and an index (5 pp.).

In an introductory chapter, entitled "The New Religions," the author first briefly epitomizes the religious history of Japan and then suggests that there have been three major *milestones* in the past two milleniums: the first being the introduction of Buddhism in the 6th century, the second the birth of the popular Buddhist sects in the 13th century, and the rise of the new religious sects that today are generally called "new religions," — a term that the author admits is both "misleading and inaccurate" (p. 15) but which he nonetheless employs throughout the volume. Although his analysis of religious history is striking and suggestive, it would seem to be an over-simplification, because it completely ignores the changes which resulted from the religious policy of the Tokugawa shogunate, on the one hand, and those introduced by the Meiji government, on the other. Actually we are too near this phenomenon today to attempt an evaluation of its historical significance.

The sects discussed in the book include some that were founded as long as a century ago in the latter part of the Tokugawa era and the early years of Meiji, as well as those

of more recent origin. After an extremely brief explanation of their overall development, the author enumerates eight characteristics which he considers they all have in common. Finally, a paragraph is devoted to the author's estimate of the movement in general, one phase of which he had already briefly suggested in his reference to the three milestones.

The sects discussed are divided as follows: I The "Old" New Religions, II The Nichiren Group, III The Ōmoto Group, and IV Miscellaneous. (It is not clear whether these divisions should be called parts, sections, or chapters.) The first section includes Tenri-kyō, Kurozumi-kyō, and Konkō-kyō; the second Sōka Gakkai, Reiyū Kai, and Risshō Kōsei Kai; the third Ōmoto, Ananai-kyō, Seichō-No-Ie, Sekai Kyūsei-kyō, and P. L. Kyōdan; and the fourth Tenshō Kōtai Jingū-kyō, (The Dancing Religion), Itto-en, Tenchi Kōdō Zenrin Kai, Dōtoku Kagaku, Ritsudō-kyō, Ishin Kai, Shinri-kyō, Jikkō-kyō, Shinshū-kyō, and Shōshōin Kyōdan.

Although the treatment differs according to the special characteristics of each sect, the general plan is to tell about the founding, history, special characteristics, festivals, worship, sources, scriptures, doctrines, objects of faith (*kami*, *hotoke*, etc.), relations with other religions, that is, their attitude toward other faiths and how they deal with them, etc., the present situation, and the future outlook.

General Impressions

New religions or new sects The sects discussed by the author until recently were referred to in Japanese as *shinkō shūkyō*, literally, newly arisen religions or religious sects, an

expression similar to *shinkō narikin*, meaning *nouveau riche*, and *shinkō kaikyū*, meaning a newly arisen class, all of which imply something in the nature of scorn.

Since the organization of the Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan* in 1951, the writer, as executive director of the Union, has endeavored to promote the use of a simpler term, *shin-shūkyō*, literally, new religions or new religious sects, because it seems to eliminate the objectionable nuances of the term *shinkō shūkyō*. Whether or not his efforts have born fruit is not clear, but the fact is that the term *shin-shūkyō* has become rather prevalent, while *shinkō shūkyō* is no longer widely used.

An additional reason why the term *shin-shūkyō* is preferred is that, besides the simple idea that these sects have been newly, that is, recently founded, there seems to be the meaning that their religious life is alive and is being extended, and that when life is active all things are fresh and vivid. This is not, of course, an explanation appropriate to the science of religion. It is merely a matter of commonsense and convenience.

Irrespective of this, however, it is necessary for us to consider exactly what constitutes a new religion or a new religious sect, and this phenomenon must be studied from a very exact, scholarly point of view before a definite statement can be made. The Japanese people undoubtedly understand the meaning of *shin-shūkyō* but, when this expression is translated into English as "new religions," a number of misunderstandings arise which

* The Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan (Shin Nippon Shūkyō Dantai Rengō Kai) is composed of sects of the Buddhist and Shinto tradition including some which arose after those sects which are called in this book "Old New Religions."

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

raise serious questions as to its correctness. There may be some totally new religions in Japan, but most of the religious groups (*shūdan*) referred to by the terms *shinkō shūkyō* or *shin-shūkyō*, have been movements within the general religious tradition of this country, although their form of expression does not necessarily follow a traditional pattern. They are, therefore, primarily new religious movements or perhaps new movements of a religious nature, and the term "new religious sects" or simply "new sects" would seem to be a more correct designation than "new religions" which, as noted above, the author himself regards as "misleading and inaccurate."

The Meaning of Kami Another matter to which attention must be paid, because it concerns the entire study, is in regard to the Japanese word *kami*. *Kami* involves a number of different conceptions and more care should have been exercised in translating it into English. Unfortunately, however, there are mistranslations in connection with almost every sect mentioned in the book.

The "Old" New Religions

Three religious groups (*shūdan*) — Tenri-kyō, Kurozumi-kyō, Konkō-kyō — which arose around the middle of the nineteenth century, are called "Old" New Religions" by the author, although heretofore they have been among the thirteen sects of Sectarian Shinto (Kyōha Shintō) which were formerly officially recognized by the Ministry of Education. Three additional sects, Shinshū-kyō, Jikkō-kyō, and Shinri-kyō, which

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

were also among the above-mentioned thirteen, are discussed in the Miscellaneous section without any explanation as to why they are not treated with the other three. All the sects that arose after the middle of the nineteenth century are regarded by the author as "new religions," which raises a question as to just where the line should be drawn between the so-called established sects and the new sects.

In regard to this there is no generally accepted view even among Japanese scholars and religionists. Each person has his own point of view. There are those who make the same division as the author; others speak vaguely of religious groups that have been founded recently as being new sects (*shin-shūkyō*). One way of drawing the line is to say that all religious groups that have been founded since the appearance of Ōmoto, including Ōmoto itself, which dates its origin in 1892, are in the category of new sects. In this case, however, the religions of Japan are classified into three divisions, — an arrangement that seems to have many supporters. Buddhism and Shinto, which have existed from ancient times, are classified as "established religions" (*kisei shūkyō*), Ōmoto and later groups being called "new sects" (*shin-shūkyō*). Those that were founded in the period between the "established religions" and the "new sects," that is, Tenri-kyō, Konkō-kyō, Kurozumi-kyō, and others, which belong to the so-called Sectarian Shinto group, are called "religious sects of the middle period" (*ryō-shū no chūkanki no shūkyō*).

However, there is a question as to whether any classification of the new sects is valid which is based solely on the date of founding, without regard to content; and this seems especially

important in connection with the newer religious movements under consideration. Particularly in interpreting these newer faiths for foreigners, some explanation of the classification adopted would seem to be called for, but the subject is not discussed by the author.

Number of New Sects

In regard to the number of new sects, the author states that the "number of new religions registered with the Ministry of Education at present is 171." (p. 16) (Incidentally, religions are not "registered"; they are incorporated.) However, no explanation is given as to how he arrived at this figure, which is unfortunate because the number does not appear in any publication issued by the Ministry and the reader has no way of learning how it was determined. Although he is careful to state in the introductory chapter that it "is difficult to give the exact number of the new religions" (p. 16), and he makes it clear that his figure of 171 does not include any incorporated with the local prefectures, the average reader will hardly be aware that the author himself recognizes that there are in fact many more "new religions" than the 171 sects he places in this category. Moreover, probably every reader will be surprised to learn that several of the sects which the author discusses are not included in the 171 figure. Sōka Gakkai, for example, is not one of the 171, because it is incorporated with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and neither are several others. The question naturally arises, then, as to why the figure was used at all and why it was emphasized by being repeated several times. Incidentally, since there is no indication as to the basis

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

on which the selection was made, this reviewer would like to have a complete list of them published.

The idea of trying to decide the number of new religious sects in this country is commendable enough, but it is difficult to understand why the number should be limited to those denominations that are incorporated under the Ministry of Education to the exclusion of all others. Indeed, one would like to raise the question as to what the incorporation of a sect has to do with the subject under discussion. What possible difference does it make whether a sect is incorporated with the Ministry of Education or with a prefectural government?

Granted for the sake of argument that it might be possible to agree upon a definition and determine the exact number of new sects incorporated with the Ministry of Education, of what possible value would such a figure be (1) if some of them have several million members, while others have only a few hundred and are of no particular significance in the religious world, and (2) if there are many sects incorporated with local prefectures which are numerically very much larger and almost infinitely more influential than some of the 171 sects incorporated with the Ministry? Obviously, none. But even more disconcerting to the statistically minded is the fact that there are also many unorganized groups throughout the country centering in shamanistic leaders that are much more influential locally than a large number of the small incorporated bodies!

Unless a careful examination is made of the entire field, it is impossible to decide which should and which should not be regarded as new sects; and, since no such study has ever been made, the number 171 is completely meaningless.

The reason this is discussed in such detail here is because the author introduces such a sect as Ritsudō-kyō (p. 239), which is not one of the 171 and at most has only a few hundred followers. If the basis for determining the number of new sects is such as to include this organization, then the number should be very much larger.

Incidentally, in connection with the problem of statistics, let me say that the way in which this book deals with the total number of "believers" is such that I doubt if foreigners can readily understand the actual situation.

The Introductory Chapter

Geographical spread In the introductory chapter the author writes, that "The main strength of the new religions is concentrated in the cities of Tōkyō, Kyōto, Ōsaka, and rural areas of Kyūshū, Hokkaidō, Okayama Prefecture, Hiroshima Prefecture, and Yamaguchi Prefecture" (p. 17). I wonder, however, on what data he bases this statement. I too have no exact data, but from personal observation it is my opinion that Aichi, Ishikawa, Hyōgo, and even some other prefectures should be added to the list.

Characteristics In the postwar years the new sects have made great strides which the author explains by saying: "The defeat in the war is the key. This can be divided into three facets: a reaction against estranged religion; an answer to a crisis; and a new freedom made possible by the removal of religious restrictions" (p. 18). Then, in the following pages,

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

he mentions eight characteristics of these movements and adds his own interpretation. Here are the eight (pp. 21—31):

1. "They center around a religious Mecca."
2. "They are easy to enter, understand, and follow."
3. "They are based on optimism."
4. "They want to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, here and now."
5. "They emphasize that religion and life are one."
6. "They rely upon a strong leader."
7. "They give man a sense of importance and dignity."
8. "They teach the relativity of all religions."

Moreover, throughout the section the author emphasizes the connection of Christianity with and its influence on the new sects.

I would like to comment briefly regarding: (1) the reasons for their development, (2) their characteristics, and (3) the influence of Christianity.

Buddhism, Shinto, and Christianity are all important parts of the human culture which our ancestors have preserved during more than two thousand years. The people of Japan have been brought up under the influence of one or more of them. Therefore it is quite natural that they have not developed in an entirely unique manner without any connection with each other. Religious groups that arise in later years are always built upon one or more of the earlier ones with which they have had some connection. Thus it must be admitted that Japanese religions have been much influenced by Christianity. It is my impression, however, that the author overestimates this influence. If he had examined this point in a calmer and

fairer manner he would have found other reasons and characteristics.

The three reasons advanced for the development of these new sects and the eight characteristics he mentions are undeniable, but they are not the whole story; and not all new sects have all these characteristics. If the author had observed them without being so conditioned by Christian ideas he would have found more reasons for their development and he would have mentioned several more characteristics. He would have noted, for example, that many of the sects are the product of the common people who produced them out of their bitter human experience and their sincere search for truth, and he would have seen that many of them started from the spiritual experiences of their founders or their direct disciples. Had he noticed these things something more could have been added.

Classification of Sects

In the first place, although not specifically stated in the text, by placing PL Kyōdan at the end of the Ōmoto group, after Ōmoto, Ananai-kyō, Seichō-No-Ie, and Sekai Kyūsei-kyō, the implication is that it is connected in some manner with Ōmoto. Moreover, the basis for this conclusion is apparently the author's statement that "the central theme of an interpretation of life as art is a generous elaboration and emphasis of one of Onisaburō's ideas in Ōmoto-kyō. It permeates all their writings and sermons — the words 'art' and 'artist' being used continually. There are several general points of similarity between PL and others of the Ōmoto group" (p. 184). Incidentally, the correct name is Ōmoto and not Ōmoto-kyō.

Dr. Baiyū Watanabe, who used to be in charge of the new sects in the Religious Affairs Section of the Education Ministry and who is regarded as an authority on them, once stated incorrectly in a book that P L Kyōdan was an off-shoot of Ōmoto, and this created a mistaken interpretation which still remains both in the religious world and among students of religion. I do not think that in this case the author's view is necessarily based upon Dr. Watanabe's error. I think that his classification is based on what he regards as the influence of Ōmoto on P L as revealed in the similarity between the art-and-life-view advocated by Onisaburō Deguchi of Ōmoto and the "Life is art" teaching of P L.

Dr. Watanabe's classification is incorrect and so is the author's idea that the art-view of Ōmoto and that of P L are the same, or quite similar. It is presumably based upon a lack of careful study. Therefore, the assertion that P L Kyōdan set up the principle of "Life is art" under the influence of Ōmoto must be denied, and P L Kyōdan should have been in the Miscellaneous (IV) section.

In the second place, among "Various Other New Religions" in the section called Miscellaneous (IV) is listed Risudō-kyō, a sect already mentioned which was founded about 1950 by Daisuke Kurihara, who formerly was a teacher of the Ōsaka Seichō-No-Ie. Mr. Kurihara, who died some years ago, was succeeded as head of the sect by his son. Risudō-kyō is a very small group.

Only about a page of the book is devoted to this sect, which is too short, if it is to be discussed at all; but the fact that it was founded by a former teacher of Seichō-No-Ie could be

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

concluded from the following statement :

"Ritsudō-kyō claims that it is no new religion, but a movement that by grasping the real nature of God and the Universe is able to give life to the "dead" truths taught by Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions. Therefore Ritsudō-kyō not only teaches the "Ritsudō Hō" but also studies and teaches the doctrines of Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions." (p. 240)

This being the case, it should have been included along with Seichō-No-Ie in the Ōmoto group. If treated as it is in this book, the author at least should have referred to its relationship with Seichō-No-Ie. But, why did he take up such a small group at all, which is one of the least known sects in the religious world?

In the third place, in the latter part of this same section we find Shinri-kyō, Jikkō-kyō, and Shinshū-kyō, which are in the group traditionally called Sectarian Shinto, and, according to the author's classification, should be included in the section on The "Old" New Religions. But I should like to suggest that Izumo Taisha-kyō and Shintō Tai-kyō should also be selected from among the Sectarian Shinto sects as the ones characteristic of that group. If the history of Shintō Tai-kyō had been studied, it would have given the author important material for a much broader understanding of modern religious movements.

In the fourth place, in regard to the selection of sects for discussion among the New "Old" Religions (I), Honmichi should have been included; among the Nichiren group (II), Kōdō Kyōdan and Shishiku Kai should have been added; and in the Miscellaneous (IV) group, Enno-kyō should have been

mentioned. The fact that Kōdō Kyōdan* and Shishiku Kai are not mentioned in connection with the Nichiren group can be said to constitute an important omission.

Finally, in the latter part of the introduction (p. 30), Denshin-kyō, Bosei-kyō, and "Jiyu-kyō" are mentioned as religions which have disappeared. "Jiyu-kyō" is incorrect: the reading of the characters should be *Jiu*. The statement that "Jiyu-kyō finally was raided by the police and dissolved" is incorrect. Jiu Kyō was never dissolved by the police.**

Jikōson, its founder, is still getting along well and is continuing her activity in the suburbs of Yokohama, although she has only a small group. Incidentally, the police did not have the authority to dissolve organizations during the Occupation. This was a function of the Special Investigations Bureau (Hōmufu Tokubetsu Shinsa Kyoku) of the Ministry of Justice in which at that time, I was in charge of religions and was engaged in research on the Jikōson case. I can definitely say, therefore, that it was never dissolved. It should be noted also that it was the Kōdōji-kyō group, rather than Denshin-kyō and

* Kōdō Kyōdan arose in the first instance as a secession from Reiyū Kai. Subsequently, before becoming completely independent, it affiliated with the Tendai Sect and hence is generally regarded as a Tendai derivative.

** The author's source for the statement that "Jiu-kyō" was dissolved is probably *Religions in Japan* published by General Headquarters, Supreme Commander for the Allied Power, Civil Information and Education Section, Religions and Cultural Resources Division, Tokyo March, 1948, page 139, which states that the sect was dissolved by the Home Ministry. Naturally this was regarded as authoritative but apparently it is not. When the book was translated into Japanese and published in 1948 by the Religious Research Society (actually the Religious Affairs Section) of the Ministry of Education (p. 224), "Jiu-kyō" was omitted, without giving any explanation. Ed.

Bosei-kyō, that constitutes an example of religious organizations that have dissappeared.

Anyway, I cannot understand in the least how the religious organizations were selected for this study. It appears to have been done quite at random.

Concerning each Sect

Tenri-kyō It is impossible within the compass of this short review to indicate all the errors here and elsewhere. It must be pointed out, however, that there are many which, though relatively minor in nature, are nonetheless important in understanding this phenomenon correctly. In regard to the reasons given for Tenri-kyō's success, I should like to point out that the author has failed to refer to the efforts being made to educate capable leaders, to the efficient organization of the sect, and to the study which has been made of how to disseminate and nurture a vigorous faith, in which connection the Catholic expansion in the Orient has been traced carefully.

Konkō-kyō The statement that "He [the founder, Konkō Daijin] left nothing written behind him, but his disciples compiled scriptures from what he had said and preached" (p. 72) is incorrect. The manuscripts of the founder remain with the head of the Konkō family. It is impossible to produce a correct interpretation of a sect merely on the basis of what others say about it and without a careful examination of its own material.

Again the author says that "when the Ninth International

Conference for the History of Religions was held in Tokyo in 1958, Konkō-kyō made a 300,000-yen contribution to the conference" (p. 76). But many other sects made contributions of from several hundred thousand to over a million yen. Why does the author mention only Konkō-kyō's contribution and make no reference to the others?

Sōka Gakkai "It [The Lotus Sutra] consists of two parts: the *shamon* and the *hommon*." (p. 87) *Shamon* is an incorrect reading; it should be read *shakumon*. This could be a misprint, but I doubt that it is because the same error occurs twice.

On page 92 the three ages of *Shōbō* (正法), *Zōbō* (像法), and *Mappō* (末法) are mentioned in connection with the idea of the Latter Days of the Law; but in order to correctly understand the Nichiren group, and especially Sōka Gakkai, this key-point should be interpreted more carefully. Moreover, the different views on the division of the ages, and even the negative view of Dōgen about the Latter Days (*Mappō*) should have been explained.

Furthermore, on the same page, the statement about the *kaidan* is much too short to be clear. Since, right or wrong, Sōka Gakkai is beginning to attract attention in foreign countries, a more detailed explanation should be made about the *kaidan*, which touches the heart of the Sōka Gakkai teaching.

It is stated on p. 100, in reference to Dr. Iichi Oguchi, that he is "one of the greatest authorities on the new religions in Japan," but the word "greatest" is an exaggeration "Great,"

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

or something like it, would be more fitting. No one in Japan deserves to be called the greatest authority on the new sects.

Also in connection with the discussion of Sōka Gakkai and the elections, some further interpretation is needed regarding the practice of making a temporary change of residence from one district to another in order to provide more votes for its candidates.

Reiyū Kai Under this heading, Risshō Kōsei Kai and Myōchi Kai are listed as being successful among the sects that seceded from the Reiyū Kai, while Bussho Gonen Kai, which is as large as Myōchi Kai, is not mentioned. The important fact that Kōdō Kyōdan was also derived from Reiyū Kai has been missed*; and, for some very strange reason, it would seem, the relationship between Reiyū Kai and Keishin Sūso Jishū Dan is completely ignored. Many sects have branched off from Reiyū Kai, but no reasons are given for these secessions. Moreover, nothing is said about the family relationship between Kakutarō Kubo, the leading actor at the time of its founding, and President Kimi Kotani. They are the most important people; and the name of Mr. Yasukichi Kotani and his family relationship should have been discussed.

On page 116, in connection with the social work of Reiyū Kai, the name, "Kunimoto Ladies Society," is mentioned, but it should be read "Kunitomo." This is probably a typographical error.

Furthermore, the social work carried on by Reiyū Kai is not mentioned, but this should have been studied more and its

* See footnote on page 58.

history clarified. In this connection, it impresses the writer very strongly that the author has depended too much upon the assertions of Reiyū Kai. It makes us doubt whether he himself carried on any independent research at all in regard to this sect.

Risshō Kōsei Kai In touching upon the circumstances of the founding of Risshō Kōsei Kai by the Rev. Nikkyō Niwano, after seceding from Reiyū Kai, the author says on page 118 that "the reason for the secession was not a profound doctrinal difference" This is clearly a mistake. Without knowing the true reason for the secession, the differences between the character of both sects and the changes that took place after secession cannot be understood. Here again there has been a lack of adequate research. The author also says that "it should be noted that all the buildings are pink, the favorite color of the late Naganuma Myōkō" (p. 119), but this trifling point is also incorrect.

In regard to the future of Risshō Kōsei Kai, we read that "the main problem that the religion faces is the lack of teachers and ministers, which is greater than in most other religions" (p. 126). To what other sects does the author refer? I do not agree with this.

Incidentally, while it does not concern only Risshō Kōsei Kai, all Lotus Sutra faiths can be roughly divided into two groups on the basis of their idea of the Sacred Title (*Dai-moku*), its meaning, and how it should be chanted. In this regard there is quite a difference between Risshō Kōsei Kai and Sōka Gakkai, for example. Therefore, without any clarifi-

cation of this point, the difference between the character of these sects, as well the character, religious nature, and the relation of all the sects in the Nichiren tradition cannot be understood. As this is an essential point in connection with the Nichiren group, a lack of interpretation regarding it indicates a serious defect in the research of the author.

Ōmoto On page 128 the names of six sects are given as offshoots of Ōmoto, and it is stated that each of them had a different reason for secession. However, Shintō Tenkō-kyō and Ishin Kai cannot be said to have been secessions in the true meaning of the term. These two have nothing in them related to Ōmoto and have not been influenced by it. (In this connection the author says that "the same doctrinal combination of destruction, messiah and the earthly heaven is found in all the above-mentioned Ōmoto group" (pp. 128—129), but this is a complete misunderstanding on the part of the author.

The interpretation of the other related sects also shows a lack of study of Ōmoto. I think that he describes what he was told by Ōmoto just as he heard it.

At the end Aizen Mizuho Kai is said to be an auxiliary of Ōmoto, but nothing is said about Jinrui Aizen Kai which is very important for the sect and offers a key for understanding it. Moreover, almost nothing is said about the World Red Swastika Society (Sekai Kō-manji Kai), but there should be, even though it is not a satellite. If the relation of this society with Ōmoto and Ananai-kyō in the postwar days were clarified, the character of these organizations would be better understood. Since the author fails to consider Jinrui Aizen Kai and Sekai

Kō-manji Kai, the key point in discussing Ōmoto is missed. This section of the book does not constitute an independent, objective study or interpretation in its true sense.

Sekai Kyūsei-kyō In his forecast of the future of this sect, the author is unnecessarily pessimistic and appears to lack understanding of the sect as a whole.

P L Kyōdan No greater blunder is found anywhere in the book equal to the statement that "Tokuchika was undoubtedly influenced by the already existing "paradises" of Sekai Kyūsei-kyō" (p. 185). On the same page *Saidan* and the *Gaisaiden*, should be *Seiden* and *Geiseiden*.

Tensho Kotai Jingū-kyo The assertion that "Oodoru Shūkyō is the only new religion besides Sōka Gakkai that is completely intolerant of all other religions" (p. 216) also shows a lack of study on the part of the author, but there is not space to discuss this. Incidentally, the picture, No. 29, is a photograph of Itsuki Fujieda and not Yoshiko Okada.

Itto-en Nothing is said about Tenkō Nishida's having been a member of the House of Councillors, yet unless this is clarified the discussion of Itto-en cannot be fully understood.

Tenchi Kodo Zenrin Kai This was formerly Zenrin Kai. The headquarters was situated at Saga City from September, 1952, to April, 1960, but it is now located at Haruda, Chikushino Machi, Chikushi-gun, Fukuoka Prefecture.

Ishin-kai Engi-chiku should be Engi-shiki (p. 240).

Shinshū-kyō Ameno-minai-nushi-no-mikoto is a misreading of Ameno-minaka-nushi-no-mikoto (p. 242).

Conclusion

This review article is already too long, yet I have mentioned only a few mistakes among many noticed in the book. My final impression is that the author wrote simply what the sects or their publications stated without concerning himself deeply with ordinary problems of academic research. Therefore, it is only natural that the general nature of the material is very one-sided. I also have the impression that the precious scriptures have been translated from his own point of view and are therefore, somewhat erroneous.

In short, this is not a scholarly book based on research of the "new religions" of Japan. It is rather a somewhat superficial, journalistic description, which I am afraid will create many misunderstandings on the part of foreigners. Nevertheless, I pay great respect to the author for his earnest effort to learn about these sects in spite of the handicap of a difficult language.

Shūten Ōishi.

Tokyo

Kanji Glossary

- Aizen Mizuho Kai 愛善みづほ会
 Ameno-minaka-nushi-no-mikoto 天御
 中主命
 Ananai-kyō 三五教
 Bosei-kyō 母性教
 Busshō Gonen Kai 仏所護念会
 Daimoku 題目
 Deguchi, Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎
 Denshin-kyō 電神教
 Dōgen 道元
 Dōtoku Kagaku 道德科学
 Engi-shiki 延喜式
 Ennō-kyō 円応教
 Fujieda, Itsuki 藤枝イツキ
 Geiseiden 芸生殿
 Hōmufu Tokubetsu Shinsa Kyoku
 法務府特別審査局
 Honmichi ほんみち
 Hommon 本門
 hotoke 仏
 Ikeda, Daisaku 池田大作
 Ishin Kai 惟神会
 Ittō-en 一燈園
 Izumo Taisha-kyō 出雲大社教
 Jikkō-kyō 実行教
 Jikōson 翊光尊
 Jinrui Aizen Kai 人類愛善会
 Jiu 瓊宇
 Kaidan 戒壇
 Kami 神
 Keishin Sūso Jishū Dan 敬神崇祖自
 修団
 kisei shūkyō 既成宗教
 Kōdōji-kyō 皇道治教
 Kōdō-Kyōdan 孝道教団
 Konkō Daijin 金光大神
 Konkō-kyō 金光教
 Kotani, Kimi 小谷キミ
 Kotani, Yasukichi 小谷安吉
 Kubo, Kakutarō 久保角太郎
 Kunitomo 国友
 Kurihara, Daisuke 栗原大介
 Kurozumi-kyō 黒住教
 Kyōha Shintō 教派神道
 Mappō 末法
 Meiji 明治
 Miki, Tokuchika 御木徳近
 Myōchi Kai 妙智会
 Naganuma, Myōkō 長沼妙俊
 Nichiren 日蓮
 Nishida, Tenkō 西田天香
 Niwano, Nikkyō 庭野日敬
 Odoru Shūkyō 踊る宗教
 Oguchi, Iichi 小口偉一
 Ōishi, Shūten 大石秀典
 Okada, Yoshiko 岡田良子
 Ōmoto 大木
 P L Kyōdan P L 教団
 Reiyū Kai 霊友会
 Rissō Kōsei Kai 立正佼成会
 Ritsudō Hō 律動法
 Ritsudō-kyō 律動教
 ryō-sha no chūkan-ki no shūkyō 両者
 の中間期の宗教

THE NEW RELIGIOUS SECTS OF JAPAN

Seichō-No-ie 生長の家	Shintō Tenkō-kyō 神道天行居
Seiden 正殿	Shōbō 正法
Sekai Kō-manji Kai 世界紅卍字会	Shōshōin Kyōdan 聖正院教団
Sekai Kyūsei-kyō 世界救世教	shudan 集団
Shakumon 迹門	Sōka Gakkai 創価学会
shinkō kaikyō 新興階級	Tenchi Kōdō Zenrin Kai 天地公道善
shinkō narikin 新興成金	隣会
shinkō shūkyō 新興宗教	Tendai 天台
Shin Nippon Shūkyō Dantai Rengō Kai 新日本宗教団体連合会	Tenri-kyō 天理教
Shinri-kyō 神理教	Tenshō Kōtai Jingū-kyō 天照皇大神
Shishiku Kai 獅子吼会	宮教
shin-shūkyō 新宗教	Tokuchika See Miki, Tokuchika
Shinshū-kyō 神習教	Tokugawa 徳川
Shintō Tai-kyō 神道大教	Watanabe, Baiyū 渡辺傑雄
	Zōbō 像法

Place names

Aichi 愛知	Okayama 岡山
Fukuoka 福岡	Ōsaka 大阪
Harada 原田	Saga 佐賀
Hiroshima 広島	Tōkyō 東京
Hokkaidō 北海道	Chikushino Machi 筑紫野町
Hyōgo 兵庫	Yamaguchi 山口
Ishikawa 石川	Yokohama 横浜
Kyōto 京都	
Kyūshū 九州	

**Comments by a Tenri-kyō Minister on *The
New Religions of Japan.* (pp. 33—60)**

By Akio Inoue

p. 33 — “Tenri means divine or heavenly wisdom ; *kyō* is a word meaning teaching or religion. (It is the last character in the names of most of the new religions.)” I do not know what he means by this parenthesis. *Kyō* has no special relationship with this religion. It simply means “teaching” or “religion,” and can be found in numerous “old” religions also.

p. 34 — “This has been the name of all preceding patriarchs (*Shimbashira*) of Tenri-kyō” The author uses the plural in referring to the preceding *Shimbashira*, but only one *Shimbashira* preceded the present one. This should be in the singular.

p. 34 — “According to their beliefs Miki had her first revelation in 1837.” The date should be 1838.

p. 34 — “the mediatrix between God and men”; the fifth line from bottom of the page. This is not a translation but may be an interpretation by the author. What he says is correct but it is not found in the original Japanese.

p. 35 — 9th line from the bottom — “. . . by violent scenes of ecstasy . . . ” This expression may be the author’s supposition, as a producer of fiction.

p. 36 — In the first paragraph he refers to the black gate of Tenri-kyō as a *torii*. However, it is not a *torii*. If the author knows what

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

a torii is, he should have distinguished the usual Japanese gate from a *torii* in respect to its architectural difference.

p. 36 — We are not taught that the Jiba is the place where the earth was created.

p. 36 — Referring to the Kanrodai, the author mentions a wooden vessel upon it. This is the same mistake the Rev. Van Straelen made. I do not understand how they could see something invisible on the Kanrodai. Neither at present nor in past has there ever been any vessel on the Kanrodai. They should have seen the top of the Kanrodai on their frequent visits to Tenri, since it is quite possible to look at it from the Main Sanctuary.

p. 38 — In the middle part of this page the author mentions the names of instruments, but the list is not complete. No reed or string instruments are mentioned here.

p. 39 — the second line from the top. He mentioned *jampon*, but it should be *shampon*.

p. 39 — “The climactic end of the dance is brought about by a series of ear-rending drum beats.” A repetition of Van Straelen. I wonder how he happened to have exactly the same incorrect impression as Van Straelen. Maybe the Catholic fathers are not good listeners to music in spite of themselves.

p. 40 — *Osashizu* was not written by Master Iburi. It was written by the disciple while revelation descended upon him. Moreover, Master Iburi was not the sole person who communicated the words of God through the *Osashizu*. The Foundress' revelations are also included in *Osashizu* (beginning part), though there are not a great

many of them.

p. 40 — The author compares the *Mikagura Uta* to the *ee ja nai ka* dances. This is a new theory to me. I think he should deal with the *Mikagura Uta* and its dance separately.

p. 48 — “The *Ofudesaki* was written in the Japanese phonetic syllabary, *hiragana*, without the use of the Chinese ideographs.” However, if the author actually read the *Ofudesaki*, he could not help but find a Chinese character right in the second verse of the first volume. In the *Ofudesaki* forty-nine kinds of Chinese characters are used, ninety-nine kinds of *hiragana*, and four kinds of *odoriji*. 49,775 letters are used in the whole *Ofudesaki*, which consists of 1,711 verses.

p. 49 — the first line of this page, “It was written by Master Iburi during the period” Here again it must be emphasized that the *Osashizu* was not written by Master Iburi.

p. 49 — second paragraph — “(Lord of Divine Wisdom)”. I do not know why the author used the word “Lord” in translating the original Japanese which simply means God. Probably this is to support his hypothesis, presented at the end of this chapter, in which he refers to the similarities between Tenri-kyō and Christianity.

p. 50 — “The final stage of the revelation of God was the appearance of Miki, through whom God was revealed as a parent (*oya*) who loves his children on earth.” In this and related passages the author proves that he understands nothing about the *Ofudesaki*.

p. 50 — fourth paragraph — “. . . the Father of Mankind, a multitude of other gods are mentioned” Why does the author

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

use "Father" instead of "Parent" which we use in our English translations. I do not understand the definition of "multitude." This paragraph is the repetition of Van Straelen.

p. 52 — Since he quotes such a long quotation he seems to forget to put the quotation mark at the end.

p. 52 — third paragraph — "the origin to the doctrine of *kashi-mono karimono* is found in the writings of Miki and Master Iburi." So far we don't have any materials written down by Master Iburi in respect to the teachings of Tenri-kyō.

p. 53 — We would like to know the names of the scholars referred to in the first line of this page.

p. 55 — In the second paragraph, the author seems to fail to distinguish *sazuke* from *tsutome*. Moreover, *Koe no sazuke* and *iki no sazuke* are not practised at present, although the author says that they are. Only the *ashiki-harai no sazuke* or *teodori no sazuke* are practised.

pp. 55—56 — The author uses the term transmigration. However, we do not believe in transmigration but in reincarnation. He does not seem to understand the difference between them.

p. 57 — In this whole page the author completely confuses *Besseki* with the *Shūyō-ka* or the missionary training course that requires at present three months to complete (though before it required six months).

Above all else the most serious error made by this author is derived from his misunderstanding of the mistranslated version of the Japanese *Osashizu*. Moreover the year of the *Osashizu* is given as 1892,

but it should be 1888, December 25, 7 p.m. This is the correct time and date of this mistranslated *Osashizu*. Please refer to Van Straelen's work (p. 182 and p. 125). On page 125 Van Straelen seems to have the correct understanding of what *Besseki* is. However, he shows his complete ignorance about it on p. 182, in his or his Japanese assistant's translation of the Japanese into English. Thomsen thinks the 90 days mentioned in this *Osashizu* (this number is mistranslated also) has some connection with present *Shūyō-ka* that did not exist during the Meiji era. They seem to have been mistaken by the mistranslated sentence "Each of the three lessons takes thirty days," etc.

Among numerous errors, those on p. 55 and p. 57, are the most serious.

p. 59 — In comparing Tenri-kyō with Christianity, the author mentions "soldiers of God." What is the Japanese original equivalent of this phrase. "We shall reap what we have sown," etc., is used in Buddhism which is a much older religion than Christianity. I personally think that these precepts are common to all human thinking. Therefore, they do not exclusively belong to the teaching of Christianity, or to Tenri-kyō, or to any other religion. They are the common denominator of moral principles of man as an ethical creature, I think.

p. 59 — "The circumstances surrounding the death of Miki, when the temple doors were wide open although nobody had opened them . . ." This is also a repetition of Van Straelen, but we do not know what they mean by "the temple doors." I figure that they (the authors) wrote this as novelists and not as careful, objective scholars.

pp. 251—252: 13, 14, 15 make us doubt whether what the author says can be relied upon or not.

**Comments by a Seicho-No-Ie believer on Thomsen's
The New Religions of Japan (pp. 153—172)**

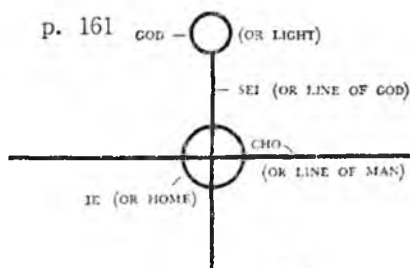
by a member of the Headquarters Staff

p. 153, l. 13 — change year of founding from 1894 to 1893.

p. 155, l. 8 — “Seicho-No-Ie changed its name four times”. This is incorrect. The name has never been changed.

p. 156, l. 4 — “Now the emphasis is not on the Emperor, but upon the ‘fatherland’” is incorrect. In his (Taniguchi’s) philosophy, “fatherland” means the Emperor. Now he claims that both the Emperor and the fatherland should be recognized as the same one body in terms of the “Ultimate Being.”

p. 158, l. 33 — change “The has recited” to “Thus has recited”



The words “GOD,” “(Or Light)” “(OR LINE OF GOD)”, and “(OR LINE OF MAN)” are incorrect.

SEI signifies the vertical growth of infinite-time and **CHŌ** signifies the horizontal spread of infinite-space. The point where those two lines of vertically infinite-time and horizontally infinite-space cross is **IE** (“HOME OF ETERNAL NOW”). In other words, the “Great Universe” is “the SEICHO-NO-IE” or “HOME OF INFINITE GROWTH AND ETERNAL NOW.” The vertical line represents

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

the positive or male attributes and the horizontal line represents the negative or female attributes.

p. 161, l. 13 — The explanation under “Sin” is incorrect.

p. 162 — The diagram, “SCRIPTURES NEMPA & SHIN-SOKAN” is incorrect.

p. 170, l. 32 — change the word Eden in “Christ prostrated himself in the garden of Eden” to “Gethsemane.” The author “explains” this error as “another example of superficial Bible study”; but, if he had used the original Japanese text instead an English translation, he would discovered that the error was due to a not unnatural slip on the part of the translator and not, as he says, to a faulty knowledge of the Bible.

Supplement on the truth of vertical and horizontal lines

The central truth in *Seimei no Jisso no Tetsugaku* (“The Philosophy of the Reality of Life”) is interpreted as follows: “According to our minds, we can freely realize poverty, wealth, illness, health, unhappiness, happiness, etc., because the phenomenal world is the manifestation of the pure mind. This is the so-called horizontal truth. Vertical truth means that man is the highest self-manifestation of God, that he is Tathagata itself, and an eternal and immortal being filled with all complete virtues, such as infinite life, wisdom and love. This is what we call *Jisso*.” If we can rule our life through freely making use of both vertical and horizontal truth, it may truly be called a religious life.

Comments on Offner and Van Straelen's *Modern Japanese Religions*.*

p. 71, l. 17 — change “November 26,” to “November 22.”

p. 73, l. 4 — change “Love of Mind Action” to “The Law of Mind in Action.”

Comments by a “Disciple of the Master Onisaburo Deguchi” on *Modern Japanese Religions*,* by C. B. Offner and H. Van Straelen, S. V. D., and *The New Religions of Japan*† by Harry Thomsen.

by Iwao P. Hino

The above books show remarkable merit and are written by able as well as sympathetic religionists, their western minds being endowed with talent for analysis, classification, and definition. Both are Baedekers — very handy, entertaining, informative, and readable — for those who have any interest at all in the new Japanese religions. I am deeply impressed by the authors' curiosity and the perseverance with which they pursued their tasks.

The most interesting point for us Japanese in reading these two books consists in their reflections as Christians, and their psychological approach to heathen — no, non-Christian faiths — because the authors are all missionaries.

Principally Dr. Van Offner and Dr. Straelen seem to be very cautious

* See *Contemporary Religions in Japan* Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 169 for a review.

† See p. 45ff for a review.

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

or restrained — not to disclose or expose ugly or unpleasant aspects. Yes, they even endeavoured not to be unkind! It was very gentleman-like, so to speak. But they did not do this through humility, but through pride, I imagine. And I fear too much suppression which reveals itself subconsciously.

Open *Modern Japanese Religions* at page 268 and read: "A further element of strength lies in the personality of the founders and leaders of these religions. The moral character of a number of leaders is not beyond question or criticism. Certainly, self-aggrandizing frauds and charlatans are not absent from present or past history.* Regardless of moral character, the leaders have a certain personal magnetism or business ability which have provided an attraction to the masses and source of strength in the progressive development of the religion." Here the authors are dealing with the "strength and weakness" of these new religions, but they should add "in any religion" after the above asterisk. We can also point out such superfluous expression as "not beyond *question or criticism*." To my regret, in chapter 4 we find their depreciative phraseology stimulating the supporters and friends of Oomoto (happily among the adherents of Oomoto, Esperantists are many, while specialists in English are fewer), for they write: "Of the religions under study, Omoto, has the second longest history and *the fewest number* (1) of believers. Despite the comparatively small number of visible adherents, its *not unimportant* (2) place in Japanese religious history makes it a worthy object of study It has *spawned* (3) a number of religions *whose membership now surpasses its own many times* (4)"

(1) and (4) cannot be said to be fact or truth, if one reads Mr. Thomsen's book. (2) and (4) are not convincing. Could they not have used "important" instead of "not unimportant," as Mr. Thomsen does? We know very well that "spawned" means "produced" or "gave birth," but why did they prefer the former without rhyme or reason? Again in the passage "*Omoto shares with Tenri-kyō certain*

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

historical elements,” we see their intention to identify them. This is quite a deviation from the truth. The above quotations all appear on page 63; the italics are the writer’s. But when they come to quote Dr. Joseph J. Spae’s study of the founders of new religions, it is too lengthy: it extends from pages 30 to 32. Here we find the following: “Many of them claim miraculous powers of healing. They can transmit those powers to the sick whether it be by having devotees drink the carefully bottled water of their bath (as did Deguchi Onisaburo) or by writing a character on a piece of paper (as did Okada Mokichi)” (pp. 30—31). We have heard of *holy water* in Western religion, and there might have been fanatics in Oomoto, as is the case with religions of any kind, who drank the bath water of those held in reverence. Yet *we* have never heard that Master Onisaburo Deguchi had followers drink such liquid. I feel like doubting the scholarship of the writer, and at the same time of the borrower of the quotation. In fact Onisaburo Deguchi was a “Prodigy of the Greater World” (cf. Oomoto Scripture, July 11, 1914). It is indeed difficult to recapture his character or personality, but I am quite sure he was not a seller of such water.

We feel naturally much concerned over the accuracy of their pen, not their evaluation. Between the two books, which seem to have no relation to each other, even the very simple date of the birth of the Founder of Seicho-No-Ie, for instance, is not the same. Apparently the most simple fact cannot be relied upon? How much more difficult it is to be exact in grasping the facts of so complicated and evasive a nature as the new Japanese religions?

Mr. Thomsen has a propensity for smoking-room talk, though he may not smoke. His pen is smooth when it depicts gossip. Refer to page 130: “Simultaneously, Kisaburo got the idea that he himself must take over the throne to reverse the social order of the country and re-establish Japan as the Kingdom of God. This idea was manifested when he changed his name from Kisaburo to Onisaburo, using

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

characters that had been exclusively used by emperors and princes. Sometimes he signed his name simply 'Kimihito,' which gave the impression that he belonged to the Imperial Family."

This reminds us of our Japanese proverb: "Storytellers are storytellers." Maybe he picked up that story from some yellow press or other. The Master Onisaburo devoted his life to bringing about the Kingdom of God, and it is true there might have been a few ex-radicals around him, but the prodigy of religion must have thought of a far greater plan than that of usurping a single throne. We should like to ask you Christian's what is meant by the "King of Kings," or are Christians permitted to be "tattlers and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." (I Timothy, 5:13) The reason why Onisaburo Deguchi changed his name from Kisaburo to Onisaburo was a supreme order through the Foundress, not of his *own* will. The author's statement that Onisaburo used "*characters that had been exclusively used by emperors and princes*" (my italics) is quite nonsense. He little knows anything about the Japanese way of giving a name. His pen *slips* again on the next page (p. 131) where he tells a story of the "Saviour" riding a white horse which was a privilege usually reserved for the emperor and what not. We know that he was presented with a white horse and rode it, but it was not *pure* white, but rather what we call *kage* or in part a fawn-coloured horse. This was understood by the officials in court. What is stated on that page sounds rather like the made-up indictment of the then militaristic government; something from yellow journalism. Because "the court prosecution took place amid all kinds of rumors that bombs, bamboo spears, and dynamite had been found in the headquarters" (p. 131) only to encounter *non-resistance*. And remember the Second Oomoto Case ended in the acquittal by the Supreme Court in 1945 of all those involved, after 10 years of legal fighting during which they had been subjected to outrageous third degree methods. (See Assistant Professor Umesao's article "The

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

Oomoto Religion" in *Chūō Kōron*, March, 1960.)

Again it is a slight mistake for him to write that "the youngest daughter, Deguchi Naohi, succeeded to the leadership." (p. 132) because she was the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Onisaburo Deguchi. And "May the Holy Spirit be Glorified" of Ananai-kyō is reported to throw "an interesting light on the main doctrine of Ananai-kyō" (p. 146), but though it is titled as above, this is in reality the Principal Hymn of Propagation of Oomoto composed by Onisaburo Deguchi, which has been translated into English and put to music. But his mistake or lack of research will be redeemed by his elaborate translation.

When all is said and done Mr. Thomsen has no intention to slander Onisaburo, for we read in the book that his was "one of the most fascinating religious careers in Japan and the main attraction of Oomoto" (p. 131), "one of the most interesting and colorful personalities in the religious history of Japan" (p. 129), a "striking personality" (p. 127) and "a thorn in the government's side" (p. 130). The fact is that Onisaburo was a religionist of huge stature, full of versatility, having a steely courage and flaming faith, whose elusive qualities were difficult for Mr. Thomsen's pen to grasp. Onisaburo in the spiritual world might recite the following with a smile:

*My heart resembles the autumnal moon,
Shining on the blue, pool clear and serene;
Nothing else stand its comparison.
How let me explain otherwise?*

— Han Shan —

But as one of his disciples I should only like reports which are free from misunderstandings.

Another point which made me frown is about what is called "logomancy" or "logolatry" and is ascribed to Japanese tradition and psychology. Dr. Offner and Dr. Van Strealen seem to agree with

THE NEW RELIGIONS SECTS OF JAPAN

Dr. Spae, but he clearly confounds such play of words with Onisaburo's logopneumatology (*genreigaku*) (See *Modern Japanese Religions* pp. 31 and 214). Logopneumatology is a subtle and esoteric occult which Onisaburo could master. Of course there were occasions when he took to puns or wordplay, because he often was very humorous, but logopneumatology is quite another matter. The trouble is that it is very difficult to study, especially for foreigners. The following quotation from Thomsen's book enables you to get a glimpse of its nature: "Oomoto explains the word for "man," *hito*, in the following way: *Hi* means a spirit or soul, and *to* means 'to stop,' 'a receptacle.' From this it is clear that man is a receptacle of the Divine Spirit" (p. 135). That explanation is an application of logopneumatology.

In conclusion, I have frankly expressed what a member of Oomoto felt on looking over the products of the research by these erudite Christian missionaries, especially the articles concerning Oomoto, and have not made a systematic criticism. I should like to call your attention on this happy occasion to the *New Religions in the West* which have arisen and which march hand in hand. Nothing else has such a marvelous affinity with Oomoto doctrine, and yet they were "spawned" about the same *period of history as the Japanese New Religions*.

Note: Comments on these two books by the headquarters of World Messianity (Sekai Kyūsei-kyō) will appear in the June issue of this journal. Ed.