

REMINISCENCES  
OF  
RELIGION IN POSTWAR JAPAN

(Continued from Vol. VII, No. 2)

CHAPTER IV  
THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION DURING  
THE LAST PHASE OF THE OCCUPATION

*During the last period of the Occupation Japan was rapidly progressing on the road of reconstruction ; the Christian boom died out but Shrine Shinto rose from its ashes like a phoenix. The new religions experienced a remarkable increase but were also the object of various criticisms.*

THE REVIVAL OF SHRINE SHINTO

Trends of return to the old course

The confusion after the war ended earlier than expected. The reconstruction of Japan which some had predicted would take a full century, progressed at a tempo nobody had foreseen. This was of course due to the turn in the American attitude toward Japan.

Although GHQ had encouraged the demilitarization and democratization of Japan, it had to change its course suddenly when the opposition between East and West became stronger.

Especially when the National Government of China, her greatest ally in the Far East, was completely defeated by the Communists, America was forced to transform Japan into

Asia's stronghold against the Communist camp.

Due to this situation, the Japanese economy, where production had dropped to less than 10% of its prewar rate, started a rapid recovery and Japan could not avoid becoming the ammunition factory of the Far East.

In 1950, GHQ issued a directive ordering the purge of the leaders of the Communist Party and conversely released many war criminals. Accordingly, many old leaders returned to their former field of activities and set out for a so-called reactionary course.

In the same year, the Korean War broke out and General MacArthur ordered the Japanese Government to create a Reserve Police Force. This was the first step to the rearmament of Japan.

In the next year, military march music was heard again in the streets, bustling under the Korea boom, something which could not have been dreamed of some years earlier. The scene was set for a real return of the past.

In 1951, a separate peace treaty was concluded between Japan and all the free nations. In April, 1952, Japan recovered her independence. Under these circumstances, the constellation of the religious forces at the end of the Occupation differed pretty much from that of the years directly following the war.

### The head priest of a shrine selling rice crackers

Most striking were some indications pointing to a revival of Shrine Shinto.

As already mentioned, since the separation of church and state came into effect, most of the shrines lost the interest of

the public and experienced serious economic troubles.

Many shrines were happy enough if they were able to support their tenants by providing facilities for wedding ceremonies, renting rooms etc. The sad story goes even that a former Special Government Shrine started selling wheat gluten at its shrine office, or that a head priest of a former Middle Government Shrine sold rice crackers on the market place.

### Shrine belief showed longevity

However, these shrines began to show, little by little, some new signs of life as a result of the tendency to return to the past.

In the last period of the Occupation, the Occupation Forces which had usually looked upon the shrines as their enemy, started to see in them allies in their struggle against Communism. This policy of the leaders found its subtle counterpart in the mind of the people who had turned their backs to the shrines after the defeat; the deeply rooted belief in the kami was finding, in some vague way, new life.

When transportation got normal again, shrines which were objects of popular faith or landmarks of touristic interest began to attract many visitors.

The return of the old leaders in the political and economic field meant also a big support for the shrines.

Even in the early stage of the Occupation, when the aid of the state or of public organizations to shrines was strictly prohibited by the Shinto Directive, it was not unusual to find shrines which were secretly supported by local public organi-

zations. This tendency gained momentum when the anti-shrine policy of the Occupation Forces was eased and when the old leaders came back. This state of affairs made some people fear that the revival of State Shinto was the result of a plot.

Religious ceremonies accompanying public funerals were again permitted since 1951.

In 1949, the *Jingu Shikinen Sengū Hōsan Kai* of Ise Shrine (Association for the Festival of the Transfer of the God of the Ise Grand Shrine) was founded. Atsuta Shrine in Nagoya damaged by fire during the war also started repairs with a budget of 200,000,000 Yen.

However, a good number of other shrines faced growing difficulties to make ends meet, but generally speaking it was from this year on that shrine faith began to show some signs of new life. When the Shinto Directive was issued, speculation rose that many shrines would not be able to subsist, but actually more than 110,000 survived.

Standing the severe trial after the war, Shrine Shinto thus gave prove of the strength of its faith.

## A MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR CHRISTIANITY

### Dwindling boom of Christianity

Christianity, elated by the prospective of a new spring during the first years of the Occupation, began very soon to show symptoms of stagnation.

Until the end of the Occupation, the Christian churches, backed by a strong support from abroad, continued to display great activity. By 1951, ahead of the other religions, Chris-

tianity had almost completely recovered from war damage; yearly statistics showed a steady growth for Catholicism as well as for Protestantism.

Thus on the surface the Christian boom seemed to continue uninterrupted under the rule of the Christian General MacArthur. However, a public opinion poll made by the Jijitsu-shinsha in 1948 already indicated that this boom was in fact very shallow and would not last long.

According to this survey, Christians made up 6.5% of all believers in 1946, 6% in 1947, but only 4.8% in 1948.

In that year the Christian boom was still considered to be in its upward phase. Therefore these figures were received with surprise in general, but the interested persons of the churches seemed to know better from their own experience the fact that the boom had already passed its peak.

One of its symptoms was the fact that in the big cities the numbers of those who crammed the portals of the churches out of mere curiosity or lead by a certain mood were on the decrease.

The Ginza Church of Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan situated next to Sukiwabashi took advantage of its favorable position in the business district: daily noon worship was held for white-collar workers, passers-by were invited in a very direct way to participate. Everybody spoke about this church, but the Rev. Akira Takada, its pastor, when his opinion was asked about the results of the survey mentioned above, said as follows:

“I don't know how far this kind of statistics is correct but as far as Christianity is concerned it is a fact that it decreased. But the decrease seems to mean only that Christianity which

rode the crest of the wave of popularity after the war slumped to its normal course again."

Study circles of Christianity or of the Bible at offices were also in vogue in those days, but Shōgo Yamazaki, a Catholic who had sponsored such a study circle of Christianity at the NHK (Japan National Broadcasting Company), said that "The number of people who join such study groups out of mere curiosity has dropped. Only those who are really looking for the faith are left, which is an improvement indeed." (From *The Shūkyō Tsūshin*, September 1948.)

### A golden opportunity missed

Although the symptoms of decline were present in this way, on the surface the boom was still in full swing for some years.

General MacArthur continued talking about his dream of making Japan a Christian nation; there was talk about the conversion of the Emperor and rumors about mass conversions filled the air and represented a great threat to the other religions.

In the later stage of the Occupation, however, everyone knew that a rapid development of Christianity was not to be expected and that the Christian boom after all was nothing but a dream of the past.

In those days statements like the following were quite common: "The vogue for Christianity lacks all depth and is on the contrary a temptation for serious missionaries," or, "Now that the churches have recovered, calm and steady missionary work should take over again."

But nevertheless, only some years ago one heard it very often

said that the present moment offered a unique opportunity for the evangelization of Japan. So much even that, if this chance were missed, it would never come again.

It is probably the truth that Christianity in its position of religion of the victors attracted many who were not exactly looking for faith but who were only driven by some curiosity or were looking for some material benefits. This was of course very much regretted by serious missionaries.

On the other side, it can not be denied that the Occupation was a golden opportunity for the spreading of Christianity. Nevertheless, Catholicism as well as Protestantism increased their ranks only by less than hundred thousand during this period. It would not be too much to say that they missed the best chance ever offered.

### **Outlandishness and the difficulty of living**

The major reason, among the many reasons given to explain the rapid check of the advance of Christianity, was the poor training of the missionaries and the difficulties of living.

Especially the low standard of the missionary activity was fatal. For example, many people began attending church under the influence of Mr. Toyohiko Kagawa's lecture tours or stimulated by the performances of the Lacour Musical Evangelical Group who travelled several times around Japan since 1950; but such an interest did not last very long. The churches lacked the power to plant the faith firmly in the mind of these people.

Although one century has passed since Christianity resumed its missionary activities in Japan, both Catholicism and Pro-

testantism still have a strong flavor of outlandishness. This was inevitable for Catholicism with its many foreign missionaries — according to the statistics, in 1948: 161 Japanese and 281 foreigners —, but even in the case of the Protestant clergy, their sermons, delivered in a stiff language, still betraying the original, were often too idealistic. An effort to explain the gospel in a simple way adapted to the capacity of understanding of the Japanese was completely absent.

Such a kind of Christianity might appeal emotionally to ladies of the high society or satisfy intellectually the young intelligentsia but it is certainly no substantial food for the suffering masses.

Although Commander MacArthur said, "We need one thousand young missionaries for the instruction of Japan," his concern was with their quality rather than with their quantity.

The fact that the missionaries had a hard life, which hindered their activity, was especially true in the case of Protestantism.

As touched upon in the previous chapter, the remuneration of the clergy by their churches was low, and that in spite of the fact that they received subsidies from abroad.

The first reason for this was that the monetary contributions from the believers were low.

If the results of the survey of the *Kirisuto Shimbun* in 1950 are broken down into different age groups, among the believers and catechumens of the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan, the age bracket between 11 and 20 years was the most numerous: they formed 36.4% of the whole; next came the 21—25 group with 23.4%. Thus the youth group constituted 59.8% of the total number. The lowest percentage (4.2%) was reserved for the middle-age



group (40—45).

Braking the data down along occupational lines, we find 45% belonging to the labor or intellectual world, and 7% to the producers' group. On the other hand "the leisure class," composed of students, housewives or those without a profession occupied 53%.

Since the young leisure class constituted the main power of the churches, it is only natural that the amount of monetary contributions was not high. Moreover, in the case of Protestantism the number of teachers was large in proportion to that of the believers (one teacher to every 52 believers in 1950), which made the economic burden all the greater.

For this reason, part-time jobs were a necessity for most missionaries. The result was that the activity of the churches, which was already rather low, was hindered still further.

### **Together with the disappearing old soldier**

General MacArthur who was an ardent promotor of the "Japan, a Christian country" plan, left Japan in April, 1951, having been deposed as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. Together with him the afterglow of the Christian boom was completely extinguished.

The golden opportunity for Christianity to take firmly root in Japanese soil vanished and perhaps will never return.

## **TENRI-KYŌ DISPLAYS ITS POWER**

### **Sectarian Shinto after 1951**

Even towards the end of the Occupation, the established sects

of Shinto, except Tenri-kyō, could not generally avoid to give a dull impression as opposed to Shrine Shinto which showed a remarkable revival.

Even the Konkō and Kurozumi sects, which were considered extending their sphere of influence after the war, were no exception to this.

Konkō-kyō, although having the name of being the biggest sect next to Tenri-kyō, did not show a positive development and stagnated on the same level.

Kurozumi-kyō, the other leading sect among Sectarian Shinto, was unable to launch a new movement but began to show even signs of decline.

### Tenri-kyō, lonely runner

Under these conditions, only Tenri-kyō showed an unfathomably deep strength.

Although there was a drop in activity immediately after the war, as a consequence of the blows it received during wartime, the war damage suffered by the urban churches and the difficulty of living, the teachers were confronting around 1949 the restoration of the doctrine, begun soon after the war, and started to penetrate the whole sect and brought about a revival.

Especially since 1951, when all attention was being focused upon 1956, the 70th anniversary of the ascension of the foundress, all efforts were made for a massive missionary attack, resulting in a considerable expansion of the sect. Under the enthusiast leadership of its Head, the Rev. Shōzen Nakayama, it displayed "the greatest perfection among all the old and new religious sects." (Mr. Akio Saki in *Illustrated Japanese*

*Cultural History.*)

## THE ESTABLISHED BUDDHIST SECTS AND THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY

### Still a long way through a dark night

The way which lay ahead for the established Buddhist sects was steep as it always had been.

Almost all the temples, first of all of course those which had been suffering from the release of farm land, but also the others faced extreme difficulties in their management.

Very often temple grounds were sold or leased out, trees were sold, paper charms, never distributed before, started circulating, nursery schools or kindergartens were opened in temple precincts ; all this for economic reasons.

The number of temple priests, who hardly could make a living even with the increased income from their side jobs as teachers or public servants, increased.

Moreover, proselytism undertaken on a large scale by the new religions, Christianity and Tenri-kyō severely shook the temples in their foundations.

Under these circumstances each sect took great pains for improving its constitution in order to survive in the future.

### Unrevived propagation enthusiasm

It was also one of the postwar phenomena that there was a big cry for proselytic activity in the Buddhist world.

Since in accordance with the policy of the Occupation Forces all religions were placed on equal footing in free competition,

even the established Buddhist temples would have fallen into gradual decline if they had only depended upon the *danka* (Buddhist parish) system. It was a necessity for them to regain their lost interest in propagation and to give back to Buddhism its character of a living faith instead of letting it pass from one generation to another as a mere family religion.

Such was the strong desire which pervaded the whole Buddhist world.

Nevertheless a quick recovery of this missionary spirit was impossible, for each sect had completely lost this spirit because of their utter dependence upon public authority since the beginning of the Tokugawa era.

But it is a fact that the established Buddhist sects recovered some of their missionary spirit after the war. Much effort was put into proselytizing by publications, and to some extent sermons in temples were more frequent when compared with the prewar days.

However, to what extent they did succeed in captivating the mind of the people remains an open question.

### **Modernization of rites and temples**

Parallel with the missionary revival the problem of modernizing sutras, rites and temples was taken up at large.

Of uttermost importance for the revival of Buddhism from its status of undertaker of funerals to a living faith, was the translation of the sutras into an easily understandable language. A great stimulation was the fact that the Christian "Bible offensive" had flooded the market with ten million copies of the Bible at a time when books were very scarce. Therefore,

seriously minded Buddhists thought that the translation of the sutras into modern language was a necessity of primary importance.

However, the Buddhist world in general did not feel un-animously about this problem.

Among the believers many held the view that the Chinese reading would be better than the Japanese. When reciting the sutras, they said it would be better to use the traditional version: if the text is too clear, it lacks dignity. Therefore, a literary translation which would be half understandable would be appropriate. (*Shūkyō Kōron*, December, 1946.) Many priests sympathized with this solution.

For this reason, it were the so-called liberal Buddhists rather than the sects, who showed positive interest in the translation of the sutras.

Dr. Seiichirō Ono and others edited several of the sacred texts in modern language. But lacking in scope, this work was unable to bring about a reformation of Buddhism.

With the rapid westernization of every-day life, the modernization of the temples started becoming a serious problem. The modern style invaded temple architecture, thus adding to the difficulties which were encountered in the running of the temples. Bars were opened under the same roof which sheltered sacred altars, which made some people think that the last apocalyptic times of Buddhism were approaching, that this meant the end of Buddhism. As far as the modernization of the rites was concerned, the fact that Christian rites had a strong appeal to young people through their special atmosphere gave a great stimulation. Especially the power of church music, often

more effective than long sermons, stirred a keen interest in Buddhist circles for ritual music. Thus the organ was introduced into Buddhist wedding ceremonies, and various attempts were made to adapt western music to Buddhist rites.

The chief abbot of Shinshū Ōtani sect and his wife, both lovers of music, were especially enthusiast about the assimilation of modern music and established the Japan Religious Music Association (1947). Consequently, he went so far as to use an electronic organ during ceremonies. However, the music and the ceremonies did not harmonize at all, and those attempts were still a far cry from the creation of genuine Buddhist music.

#### “Kanda-dera”

It was also one of the remarkable tendencies that many new Buddhist groups, very sensitive to the demands of the new time, tried to develop movements for updating Buddhism. Their general standpoint was one of reflection on the narrow-minded sectarian spirit for a genuine pan-Buddhism.

Notorious was the Kanda-dera experiment. The Kanda temple (affiliated with no sect) was founded by the Rev. Entai Tomomatsu at Kanda, Tokyo, in May, 1946. It attracted the attention of the public as an experiment ahead of its time. The Rev. Entai Tomomatsu was a talented follower of the Jōdo sect. In 1934, he had given radio-lectures on the *Hokku-kyō* (Sutra of the Law Words) in a modern style and had thus gained popularity all over the country, creating a Buddhist revival boom.

Not affiliated with any sect, reacting against tradition, this

temple possessed a modern hall where chairs replaced the straw mats and where religious songs, in imitation of Christian hymns, could be heard. Sutras sung at funerals were translated into Japanese. This was an effort of implanting Buddhism deeper into every-day life. There was also a strong effort of spreading Buddhism through literature. The results did not meet the expectations, but this unusual temple was the first to show some interest in a reformation of the sects, in the promotion of proselytism, in the modernization of the sutras, rites and temples etc., all tendencies which were quickly taken up by the pan-Buddhist movement.

### Democratization of the structure of the sects

Immediately after the end of the war, when the above-mentioned tendencies started to develop, each Buddhist sect revised its rules in order to rationalize its structure. The main common characteristic was the separation of religious authority and administrative responsibility.

Under the Religious Organizations Law, the *Kanchō* system was adopted in which the religious representative such as *Hossu* or *Zasu* was also responsible for the administration at the same time. However, with the abolition of this law, each sect switched to a system where the administrative authority was separated from the *Hossu*, *Zasu* or others, and where a secretary-general, mostly elected publicly, was responsible for the administration of the sect. At the same time the custom grew among the sects of adding laymen to the election organs. This was partly due to the policy of democratization followed by the Occupation forces, but the major reason was that the

sects had become aware of the necessity of adopting a unified system of priests and laymen for the survival of the sects in the modern world.

These same conditions which called for a close collaboration between priests and laymen also produced in the last phase of the Occupation a movement towards unity in the whole Buddhist world.

### **Rise of a pan-Buddhist movement for unity**

The rise of the pan-Buddhist unity movement toward the end of the Occupation was the only bright side for the Buddhist world in the postwar days, when the talk of the day was rather gloomy. The necessity of a movement in which all Buddhists would act in concert disregarding sect differences or distinctions between clergy and laymen was strongly felt by many. The confrontation with the missionary offensive of both Christianity and the new religions since the end of the war, and the tendencies of the overseas Buddhists were a strong stimulation.

Mr. Christmas Humphreys, President of the London Buddhist Society, who came to Japan in the spring of 1946 as representative public prosecutor of Britain in the Far East Military Court, proposed "Twelve Articles of Buddhism" to the representatives of the sects as the common idea of Buddhism.

This was the first stimulation from overseas. The Buddhist world at that time, preoccupied with splinter movements and internal strife, on this occasion became aware of the possibility and significance of a pan-Buddhist movement.



Since then more voices were raised in favor of a movement for unity. Moved by public opinion, the Buddhist Federation made public in 1949 a plan of building a Central Buddhist House which would serve as base for the movement. It started a fund-raising drive by selling badges.

The outcome was a complete failure : the plan had been too optimistic. However, it had one positive result, namely that the interest in a pan-Buddhist movement was raised.

### The World Buddhist Conference and the Buddhist world

A second great stimulation came from abroad.

At Colombo in Ceylon the representatives of 25 countries came together in 1950 for the first World Buddhist Conference. From Japan the Rev. Rōsen Takashina, the Rev. Riri Nakayama and others attended it. The Japanese delegation was struck by the fact that a newly emerged country like Ceylon, which had just acquired independence, could sponsor that epoch-making international conference in such a successful way thanks to the close cooperation of the government and the people.

Still more, when they witnessed the enthusiasm with which the countries of southeastern Asia (Ceylon, Thailand, Burma, etc.) intended to spread Buddhism even among the Japanese Buddhists, who usually displayed a sense of superiority common to Mahayana Buddhism in their criticism of the southern school or Theravada Buddhism, they saw that a few things had to be taken into reconsideration.

Moreover, the Buddhists of these countries held Japan as a developed Buddhist nation in high esteem and therefore, when

a resolution was voted to hold such a World Buddhist Conference every two years, the strong wish was expressed to have Japan sponsor the second meeting.

This conference in Ceylon stimulated very highly the whole movement for a united Buddhism.

The Japanese Buddhists understood that, as an advanced Buddhist nation, they should have developed a Buddhist movement combining the efforts of priests and laymen and transcending all distinction of sects. And thus, notwithstanding the various difficulties due to the Occupation, when Japan had to assume the sponsorship of the second World Buddhist Conference, many voices rose to push the plan through for the sake of the honor of the Japanese Buddhists.

In the spring of the following year, the Japan Buddhist Conference was organized as the preparatory organ for the World Buddhist Conference, and in the autumn of the same year the Japan National Buddhist Conference convened. The way was paved for the World Conference and a tendency to integrate the whole movement arose.

However, the preparative work behind the scene of the World Conference carried out by the Rev. Riri Nakayama, the Rev. Kōnen Tsunemitsu, the Rev. Makoto Nagai and others, was no easy matter. For those who earnestly insisted upon holding the World Conference were so-called liberal Buddhists whereas the headquarters of the sects showed a rather negative attitude.

Many of those liberal Buddhists, feeling hindered in their action within the sects, acted outside of them. Therefore, the feelings between the liberals and the sects were not always exactly cordial. Their opposition came to the surface in con-

nection with the World Buddhist Conference.

In the beginning the liberals intended to collect the necessary funds on their own by addressing themselves to the business world, without depending upon the Buddhist Federation which was the liaison organ of the sects. But the collection of funds encountered unexpected difficulties, and with the day of the conference coming close, the liberals had to give up their previous plan.

On the other hand, the sects which had taken a very cold attitude towards the action of the liberals thought that, if the conference was to be called off or was to fail, Japanese Buddhism would be put to shame before the whole world. They felt that the whole conference should not be brought to a failure just because of this dispute. Both parties came to a compromise in July, 1952, and decided that the meeting should be held in unison by the whole of Japanese Buddhism.

Thus, in September of the year in which Japan recovered her independence, a prosperous Tokyo played host to the second World Buddhist Conference. The same year saw also the erection of the Japanese League of the World Buddhist Conference, and in 1954, through amalgamation of the Japanese League and the Japan Buddhist Federation (the central organ of the various sects), the great organization called All Japan Buddhist Association, which unified priests and laymen, was borne.

Thus the organization for the promotion of a pan-Buddhist movement was established.

## THE FLOURISHING NEW RELIGIONS

### Potentialities of the pre war sects

The number of the new religions increased sharply. Religious groups mushroomed all about. Some of them took root among the people and developed into large sects.

Ōmoto, PL Kyōdan and Seichō-no-Ie were regarded as the forerunners of the new religions. Their tribulations were noticed from many sides but they displayed strong power during the last stage of the Occupation.

Although Ōmoto did not show a remarkable increase of believers, they counted about 60,000 members at the end of 1951. (All statistics concerning religious organizations from now on date from that time.) It let feel its influence most strongly through a special peace movement based on goodness and love for mankind as its guiding principles.

PL Kyōdan, under the leadership of its founder, Tokuchika Miki, who showed a keen understanding for the needs of the time, succeeded in the gradual creation of a religious organization of more than 360,000 believers, thus acquiring for it the status of a top religious movement.

Seichō-no-Ie, founded by Masaharu Taniguchi, discredited because of its close cooperation with the war effort, struggled through a few difficult years but then recovered rapidly and soon reached the 1,200,000 mark. The revival mood, prevailing at that time, was very favorable to this development.

### Various religious organizations developing

Sekai-kyūsei-kyō, which had appeared on the stage of the

religious world like a whirling wind after the war, was slow at first in extending its religious influence because of two cases of tax evasion (1948, 1950). However, it now established itself as a major religion with a unique character. The number of believers reached 305,000.

Tenshōkōtaijingū-kyō of foundress Sayo Kitamura, the "Dancing Great Goddess," though the exploding popularity of former years was on the wane, still attracted a good number of people at various places. The believers numbered 67,000.

Besides these religions, in the latter period of the Occupation, there was Kōdō-kyōdan (82,000) whose founders were the Rev. Shōdō Okano and his wife. The Rev. Okano, while being a priest of the Tendai sect, was also a leader of Reiyū-kai and thought of establishing a middle way between Tendai Buddhism and Nichirenism. There were Nempō Shin-kyō whose founder, Reigen Ogura, claimed to have received a revelation of Amida, and Ananai-kyō (31,000) founded by Yonosuke Nakano after his separation from Ōmoto.

Ennō-kyō (chief abbot Chōji Fukada, Hyōgo Prefecture, 86,000) was established by the people who yearned for the benefit derived from the virtue of foundress Chiyoko Fukada who had healed diseases, predicted and cured sufferings, settled worries etc. by means of a unique practice and inspiration. Tenchi-kōdō-zenrin-kai (Saga Prefecture, 104,000), later renamed Zenrin-kai, of founder Shinsei Rikihisa, a man of spiritual ability trained in severe ascetic practices, was expanding in each region. Besides, Gedatsu-Hōon-Kansha-kai (superintendent Eizan Kishida, 13,000), later renamed Gedatsukai, founded by Mr. Shōken Okano, Shūyōdan-Hōsei-kai (5,000)

of president Seitarō Idei, and other religious organizations were showing gradually signs of advance.

However, the greatest topics in the new religious world of the latter period of the Occupation were the great dissolution of Reiyū-kai and the remarkable advance of Risshō Kōsei-kai.

### In the shade of the height of prosperity of Reiyū-kai

In 1948, Reiyū-kai was enjoying the glory of its springtime. Nominal believers numbered two million. They were proud of their outstanding power among the new religions, and the "guidance" activity centering around the so called *Ohata-gumi* (the "Banner Groups", i.e., the seven branches which had been granted banners inscribed by Mr. Kakutarō Kubo as the most pious and honorable branches) looked as if sailing before full wind.

However, even in Reiyū-kai, which was apparently continuing its development, a crisis of dissolution was already approaching.

The first cause inviting such a dark shadow was inherent in the system of the organization itself. In Reiyū-kai the chiefs of the branches had great power, and the believers were completely in their hands at that time.

Such a system of organization was very favorable to schism and dissolution. Moreover, many of the leading branch chiefs showed signs of "divine inspiration" after their many years of ascetic discipline and each of them possessed sufficient qualities to become founders of new religions.

In addition, it seems to be undeniable that the violent character of president Kimi Kotani was a remote cause of

dissolution.

It is true that the passionate enthusiasm of president Kotani had been of great help in bringing up the organization. However, since 1944, when she lost the creator of the organization, Mr. Kakutarō Kubo, her character became violently willful toward the leaders close to her.

It was not rare that the leaders were denounced, struck or kicked by the president for a trifle.

A deep gap opened between such a president and the leaders who had several ten thousand or hundred thousand believers behind them and even possessed founder-like qualities.

Although many leaders restrained their antipathy toward the president which they felt together with a strong affection to the organization, a dark stream of ill feelings began to flow with a murmuring sound behind the scene in 1948 when Reiyū-kai was proud of its brilliant height of prosperity.

If the respect for the president's religious authority which remained in the mind of the leaders were lost, a catastrophe was unavoidable.

### Great secession started

Yet it came sooner than expected. The headquarters of Reiyū-kai was raided in 1949 on suspicion of tax evasion and concealment of gold ingots, and cocain was also discovered. This surprised the world. It was the so-called first Reiyū-kai case which was one of the causes of secession.

According to the reports of the newspapers and magazines, president Kotani "threw out herself before the investigation official to apologize," and "sat down on the ground before

the soldier of the Occupation Force.”

A woman knowing little of worldly affairs was involved in such an incident. Therefore, even if the president truly showed such a fright, it was not unnatural.

On the other hand, however, it was not unreasonable for some leaders to find the “misery of an ascetic who had lost his divine power” in such a figure of the president.

Moreover, since the incident the attitude of the president toward the leaders increased in severity and with the settlement of the incident the inside of the organization fell into an undescrivable confusion.

The chance of dissolution had come. The opposition against the president which had been smoldering in the mind of some leaders came to the surface taking this incident as an opportunity. Many of them left Reiyū-kai cutting off the tie with the organization in order to look for a new way to “disseminate the Lotus Sutra.”

#### Various sects borne from Reiyū-kai

Mr. Ginjirō Nagasawa, a believer in Tochigi Prefecture, seceded from the organization and founded Hakuai-dōshi-kai in May, 1949. With this as the beginning, Reiyū-kai was subject to more secessions and schisms in 1950 and 1951.

In the fall of 1950, the seventh branch, which with 250,000 members was the strongest among the *Ohata-gumi*, collapsed. The chief of the branch, Mrs. Mitsu Miyamoto, retired from the organization and established the Myōchi-kai at Yoyogi in Tokyo. About 50,000 believers followed her.

Before or after this another powerful *Ohata-gumi*, the sixth



branch, seceded. Because the chief of the branch, Mr. Kaichi Sekiguchi, established Busshogonen-kai at Shiba, Tokyo, eighteen thousand believers followed him.

At almost the same time, Mrs. Chiyo Saitō seceded and established Hosshi-kai at Ichinoseki-shi, Iwate Pref., and Mr. Endai Sugawara left the organization and founded Tokkō-kai at Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa Pref.

In the Kansai District also, the deputy chief of the eighth branch, Mr. Tarō Ono, founded Myōhō-kyō in Osaka Pref.

In 1951, dissolution did not come to an end yet. First, the chief of the Yamaguchi branch, Mr. Giichi Yamaguchi, created Seikai-kyōdan at Ichikawa-shi, Chiba Pref., taking with him 20,000 believers.

Next, Messrs. Chūjirō Sahara, the chief of the eleventh branch, and Yasusuke Ishikura, the chief of the eighth branch, who both had been active as important leaders in the Kansai District taking care of the *Ohata-gumi*, retired from their position. Mr. Sahara created Myōdō-kai at Osaka, and Mr. Ishikura Daie-kai in Osaka Pref.

After producing nearly ten new sects in this way, the storm of dissolution was settled for once.

The strongest point of Risshō Kōsei-kai at that time was the strong combination of president Niwano and vice-president Naganuma.

While vice-president Myōkō Naganuma was firing the faith of the members as the spiritual leader, president Nikkyō Niwano exercised his ability on a large scale in systematizing the doctrine and establishing the system of organization as the theoretical leader.

State of increase in Risshō Kōsei-kai members

Year	Number of member families
1944	810
45	1,413
46	2,458
47	7,701
48	13,158
49	27,000
50	55,221
51	88,452
52	124,127
53	175,777
54	246,637
55	270,000
56	300,000

While Reiyū-kai which had lost Mr. Kakutarō Kubo, a great supporter, experienced secessions due to the strong despotism of president Kotani, Kōsei-kai quickly developed the organization through the close combination of the president and the vice-president and was firmly consolidating its organization.

All mass media took up the amazing development of Kōsei-kai.

At the same time Nichiren-shōshū-Sōkagakkai was also to come up to the surface from its long hidden existence.

In 1951, Mr. Jōsei Toda assumed formally the presidency and was to open the great offensive of *shakubuku* (religious attack) leading the people of the 12 branches, i.e., 3,000 families.

### Still sharp critical eyes upon the new religions

Even in the latter period of the Occupation, the public opinion toward the new religions never softened.

The point that lack of understanding in various quarters including journalism strengthened the sharp critical eyes in every way more than necessary was perceived at large, but here half of the responsibility rested with the new religions.

For there were some suspicious ones among the new religions which abused the freedom of religion, and even in the sincere religions they sometimes overdid their missionary work and caused criticism.

At that time, however, it was the general tendency to regard almost all new religions as "suspicious," but the worst among the organizations which were regarded "especially suspicious" was Kōdō-chi-kyō. Abusing to a maximum a blind spot of the Religious Corporations Ordinance, it caused serious troubles.

### Kōdō-chi-kyō, a strange religion

It was quite an abnormal religion. The general headquarters was Kōdō-chi-kyō Jingi On'yō Ryōtensha Jingū-shichō at Nagano-mura, Iwata-gun, Shizuoka Pref.

The general leader was "the Great Master of Teaching," Seizen Kifune, who claimed to be *Shukansha* (Superintendent) of the office of the headquarters, *Sōkan* (General Supervisor), *Kanchō* (Chief Abbot), *Jingi-kan* (Shrine Official), *On'yō Shingaku-hakase* (Doctor of Divinity of On'yō [the cosmic dual forces]), *Senkyō-shu* (Master of Dissemination of Teaching), *Daisaishi* (Great Servant of Festivals).

Under the influence of this man, more than ten organizations (each with *Kanchō*, *Shukansha* or others) which claimed to be "Kōdō-chi-kyō Dai-Nihon Jingū-shichō," "Kōdō-chi-kyō Kōyasan Daishi-kyō" or something similar were gathering to form

“the group of organizations of Kōdō-chi-kyō.”

The abnormality was not only in the system of this religion but also in its doctrine.

The doctrine of the general headquarters stated, “Our doctrine is based on Confucianism, and our remote ancestor is Wani who introduced Confucianism to this country,” but the doctrines of the affiliated organizations were so various and miscellaneous that some claimed the Confucian lineage while others claimed a Shinto or Buddhist lineage or even an Ōmoto lineage.

Here the question arises as to how such a strange and mixed up organization could be established.

In the research materials of the then Attorney-General's Office, the Special Investigation Bureau, the character of the organization was recorded as follows :

“It claims to be the head of the On'yō-dō (the Way of Cosmic Dualism), has prefectural headquarters in each prefecture, makes ordinary shops affiliated churches under the principle that Life is Religion, develops mainly in the prefectures of Shizuoka, Aichi, Kanagawa, Tokyo, Chiba and others, and says to create 3,000 churches all through the country. It is thought to exist mainly for the purpose of tax evasion. The superintendent is Kifune. It is not a religion.”

In short, the purpose of this organization was tax evasion, and a religious system or a doctrine meant nothing to it.

### Even an assignation house can become a church

The career of “the Great Master of Teaching” Seizen or Naotarō Kifune is not known in details. It is said that he

already presided over a religious association in the prewar days, but it was, needless to say, in the postwar days that he set about systematizing the organization of Chi-kyō on a full scale.

Reading the Religious Corporations Ordinance which had been newly established, Kifune who "was amazingly eloquent and well versed in laws" (Dr. Baiyū Watanabe in *Religions in Present Day Japan*) seemed to think as follows.

When an organization becomes a religious corporation in accordance with the Ordinance, income from religious activity can be granted the privilege of tax exemption. Moreover, as the establishment of a corporation can be made by a mere report, the contents are a matter of no consequence. If so, there should be a means of evading tax whenever a profit-making enterprise or trade is declared a "religious activity" of a religious corporation.

As for a restaurant, for example, it is all right when the shop is made into a church as it is. For business is "a religious activity" which practises that life is religion, and customers are "believers." It is indeed a fine way of salvation to still the hunger of "the believers" in days when food is scarce. The money offered by the believers who are bathed in the grace of salvation is not a payment but a "contribution." Therefore, no tax is imposed.

When he got this splendid enlightenment Kifune assumed the position of Great Master of Teaching by himself and set about creating a religious organization, displaying the banner of "Life is Religion."

"Only displaying the signboard of a religious corporation relieves of taxes on trade!" Being attracted by this charming

"gospel," many small merchants and manufacturers gathered in this organization. They were granted a license by "the Great Master of Teaching" Kifune and at each shop displayed a signboard of a religious organization or a church affiliated with Chi-kyō.

### The Ministry of Education was greatly surprised

It was in 1947 when Chi-kyō was started, but, since the persons concerned caused troubles in various places, in a short time its existence became known abroad.

Several persons of the organization carrying blackmarket food rucksacks were arrested at Kisarazu in Chiba Prefecture in May, 1948. When asked what they were carrying, they replied, "In the regulations of our religious organization it is clearly stated that food and fuel are collected and distributed to the believers, and these regulations have been registered in accordance with the Religious Corporations Ordinance. Why is it wrong to carry on what is stipulated in the regulations?" With this they began accusing the officials concerned for having violated the freedom of religion.

The influence of "the Great Master of Teaching" was indeed great — but the trial, needless to say, resulted in a clear defeat of the organization. All the controlled food shouldered by the men of the organization at that time was confiscated and, in addition, they had to pay a fine.

In the next month, four men of the organization were arrested for illegal pressing of rape-seed at Iwata-shi, Shizuoka Prefecture. They also were found guilty.

Because such things happened frequently, many rumors in

connection with this organization appeared in newspapers and magazines, and loud criticisms were heard.

The Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education at once inquired into the actual conditions, but the real situation was quite amazing.

Every "*Kyōdan*" and every "*Kyōkai*" used a house of business as it was, and many had no altar worthy of the name of altar.

A "*Kyōkai*" with a hot spring sign went under the name of "The Assignment Hotel for Coexistence and Coprosperity," its business being the "religious activity" to make man and woman enjoy the delights of life.

A permanent wave business was the "Believers' Public Beauty Parlor" to practise religious activity for beautifying life, a tailor shop a "Public Welfare Enterprise, Department of Processing Brought-in Materials." A painting business was a "Social Public Welfare Enterprise Public Painting Company," and a haberdashery was the "Believers' Public Sale Department of Clothing." All these claimed the name of "*Kyōkai*" because they practised that life is religion.

In the case of the "Social Public Welfare Enterprise, Second Group of Construction Assistants" the logic was that a construction assistant was "a churchman" who promoted the public welfare through his work.

### The last days of Chi-kyō

It was in 1947 and 1948 that this strange organization flourished.

After that, there occurred disturbances within the group

due to the fact that persons of the organization were found guilty of violations of economic regulations. In addition, public opinion aroused from a nightmare the people who had been influenced by "the Great Master of Teaching." As a result, many of the members took off the signs of "*Kyōdan*" or "*Kyōkai*," and his power suddenly declined.

The remaining members of the group could not get the authentication at the time of the enforcement of the Religious Juridical Persons Law.

This organization was the most noticeable example for abusing the freedom of religion.

### The new religions' excessive missionary work

It was quite natural for the public opinion severely to disdain the "*Kyōdan*" abusing the laws in this way. At the same time the excessive missionary work of many new religions was made the focus of bitter criticism.

Rumors were very often heard that the new religions made the believers too enthusiastic about visiting churches or meeting places and therefore business could not get along, that the guidance given to believers was too forceful and aimed at mass production of new followers.

Especially large religious organizations, such as Reiyū-kai, Risshō Kōsei-kai, PL Kyōdan, Seichō-no-Ie, Sekai-kyūsei-kyō and others, had sometimes to meet such attacks which not always were based on real conditions.

Behind the attacks was the general tendency to make a great fuss about trivial things. This tendency came from a lack of understanding of, or prejudice against the new religions or,



as in the case of Makoto Kyōdan, from the silence kept on the side of the organization and the insistence of the other party. This tendency very often impressed the world with the overzealous missionary efforts of the new religions, and there were indeed some questions about the ways how the new religions found their followers.

Some of the new religions which had obtained freedom in its true sense for the first time at the termination of war acquired hundred thousands or millions of believers only in several years. Within these religious organizations which were growing so suddenly a great enthusiasm was alive.

The fact that in such cases too great enthusiasm sometimes drives people to overdo themselves in speech and activity is a phenomenon almost always seen when not only new religions but also all religions make rapid progress.

It is true that in the missionary effort of the new religions during the time of the Occupation excessive proselytizing was perceived to some extent following the rapid progress, and the leaders of the religious organizations were given much material for reconsideration.

### The Union of the New Religious Organizations of Japan

The fact that the *Shin-Nihon-Shūkyōdantai-Rengōkai* (Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan (abbr. *Shin-shūren*), the first formal federation of the new religious organizations, was established in the fall of 1951, is an important event in the history of these religions.

By that time the established religious organizations had individually organized the Sectarian Shinto Federation, the Japan

Buddhist Association and the Japan Christian Association, and in addition to these three Associations and the Shrine Association, the Japan Religions League was established. The League worked for protecting the common interests, including the negotiations with GHQ and various government offices.

On the contrary, the new religious organizations were completely isolated from each other and had no formal association of this kind.

This was quite inconvenient and disadvantageous. If they had an association, they could defend themselves jointly when attacked from the outside, and negotiations with government offices could be done very conveniently. However, as they had scarcely a common basis and each of them had a unique doctrine and history, they had passed several years in the postwar days without a strong organ worthy of being publicly recognized as the formal association but some associations on a small scale.

However, when the end of the Occupation was coming near and the Religious Juridical Persons Law was established in place of the Religious Corporations Ordinance, the necessity of founding an association was more and more keenly felt. For, the system of establishing a religious corporation by a report in accordance with the Religious Corporations Ordinance was switched over to the system of authentication. Therefore, it was judged that the standpoint of the new religions was quite disadvantageous unless they established an association in order to negotiate with the government.

Just at that time, Mr. William P. Woodard, who was in charge of drafting the Religious Juridical Persons Law in

Religions and Cultural Resources Division, GHQ, and in close contact with all religious organizations, advised Mr. Miki, Head of PL Kyōdan, that the new religions also would better establish an association.

This was a timely help. Taking advantage of his advice, in August, 1951, the five organizations of PL Kyōdan, Risshō Kōsei-kai, Sekai-kyūsei-kyō, Seichō-no-Ie and Ishin-kai established *Shin-Shukyōdantai-Rengōkai* (Union of the New Religious Organizations). Before that, the leaders of Tensū-kyō, Ananai-kyō, Shūyōdan-hōsei-kai, Tenshindō, Ishin-kai, Seichō-no-Ie and others had already established the "Preparatory Society for the Establishment of the New Religions Association" which could be said a social organ of the people of new religions. In October of the same year, both were amalgamated into the "Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan."

The affiliated organizations numbered 24 in the beginning (as of 1961, 76). The first chairman of the board of directors was Mr. Tokuchika Miki (PL Kyōdan), secretary general was Mr. Shūten Ōishi.

People were sneering at the birth of this new organization. Describing it as "a meeting of deities," many people thought that "as a gathering of the newly established religions with strong sectarian selfishness, they must part with one another after some quarrel before long."

However, the new religions had started for the first time something formally recognized as an association. Furthermore, this association was affiliated with the Japan Religions League in April of the next year. Since then the position of chairman of the board of directors of the League was to be assumed

by the chairman of the board of directors of the Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan in turn with the representatives of the Japan Buddhist Association, the Sectarian Shinto Federation, the Japan Christian Association and the Shrine Association.

This was an epoch-making event at that time ; for the new religions which were looked down upon by many people of the established religions were to be treated on the same level as the established religions.

Nevertheless, this did not mean that the antipathy of the established religions against the new religions was softened. However, the new religions had already grown up in such a way that their affiliation with the Japan Religions League had to be recognized in spite of the feelings on the side of the established religions.

## ENACTMENT OF THE RELIGIOUS JURIDICAL PERSONS LAW AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF JAPAN

The enactment of the Religious Juridical Persons Law was a grave problem in the latter period of the Occupation. The Religious Corporations Ordinance which was enacted soon after the termination of the war was a law of great significance which largely contributed to the establishment of religious freedom. But the Ministry of Education planned to revise this law and often demanded from GHQ the permission to do so soon after the time when this law came into effect.

One reason for a revision of this law was advanced by the sects of Buddhism and Shinto which had been subject to great

damage because of the independence of all sects in accordance with the Religious Corporations Ordinance. They thought a revision of this law would help to check further damage. The second reason was the severe public criticism of the new religions which were springing up in succession without any control. Vices requiring that they should be controlled by some means or other were strong even within the religious world, not to speak of the worlds of politics and the press.

Religions and Cultural Resources Division of GHQ with Dr. W. K. Bunce as its chief, however, did not agree to the requests of religious organizations to revise the law.

This was because Religions and Cultural Resources Division thought that either any limitation of secession and independence or any restraint put on the establishment of a new religion was running counter to the freedom of religion.

While these arguments were repeated between GHQ and the Ministry of Education, schisms and secessions never ceased and criticisms of the new religions became stronger.

Various happenings in the new religions which were avidly picked up by mass media — the “lynch” case of Makoto Kyōdan, the cases of tax evasion in Sekai-kyūsei-kyō and Reiyūkai, various cases in connection with Kōdō-chi-kyō, the unending reports of excessive proselytizing, etc., gave the best materials to the advocates of revising the Religious Corporations Ordinance. The condition was developing in favor of the Ministry of Education. Especially, the appearance of Kōdō-chi-kyō which abused the blind points of the Religious Corporations Ordinance decided the fate of this law.

Since the existence of this organization became an issue,

the Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education made detailed research on the actual condition. It was said that Mr. Yoshio Shinohara, the third chief of the section after Messrs. Kōichi Yoshida and Shigeru Fukuda in the postwar days, determined to accelerate the revision of the law. He even put his position at stake when, aware of the actual condition of the organization, he went to recommend to the Ministry of Education the revision of the law with a written resignation in his pocket.

### **The termination of the Occupation coming near**

In addition to this situation, another condition favorable to the advocates of revision became apparent.

In the beginning of 1948, the time of the recovery of independence of Japan came to be discussed. Together with this, the problem of how to deal with the so-called "Potsdam Imperial Ordinances," i.e., those emergency ordinances issued immediately after the termination of the war, arose.

Those Imperial ordinances were destined to become null and void when the Occupation ended because they had been enacted without deliberation in the Diet. The Religious Corporations Ordinance was one of them.

Accordingly, it was thought necessary to make new laws concerning religions before the independence which were to replace the Religious Corporations Ordinance after the recovery of independence.

### **Drafting of the Religious Juridical Persons Law began**

Encouraged by this change of the situation, the Ministry of

Education requested again from GHQ the permission to enact a new law mainly on the ground that the Religious Corporations Ordinance was to become null and void with the termination of the Occupation and secondarily because of the problems of secession and the new religions.

However, GHQ still kept a negative attitude on the ground that there was the provision of Article 34 of the Civil Law (An association or a foundation with rites, religion, charity, science, art and other public interests which does not aim at profit-making may be made into a corporation with the permission of the competent authority), so that even when a new law was not made suddenly, the problem of incorporation of a religious organization was to be settled in the future.

The Ministry of Education, perceiving that a frontal attack alone could not move GHQ, adopted some clever tactics.

Taking advantage of the fact that GHQ was always saying, "Importance is attached to the public opinion in the religious world," the Ministry of Education mobilized the Japan Religions League and made it propose the forceful demand for a new law before independence.

It was the same method by which the Ministry of Education had directed public opinion in the religious world when GHQ intended to abolish the Religious Affairs Section.

Through this interference of the Religions League GHQ had lost the reason for opposition against the new law.

Then Religions and Cultural Resources Division approved the drafting of the law at last in October, 1949. Section Chief Bunce appointed Mr. W. P. Woodard of the same section, who had a career of twenty years' staying in Japan in the prewar

days as the secretary of the headquarters of the Congregational Church, the Special Project Officer. He was to deal with the problem.

### Storm of secession assaulted

Drafting of the Religious Juridical Persons Law was started in this way. However, when the enactment of this new law was reported, a least expected confusion took place in religious circles, especially among Buddhists. Schisms and secessions began to take place without end.

This was because a rumour was spread that when the Religious Juridical Persons Law was enacted schisms and secessions would become difficult. It was said that the people of the Religious Affairs Section were quite worried about the reports of schisms and independence coming in one after the other.

As already mentioned, in January of that year, from Konkō-kyō, which had a household disturbance for a long time, Tenchi-konkō-kyō of the former chief abbot, Mr. Iekuni Konkō, was branched off.

According to the leaders of Konkō-kyō, Mr. Iekuni had shown not a sign of becoming independent immediately before it. He hurried up to enforce the secession for fear of losing the chance of schism when he heard the rumour, "When the Juridical Persons Law is enacted . . . ."

Because of the same rumor, for the Buddhist sects that year was a year of unrest and confusion.

The number of sects and denominations which had been registered as religious corporations with the Ministry of Edu-



cation under the Religious Corporations Ordinance in April, 1951, when the Religious Juridical Persons Law came into effect, amounted to 720. The following shows the increase by years: 44 in 1945; 151 at the end of 1946; 217 at the end of 1947; 301 at the end of 1948; 406 at the end of 1949; 593 at the end of 1950. The number of increase from 1950 to the beginning of 1951 far surpassed that of 1946.

It is imaginable how much suspicion and fear the revision of the Religious Corporations Ordinance produced.

### Drafting had a difficult sailing

Meanwhile, the drafting of the Juridical Persons Law was proceeding, but the process was not necessarily pacific.

There was an almost unbridgeable gap between the GHQ authorities, who intended to carry out the thoroughgoing separation of state and church, and the Ministry of Education, which desired to recover as much as possible the power of supervision over religious organizations, with public opinion clamoring for the restraint of schism and some kind of control of the new religions as the background.

The first draft proposed by the Ministry of Education met with a setback in the preamble. It read: "This law aims at securing the social status of religious organizations on the foundation of religious freedom because they practise dissemination of doctrine, perform ceremonies and contribute to public welfare." It put the purpose of the law in protecting religious organizations and in promoting their contribution to social welfare. Against this, GHQ refused the approval insisting that, "The social status of religious organizations should not be

determined by the Government and it is doubtful that all the religions are necessarily contributing to social welfare. The purpose of the law should be limited to the maintenance of property of religious organizations."

Such being the case concerning the purpose of the law, it was natural that there were many clashes of opinions with regard to details of the draft, not to speak of the fundamental principles.

The GHQ authorities suggested to have discussions with representatives of the religious world about the way the Religious Juridical Persons Law should be formulated, but the Ministry of Education refused this on the ground that, "It is not permitted to discuss the law with outsiders until the draft is completed."

Therefore, GHQ took measures to hold round-table talks with men of religion, lawyers and others at various places under the sponsorship of Religions and Cultural Resources Division and at the same time improved thoroughly the original draft proposed by the Ministry of Education.

From the end of 1949 to the fall of the next year, as many as 42 round-table talks were held. However, the opinions stated by men of religion at these meetings seemed to give the GHQ authorities serious disappointment.

Their opinions were concentrated on only two points, namely, to protect the privilege of tax-exemption, and to control the newly established religions. Not a single constructive opinion as to how to bring the spirit of religious freedom into the new law was heard.

Moreover, to the intention of GHQ which was to give the

power of authentication for all religious juridical persons to the prefectural governors regardless of sects, denominations, shrines, temples and churches, the religious organizations replied that it was desirable for the power of authentication of sects or denominations to be given to the Minister of Education.

When Special Project Officer Woodard heard this at a meeting of Okayama he said, "I could not believe that everybody preferred taking the trouble to go and negotiate with the Ministry of Education at Tokyo to getting authentication at the prefectural government office at Okayama." The deep-rooted thought of power-worship imbued in Japanese men of religion and even grown into their instinct was only astonishing to the Americans.

### **Establishment of the Religious Juridical Persons Law and effectuation of the peace treaty**

The Government's side, although because of the strong opposition of GHQ it could not get what it had expected with regard to the restraint of schism and the control of new religions, could largely recover the power of interference with religious organizations by grasping the right of authentication.

The main difference between the Religious Corporations Ordinance and the Religious Juridical Persons Law is in this that the establishment of a religious juridical person was switched over from the report-system to the authentication-system.

From the viewpoint of the separation of church and state, which GHQ aimed at, this meant a big retreat.

The confusion in the religious world of the postwar days

was so great and those who abused religious freedom were so numerous that GHQ, which had shown a very strict attitude with regard to the separation of church and state, had reluctantly to admit its retreat.

In short, "the freedom of religion" in our country was not yet ripe.

The Religious Juridical Persons Law passed the Diet in March, 1951, and was promulgated on April 3.

It may be said that by this the confusion in the religious world came to an end at once.

In September of the same year, the US-Japanese peace treaty was concluded in San Francisco and Japan recovered her independence in April, 1952, after an interval of seven years.

"The Occupation Age," which had introduced the freedom of religion to our country and had brought about a revolutionary change in the religious world, had come to an end.

## THE RELIGIOUS WORLD AFTER THE RECOVERY OF INDEPENDENCE

### Rehabilitated Shrine Shinto

In conclusion, let us touch briefly on the situation of the religious world after the recovery of independence.

What attracts our attention first is the fact that the shrine world which regained life in the latter period of the Occupation is becoming more and more vigorous.

As if symbolizing the revival of Shrine Shinto, the 59th dedication of the new shrine buildings of the Grand Shrines of Ise, which is customarily observed every twenty years but

had been postponed because of the war, was observed in October, 1953. The costs for rebuilding the shrines amounted to 700 million Yen.

There was some criticism that the funds had been collected "half compulsorily with the help of the bureaucratic system and the boss-system of towns and villages," but it was really an epoch-making dedication ceremony worthy of the new democratic system; it had been accomplished only with monetary contributions of the people.

Jingūkōgakkan which had been abolished under the Shinto Directive was rebuilt as a private university with a strong backing of the political and economic worlds.

The rehabilitation from war damage of famous shrines, including Atsuta Shrine and Meiji Shrine, was already completed, and many shrines are again crowded with visitors and sightseers. Also the management of the shrines is going to be stabilized.

Needless to say, there are not a few shrines famous in the past which were left behind in the stream of rehabilitation because of the small number of *ujiko* in comparison with the rank of the shrine (there is even a shrine which used to be a Government Grand Shrine with only one hundred and some tens of *ujiko* families and no sightseer visits there), or because of the unfavorable location or because of the lack of managing ability of the chief priest.

However, in view of the great blow, material and spiritual, to the shrine world caused by the defeat in war, it is no exaggeration to say that the speed of the rehabilitation of the shrines is surprising.

### Christianity requiring constitutional improvement

Compared with the new life seen in the shrine world, the small progress made by Christianity after the Christian boom is remarkable.

Although hundred years have passed since the reintroduction of Christianity in the last days of the Tokugawa Government and aid in various forms was received from overseas, the total of the believers of the denominations of Christianity is a little over 652,000, or less than 1% of the whole population of Japan according to the statistics as of the end of 1958.

This cannot but be said a very poor result when compared with the fact that Christianity at the time of the civil war of Sekigahara (T.N. 1600 A.D., after winning the battle, the Tokugawa established their Shogunate) had more than 600,000 believers, or over 3% of the population, and this only fifty years since the start of missionary work under much harder conditions. Catholicism is slowly extending its influence, but almost all the churches are occupied by ladies of good families.

The Protestant denominations gave a strong stimulus to the religious world by adopting an up-to-date method of evangelism. Especially the missionary meetings which utilized music, such as the Lacour Music Mission Group or the Christian Crusade (at Osaka in 1959, at Tokyo in 1961), attracted many people.

However, almost all the people only became intoxicated by the mood for a while but did not become converted. The churches in the present days are not strong enough to retain the people whom they have attracted at great pains.

It is thought that it is necessary for both Catholicism and Protestantism to thoroughly improve their mission methods in order to disseminate their gospel to the populace in general.

It is also a sorrowful fact that the opposition and struggles between the Eastern and the Western camps are reflecting on the Christian world in various forms. The internal troubles of Nihon Harisutosu Orthodox Church are a good example to illustrate this fact.

This denomination, famous for its *Nikorai-dō* at Surugadai, which since its establishment in Japan had belonged to the Russian Patriarchate in Moscow, cut its ties with Moscow in 1946 under pressure from the Occupation and affiliated with the Independent Autonomous Church in America.

However, within the Church there was a group which was strongly opposed to this arrangement and became the cause of internal trouble. In 1957, the Moscow Patriarchate took back three churches belonging to Nihon Harisutosu Orthodox Church and established a "Japanese Diocese." This was possible only because the political rivalry between America and Russia had been allowed to enter the Church.

In May, 1961, shortly after the revision of the Japanese-American Security Pact had provoked cruel struggles in Japan, the Tokyo Christian Crusade was held by the Japan Christian Conference and others with the collaboration of World Vision, an American organization which aids overseas mission work in a super-denominational way for 15,000 independent churches in America, which cannot carry on overseas propagation individually. This Crusade was severely attacked in and out of churches on the ground that it was American anti-Communist

propaganda. This is still fresh in our memory.

Under these conditions, among the Protestant denominations a tendency is being promoted to become independent through gradually separating from the American churches.

In America, too, the tendency is being strengthened to stimulate the independence of Japanese churches by a gradual decrease of aid to them.

It may be said that the Japanese Christian churches are standing now at a serious parting point.

### Still stagnant Buddhist world

The established Buddhist sects are still in a stagnant state.

Although the All Japan Buddhist Society was created to develop the Buddhist movement, this movement ended in a mere gesture. The lost power of Buddhism has not yet revived. Although the threat of Christianity has passed, the foundations of Buddhism are being shaken by the missionary activity of the new religions. Especially the quick advance of Nichiren-shōshū-Sōkagakkai is causing great damage and unrest to temples at various places.

The financial condition of temples is generally in distress except at some sightseeing spots. These beautiful temples profit from the crowds of sightseers, but their secularization is intolerable. This is a problem they have in common with the shrine world. With the arrival of the sightseeing boom, the famous shrines and temples such as the Grand Shrine of Ise, Hiei-zan, Eihei-ji and others which hitherto had kept a religious atmosphere have been rapidly secularized.

For the Buddhist world the year 1961 was the year to dis-



play their latent power. In this year, with the arrival of springtime, the streets of Kyoto were alive with the great anniversaries of the death of two sectarian founders.

At Chion-in, which observed the 750th anniversary of the death of Founder Hōnen, 270,000 visitors gathered, and taking this chance of the anniversary, the Homba-Jōdo-shū and Jōdo-shū, which had been separated in the postwar days, were united again.

At Higashi-Honganji, which celebrated the 700th anniversary of Founder Shinran, 850,000 visitors, and at Nishi-Honganji 520,000 gathered. The strength of the power latent in these sects surprised the religious world.

Moreover, at about this time, "the Zen boom" which had risen together with the Japan boom in America some years ago was reimported to Japan, and among young men the practice of Zen meditation became popular. It has also become customary for leading companies to utilize Zen temples for the training of new employees.

Buddhism thus gives the impression of retaining latently a great power. However, it is desirable for each sect of Buddhism to get rid of the long stagnancy and to become living religious organizations.

### Weighty Tenri and Konkō

With regard to Sectarian Shinto, while Tenri-kyō extended its influence again since the final period of the Occupation and built a gigantic "*Oyasato-yakata*" (lit. Parental Home Mansion; the cost of construction, 23 billion Yen) at a corner of the precincts of the headquarters in commemoration of the

70th anniversary of the passing of the foundress (1956) to demonstrate its real capacity as the number-one sect, another leading sect, Konkō-kyō, completed in 1959 a super-modern ceremony hall with a capacity of 15,000 to display a part of its real influence.

However, there were few topics in Sectarian Shinto except the activity of the two sects and the unique peace movement of Ōmoto which did not like to be called a new religion and affiliated with the Association of Sectarian Shinto.

### The new religions standing at a turning point

The flood of new religions went in the direction of rearrangement in the final period of the Occupation. At the time of the enactment of the Religious Juridical Persons Law this tendency especially became strong and bubble-like organizations by and by disappeared, while the status of the leading organizations, including PL Kyōdan, Sekai-kyūsei-kyō, Seichō-no-Ie Kyōdan, Risshō Kōsei-kai, began to show a steady stabilization.

When suspicious eyes were turned to Risshō Kōsei-kai, which was involved in a problem about a piece of land in 1956, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* made strong and persistent attacks against Kōsei-kai which appeared for a long time in the *Yomiuri*, every day and on a large scale. Yet, as the result no big damage was done to Kōsei-kai. The organization was strong enough to check the attack of this leading newspaper.

With the remarkably gorgeous building for its headquarters which Seichō-no-Ie constructed at the cost of 300 million Yen in 1954, many religious organizations have built gigantic shrines or temples in succession. Sekai-kyūsei-kyō built many

institutes including a hall and an art museum at Atami, and Myōdō-kai, Myōchi-kai, Shūyōdan-hōsei-kai and others also built modern assembly halls. PL Kyōdan is now constructing a big building for the headquarters on a hilly land as large as three million *tsubo* (at Habikino, Osaka Prefecture). At Risshō Kōsei-kai the "Daiseidō" (Great Sacred Hall) is under construction at the huge cost of three billion yen.

Many new religious organizations have ~~strengthened their~~ constitutions and systematized their doctrine in a way quite different from that of ten years ago.

However, it may be said all the more that each sect is standing at a turning point. For, the bigger the institution becomes, the greater is the fear of secularization of the organization, and the more the doctrine is systematized, the easier the belief becomes formalized.

The various religious organizations which have attained today's grandeur after overcoming the difficulties of the post-war days are now confronting the very serious problem whether they can keep the charm of a new religion and at the same systematize their doctrine, build big shrines or temples and strengthen their constitution, or whether they will gradually lose their freshness to become established and skeletal.

### Is religious freedom being observed?

While each religion experienced its ups and downs in Japanese society after the recovery of independence, several important problems appeared in the religious world. All of them were problems in connection with the "freedom of religion."

Nearly twenty years have already passed since the time when

freedom of religion was unexpectedly granted as a result of the Occupation policy at the time of the defeat in war. However, freedom of religion in our country is still unripe and has not been rooted in the Japanese soil.

The bureaucracy is still possessed of the idea of control of religion, that religion should be brought up in a right way under the supervision of the government. On the other hand, even men of religion, not to speak of the people in general, do not exactly recognize that freedom of religion is the source of all freedoms and forms the foundation of human rights. For this reason, movements are made in various forms to abolish the principle of separation of church and state and to restrain the freedom of religion.

The government and public offices which had been completely deprived of the power of supervision and regimentation of religious organizations by the abolition of the Religious Organizations Law, recovered a small part of supervision by the establishment of the Religious Juridical Persons Law. Even after that they often showed movements for strengthening the power of supervision by revising the law.

On the other hand, there are not a few religious organizations which are endangering the freedom of religion through their activity. Since the Religious Corporations Ordinance was replaced by the Religious Juridical Persons Law, religious organizations abusing the freedom of religion are not seen any longer, but the established Buddhist sects are earnestly desiring that secessions and independence should be regulated by law. In the shrine world, the view that shrines are not religion is being brought up again, and many people fear that Shrine

Shinto might step out again on the way of a state religion.

Two problems to which greatest attention should be paid for the future of religious freedom in Japan, are the problem of reform of the Grand Shrine and the problem offered by the advance of Sōkagakkai.

### Reform of the Grand Shrine

The shrine world, harboring a strong dissatisfaction on the ground that the disposition taken in the postwar days about shrines under the Shinto Directive disregards the essential character of Shrine Shinto and the tradition of the Japanese people, is engaged in a movement to make the public recognize the assertion that shrines conduct traditional rites and have a character different from that of religions in general.

Especially in 1959, it published "Opinion on the Reform of the Grand Shrine" in the name of Mr. Naotake Satō, President of the Association of Supporters of the Grand Shrine of Ise, and started the movement for the nationalization of the Grand Shrine to attract the attention of various circles.

This publication mentioned especially two points : (1) Because the Grand Shrine of Ise is the shrine whose rites are presided over by the Emperor and where the sacred mirror bestowed by the Imperial Ancestress is being kept, it is not appropriate for the Grand Shrine of Ise, a private corporation, to possess the main shrine building, its site and everything belonging to it. It should be nationalized. (2) From the viewpoint of the Emperor's position under the Constitution, the relation between the Imperial Ancestress and the Imperial throne is inseparable.

The Liberal Democratic Party showed itself quite in agreement with this opinion and the proposal seemed to be going to be accepted. However, strong opposition was made by the religious world, especially by Christian denominations, which regarded the reform of the Grand Shrine as a first step to the revival of State Shinto, and by the new religions and others, which regarded the proposed reform as running counter to the Constitution.

The shrines' side through Mr. Bumpei Hamagi, the member of the House of Representatives elected from Mie Prefecture, in October, 1960, proposed a written question asking the view of the Government concerning "the treatment of the sacred mirror enshrined in the Grand Shrine of Ise."

Premier Hayato Ikeda answered to this question to the following effect :

- (1) The divine mirror enshrined in the Grand Shrine is the *Yata-no-kagami* bestowed by the Imperial Ancestress. This should be understood as falling under "the historical articles to be transmitted together with the Imperial throne" referred to in Article 7 of the Imperial Household Economic Law.
- (2) The divine mirror of Ise cannot be interpreted as being the property of the Grand Shrine in view of its origin and history. I think that the Grand Shrine cannot dispose of it at will disregarding its true character.

Thus the theoretical basis for the nationalization of the Grand Shrine was publicly recognized. The problem of reform of the Grand Shrine is again in such a state that no prediction as to its future can be made.

As far as the special position of the Grand Shrine is con-

cerned, the assertion of the shrine's side, needless to say, in many respects is supported by the "national sentiment." Nevertheless, if the plan of the shrine's side were realized, namely, that the Grand Shrine is nationalized as the place for the Emperor's State worship and at the same time the shrine continues its religious activity as a religious juridical person, the system of separation of church and state would be broken and a big obstacle would be put to the freedom of religion.

To the future of the problem of the Grand Shrine reform most careful attention should be paid. Connected with this problem is the movement to nationalize Yasukuni Shrine which is being carried on ardently by the Association of War-bereaved Families.

### **Mammoth growing and advance into the political world of Sōkagakkai**

The quick extension of influence and advance into the political world of Nichiren-shōshū-Sōkagakkai is also casting a dark shadow on the future of the religious world.

The development of Sōkagakkai was one of the most important events in the religious world after the termination of the Occupation. In 1951, in the latter period of the Occupation, Sōkagakkai led by president Jōsei Toda started a big march to attack the other religions in order to "save Japan and Asia." The number of its members at that time was said to be two or three thousand, and this unknown organization became at once noted for its propagation activity with coercion and threat. All the world attacked the Gakkai as "a violent religion," but the Gakkai developed the method of provoking

discussions on belief disregarding the troubles of others and of propagation by half-threat and extended its influence day by day.

As early as 1957, it had grown to such an organization as to seriously threaten the Coal-miners' Labor Union which was one of the largest labor unions in Japan. At that time the Gakkai extended its influence very often to coal-mine zones which were suffering from the depression. The result was that the Coal-miners' Labor Union, which was disturbed in its solidarity of union activity by members joining the Gakkai, declared to "fight resolutely with the power of the organization."

Since then, the religious influence of Sōkagakkai is extending rapidly as shown on the graph. The use of force by the members of the Gakkai when recruiting new followers is very often observed.

The advance of the Gakkai into the political world was made very quickly. It had fifty-three candidates elected to local assemblies in 1955. With this as the beginning, there were three in the election to the House of Councillors in the next year, 270 in the local election in 1959, 6 in the election to the House of Councilors in the same year, and 9 in the election to the House of Councillors in 1962. As a result, in the House of Councilors it became the third party with 15 members. The total number of votes obtained by the candidates of the Gakkai in the national constitution during the election to the House of Councillors was as high as 2,480,000 in 1959 and 4,120,000 in 1962.

What way the Gakkai, teaching *ōbutsu-myōgō* (the union of government and Buddhism), advocating the establishment



## Reminiscences of Religion in Postwar Japan

of a national ordination-platform and contemplating to make Nichiren-shōshū the state religion, will proceed from now on? To the future of this mammoth religious organization which threatens the freedom of religion from the inside of the religious world should also be paid considerable attention.

