

Editors' Introduction

Ian READER and George J. TANABE, Jr.

ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY commented upon traits in Japanese religious history is the tendency for different religious traditions to find ways of accommodation that enable them to fit together within Japanese society. The tendency towards religious plurality that this produces has been widely noted in analyses of Japanese religious behavior: Japanese people in general participate in a wide variety of religious rituals and incorporate into their lives a number of religious traditions. As the saying has it, they are "born Shinto and die Buddhist," with perhaps a Christian wedding and membership in a New Religion thrown in for good measure along the way. Coupled with the widespread observation that there exists a form of a "division of labor" amongst Japanese religions in which they do not challenge each other directly (as with the Shinto/Buddhist accommodation on life-cycle rituals), there is the apparent readiness of many New Religions to avoid direct challenges to the established religions in these areas. Such behavior has helped shape a predominant view that harmony and unity are the most powerful forces within Japanese religion. The notion of numerous traditions fitting into a single way has been a prominent feature of much academic interpretation of religion in Japan, as the following comment by a leading Japanese scholar well illustrates:

The multiplicity and complexity of Japanese religious phenomena is related to an assimilative tendency in Japanese culture. Historically, Japan had adopted various cultural and religious traditions and therewith enriched her spiritual life. In this process the newly introduced traditions did not uproot the indigenous but were invariably assimilated into a kind of homogeneous tradition which itself might be called "Japanese religion." What stands out in this assimilative process is not value conflict or discord but continuity and harmony.

(HORI et al. 1986 [1972], p. 12)

There is plentiful evidence to support this model, in which harmony and continuity predominate over conflict and discord: the physical proximity, for example, of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, which often occupy the same piece of land, or the above-mentioned practice of attending both Shinto and Buddhist ceremonies. David REID (in the midst, interestingly, of an analysis of a particularly acrimonious conflict within a Japanese Christian organization)¹ has suggested that this general Japanese practice “contributes to a climate of political stability in that it minimizes the possibility of conflict over the issue of religion” (1991, p. 91).

While notions of the harmonious nature of Japanese religion do not wholly exclude the potential for conflict (an unlikely possibility given the large numbers of religious organizations and groups in Japan), they do tend to imply that discord or religious intolerance is an aberration rather than the norm. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the treatment meted out, in many academic works, to the thirteenth-century Buddhist leader Nichiren and the religious tradition he founded. As Jacqueline Stone comments in the present collection, scholars such as Sir George Sansom accuse Nichiren of breaking the tradition of religious tolerance in Japan, while both Watanabe Shōkō and Edward Conze try to distance him from the Buddhist tradition (Conze going so far as to doubt whether Nichiren can be considered a Buddhist at all). One could perhaps suggest that this academic custom of marginalizing Nichiren has itself served to marginalize the entire subject of conflict as a prevalent theme in the Japanese and Buddhist religious traditions.

This perspective, which asserts the predominance of harmony over discord, is one found not just in writings on religion: rather it has been a predominant thread in most analyses and discussions of Japanese society and social structure in general. The tendency to privilege harmony over conflict (often, indeed, to so focus on harmony and consensus as to virtually ignore conflict and discord altogether) is especially prominent amongst Japanese scholars, but is widely seen in Western academics as well. Winston DAVIS (1992, p. 45), in drawing attention to the importance of conflict in Japanese society and religion, has rightly been critical of this overemphasis on the notion of harmony, noting that “on the Japanese side...one is constantly reminded that Japan is a ‘harmonious society’.” He contends that

this idealized image has been picked up by western Japan-

¹ A dispute within the Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan that started in the late 1960s; also discussed in DAVIS 1992, pp. 81-109.

ologists.... Under their influence, a nonconflictual group model of Japanese society became an article of faith in Japanese studies for many years. (1992, p. 46)

Similar points have been made by KRAUSS, ROHLEN, and STEINHOFF, who comment on the “dominant chord of harmony and consensus” in many, especially earlier, studies of Japan. They state that:

To the outside world contemporary Japan was characterized as lacking both major schisms and as resolving its lesser conflicts with relative ease. In the prevailing paradigm Japanese institutions are effective and satisfying to their loyal and cooperative participants. This general image of Japan has been accompanied by microlevel studies of individuals and small groups that portray the Japanese as “polite” people seeking the social harmony idealized in traditional Japanese culture. (1984, p. 3)

Such qualities as harmony, cooperation, consensus, and unity are, indeed, important forces within Japanese society and religion, a point that is recognized and affirmed by Krauss, Rohlen, and Steinhoff. Yet, even while recognizing the potent force of the ideal of harmony in contemporary Japan, they point to the shortcomings of that notion, commenting in particular that “the emphasis on harmony in Japanese studies tends to offer a static image of that society” (1984, p. 378). In contrast to the stasis implied by harmony, however, Krauss, Rohlen, and Steinhoff draw attention to the processes of change that are occasioned, provoked, and given birth to through conflict. In short, then, they suggest that conflict plays an important and indeed creative role in Japanese society.

The growing attention paid to conflict as an important factor in Japanese society and religion, and the challenges this poses to the images of harmony, is especially welcome now in the early 1990s, a period when a number of religious conflicts and disputes have sprung into public prominence. Probably the most visible of these has been the conflict between the Nichiren Shōshū sect and the lay organization Sōka Gakkai, between which a growing fissure developed in late 1990 that has widened into a vituperative and highly public conflict and separation.² Another dispute that has captured widespread attention in the current decade has been the venomous, name-calling quarrel between Kōfuku no Kagaku 幸福の科学 and Aum Shinrikyō オウム真理教, both of which are aggressive New Religions seeking fol-

² There have been a number of progress reports about this dispute (ASTLEY 1992, MÉTRAUX 1992, VAN BRAGT 1993); but a full analysis has yet to be made, no doubt because the situation is still unfolding.

lowers especially among the young. The very fact that they operate in similar areas and seek followers among similar age groups has pushed them into conflict with each other, a conflict that has been to some degree encouraged by the mass media. The media, recognizing the public interest generated by religious disputes, have provided both parties with various opportunities to attack each other on television and through the pages of mass circulation magazines.³

The mass media (in this particular case, the publishing media) were a direct part of what may be, after the Nichiren Shōshū–Sōka Gakkai dispute, the most angry conflict involving a religious group in the 1990s: the clash between Kōfuku no Kagaku and the publishing company Kōdansha. This came about after the glossy magazine *Friday* (a weekly magazine published by Kōdansha that normally subsists on a diet of scandal and exposure) ran an article suggesting that Kōfuku's founder and leader, Ōkawa Ryūhō, had been treated in the 1980s for depression. The article, by questioning Ōkawa's fitness to give spiritual guidance to others, caused a furious reaction amongst Kōfuku members, who not only picketed Kōdansha's buildings but also effectively prevented the company from conducting any business for several days by telephoning and faxing so many complaints that the company's lines of communication to the wider world were blocked.

The involvement of various sections of the media in such conflicts, whether simply reporting on them, encouraging them, or, as in the case of Kōdansha, becoming deeply entangled in them, has certainly highlighted conflict as an issue in contemporary Japan. Whilst it is to be welcomed, for reasons stated above, that more attention is being paid to this issue, and that the earlier models of harmony are therefore being challenged, there is also a danger that the eruption of these highly public and disputatious affairs might persuade those accustomed to the harmonious interpretive model of Japanese religion that a new paradigm shift is under way, with religious conflict taking the place of consensus as a dominant force. From a historical perspective, however, it would be more apposite to note that these disputes provide us with a salient reminder that conflict is an endemic and continuing factor in the world of Japanese religion. Religious dis-

³ See, for example, the report in *Shūkan Bunshun* (1991, p. 32) describing a program on Asahi Television that brought together members of both movements for a discussion on religion and young people. The discussion erupted into angry exchanges, reflecting the underlying ill-feeling that exists between these two groups. This acrimony has been inflamed further by a variety of insulting attacks that have appeared in the publications of both movements. See also the interview with Kōfuku no Kagaku's leader, Ōkawa Ryūhō, in *Shūkan Bunshun* 1991, pp. 34–39, in which he makes a number of derogatory remarks about Aum Shinrikyō, and in which he also discusses the Kōdansha–Kōfuku dispute in some detail.

putes, whether between organizations or institutions, or between practitioners competing for clients or arguing over differing doctrinal positions, and acts of violence occasioned by conflicts spurred by or with their roots in religious issues, permeate Japanese history. These disputes range from the warfare that developed between the Soga and Mononobe clans over the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century, to the frequent clashes between the warrior monks of Mt. Hiei and their rivals, to the violence that exploded in Kyoto in 1536 in the aftermath of a debate between advocates of the Nichiren and Tendai sects. Indeed, if the most recent cases of religious conflict in Japan could be seen to represent any form of new pattern, it would be that they have produced much invective but, so far at least, no bloodshed.

The aim of this collection of essays is to draw attention to the presence and influence of conflict in religious situations in Japan, in order both to help develop an understanding of its importance as a basic theme in Japanese religion and to provide an alternative, yet complementary, perspective to the idealized images of religious harmony that have for so long held sway. In drawing attention to conflict as a recurrent and (it should be emphasized) enriching theme in Japanese religious history, the volume can also provide background information against which analyses of the current conflicts might be made. These essays not only illustrate the enduring nature of religious conflict in Japan, they also provide evidence of the scope and varieties of conflict that may occur. There are, for example confrontations between emerging new religious groups and older established religions, intellectual disputes between religious leaders, and clashes between religions and the arms of the establishment, such as the media and the government authorities.

The first two essays in this collection deal, from different angles, with conflicts involving the mountain religious tradition Shugendō, itself often considered an example of the syncretization of various Japanese religious currents and traditions. Both essays, by Helen Hardacre and Hayashi Makoto, show that Shugendō has been no stranger to religious conflicts and confrontations. Helen HARDACRE'S essay discusses the rise of new religious movements in the Bakumatsu era, and shows how these came into conflict with Shugendō on a number of levels. As Hardacre shows, Shugendō practitioners in the Edo period were extremely active in performing communal and individual rituals, from faith healing and divination to funerals. Shugendō had not only become an entrenched and powerful tradition in much of rural Japan, it had also developed quite a propensity for confrontation, internally amongst rival lines and externally with other groups

such as Yoshida Shinto, whose performance of similar services threatened its hold on its clientele. It was against such a background that Shugendō found itself in conflict with emergent new religious movements such as Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō, and Kurozumikyō in Bakumatsu Japan.

Although these conflicts had several causes, one that was especially crucial was the fact that the faith healing offered by the leaders of these New Religions was inexpensive or, at times, free, thus eroding the customary religious market of the Shugendō practitioners, whose services were often protracted and expensive. As Hardacre suggests, however, the conflict was not merely over issues such as these; also involved were deeply divergent worldviews and attitudes on such matters as the role of women. The New Religions challenged Shugendō's more overt focus on masculine roles and produced a positive evaluation of women, who were religiously empowered and who could, like Nakayama Miki, become leaders.

While Hardacre focuses on irreconcilable differences in religious practice and gender construction as the root causes of the conflict between Shugendō and the New Religions, HAYASHI Makoto examines the underlying legal and economic issues that gave rise to a confrontation between Shugendō and Onmyōdō. When the bakufu recognized the Tsuchimikado family in 1683 as the official lineage of Onmyōdō divination specialists, the organization's leaders sought to gain exclusive control of the fees charged for divinations by forcing Buddhist, Shugendō, and Shinto priests to obtain licenses from them; battle was waged through a long series of lawsuits filed with various magistrates over the course of about 150 years, and while it never erupted into open warfare, it was no less acrimonious for being confined to the civil procedures of legal argumentation. As plaintiffs in the case, the Tsuchimikado leaders asked the magistrates to force the Shugendō practitioners to either cease and desist from performing divinations or purchase licenses from them. The Shugendō defense centered on their claim that their own tradition of divination was independent, and their insistence that they did not charge for their divination services. The issue was finally settled in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Tsuchimikado leaders accepted a series of rulings that (1) affirmed their right as the sole grantors of licenses for divinations performed for fees, but (2) refused to ban the Shugendō priests from practicing divinations since they claimed to be doing so for free. Technically the Tsuchimikado won its case, but in reality lost to the cut-rate services of the Shugendō priests, who, Hayashi notes, were in fact charging fees.

Shugendō thus found itself on both sides of the fence in the competitive world of Japanese religion: in its competition with the New Religions, as Hardacre shows, Shugendō was at a disadvantage for charging expensive fees, while in its conflict with Onmyōdō, as Hayashi demonstrates, it came out on top by convincing the court that it was charging little or nothing.

The next two essays, by Helen BARONI and Janine SAWADA, focus on conflicts involving Buddhism during the Tokugawa period. Baroni's essay examines the repercussions caused when a new Buddhist movement, Ōbaku Zen (which in China had been part of the Rinzai tradition but which developed as an independent movement in Japan) was introduced to Japan by the Chinese teacher Yin-yuan Lung-ch'i (Jpn. Ingen Ryūki) in the seventeenth century. As Baroni shows, this new sect presented a doctrinal threat particularly to the Rinzai and the Shin Buddhist sects, and provoked some conflict with other Buddhist sects because of its early successes in attracting new converts and acquiring temples for its lineage, and because it therefore took such resources away from its rivals. Baroni notes, however, that the most serious conflict centered on questions of loyalty and personality. One of the most important Ōbaku monks, Tetsugen Dōkō, had been a Jōdo Shin monk before converting to Ōbaku; his subsequent preaching, which contained implicit criticisms of his former sect, engendered severe reactions amongst Shin believers, who saw him as not only a rival but a traitor as well. Thus the fact that Tetsugen had been a Shin monk appears to have intensified the conflict between the two sects by injecting emotions of a personal nature into an otherwise doctrinal dispute. Whilst debates and confrontations between Tetsugen and his Shin critics never erupted into overt violence, outright physical conflict was in fact only narrowly avoided. A further point to note in this essay is that the confrontation provided the sects concerned (especially the Shin sect, which found itself under some doctrinal threat from Tetsugen's teaching) with a means of restating and reforming their own teachings to meet the new challenge posed by Ōbaku. Conflict was thus not simply a negative force, it also provided the dynamism for renewal and creativity.

Sawada discusses a less confrontational dispute between the traditions of Confucianism and Zen in Tokugawa Japan, and the strategies taken by their leading teachers. Although on one level the dispute between the Confucian teacher Higashi Takusha and his Rinzai rivals revolved around the ethical and religious merits of Buddhism vis-à-vis Confucianism, Sawada notes that the arguments had political implications concerning the direction that Chōshū should take during the

tumultuous times of pre-Restoration Japan. Takusha, who saw Buddhism as a serious detriment to the development of the nation, escalated his relatively polite dialogue with Chūhō Shūyō, abbot of a Rinzai temple in Iwakuni, into a vituperative attack against Imakita Kōsen. What rankled Takusha was Imakita's argument that Buddhism and Confucianism were essentially the same, a notion that Imakita clearly knew to be provocative. Imakita also exploited the differences within the Neo-Confucian tradition, buttressing his position with claims that Chu Hsi, Wang yang-ming, and the other founding fathers of Neo-Confucianism were favorably disposed toward Buddhism. Takusha, of course, disputed Imakita's depiction the peaceful coexistence of Neo-Confucianism with Buddhism, denouncing it as a pernicious ruse to confuse people. Imakita's idea of the harmony of the two traditions thus became a point of conflict, and Sawada shows how it was used by Imakita to attack Takusha's tradition. Harmony is not always simple and innocent: if conflict can lead, upon some kind of resulting resolution, to greater harmony, the call for harmony can lead, against claims of privileged superiority, to greater conflict.

The fifth essay in the volume, by Jacqueline STONE, provides an extensive study of conflict within the Nichiren Buddhist tradition. In demonstrating that recurrent conflicts have occurred within Nichirenism over the very issue of conflict with other religions, Stone shows that the tensions between the Nichiren ideal of rigorous exclusivism and the wish to ensure the welfare and viability of the religious order by maintaining peaceful relations with the outside world have been a constant cause of internal debate in Nichiren Buddhism. This internal and continuing conflict has been a source of creative tension in the order. However, while the drive towards accommodation with other religions has been a creative force in Nichirenism's continuing development, it has never been as successful as its more overtly confrontational sides in mobilizing sectarian energies or inspiring the faithful. Nichirenism has made great use of its sense of exclusivism as a means of challenging various authorities in Japan; incurring opposition and provoking conflict for the sake of the Nichirenist view of the world has at times been an almost obligatory action for many in the tradition, including the leading priests, for whom the practice of admonishing the State became almost customary. Through such activities Nichirenism, though associated with its share of violence, has also presented a continuing and challenging critique of the status quo in Japan.

Mark MULLINS's essay takes up an area of conflict also discussed by Stone, that of conflict between religious organizations and the State. Mullins examines the conflicts that arose between certain small sectar-

ian Christian groups and the State during the period 1941–1945, and the ways in which the State investigated and sought to stifle dissent amongst these movements. Whilst many Christian organizations and their representatives, including many in established Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, tended to accommodate themselves to the nationalistic environment of the time, some Christians, particularly those belonging to sectarian groups such as the Plymouth Brethren and the Mukyōkai, found themselves unable to cooperate with the State and went to prison because of their stance. What was primarily responsible for their dissent was their belief that Jesus would return to reign over this world—a viewpoint that implicitly placed the supreme symbol of Japanese power at the time, the emperor, in a position subservient to that of Jesus. As Mullins shows, these rather marginal Christian groups did not in themselves pose a threat to the forces of the State, and indeed their representatives did not actively seek to provoke a confrontation with it. Nonetheless, the dissent which they were conditioned to express provided the State with the opportunity to prosecute them as a way of warning others about the danger of challenging the collective identity being promoted in the wartime era. This religious conflict was thus used by the State as a means of accomplishing its own goals.

Mullins also draws attention to the ways in which organs of the State themselves sought to provoke conflict with religious movements for their own purposes as well. The Tokkō (the Japanese Special Higher Police) became preoccupied with religious groups after they had succeeded in crushing political forces of dissent such as the Communists. They needed to find other sources of potential deviance and subversion in order to justify their own continued existence and importance in the eyes of the government, and this in itself was a factor in their interest in, and investigations and persecutions of, some of the New Religions and also of smaller Christian groups. Conflict was thus, in part at least, created by the practical needs of one of the institutions involved, the Tokkō.

MORIOKA Kiyomi's essay on the details and repercussions of the Yomiuri Newspaper's investigations of Risshō Kōseikai in 1955–1956 brings us into the postwar era. It also serves in many respects as a useful background study to the recent conflict between Kōfuku no Kagaku and Kōdansha mentioned earlier in this introduction. The background to the dispute was Risshō Kōseikai's rapid expansion in the early 1950s; as we have seen in Baroni's and Hardacre's essays, there are few things more likely to provoke conflict and unease than the arrival and swift growth of new religious groups, particularly

when, like the New Religions, they provide an alternative voice to prevailing social and political mores. Whether New Religions such as Risshō Kōseikai really posed a threat to the established order is questionable, but it is evident that their rapid growth did cause much concern amongst members of the establishment.

In prewar Japan, the rapid rise of new religions was frequently checked by the State, which could use forces such as the police to repress those groups that became too active for its liking. In postwar Japan, the separation of religion and State, and the lack of State control over religion, meant that any attempts to restrict the growth of religious movements had to be carried out by different means. As Morioka shows, it was primarily the media, and particularly the major newspaper companies (which in Japan as elsewhere are very much part of the establishment), that took the lead in the attempt to curb the New Religions. The New Religions themselves provided their opponents with plenty of ammunition, involving themselves in various scandals, irregularities, and intimidations of prospective members that gave journalists ample opportunity to write exposés of several different movements. Perhaps the most dramatic of such exposés started in 1955: the Yomiuri Newspaper campaign against Risshō Kōseikai, which ultimately raised questions on the organization's human rights record, the propriety of its financial dealings, its internal structure and workings, and the ways it presented itself to the outside world. Eventually the dispute spread to the political arena, with various politicians, notably of the Socialist Party, joining in the campaign against the religious movement, leading to further investigations of its conduct by parliamentary committees, and to its being branded a "false religion" (*jakyō* 邪教) and threatened with the possibility of losing its protected status as a religious body.

Conflict, as we have suggested, often has positive results on the religion concerned, and Morioka shows how, after a temporary halt to its growth, Risshō Kōseikai continued to expand. Indeed, the attacks caused it to devote greater efforts to explaining its views and to improving its media relations. One should note here that the responses of Risshō Kōseikai were far more cautious and even-tempered than those of Kōfuku no Kagaku in a later era: Risshō Kōseikai leaders, although they complained at the mistreatment they felt they had received from the media, continued to put their views across in a generally patient manner, in contrast to the more aggressive responses made by Kōfuku no Kagaku. The incident also provided the Risshō Kōseikai leader, Niwano Nikkyō, with the opportunity to embark on a program of necessary internal reforms that would have been less read-

ily managed if the religion were not under external attack; it also provided a test of fire for the members, many of whom had their faith strengthened by the conflict. Niwano's reforms ultimately strengthened the movement and helped it develop into a large-scale religion; thus the conflict, albeit threatening at first, proved of value to the movement in the long run.

Although the final essay in this selection, by Richard ANDERSON, also focuses on Risshō Kōseikai, it introduces a rather different aspect of conflict, in that it is not primarily concerned with issues of competition between movements, doctrinal disputes between teachers, or conflicts between organizations. Anderson, instead, examines the manner in which conflicts may arise between personal religious faith on the one hand, and social obligations on the other—between, that is, the commitment to a life of religious practice as espoused in the ideals of Risshō Kōseikai (in which one is admonished to devote oneself to the path of attaining enlightenment) and the obligations normal followers have towards their families. Anderson examines how this conflict applied to the life of the cofounder, Niwano Nikkyō, and further examines the dilemma that it creates amongst ordinary, especially female, followers. He also notes, through a discussion of case histories, that whereas for a male leader such as Niwano the privileging of the religious path over the needs of one's family (even to the extent of abandoning the family altogether) is not merely a viable but is even a respected option, for an ordinary female devotee it is simply not a possibility. Thus conflicts between personal faith and social obligations have different resolutions depending on the status and gender of the person involved. All of this shows how the pursuit of religious ideals in itself can be a source of conflict on a personal level. It is precisely when ordinary adherents, particularly females, attempt to put the ideal of attaining enlightenment into practice that conflict is liable to arise.

The essays in this volume thus indicate a number of areas in which conflict has arisen, and the forms it takes, in the religious context in Japan. They indicate that religious conflict is nothing new in Japan; rather, that it has been a central factor throughout Japanese history. Religion in Japan can, as discussions of the functions of the established religions in the social order have frequently demonstrated, be a force for consensus and harmony; it can also, as these essays show, be a force for conflict and fissure. Conflict is not, however, a negative force: Krauss, Rohlen, and Steinhoff's argument that conflict is an essential, dynamic, and creative force in society is borne out by much of what is written in this volume.

We have not, of course, been able to cover all the areas and types of conflict that have occurred, or that are liable to occur, in Japan. One notable absence from this collection is any detailed study of violent religious conflicts, although, as has been noted earlier, these have surfaced at various points in Japanese history. While a number of the articles in this collection (notably Hardacre's and Baroni's) draw attention to the incidences of violence and potential violence as aspects of the wider religious conflicts they discuss, none directly focuses on the topic. This is certainly an area that requires further research. Another area that has fallen outside the parameters of this volume, but which merits particular consideration, is the study of the mechanisms and strategies that have developed in Japan for the resolution of conflicts. Indeed, the whole topic of religious conflict as a forceful and prominent factor and mechanism in the Japanese religious world, and in Japanese religious history, is a large and beckoning one, offering much scope for future research. We need to underline the point that whilst the "harmony model" may provide one avenue for understanding religion in Japan, it alone is not adequate; attention needs to be paid to the underlying fissures and currents of dissent that flow beneath the surface images of harmony, and that provide much of the creative force at the heart of Japan's rich and continuing religious life. The aim of this volume is to draw attention to some of these issues, in the hope that it will encourage the further study of a consistent, important, yet often inadequately discussed element in the Japanese religious world.

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