

REMINISCENCES
OF
RELIGION IN POSTWAR JAPAN

(Continued from Vol. VI, No. 2)

Repentance — The Peace through Religion Movement

The storm of the purge did not touch the religious world

Soon after the termination of the war, the religious world first had to confront the problem of how to deal with the responsibility for the war.

The stationing of Occupation Forces, the arrest of those suspect of war crimes, the enforcement of the Purge Directive, the Purge Directive of the Press and Information Bodies and others aroused quite a lot of purging activity, and those responsible for the war were sought out with great severity everywhere.

It was supposed that the purge was to affect the religious world too. GHQ was generous, however, toward the religious world also in regard to this problem and excepted it from the purge.

Although many religious leaders, including Kōshō Ōtani, Chief Abbot of Nishi-Honganji, Nobusuke Takatsukasa, President of the Shrine Association, Masaharu Taniguchi, Founder of Seichō-no-Ie and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Japan Religions League, were designated purgees, this purge

applied only to their positions outside the religious world. They were permitted to assume offices of a religious character and to conduct religious activities.

Therefore, pressure was scarcely applied on the religious world to pursue the question of responsibility for cooperation during the war. There were a few voices raised from within religious circles to criticize the responsibility of the leaders but they soon were silenced. So far as this problem was concerned, the religious world stood outside of the violent storm.

Therefore, while the old leaders disappeared from various circles, including the political and the economical, for several years after the war, only the religious world did not undergo any change of its leaders.

Repentance, repentance and repentance

However, even though nobody was pressing the responsibility of religious leaders from outside, the religious world had to show its gesture of "repentance" before the eyes of the Occupation Forces for being unable to prevent the war. Although it had positively cooperated in carrying out "the Holy War," it could not afford to miss the "bus" of the peaceful age, displaying to the world that religion was originally a peaceful thing and that it was of sufficient use for the peace.

For this reason, meetings for expressing repentance were often held for several years after the war and in combination with them a "Peace through Religion Movements" became very active.

“ No more repentance ”

Although the early gesture of repentance by the whole nation, advocated by the Higashikuni Cabinet, was at once forgotten by the people, the religious world was the only exception. Whenever a big conference or function was made jointly by various religions, the expression of repentance was repeated through “ begging forgiveness to Japan and foreign countries, and the souls of the departed war heroes for being unable to prevent the war.”

Needless to say, this in itself was a good thing, but the manifestation of repentance at that time was not accompanied by a sincere reconsideration but was only a conventional and empty gesture toward foreign countries.

Therefore the following scene took place at a religious meeting in autumn, 1948, when a delegate protested: “ I will leave my seat at once if this conference is again going to make a resolution about repentance or something similar,” and no one objected.¹ It should have been necessary for each religion to make strict self-criticism in regard to its behaviour before and during wartime for the sake of their own future. All religions, however, did not make any reconsideration of this kind, they only repeated repentance with their lips, in order to flatter the new age.

The Peace through Religion Movement was initiated, but . . .

Parallel with this repentance movement went the so-called “ Peace through Religion Movement ” which intended to bring

1. See *Shūkyō-tsūshin*, Jan. 15, 1949.

peace to the world through the power of religion. This movement, too, was nothing but something conventional and superficial.

The initiative for this movement was taken by the All Japan Religious Peace Conference which was held under the sponsorship of the Religions League of Japan in May, 1947. The meeting place was at Honganji, Tsukiji, and the chairman Dr. Masaharu Anesaki. It was a meeting on a for that time big scale: about a thousand leaders of each religion, famous persons of the political and learned worlds in addition to Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida.

The conference began with the "expression of repentance" as usual and after all-round discussions of various religious and social problems made only a resolution on a Declaration of Peace through Religion: "We desire to make all efforts for elevating the national culture and for the spiritual reconstruction of Japan first by fostering a rich religious sentiment among the Japanese people in order to permeate them with a peaceful spirit." Besides this, it sent a message to the Pope at Rome, sponsored a march of six thousand students on the street and made a commemoration broadcasting through NHK. These attracted the attention of very many people.

Following this, the Religions League held rallies by districts in the main cities of the country, and with the help of the three newspapers, Asahi, Mainichi, Yomiuri, and NHK a National Religious Rally in October, 1949, "to mourn for the ten million war-dead of all countries east and west in this global war and to pray for the eternal peace of mankind." (The meeting place was the Shiba Sports Center in Tokyo,

the chairman of the commission was Seijun Andō, attendants numbered 15,000.) In this way and through many conferences and meetings in various places they planned to strengthen the Peace through Religion Movement. These meetings looked grand on the surface but the contents were very poor.

A slanted view of peace through religion

To cite one example for the shallowness of this peace movement, there is the "Resolution Concerning the Rejection of War" which was adopted as the logical foundation for a declaration of peace based on religion by the All Japan Religious Peace Conference. Its contents are as follows:

In Buddhism which teaches salvation of all sentient beings as the aim of Buddhahood, the precept of not killing in Hinayana Buddhism insists upon love and protection of all lives. In the *Muryōju-kyō* (Sutra of Immeasurable Life) Mahayana Buddhism opposes war because of its idea of peace and harmony in the world. The idea of Prince Shōtoku that harmony should be respected, is a manifestation of the great harmonious spirit of the Japanese people. Shinto, the way of Kami, denies war, and hopes for the establishment of a peaceful and happy land. At its festivals its followers always pray for the peace of the world and the happiness of all the people. In Christianity, love is the holy will of God who is the object of its faith, and Jesus teaches not to turn against one's enemy. It advocates the spirit of love of the enemy, rejects revengeful thoughts and insists upon the practice of neighborly love and humanity. We reaffirm the mission of religious men and express our determination to

cooperate with and help each other because of the ideas of war-denial, peaceful cooperation, love and benevolence, which are common to all these religions.

In short, this is an arrangement of sentences picked up from among the scriptures of various religions, which look convenient for the interpretation that religions are aiming at peace, while sentences which can be understood as an approval of war are carefully omitted. They shut their eyes even before history which shows that many wars were fought for the sake of religion.

No sincere effort for establishing anew the idea of "Peace through Religion" is found here. The men of religion who had theorized about "the Holy War" during wartime, repented only with their lips and suddenly could talk about the establishment of a peaceful world by means of religion. Here they showed such a quick change of attitude, which because of its superficiality failed to impress the people.

A fruitless peace movement

Therefore, it was a natural result that the Peace through Religion Movement, started by the All Japan Religious Peace Conference, was a complete failure.

The men of religions did not make any efforts for probing deeply into the problem of peace; they only hastened to get on the stream of the times. The development of this superficial peace movement under such conditions became a major cause for the leadership of the peace movement to pass into the hands of leftist circles.

The religious world and the removal of militarism and ultranationalism

Although faith was said to be free . . .

Although it was said that the freedom of religion was guaranteed by the new Constitution and although GHQ showed a sympathetic attitude toward religion, under the Occupation the Japanese were not allowed perfect freedom of religion.

It is needless to say that criticism of, or resistance against the Occupation Forces was prohibited. All ideas supposed to be militaristic or ultranationalistic were thoroughly suppressed in all the fields. In addition to this, during the latter part of the Occupation period, leftwing ideas were also strictly watched.

This policy of GHQ exerted a big influence on religion too, and there were not a few religious organizations that experienced restrictions with regard to their doctrines.

The ultranationalistic idea suppressed

The extermination of militaristic and ultranationalistic ideas can be said to have been the fundamental policy of GHQ. Militarism and ultranationalism, for the authorities of the Occupation, meant

1. the principle of regarding the Emperor as superior to the sovereigns of other countries because of his family line, blood or a special origin ;
2. the principle of regarding the Japanese people as superior to other peoples because of their family lines, blood or special origins ;
3. the principle of regarding the Japanese islands as superior

- to other countries because of a special origin ;
4. other principles which deceive and drive the Japanese people into an aggressive war or make them applaud the use of military power as the means of settling disputes with other peoples.

Therefore, the Shinto Directive defines militarism and ultranationalism as any “teaching, faith or theory which protects or justifies the Japanese mission to exert Japanese control over other peoples and other races.”

In order to remove these ideas from religions GHQ maintained a strict attitude. This brought strong restrictions to the doctrine and the faith of a part of Sectarian Shinto and a part of the new religions of Shinto lineage, not to speak of Shrine Shinto. Even Tenri-kyō which had been suppressed by the Government on the ground that its doctrine ran counter to the idea of State Shinto, was ordered again by the military local government of Kyoto to delete more than thirty articles from its scriptures. This was because the contents of the scriptures were regarded as “ultranationalistic.” This case was not openly discussed because the military local government understood the interpretation of Tenri-kyō and withdrew the order.

Since in the early stage of the Occupation the Occupation Forces were very nervous in regard to the ideas of militarism and ultranationalism, some sects revised part of their doctrine or withdrew part of their literature from circulation.

The Organizations Control Ordinance and religious organizations

The law which served as the base for controlling militaristic,

ultranationalistic or terroristic movements all through the period of the Occupation was the Organizations Control Ordinance which as Imperial Ordinance No. 101 was promulgated in 1946 and revised in 1949. According to these laws it was forbidden

1. to resist or to oppose the Occupation Forces, or to resist or to oppose orders issued by the Government of Japan upon the demands of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers ;
2. to support or to justify Japanese aggressive foreign military action ;
3. for Japan to assume the title of leader of other Asian, Indonesian or Malay races ;
4. to exclude foreigners from trade, commerce or business within the country of Japan ;
5. to oppose free interchange of culture and science between Japan and foreign countries ;
6. to practise military or semi-military training within the country of Japan, to furnish people who had been in the army or navy more privileges than those given to civilians, to give them a special right of speaking or to maintain militarism or soldierly spirit ;
7. to influence politics through assassination and other terroristic acts, or to promote or to justify the tendency of recognizing terroristic methods.

Organizations engaged in these activities were dissolved, their property was confiscated and their main officers were purged.

Even when an organization did not conflict with this ordinance, if the main officers of the organization (a) had been

members of an organization dissolved in accordance with this ordinance, (b) had been regular military or naval officers on the active list since 1930 or special voluntary reserve officers, (c) had been in service or collaborators of the Military Police, the Special Service Agency, the Naval Special Service Agency or other military or naval police organs, — the organization concerned had to be dissolved. (However, in case of religious organizations, they were treated with a little more tolerance. Even when the law applied to a religious organization, it was not dissolved. In case of individual shrines, temples or churches, even those who fell under these provisions could be allowed to assume the position of officers. They were only forbidden to become higher officers.) Furthermore, if more than a quarter of the members of the organization were members of a dissolved organization, the organization concerned was also dissolved. (In case of a religious organization, after the Attorney General's Office had investigated its character and recognized its innocence, it was permitted to continue to exist.) These stipulations were rather strict.

In accordance with this ordinance the Special Investigation Bureau of the Attorney General's Office was in charge of the investigation. It also investigated religious organizations under the direction of the Government Section GHQ.

The dissolved organizations

The investigations made by the Special Investigation Bureau concerning religious organizations were very extensive. The religious organizations which were investigated from the beginning of 1948 to the end of 1950 numbered 62 universal juridical

persons, 29 particular juridical persons, seven with their legal personality unknown, three quasi-religious organizations, three mental training organizations, eight religio-political organizations and four others, in total as many as 116. Besides these, eight religious personalities were investigated as individuals.

The Bureau searched carefully all organizations which might possibly come into conflict with the Control Ordinance. As a result the following organizations were ordered to dissolve:

Yuishin-remmei

(A religious corporation in accordance with Article 2 of the Religious Corporations Ordinance. Headquarters: Tokyo-to. President: Shinten Takahashi.) This was a small sect which aimed at removing the Confucian and Buddhist admixtures from the various kinds of traditional Shinto. It taught the Emperor's divine absolute authority and insisted on the divine origin of the country, and so made Japan the pattern and leader of the world. For this doctrine it was ordered to dissolve, and its eight leaders were purged.

Bankyō-Kiichi "Hito-no-tsudoi"

**Makihara Institute for the Study of Science of Destiny
Headquarters of Jinkō-no-michi**

(All of them non-corporated. Location: Tottori Pref. and Tokyo-to. Sponsor of the three: Gyokuyō Makihara.) These were small organizations with together about 200 believers. They propagated an ultranationalistic doctrine based upon old Shinto and endeavored to popularize ultra-nationalistic Shinto ways of divination. Moreover they heavily slandered the Oc-

cupation Forces. On the charge of these acts they were ordered to dissolve, and the sponsor was purged.

Tenshin-kyo

(Corporation acc. to Article 2. Old name *Dainichi-kyō*. Headquarters : Ibaragi Pref. Superintendent : Omaro Takeuchi.) Founder Takeuchi pretended that he was a descendant from Sukune Takenouchi, and advocated the following doctrine contained in old literature “transmitted by the Takeuchi family”:

The main deity, Tenchishin Isshin, is the original deity, the creator of the universe. All the deities, souls and things are created by this deity. The blood of this deity is the Imperial lineage of Japan and the five kinds of races in the five continents of the world are offshoots of this deity's blood. Therefore, Japan is, so to speak, the main family and the other countries are the branch families. Accordingly, the world should worship and be united to this fundamental deity, and the Japanese Emperor who, as of the blood of this deity, is destined to rule the world.

Believers were about 1,000. The organization was ordered to dissolve together with three lower churches in January, 1950, and the founder and four others were purged.

Story of Higashikuni-kyō

Through the vigorous activity in accordance with the Organizations Control Ordinance only these eight small organizations were dissolved (including the lower churches of Tenshin-kyo). Besides, there were some organizations the

officers of which were advised to retire from their position. Among them, the one that was most talked of by the people, was Higashikuni-kyō.

In April, 1950, the information that former Premier Prince Higashikuni had created a new religion, Higashikuni-kyō, surprised very much even those people who had been accustomed the successive rising of new religions and were no longer surprised at such things.

Higashikuni-kyō taught :

This religion aims at mastering the Buddhist faith, going hand in hand with the people who aspire at world peace through benevolence and service, devout religious life and work for the establishment of eternal peace in human society. It makes such activities as calling out to the people of the world to utilize the atomic power for the benefit of mankind and the development of culture instead of using it as a tool of cruel mass murder, going on pilgrimage all through the country for consoling the spirits of those who died in this great war, offering respectful and mourning prayer to tombs of unknown soldiers in all countries and others.

The creation of this new organization was planned by Mr. Higashikuni's advisor, Mr. Ryūkai Obara, a Sōtō-sect priest. Therefore, it was supposed that he intended to make an inroad into a populace inclining to Emperor worship by utilizing the name of the former prince.

On June 1 in that year, this religious organization was registered in accordance with Article 2 of the Religious Corporations Ordinance with Mr. Obara as superintendent.

The Special Investigation Bureau authorities who had investigated the case were knitting their eyebrows because of Mr. Obara's utilizing Mr. Higashikuni and advised the organization at once that Mr. Higashikuni should retire from the position of founder and the organization should be renamed because the Organizations Control Ordinance did not allow former General Higashikuni to assume a leading position in the organization.

For this reason, the organization asked for Mr. Higashikuni's retirement from office and decided not to use his name on documents related to the organization, to rename the organization Hōō-kyō and to appoint Mr. Obara to the position of founder. It thus escaped the crisis, but because of the fact that it had to take down the all-important name of the Prince right at the beginning, the "New Sect of the Prince," which had surprised many people, disappeared.

Religious activity in military uniform prohibited

Also in the Hinomoto-kyōdan, a branch of Maruyama-kyō, the leader was forced to retire. He was Mr. Shinji Hata, the consultant of the sect and at the same time the representative of its teachers. His retirement was natural because he was Lieutenant General and Commander of the Military Police. Moreover, Mr. Hata frequented the religious organization and attended ceremonies in a dress which was a military uniform only without shoulder-straps and other ensigns.

This fact bitterly aroused the Attorney General's authorities and the Special Investigation Bureau made a strong proposal to the Ministry of Education to the effect that "it was necessary to remove the military color still remaining within religious

organizations." Consequently, the following notification was sent under the name of the Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education (December, 1948):

It is heard that there are cases of former professional soldiers and others engaged in conducting religious ceremonies, preaching, giving religious lectures etc. in a dress which is a military uniform without shoulder-straps and other military ensigns (or wearing a simple religious dress over it). Because such a dress is feared to cause the misunderstanding that a military color is still remaining in the religious organization concerned, self-control is requested in order to expect the wholesome development of religious organizations.

This notification confused some people who were obliged to use military uniforms for daily wear due to the scarcity of clothing.

The Shingi-shintō-keiten-aijin-kyōkai, a corporation acc. to Art. 2 of the Religious Corporations Ordinance, dissolved itself voluntarily. Its superintendent, Mr. Haruhiro Minagawa, was advised to retire because he had been the consultant of the dissolved organization, Kōkoku-dōshi-kai. Without Mr. Minagawa at its center, the organization was regarded meaningless and therefore disbanded.

Tenri-hommichi barely escapes dissolution

The organizations which were dissolved or brought into a situation near to dissolution in accordance with the Organizations Control Ordinance were those mentioned above. It is Tenri-hommichi that barely escaped dissolution.

Tenri-hommichi (at present named simply Hommichi) was founded by Mr. Aijirō Ōnishi in 1925. The outline of its doctrine is almost the same as that of Tenri-kyō, but there are fundamental differences concerning the interpretation of the *Kanrodai*.

In Tenri-kyō, *Kanrodai* is a stand built at *jiba*, the source of creation of human beings. On it nectar bestowed from heaven is to fall on the day of the beginning of the ideal world. A temporary stand is placed in the middle of the main hall at the headquarters.

In Hommichi, however, the *Kanrodai* is no material thing but Aijirō Ōnishi himself. Therefore, Ōnishi himself is a man into whom the deity has entered, he is "Kanrodai-sama," who is the third revealed man succeeding to Miki Nakayama and Izo Iiburi. It teaches that Kanrodai-sama reconstructs not only the human mind but also everything in the actual world by revelations.

Based upon this doctrine, Ōnishi denies the divine character of the Emperor and says, "The Japanese Emperor is not qualified to control Japan and since, in spite of this disqualification, the Emperor rules Japan, the deity is angry." For this reason, he was accused of lese majesty twice in 1928 and 1938. Even after the end of the war the doctrine was not changed and the followers believed that Ōnishi would soon become spiritual and political ruler over Japan and the world.

The authorities of the Special Investigation Bureau regarded this doctrine as ultranationalistic and made a nation-wide investigation in extreme secrecy since the spring of 1949.

This investigation seemed to have a very difficult sailing,

because of the extreme secretism of the sect. The headquarters at Hagoromo, Osaka Prefecture, covering about 28,800 sq. ft., was surrounded by a fence. Only believers with a gate-pass were admitted even a step within the enclosure. Since it was a principle of the sect that no church except the headquarters should be built, it was quite difficult to collect evidence that justified the Bureau's action.

As a result of the investigation made over a year and a half, the Bureau, in the fall of 1950, was convinced that Tenri-hommichi was intending to make Ōnishi not only a religious ruler but also a ruler in the political field, and therefore prepared to dissolve the sect as an ultranationalistic organization.

Barely saved by GHQ

Just at that time, however, Tenri-hommichi was searched by the competent tax office on suspicion of tax evasion.

As in this search the tax office and the Special Investigation Bureau got in touch with each other, reporters who learned of the fact that the Special Investigation Bureau was making a complete secret search on Hommichi, wrote an article for a local newspaper at Osaka under the heading, "The Special Investigation Bureau moves to Tenri-hommichi, dissolution inevitable?" and so brought the movement of the Bureau before the public.

It was the leaders of Hommichi who were surprised at the graveness of the situation. They hastily appealed to RCR of GHQ and endeavored to explain the situation. At last they succeeded in getting the sympathy of the officer in charge and GHQ recognized, through negotiations between the same sec-

tion and the Government Section that Tenri-hommichi did not run counter to the Control Ordinance to the regret of the Special Investigation Bureau authorities.

The reason why the Special Investigation Bureau authorities tried to drive Tenri-hommichi to dissolution lay in the fact that they regarded the doctrine and the secretistic character of the organization and its severe criticism of the Emperor system as dangerous.

According to the investigation, not only did the leaders of Hommichi slander the Emperor system but also extreme believers called the Emperor a murderer or weak-headed, thus provoking the bitter indignation of the authorities.

The Special Investigation Bureau suspects the growth of Sōka Gakkai

At that time no one knew of the existence of Sōka Gakkai. Nevertheless, the Special Investigation Bureau was already suspecting that something was going on. •

President Jōsei Toda of Sōka Gakkai at that time seemed to be training in secrecy troops of young men for attacking the other religions and so to prepare a chance of playing an active part after Japan had recovered her independence. Paying attention to the fact that this organization worked under extreme secrecy and showed quite terroristic tendencies, the Special Investigation Bureau began its investigation of the actual condition about 1950.

It endeavored to collect material by filtering an officer into the organization but could not catch a concrete fact conflicting with the Control Ordinance.

It was said that the Special Investigation Bureau only got a written pledge from President Toda to the effect that they would abstain from all terroristic activity after it had discovered that they had held a "kangaroo court."

Application of the Control Ordinance kept to a minimum

As the Organizations Control Ordinance was a very important law for regulating anti-Occupation-Forces activities and suppressing militaristic and ultranationalistic activities, the investigation of religious organizations based on this ordinance at times was a very touchy problem.

New sects were watched with strict severity So, e.g., Sekai-kyūsei-kyō was subject to a thoroughgoing search for two years and a half since 1948 for the vague reason that "it contributed money to the political world in order to make contacts." In the event of Makoto-kyōdan mentioned in Chapter 2, this sect was suspected of being a terroristic organization.

Masaharu Taniguchi of Seichō no-Ie "voluntarily" retired from his position of founder in compliance with the "advice" of the Attorney General's Office. He was solely to engage in religious activities without touching the management side of the organization. (In the same organization the other two directors retired because of the same "advice.") In PL Kyōdan too, chiefs of branch churches were investigated on the suspicion of conflicting with the Control Ordinance and made to retire "voluntarily."

In this way, the activities of the Special Investigation Bureau menaced the religious world all through the period of the Occupation.

However, even if there occurred some excesses, in proportion to the large extension of the investigations and the touchiness of the problem, the application of the Control Ordinance to religious organizations may be said to have been kept to a minimum.

This seems to be owed to the good efforts of Mr. Shūten Ōishi who, since 1948, was in charge of religious problems in the Special Investigation Bureau and among people with little understanding of religion, treated religious organizations with sympathy and love.

(To be continued.)