

The Dispute Between the Sōka Gakkai and the Nichiren Shōshū Priesthood: A Lay Revolution Against a Conservative Clergy

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The recent confrontation between the Sōka Gakkai, Japan's largest lay Buddhist organization, and the Nichiren Shōshū priesthood that erupted in 1990 revealed an interesting contrast between a reformist lay Buddhist movement and a conservative priesthood that claims the mantle of orthodoxy. The dispute also raises some meaningful questions concerning the state of religion and society in Japan. Can a lay Buddhist movement survive on its own in an increasingly secular industrial society without the active support and legitimization of a priesthood? What is the future of a priestly order that bases its authority on centuries-old traditions in a rapidly changing Japan? An even broader question concerns the role a lay Buddhist group in modern Japanese society can play and the adaptations that it must make to grow.

Nichiren Shōshū and the Sōka Gakkai share a common religious foundation that links them to Nichiren 日蓮 (1222–1282), founder of the Nichiren school of Japanese Buddhism. Nichiren Shōshū 日蓮正宗, which is one of several sects that makes up the Nichiren school, was founded when one of Nichiren's disciples, Nikkō 日興 (1246–1333) built the sect's head temple, Taiseki-ji 大石寺, near Mount Fuji. The current head priest, Abe Nikken 阿部日顕, believes that spiritual and administrative authority over Nichiren Shōshū was passed down to him through a succession of head priests dating back to Nikkō. Some Japanese religious scholars view his stance as a parallel to the Roman Catholic Church's view of the Pope as the legitimate disciple of Jesus Christ. The Sōka Gakkai was founded in the 1930s and grew rapidly after 1945 as a lay religious movement dedicated to the propagation of Nichiren Shōshū Buddhism throughout Japan and the rest of the world. Its pantheon of leaders include Makiguchi Tsunesaburō 牧口常三郎 (1871–1944), Toda

Jōsei 戸田城聖 (1900–1958), and Ikeda Daisaku 池田大作 (1928–), the current leader.¹

The key questions concerning the Sōka Gakkai and Taiseki-ji involve spiritual leadership and responsibility, the correct role of the clergy and laity, the organizational problem of a small provincial priestly order suddenly growing into a mammoth national and international community of believers, and a power struggle between two strong leaders. The issues are very complex. The priesthood claims that it is the sole custodian of religious authority and dogma, while the Sōka Gakkai leadership argues that the sacred writings of Nichiren, not the priesthood, represent the ultimate source of authority, and that any individual with deep faith in Nichiren's teachings can gain enlightenment without the assistance of a priest. The Sōka Gakkai supports the idea that because all people have equal access to enlightenment, all people are, in effect, priests.

Although the Sōka Gakkai and Nichiren Shōshū are legally two distinct organizations with their own leaders, the two groups worked together in general harmony through 1990. Where they differed was in their perception of the Sōka Gakkai's role. While the priesthood claims that the Sōka Gakkai is a subsidiary organization working on behalf of Nichiren Shōshū, the Sōka Gakkai has always regarded itself as a truly independent organization that has its own direct spiritual mandate from Nichiren. The result has been occasional tension between the two groups since World War II.²

The fact that the two organizations are separate was until recently a legal nicety since they share the same goal—the growth of Nichiren Shōshū Buddhism. In the words of Tamaru Noriyoshi, a leading scholar of Japanese religion:

I regard the two organizations as something like Siamese twins, virtually fused in a vital area. Any measures to separate them would require delicate surgery painful to both and extremely risky to their survival if not well done. They have definitely helped each other until now. Until the early twentieth century, Nichiren Shōshū was a small, weak sect with no more than forty-odd temples. By 1931, according to extant records, there were 116 temples, 32 churches, and 538 teachers. Even then, it was by no means

¹ Ikeda formally resigned as Sōka Gakkai president in 1979, but he remains as the movement's key spiritual leader and spokesman. The current president of the Sōka Gakkai is Akiya Einosuke 秋谷栄之助.

² An early moment of discord between the priesthood and the Sōka Gakkai occurred during World War II. The leaders of the Sōka Gakkai, including Makiguchi and Toda, were imprisoned by the Japanese government in 1943 due to their refusal to enshrine a talisman of the Sun Goddess Tenshō Daijin. When Taiseki-ji was more agreeable to demands for enshrinement, Makiguchi and Toda angrily rebuffed Taiseki-ji. Makiguchi died in prison and Toda was not released until July, 1945.

a powerful sect. Today, by comparison, it is much bigger in numbers of temples, clergy, and lay membership.³ There can be no doubt that the change has occurred as a result of donations from Sōka Gakkai membership. So in that sense, Nichiren Shōshū owes its growth to Sōka Gakkai, and that inevitably gives rise to a structural contradiction. (NAKANO, IKADO, and TAMARU 1992, p. 6)

Toda Jōsei outlined his view of the role of the Sōka Gakkai and Nichiren Shōshū in the late 1940s:

A lay organization is necessary as a buffer to protect the head temple from all direct responsibilities and trouble that might arise during the campaign to win new members to the faith.

A lay organization is essential to persevere boldly in a total membership campaign that can be conducted while protecting the head temple from the outside.

The priesthood's leadership methods and ways of conducting religious affairs in the past will probably be insufficient to bring the True Law to the ordinary people of today and tomorrow. Furthermore, the clergy is too limited in number to provide leadership for large numbers of believers. To compensate for these weaknesses, a large lay organization is essential.

An organization of lay believers is the most modern and ideal means to carry true Buddhism into all phases of society. Furthermore, such an organization can naturally and efficiently accelerate the pace at which the true faith can be carried to the world. (quoted in IKEDA 1976, vol. 3, p. 42)

The actual crisis began on 13 December 1990, when Nichiren Shōshū General Administrator Rev. Fujimoto Nichijun produced an envelope containing a tape of a speech by Ikeda Daisaku at the Thirty-Fifth Headquarters Leaders Meeting on 16 November 1990, where Ikeda allegedly made insulting comments about the priesthood. Taiseki-ji claimed that Ikeda had questioned head priest Abe Nikken's integrity, indicating that the chief priest was putting his own power ahead of the best interests of his followers. Ikeda also supposedly dismissed Nikken's teachings as arcane dogma (*ASAHI SHIMBUN JAPAN ACCESS*, 18 November 1991, pp. 1-2). Fujimoto requested written answers to questions concerning the speech, while Sōka Gakkai president Akiya suggested a discussion instead. On 17 December Taiseki-ji sent a questionnaire to Sōka Gakkai headquarters requesting a written response within one week. The Sōka Gakkai responded to the questions in writing on 23 December and again

³ Journalists estimate Sōka Gakkai membership in Japan in 1992 to be between eight and ten million. The Sōka Gakkai claims 1.26 million members outside Japan in approximately 120 foreign countries and territories.

requested a dialogue. On 26 December, Fujimoto sent a note to the Sōka Gakkai stating that the priesthood “considers the Sōka Gakkai’s December 23rd letter indicative of a lack of will to provide written answers to the questions.” On 27 December 1990, the Nichiren Shōshū Council (*shūkai* 宗会) convened a meeting where it revised the Nichiren Shōshū Rules (*shūki* 宗規), with the result that Ikeda and the other Sōka Gakkai leaders were relieved of their posts as heads of all Nichiren Shōshū lay organizations (*sōkōto* 総講頭) and Nichiren Shōshū senior lay representatives (*daikōto* 大講頭). Fujimoto also claimed that henceforth punitive actions could be taken against lay believers who criticized the Nichiren Shōshū chief administrator (*kanchō* 管長, the head priest) (*SŌKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL* 1991, vol. 1, pp. 3–5).

The crisis continued to escalate until 8 November 1991, when the Sōka Gakkai received a letter from Taiseki-ji ordering the dissolution of Sōka Gakkai. The Gakkai rejected the request and attacked the priesthood, denouncing its “appalling lack of respect for the faithful” (*ASAHI SHIMBUN JAPAN ACCESS*, 18 November 1991, p. 2). At the end of November 1991, Taiseki-ji formally excommunicated the Sōka Gakkai and its affiliated international chapters. The head temple urged individual members to resign their Gakkai membership and to devote their full loyalty and attention to separate temples belonging to the sect (*THE JAPAN TIMES*, 1 December 1991) A war of words between Taiseki-ji and the Sōka Gakkai has continued since that time.

Taiseki-ji’s Stance

The Taiseki-ji priesthood charged that the Sōka Gakkai, in forgetting its status as a lay group, had both attacked and subverted the authority of the head temple. It further accused the Sōka Gakkai of not being the clean and honorable lay organization that it pretends to be and cited a number of occasions where it was said that Sōka Gakkai officials had allegedly engaged in tax evasion and other questionable financial practices (*ASAHI EVENING NEWS* and *THE JAPAN TIMES*, 8–10 November and 30 November 1991).

It is apparent that the head temple felt that the Sōka Gakkai had become too powerful and that it was eroding both the authority of the chief priest and the functions of the general priesthood. In effect, it feared that Ikeda and his aides had seized the prerogatives and authority of the church and were becoming the de facto leaders of Nichiren Shōshū, thus rendering the priesthood irrelevant. The words “Ikeda Sect” (*Ikeda-shū*) and “Ikeda-ism” (*Ikeda-kyō*) are often bandied about, reflecting the widely held perception that Ikeda is seen to have held pretensions to a position of ultimate power for some time (ASTLEY 1992, p. 172). The implication is that Sōka Gakkai members wrongly seek religious instruc-

tion and leadership from Ikeda rather than Taiseki-ji. The excommunication of Sōka Gakkai represents an attempt by Taiseki-ji to regain authority over believers it feels it was losing to Ikeda and the Gakkai.

Abe Nikken outlined Nichiren Shōshū's stance in a lengthy article in the February 1992 issue of *Bungei shunjū*. He stated that the crisis stems from the actions of Ikeda Daisaku and other contemporary Gakkai leaders who are allegedly trying to seize full control of the church. He accused the Gakkai leadership of ignoring the proper guidance of the priesthood and of criticizing and having a hateful attitude toward the clergy. His greatest concern is that the Gakkai under Ikeda has altered the orthodox teachings of Nichiren. Nikken said that he expelled the Sōka Gakkai in order to protect the sanctity of Nichiren Shōshū Buddhism (ABE 1992, pp. 386–89).

Nikken insists that it is the priesthood that stands as the guardian and preserver of the faith and the focal point of Nichiren Shōshū, citing the direct line of succession from Nichiren to Nikkō (who established Taiseki-ji) and down through the lineage of chief priests. He also insists on the supremacy of the Three Treasures (*sanpō* 三寶) concept, in which Nichiren is the True Buddha, the Doctrine is the Three Great Secret Laws,⁴ and the priestly authority was Nikkō. Nikken feels that this amounts to vesting power and authority in the historical succession of chief priests and in the clergy as a whole (ABE 1992, pp. 387–88). He denounces the Sōka Gakkai assertion that clergy and laity are equal and that, in effect, all men are priests.

Nikken agrees that the first two presidents of the Sōka Gakkai, Makiguchi Tsunesaburō and Toda Jōsei, cooperated closely with the head temple in the expansion of the faith. Makiguchi and Toda did not press their own views, but, rather, defended the Buddhist Law. The situation changed radically, however, with the leadership of Ikeda Daisaku beginning in the early 1960s. Nikken accuses Ikeda of being a virtual dictator who claims absolute authority and demands the total loyalty of Nichiren Shōshū lay believers. Ikeda is charged with having inaugurated a full religious revolution that subverts both the authority and role of the priesthood and that gives Ikeda and the Sōka Gakkai the power to interpret religious dogma. The chief priest likens Ikeda to the king of the evil world, a dangerous enemy of Buddhism whose secret goal is to destroy the church and Nichiren Shōshū. That, according to Nikken, is why Ikeda was purged – to save the church. Nikken labels Ikeda a power-hungry monster with only a superficial understanding of Buddhism,

⁴ The Three Great Secret Laws (*sandaihihō* 三大秘法) consist of the Object of Worship (in Nichiren Shōshū, the *daigo honzon* 大御本尊, a *mandala* said to have been inscribed by Nichiren in 1279); the *daimoku* 題目 (invocation of Nammyōhō-rengē-kyō which one chants with faith in the object of worship); and the *honmon no kaidan* 本門の戒壇 (The High Sanctuary of true Buddhism where one chants the *daimoku* to the object of worship).

who built up the Sōka Gakkai to provide himself with a political and social power base. Thus, the Sōka Gakkai cannot be called a true Buddhist movement.

The priesthood summarized its position in its excommunication order:

Sōka Gakkai has become an organization which greatly vilifies Buddhist Law, which goes against the repeated mercy and guidance of the Chief Priest and the Sect, which is conspicuously changing the creed and the faith of this Sect, and which is destroying Buddhist teachings. This being the case, this sect can no longer recognize Sōka Gakkai, no matter how great its services of protection from the outside may have been in the past. . . . (quoted from Nichiren Shōshū's "Written Notification of Excommunication to Sōka Gakkai, in *AKAHATA*, 1 December 1991)

Nikken is also critical of the Sōka Gakkai's creation of the Kōmeitō and its active involvement in Japanese politics. He insists that the Kōmeitō has subverted the teachings of Nichiren and that it has been involved in a number of scandals (ABE 1992, pp. 387–98).

Parallels with the Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation

Ikado Fujio, a noted scholar of Japanese religion, finds parallels between the Nichiren Shōshū–Sōka Gakkai dispute and the historical differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants concerning the role of the priesthood and sources of doctrinal authority.

The Catholic church's authority is founded in the key passage in Matthew where Jesus says that "on this rock" of the apostle Peter shall the church be built. From that, the Catholic church derives the central, traditional authority of the priesthood. The other may be called the prophetic or lay minister type, as opposed to the priestly type. This is typically represented by the Marcion-Luther tradition which placed himself among people in and of this world and particularly sought the divine in his inner life. (NAKANO, IKADO, and TAMARU 1992, pp. 3–4)

Luther believed in the priesthood of all believers, in God as the source of authority, and in the capacity of all human beings to find God within themselves. The Roman Catholic Church argues that the clergy, led by the Pope, is the essential intermediary between man and God and that the Pope is the spokesman for God with ultimate authority.

According to Nakano Tsuyoshi:

Nichiren Shōshū is a historical phenomenon that developed as the system of registration in temple parishes took shape and the linkage of main-local temples became systematized in the Edo period.

... Nichiren Shōshū has a strong sense of clericalism and ... makes it absolutely clear that matters of faith are decided by the priesthood. The chief priest, whose position is based on his succession in the legitimate lineage of Nichiren, has the authority to inscribe the Gohonzon, interpret the doctrine, and decide on other religious matters. . . . One of the cardinal beliefs of the present Nichiren Shōshū is the belief that clergy and laity are bound to entrust all matters of faith and sect management to the chief priest / chief executive officer and obey his decisions. (NAKANO, IKADO, and TAMURA 1992, p. 16)

The Sōka Gakkai: Faith and Enlightenment

The Sōka Gakkai represents more of a reformist school on the question of faith and enlightenment, reflecting the traditional Kamakura era approach in which clergy and laity had different functions, but in which there was no distinction between them in terms of faith. The Gakkai emphasizes the importance of the inner self, an internal spirituality. Faith comes from within the believer.

Sōka Gakkai . . . has developed an orientation toward Buddhism that stresses, for example, an inner Buddha-nature that exists within all people and is expressed in daily life. . . . It has created a modern movement of believers which encourages each individual member to try to manifest their Buddha-nature in everyday lives. . . . The kind of faith envisioned there is not centered on ritual, but is something that grows internally and is manifested in the way one lives every day. . . .

Just here the tension between Sōka Gakkai and Nichiren Shōshū lies, and the two diverge sharply in their interpretation of being a Nichiren Buddhist. Nichiren Shōshū almost completely refuses to recognize the validity of inner ethics or individually developed faith. It continues to insist on the almost categorical priority of the Three Treasures (*sanpō*), which originally meant that Nichiren was the Buddha, the Doctrine was the Three Great Secret Laws, and the priestly authority was Nikkō. But now, Nichiren Shōshū insists that this, in sum, amounts to vesting power and authority in the historical succession of chief priests and in the clergy as a whole. The sect remains adamant in its essential view of authority, insisting that this hierarchical clerical system is the source of belief. (NAKANO, IKADO, and TAMURA 1992, p. 13)

A key point of contention concerns the way in which the faithful attain enlightenment. The Sōka Gakkai insists that enlightenment can only come through the direct actions of the believer. True devotion expressed through prayer and chanting before a Gohonzon, a loving and

respectful attitude towards other people, and sincere attempts at proselytization of the faith are all that are required. Because all people, clergy and laity, have equal opportunity for Buddhahood, priests and laymen are equal. According to Ikeda Daisaku:

The Lotus Sutra teaches a truth open to all: "All [who believe in the Lotus Sutra] will attain Buddhahood." It is a Great Law that teaches that the Buddha's wisdom benefits all living beings equally.

It is a scripture imbued with the spirit of Shakyamuni, who fought all types of discrimination and prejudice throughout his life. The rejection of equality is the rejection of the Lotus Sutra, and some go as far to say it is butchering the very soul of Buddhism.

What can we possibly say about those who are mad enough to try to bring such prejudice and discrimination into the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin, declaring that the priesthood is superior to lay followers and that only by relying on the priesthood can we attain Buddhahood? (IKEDA & WATSON 1992, p. 3)

The goal of the Sōka Gakkai is to spread the benefits of the saving powers of Nichiren Buddhism to all people everywhere. They conceive their movement as a "religious revolution, a mission imposed on us by Nichiren Daishonin to save all mankind. . . . The people of the Orient and of the world wander in need of salvation like sheep on the brink of the realms of hell and wrath. We know that only Sōka Gakkai can decide whether man shall be saved or shall perish. We have the key" (IKEDA 1977, vol. 3, p. 42). Since the movement is open to everybody, the Sōka Gakkai calls itself a "democratic movement" designed to bring happiness to all people.

The Sōka Gakkai interprets the central role of the priesthood as guiding the faith of the laity and helping them find their own enlightenment. The Gakkai, however, declares that the priesthood is the one that has moved away from the true teachings of Nichiren. According to Sōka Gakkai leaders, the priesthood has claimed the powers of enlightenment for itself and fostered the notion that nobody can be saved without priestly intervention.

The Gakkai, in a move that sounds similar to Martin Luther's denunciation of the sale of indulgences, accuses the priesthood of promising benefits for people if they offer *tōba* 塔婆.⁵ One recent Sōka Gakkai document accuses the Rev. Yasuzawa Jun'ei, chief priest of Jisshō-ji in Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture, of offering benefits through the sale of *tōba* on New Year's Day.

⁵ A *tōba* is a wooden memorial tablet offered for the deceased.

Traditionally, in what is a custom to all Japanese Buddhist sects (though it is not found in other Buddhist countries), memorial tablets were offered for the repose of the deceased on the anniversary of the person's death, during the memorial service held twice a year around the time of vernal and autumnal equinoxes honoring the "spirits" of one's ancestors. There is no basis, in either Buddhist doctrine or tradition, for Rev. Yasuzawa's assertion that tablets for the repose of the deceased should be offered on New Year's Day.

Last fall (1990), Rev. Yasuzawa . . . promoted this idea of New Year's Day *tōba* offerings by sending flyers to all registered households urging them to participate. In fact, this past New Year's Day, his campaign yielded several thousand applications for *tōba* among the laity (Each tablet requires a donation of 2,000 yen). . . .

Rev. Yasuzawa customarily urges believers to offer one *tōba* for each of their deceased ancestors instead of offering just one *tōba* for each of their ancestry as a whole, or to offer *tōba* even for deceased individuals who are not relatives. In fact, this priest has so misled members about the benefit of making *toba* offerings that some have become convinced that any problems whatsoever can be solved through making such offerings.

The truth is that Rev. Yasuzawa, through receiving members' donations, has "benefited" greatly from *tōba* offerings. Indeed, so much so that he has bought memberships at two prestigious golf clubs (in land scarce Japan, golf club memberships cost tens of millions of yen, putting them out of reach of all but the very rich). . . . We often hear reports that Nichiren Shōshū priests make a business out of religion. (SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL 1991, vol. 2, pp. 69–72)

The Sōka Gakkai charges that the Rev. Itō Shindō, chief priest of Hōraku-ji in Niihama City, Ehime Prefecture, recommends *tōba* for believers.

He is known to ask believers about their ancestors six or eight generations removed, in the hope of finding an ancestor who passed away miserably. Rev. Itō then often says: "So-and-So in your family died in great suffering. His suffering manifests itself in the lives of those descendants who are well. That is why you are suffering now. But you can cure your suffering by offering *tōba* for this particular deceased ancestor who is still obviously suffering in death."

Furthermore, to those who may have lost family members due to an accident or disaster, Rev. Itō has been known to say, "You have experienced such a mishap because you have neglected to make *tōba* offerings for the repose of your ancestors. . . ." Where in the

*Gosho*⁶ 御書 does Nichiren Daishonin state that one will become miserable if he neglects to make offerings for the repose of his ancestors? . . . It is a gross distortion . . . to say that our ancestors cannot obtain Buddhahood without *tōba* tablets being offered. (SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL 1991, vol. 2, p. 74)

Sōka Gakkai officials and many members delight in telling additional stories about the corrupt priests. One hears of instances where priests are said to have wild parties, mistresses, and a lucrative side business in the pornographic movie industry. Sōka Gakkai newspapers and magazines offer readers a flood of anti-priestly propaganda. Since Sōka Gakkai members also belong to the Nichiren Shōshū and are commonly registered at Nichiren Shōshū temples, there is an on-going struggle for the hearts and souls of the laity that forms the basis of both organizations. Without the donations and support of the common member, both organizations would perish.

Thus far, it appears that the Sōka Gakkai is winning this religious civil war. There is no indication that the Sōka Gakkai is losing many members despite appeals from the priesthood. In fact, the Sōka Gakkai states that a few “reformist” priests are backing the Gakkai cause.

One longtime member expressed the sentiments of many others when she said “We simply do not need the priests to carry on the practice of our faith. Just as Quakers in the West have survived for centuries without an organized ministry, so can we. We don’t need to visit Taiseki-ji, and communities of friends can perform funerals together. We will continue to thrive as a lay movement under the guidance of people like Ikeda-sensei.”

Sōka Gakkai leaders like President Akiya Einosuke insist that the goal of his movement is to “return Buddhism to the people.” A believer does not attain enlightenment through the priesthood, but through direct prayer and faith where Nichiren himself is the object of worship. Akiya insists that the Sōka Gakkai is much like Luther in that it is restoring Buddhism to its essence (interview with Akiya, 18 June 1992).

According to Ikeda:

In Japan, children automatically “inherit” the religion of their parents, without ever inquiring into what that religion is. This has led to the formalization of religion.

The Sōka Gakkai has broken through that formalization and respected and nourished the individual’s autonomous freedom of religion. In the background of the present issue is also a friction between the Sōka Gakkai’s commitment to the progressive spirit

⁶ The sacred writings of Nichiren.

that is essential to Buddhism, and the antiquated tradition of the priesthood. (IKEDA & WATSON 1992, p. 3)

Sōka Gakkai scholars point out that the Gakkai started out as an independent lay movement and that it will continue on as such. The inception of the reorganized postwar Gakkai came with Toda Jōsei's sudden enlightenment in prison during World War II that he had been anointed as the person to bring salvation to the people during the period of *mappō*⁷ – that he was Nichiren's personal delegate who bore the awesome responsibility of ending the misery of mankind. He rebuilt the Sōka Gakkai after the war as the main vehicle to achieve this goal. Ties with the formal structure of Nichiren Shōshū were helpful as long as the priesthood cooperated, but the priests were always regarded as an affiliated group whose value lay in their performance of such useful functions as maintaining the head temple, issuing Gohonzon, and presiding at funerals. The Gakkai considers itself to be the nerve center of Nichiren Shōshū and believes that it can continue on even without the priests. These ideas, of course, run directly counter to those of the priests, who insist that they are the key for the propagation of Nichiren Buddhism and that the Gakkai has usurped their role. Conflict between the two groups was inevitable.

Although it may take many years for the current dispute to be resolved, the Gakkai will undoubtedly continue to thrive. The key to its success is its ability to interpret traditional Buddhist concepts for a modern audience. Lay movements that directly address the needs of the common man often find a responsive cord in a nation whose people, according to a United Nations poll in the 1980s, are among the unhappiest on earth. At the same time, the Taiseki-ji priesthood has extensive wealth and could well survive a prolonged cloistered existence, but it is doubtful that it will attract many lay supporters.

The key lesson here is that lay religious movements can thrive in contemporary Japan without an organized clergy. Organized religious denominations will continue to play their traditional functions, but the new religious groups that have grown since 1945 will prosper even without the benefit of the orthodox clergy. The danger is when one tries to mix a conservative organized religious organization with a modern mass lay movement. Their goals, world views, and practices are too different to enable a permanent marriage. Each can probably survive on its own, but bringing them together may eventually lead to trouble.

⁷ The "Latter Day of the Law." *Mappō* 末法 is a medieval Buddhist concept that 2,000 years after the Buddha's death, people would forget his teachings and chaos would result. See, for example, MARRA 1988.

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