

Some Parallels to the Criticism from American Religious Liberals

Read to the eleventh annual meeting of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations held at University of Pittsburgh, 27-30 May 1982

Bruce A. Kimball

SUMMARY

In order to initiate discussion about the theology of the New Religions of Japan, this essay describes how six major New Religions ... similar to American religious liberals ... typically focus on three points in their criticism of Christian theology: rationality, transcendence of God, sin and describes the writer's response and rebuttal by clergy and theologians of the New Religions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The name "New Religions" (*shin shukyo**) is commonly applied to the several hundred religious movements founded in Japan over the past 150 years; however, this term must be used advisedly because it is sometimes regarded negatively by the groups to which it is applied due to its association with and derivation from the term "newly-arisen religions" (*shinko shukyo*). The latter, coined by Japanese journalists early in this century,¹ carried a pejorative connotation through its paradoxical implications of opportunism and naivety on the part of those recently formed and rapidly growing religious groups which offered salvation to the farming and laboring lower classes in Japanese society - especially after the devastation of World War II.² I employ "New Religions" here as a concession to convenience and popular usage, and in this context, the term should not suggest a lack of historicity or sincerity but rather convey a sense of vibrancy and relevance for the contemporary age.

During the academic year of 1978-79, I lived with and studied some of these New Religions as a visiting scholar of the Henry Luce Foundation. My regimen of study generally consisted of reading the English language material produced by and written about the particular New Religion; then a week of visits and interviews with clergy, administrators at the headquarters, lay people at local churches, and scholars at the Research Institute, if such existed; and lastly a few days of organizing and writing a follow-up report to

* For Romanization of Japanese words, the Hepburn system will be the basis, with small modifications and the elimination of stress and accent markings. Also, the family names will precede the given names of Japanese, in accordance with their custom.

the religion. This was complemented by later interviews with outside scholars such as at the International Institute for the Study of Religions in Tokyo or the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya. Since I speak only elementary conversational Japanese, my interviews were generally conducted through interpreters.

In the course of this experience among the New Religions, I was struck by their analysis of Christianity which nearly always seemed to include three central criticisms regarding the use of reason, the notion of God and the doctrine of sin. Though a non-Christian - at least in a creedal sense - I was nevertheless impressed by several points. First is that the overall analysis was, in my view, not very penetrating. Second is the fact that these different religions rather uniformly focus on three particular aspects of Christianity in their criticism. Third is that those same criticisms can often be heard from American religious liberals, i.e. Unitarian Universalists. In this essay, I intend to report those three criticisms while relating them to the context of Japanese religiosity, to describe my response to the Japanese clergy and theologians, and to express their reactions. Beyond discussing the specific analysis of Christianity, I hope to convey a sense of the approach to theology in the New Religions and to raise some questions about doing theology between members of different religions.

In order to make this assignment manageable, I will draw on material from a small, yet significantly representative group of the New Religions, and a word about this sample is in order. Selecting such a group is a difficult task because, first of all, the size of these hundreds of religions ranges from memberships counted in dozens to those counted in millions. According to the Agency for Cultural Affairs in the Ministry of Education, these were by far the six largest memberships reported in 1978:

Soka Gakkai (<i>Nichiren Shoshu</i>)	16,480,060
Rissho Kosei Kai	4,704,452
Seicho no Ie	3,169,948
Perfect Liberty Kyodan	2,624,151
Reiyu-kai	2,512,452
Tenrikyo	2,357,786

Secondly, there seem to be almost as many schemes for classifying the New Religions as there are scholars to examine them.³

The three most popular methods of classifying the New Religions focus respectively on either the nature of origin and doctrine, the structure, or the time of founding and growth. Each of these methods has serious difficulties, however. The first approach, based on the kind of tradition in which the New Religion originated (generally Buddhist, Shinto or folk religion), is nearly obviated by the syncretistic character of these various groups, even those that claim to have one pure tradition. The second method, looking at the institutional structure and organizational behaviour in the New Religions, is undermined by their similarity in this regard which simply reflects their wholesale appropriation of Japanese social values. This in turn is compounded by the "groupism" of Japanese which leads them to act very much alike in organized settings.⁴ The third method of classifying the New Religions into chronological periods according to their time of founding or most rapid growth is unsatisfactory simply because it does not say very much or, at least,

ignores the distinctions of origin, doctrine and structure that do exist. Faced with this chaos, many scholars try to combine the categories in some fashion, which inevitably leads to inconsistencies.

Bearing all this in mind, I shall rely on the understanding of Christian theology in these six sects: Soka Gakkai, Rissho Kosei Kai, Seicho no Ie, Perfect Liberty Kyodan (PL Kyodan), Tenrikyo, and Konkokyo. This set of six includes most of the wealthiest groups with the largest membership and, presumably, impact on Japanese society. Also it provides categorical variation because Tenrikyo and Konkokyo have traditionally been associated with Sectarian Shinto while Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai are based in Nichiren Buddhism: two of the fountainhead traditions of the New Religions. Meanwhile, Seicho no Ie and PL Kyodan represent typical eclectic movements.

Furthermore, these six New Religions offer historical diversity in that Tenrikyo and Konkokyo are among the oldest and most mature, founded in 1838 and 1859 respectively, while Seicho no Ie and Rissho Kosei Kai emerged between the World Wars, and Soka Gakkai and PL Kyodan are essentially post-World War II movements.⁵ Finally, it is worthwhile to note that, apart from other considerations, Tenrikyo and Soka Gakkai probably ought to be included for study simply because scholars of Japanese religion and society often identify them as archetypal New Religions: the former due to its record as the strongest over the longest period of time, the latter due to its current preeminence in membership and wealth.⁶

One other factor worth mentioning here in connection with scholarship about the New Religions is that independent research to this point has largely been confined to sociological aspects of these groups, both internal and external. Relatively little work has been done to analyze the theologies of the New Religions. A brief review of Earhart's *The New Religions of Japan: A Bibliography of Western-Language Materials*, though somewhat dated, will demonstrate this point while it was confirmed for me in a discussion with David Reid, Director of the International Institute for the Study of Religions in Tokyo.⁷ Meanwhile the in-house research institutes of the New Religions attend to their own particular doctrine. Rarely is an effort made to examine the theology of their immediate neighbours, although they are generally eager to distinguish themselves over against Christianity.

11. RATIONALITY

Paradoxically, the New Religions criticize Christianity for irrationality at the same time that they generally regard it as relying too heavily on the use of reason. While both these opinions can usually be found together in the same New Religion, there is often primary emphasis on one or the other.⁸

The charge of irrationality in Christianity is not new in Japan, and it has usually stemmed from the supernatural elements in Christian doctrine, as was the case during the late nineteenth century when Christian missionaries were greatly active in Japan.⁹ In the contemporary situation, this view is shared by many New Religions having roots in Sectarian Shinto, such as Tenrikyo:

We are, frankly speaking, in blank dismay when we come across such fundamental doctrines of Christianity as the conception of Virgin Mary

and the Resurrection of Christ . . . (which are) made solely with divine authority without any regard for human thinking (and) . . . seem to be filled with many contradictions.¹⁰

However, such criticism of irrationality comes most prominently from those New Religions derived from Buddhist origins, such as Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai. In this case, the criticism is generally made in the course of expositing their understanding of the thought of the historical Buddha. For Soka Gakkai, this position can be found repeatedly in the descriptions of the "Life Force philosophy" of the founder, Toda Josei, as interpreted by Ikeda Daisaku, his successor. Toda asserts that Buddha's law of cause and effect explains all phenomena in the universe "scientifically" and "rationally" rather than calling on the divine agency and supernatural powers found in the miracle stories of other religions.¹¹ This sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit contradistinction with Christianity based on cause and effect as the "scientific" natural law of the universe is carried forward also by members of the (Theological) Study Department of Soka Gakkai both in their writings and in their discussion.¹²

Similarly, the major in-house treatment of Rissho Kosei Kai from the 1960s extolled the thorough rationalism of Buddha's metaphysics in a rather less polemical tone;¹³ and this view was recently perpetuated in a major book by Niwano Nikkyo, the president and co-founder of Rissho Kosei Kai. Niwano commends Buddhism as both a religion and philosophy, and he differentiates it from other religions because of its "objective" attitude by which all phenomena are explained in terms of cause and effect without an appeal to "a transcendent god." In fact, "the Sanskrit word *buddha* is derived from the word *bodhi*, indicating the idea of 'exercise of reason'. The mental state of enlightenment that the Buddha preached can be understood by anyone who has a high degree of reason."¹⁴ Like many other New Religions, Tenrikyo also adopts a law of cause and effect in its metaphysics which its scholars commend in much the same terms as do those of the Buddhist New Religions.¹⁵

The foundation of these theories can be traced beyond Japan to the earliest origins of Buddhism, understood through such standard introductions as that of Edward Conze or Trevor Ling.¹⁶ Based on the Pali canon, "original Buddhism" is often described as highly rationalistic and humanistic, thereby rejecting the appeal to and dependence on powers transcendent to the individual. In addition, respect for rationality in Japanese religion was strengthened in the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868) by the influence of Chu Hsi Confucianism which preserved its emphasis on rationalism and pragmatism even after its arrival from China.¹⁷

This historical factor only reinforces the tendency of modern Japanese - both Buddhists and others - to cite the Buddhist tradition as more rationalistic and congenial to modern science¹⁸ by way of criticizing Christianity and defending the essential rationality in Japanese religiosity. I heard this appeal to the Buddhist tradition in my informal talks with clergy of the New Religions having a Shintoistic or eclectic background such as Tenrikyo and Seicho no Ie,¹⁹ and I believe this outlook fuels their implicit criticisms of irrationality when they refer to the doctrine of sin in Christianity.²⁰

On the other hand, for these non-Buddhist groups and the others that are more influenced by Shintoism or Japanese folk religion in general, the more

often heard criticism is that Western Christianity (and especially Unitarian Universalism for those who know it²¹) is too rationalistic and relies too heavily on reason.²² In *In Quest of the Fundamental, Tenrikyo Way to Salvation*, Matsumoto Shigeru notes: "I cannot but think that contemporary men tend to be too rational in their thinking . . . Religion has its roots in the irrational."²³ Similarly, Ofuchi Chihiro, former director of the Konkokyo Theological Research Institute, writes that when life is regarded from a religious perspective "the way of grasping the situation is not necessarily rational or systematic."²⁴ And the faculty of the Konkokyo Seminary argue on behalf of the one-year length of their seminary course that further study does not readily improve religious understanding and may retard it, which reflects their emphasis on heart or "sincerity" (*makoto*) above intellect as a means of evaluating religious activity.²⁵

Through the governing maxim "Life is Art," PL Kyodan concurs in this estimate in the dictum: "Man who is capable of realizing life's true beauty, charm, and meaning, lives an artistic life, when he freely expresses his individuality in his field of function in a society and in his aspiration of life."²⁶ These words were elaborated to mean a reliance on "heart and spirit above mind" during my visit to PL Kyodan headquarters,²⁷ while at the Seicho no Ie Training Center in Tobitakyu the point was similarly explained.²⁸

Overall, in every one of these six archetypal New Religions, I was warned more than once, formally or informally, against the Western Christian tendency to intellectualize religion.²⁹ Also it was more than coincidental that Henri Bergson with his *élan vital* was mentioned to me at three different New Religions as a Western philosopher congenial to Japanese religiosity³⁰ and that Bergson is mentioned in the literature in this same context.³¹ Congruently, William James and Rudolf Otto have traditionally been held in high regard by the Japanese precisely because of their emphasis on "religious experience."³²

Naturally, such a widespread attitude is not without precursors in Japanese religiosity to which is widely attributed the beliefs that religious truth cannot be communicated without appropriate experience, largely affective, and that such experience is essentially unanalyzable by logical and rational processes.³³ The indigenous religion of Shinto incorporates this outlook through its reliance on subjective thinking whereby intuition is accepted as a valid means of verification as much as is objective rationality.³⁴ Commensurately, both Japanese folk religion and Shinto are seen to emphasize the affect, or sensitivity, above the intellect,³⁵ an outlook that dominates classical Japanese literature such as the *Tale of Genji*.³⁶

Those native impulses were reinforced by the introduction to Japan of esoteric Buddhism with its special attention to Buddha's private, inner experience through his "secret" teachings.³⁷ This led to the founding of the Shingon sect which medieval Shintoists considered the Buddhist group closest to them.³⁸ The distrust or transcendence of rationality through inner and affective experience was further invigorated in the Tokugawa Period by *Shingaku*. This "Learning of the heart" movement emphasized education through purifying the heart as much as through training the mind, and "Japanese scholars unanimously agree . . . it was the epitome of 'Japaneseness'." ³⁹ Finally, similar to the way in which many New Religions point to

superior rationality in Buddhism whether or not they are Buddhists themselves, so Zen is occasionally cited by members of New Religions - who do not belong to a Zen sect - as evidence of the greater appreciation in Japan of that which Western religion, i.e. Christianity, does not understand.⁴⁰ And indeed, Zen has promoted a concept of "enlightenment" (*satori*) that "may be defined as an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contradistinction to the analytical or logical understanding of it."⁴¹

To summarize, I can only recall the three different occasions when, upon entering the worship hall of Soka Gakkai, Seicho no Ie, and Tenrikyo, I was asked rhetorically by my companion believer whether I hadn't experienced an extra special feeling above the other worship halls I had visited. To my mind, even if I had had such a feeling, it would not have verified the truth of the religion. However, "to the Japanese, it is descriptive, factual and convincing. It moves them, and hence it is true."⁴²

111. TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD

Rather like the criticism that Christianity is too rational, the prevalent idea among the New Religions that Christian theism artificially divorces divinity from humanity has roots in Japanese folk religion, Shinto and Buddhism. Continuity between human beings and *Kami* ("gods")⁴³ is central to Japanese folk religion wherein human beings often became *Kami* (called *ikigami* or "living gods") and vice versa.⁴⁴ A sharp distinction between sacred and secular was thus not posited, as seen in the role of the traditional tribal patriarch who served as priest and ruler in early Japanese history.⁴⁵ Shinto inherited and developed this view by avoiding dualisms; locating the *Kami* in this world;⁴⁶ and holding that *Kami*, humans, and nature are all born of the same parents and so are all related without fundamental differences.⁴⁷ In the words of a noted professor of the national Shinto university:

The world of the kami does not transcend that of man, and man does not need to seek to enter a divine, transcendental world to attain salvation. He seeks salvation by bringing the kami into the human world, into the daily life of the home, the market place, and the cooperation of the people. Man experiences the kami in this world and salvation is attained in the harmonious development of the world.⁴⁸

Implicit in this view is a tendency towards monism and a belief that the phenomenal world is absolute because the transcendent ideal does not exist.⁴⁹ Doubtlessly, the humanism of Chu Hsi Confucianism in the Tokugawa era did contribute to this perspective,⁵⁰ and while it is also congenial to the essential humanism of "original Buddhism" wherein Buddha was not deified.⁵¹ All this makes it unsurprising that the New Religions, by and large, should tend towards "metaphysical monism"⁵² in the process of criticizing the Christian notion of a transcendent God.

This critique is rather easily demonstrated for Soka Gakkai on behalf of which Ikeda Daisaku attacks the dualistic thinking of the West⁵³ and "the sickness introduced by faith in absolutes." He rejects the idea that "a divinity must be fundamental, transcendent, unique, absolute, omniscient and omnipotent" and thus the belief in "the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the god of Judaism, Christianity and Islam (which) is a divinity of this kind."⁵⁴

Instead, Ikeda argues, modern religion must be "scientific," which is to say "humanistic,"⁵⁵ a view attributed to an early leader of Soka Gakkai.⁵⁶ Then Ikeda lauds Buddha for this outlook while positing a metaphysical continuum in order to avoid a dualism.⁵⁷ My discussion with and the writings of the members of the Soka Gakkai Theological Study Department confirm this view.⁵⁸

Similarly, though again less polemically, Rissho Kosei Kai contrasts an interpretation of "fundamental Buddhism" based on the life of Buddha with Western Christian theism.⁵⁹ President Niwano, though praising Christianity very highly and equating its moral aspirations with those of Buddhism, nevertheless writes:

Sakyamuni Buddha did not admit the existence of a transcendent god controlling man's destiny. The Buddha never preached belief in a god who created this world and presides over the workings of nature - an absolute being by whom people are saved if they pray to or worship him.⁶⁰

Interestingly, Konkokyo and Tenrikyo adopt analogous positions from which they do not reject the idea of theism, as the Buddhist New Religions apparently do, and in fact will use the English word "god" in reference to their own faith. However, both Konkokyo and Tenrikyo argue that their concept of deity avoids the transcending separation posited in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

For Konkokyo, this appears first in the fact that *Kami* did not create the world and humans; *Kami* arose from primordial elements and gave birth to humans. The resulting parent-child relationship is seen to be closer than the creator-created relationship in Judaeo-Christian myth, if for no other reason than the fact that *Kami* and people are of the same essence and can become each other.⁶¹ Secondly, *Kami* achieves greater immanence in the world because *Kami* communicates directly to humans in the practice of "mediation" (*toritsugi*) where the Konkokyo patriarch or his surrogate is "taken over" by *Kami* and speaks directly to people as *Kami* speaks. This "mediation" demonstrates the mutuality and interdependence between *Kami* and humans. Put another way, as did the Konkokyo seminary faculty and members of the Theological Research Institute, *Kami* could not be *Kami* without people, and vice versa. Thus, the idea of the independence of *Kami* is rejected.⁶²

Somewhat parallel to this line of thinking, I believe, is the approach of Tenrikyo, which actually classifies itself as "monotheism" in order to refute the charge of polytheism that has been made in the past.⁶³ However, Tenrikyo argues for greater immanence of its *Kami* (which it calls "God the Parent") than the creator of god in "Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism and some other religions."⁶⁴ The basis of this distinction is as follows:

What distinguishes Tenrikyo from other religions is the fact that it links God directly as parent and child. Tenrikyo's teachings connote that instead of God having created man, He gave birth to man These passages convey the idea that the relations between (Tenrikyo's) God and man are warm and human like those between parent and child, instead of being cold and austere Tenrikyo's concept of God is thus different from those of Christianity and Islamism in that these two religions, while considering God as the creator of man as does Tenrikyo, revere Him as a supreme being transcending the human community.⁶⁵

We have noted how this idea that humans and *Kami* are of the same family with the same essence has its origins in Japanese folk religion and Shinto and how this concept undergirds the relatively easy transition theorized between humans and *Kami*. While Konkokyo and Tenrikyo evidence significant aspects of this thinking, it is more fully realized in the syncretistic-type New Religions such as PL Kyodan and Seicho no Ie.

Based in "an essentially syncretistic and magical religious orientation,"⁶⁶ the founder of PL Kyodan developed what Joseph Kitagawa calls an "amazingly simple" doctrine⁶⁷ founded in the idea that "man is a manifestation of God," the third of "The Twenty-One Precepts of Perfect Liberty."⁶⁸ This was interpreted for me to mean that people "are children of God," "are like God," and "can do all that God can do" if they realize their true self-expression through the maxim that "Life is Art".⁶⁹ The founder of PL Kyodan is the guide in this for he has already become an *ikigami* who can take upon himself the afflictions of other people when beseeched to do so.⁷⁰ Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that the founders of Konkokyo and Tenrikyo also became *ikigami* in their lives,⁷¹ and Niwano Nikkyo in the Japanese language literature of Rissho Kosei Kai has referred to the Roman Catholic Pope as an *ikigami* in the course of describing his papal audience. The inference drawn by some Roman Catholic scholars is that Niwano would like to be considered an *ikigami* as well.⁷²

This tendency culminates in Seicho no Ie whose founder in 1923 heard these words of enlightenment: "There is no such thing as material appearance. Do not be tricked by things that do not exist You are reality. You are Buddha. You are Christ. You are infinite. You are inexhaustible."⁷³ As implied, he went on to theorize a metaphysical monism:

Mind does not exist! Only Reality exists! The state of nothingness is not the true phase of Reality. The void is not the true state of Reality. Things of the phenomenal world are all 'nothingness' and material things and mental phases are all vanity! The true essence of Reality is God. Only God exists. The things that are real are only the Mind of God and the manifestations of the Mind of God. This is the truth of Reality.⁷⁴

It follows that all people are God;⁷⁵ that prayer or meditation is an appeal to oneself, "Your *Jisso*, originally perfect and whole true self";⁷⁶ and that all religions are different manifestations of the same divinity and same truth.⁷⁷ The transcendence of the Christian God above humanity is consequently rejected.⁷⁸

IV SIN

In a schema of monistic goodness, there is no room for evil or sin, and so Seicho no Ie holds that they do not exist:

Sins are not perfect; so they are not of reality,
Diseases are imperfect: so they are not real,
Death is imperfect, so it could never be of reality.

Do not take things to be real that have not been created by God.⁷⁹

Conversely, everyone is advised to think positively all the time. This is the basis of the "meditation" (*shinsokan*) practice, the purification ceremonies to wipe away unclean thoughts,⁸⁰ the "laughing practice" for members at

Seicho no Ie training centers to keep everyone happy, and the advice to children to begin their school lessons by reciting: "I am a child of God, a child of Buddha. There is nothing that I cannot do. I am strong; I am good".⁸¹ Meanwhile, adults read the essays and listen to the sermons of the founder under such titles as "Make the Most of the Early Morning," "Live, Laughing Cheerfully," "Do Your Best Now," "Be Decisive, Determined and Courageous in Carrying Out Your Plans," "He Who Refuses to Anticipate Defeat Must Win," "Life is Reborn through Love and Wisdom."⁸² These works offer the following sort of advice:

You have the capability to know your own future, the future of your company or even the future of your country. How is this possible? It is because there is in this physical world a law which states that "things appear exactly as you visualize them" . . . and it is constantly at work all around us. So, in order to lead a bright, happy, and abundant life, we must have the right attitude of the correct view of things based on the Laws of the Universe.⁸³

Not very differently does PL Kyodan approach these questions, for the notion of sin is rejected as incompatible with the goodness of God. "Evil" is therefore a problem of ignorance - of not knowing one's true self as a manifestation of the Parent Deity, the realization of which would bring happiness.⁸⁴ This is why it is held that "Man's life is a succession of self-expressions" and "Man suffers if he fails to express himself," numbers two and four of "The Twenty-One Precepts of Perfect Liberty." In order to help their people, the founder and a small circle close to him have received the "Divine Instruction" (*mioshie*). When followers experience problems or tragedy, this instruction is imparted to them to explain how they are not expressing their true selves.⁸⁵ In cases where *mioshie* is ineffective or for some reason unobtainable, a follower can appeal to the founder to vicariously take upon himself the suffering of the follower, a practice which is "perhaps the oldest, and has been the most persistent feature of folk religion in Japan."⁸⁶

Apart from that particular practice, it is clear in general that Japanese folk religion did not address the topic of evil, or its origins.⁸⁷ Quite naturally, beyond its notion of "pollution" (*kegare*) which did not entail any personal responsibility for defilement,⁸⁸ Shinto adopted this thorough optimism:

The world is not in contrast with nor in opposition to man. On the contrary, it is filled with the blessings of the kami and is developing through the power of harmony and cooperation. Shinto is not a pessimistic faith. It is an optimistic faith. This world is inherently good. That which interferes with man's goodness should be expelled. It belongs to another world.⁸⁹

This attitude is sometimes thought to have been countered by the arrival of Buddhism which addressed "suffering" (*dukkha*) through Buddha's analysis of the "impermanence" (*anicca*) of all phenomena.⁹⁰ However, these doctrines are just as often differentiated from "pessimism" and the Christian idea of "sin"⁹¹; and in any case, fundamental Japanese religiosity did retain its optimism⁹² which prompts the New Religions to emphasize "earthly joy."⁹³ For Tenrikyo, this appears clearly in the overarching concept of "Joyous Life" (*yokigurashi*) which is taken to be the purpose of living⁹⁴ as taught in their Scripture: "I (Tenrikyo's God the Parent) created you human

beings because I desired to see you lead a joyous life."⁹⁵ The complement to this view is that "in the faith of Tenrikyo, unlike Christianity, we never speak of original sin."⁹⁶

Some say that vice and evil are inevitable and others say that human beings are originally burdened with sins. Many have thought that these vices or evils have something in them which is destined to stay in them and can never be removed. However, is it right to consider these vices or evils as fixed and immovable? No, they are by no means such fixed ones. A line of thought that has recently been developed denies the existence of original sin or pre-destination. It is true that there are much evils which cannot be removed easily, but they appear as a result of the complication or false steps of human minds. To assume the existence of such fixed evils tends to make it even more difficult to get rid of these evils.⁹⁷

Therefore, bad thoughts - thinking opposed to the way of God - are what creates evils, while good thoughts alleviate them.⁹⁸ For example, "sickness is caused by the wrong use of the mind,"⁹⁹ and testimonies of cures for physical, mental, economic, social and familial problems are cited as evidence.¹⁰⁰ Underlying this view is the metaphysical law of "causation" (*innen*) whereby pessimistic or egoistic thinking produces bad results in life.¹⁰¹ "Any trouble in our body comes from our mental attitude which is contrary to the will of God the Parent . . . This mental attitude, however, is not sin . . . in our religion."¹⁰² The difference is that evil is not inevitable but can be "swept away" by reversing the causation, especially through the act of the "service" (*tsutome*) at the Tenrikyo main worship hall.¹⁰³ Since this explanation of bad events through the law of cause and effect derives from Buddhism, as Tenrikyo acknowledges,¹⁰⁴ it should not be surprising to find a similar approach in Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai.

For the former sect, the basic goal of happiness and harmony is achieved by joining together and chanting to Soka Gakkai's worship object which is the "correct" one and the only one efficacious to bring happiness.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Ikeda Daisaku cites many examples in his writings of how those who chant to his sect's worship object activate the Life Force through the Buddhist law of cause and effect to obtain health, prosperity, friendship, and happy feelings. Those who chant to some other worship object are unrewarded or even punished. On the other hand, when bad things happen to members of Soka Gakkai, it is attributed to past bad actions (usually before becoming a member of Soka Gakkai) or some insincerity while chanting.¹⁰⁶

Overall, Soka Gakkai's "life-force philosophy of Buddhism" is held to be "more than an equal for modern scientific thought" in that, through the causality bound into the worship object, one is united with "ultimate reality" and so can satisfy one's material and spiritual desires while everyone else is doing so also.¹⁰⁷ This exposition is coupled with a rejection of the idea of sin or the possibility that good intentions could meet bad results,¹⁰⁸ except, it appears, where Rissho Kosei Kai is concerned. As Soka Gakkai's biggest competitor, it has been compared by Ikeda to the "Devil" in the past.¹⁰⁹

Rissho Kosei Kai, like most of the New Religions, incorporated many folk religious practices during the time of its early development. But since the 1950s under the sole leadership of Niwano Nikkyo, it has deemphasized those

and developed itself into a "Buddhist lay association."¹¹⁰ As a result, there seems to be less of an emphasis on physical and economic return for religious devotion in Rissho Kosei Kai than in many other New Religions, although this does not mean that the Buddhist law of cause and effect is weakened metaphysically.¹¹¹ Rather, the causality between devotional acts and other acts of life is not interpreted so concretely or immediately as in some of the other groups. At the same time, the essential optimism of Japanese religiosity appears in Rissho Kosei Kai's "hope for betterment . . . based upon the physical and moral possibility of changing one's living conditions"¹¹² and its rejection of the "sin" of human beings for the sake of preserving the essential goodness of all people's "Buddha nature."¹¹³

Lastly, in Konkokyo, the concept of evil appears to play a larger role than in these other New Religions. In fact, it was the Job-like succession of physical, social, economic and familial problems imposed by *Kami* upon the founder that became the stimulus for the founder's realization of his own inadequacy as a human being.¹¹⁴ This realization of inadequacy then prompted him to acknowledge his dependence on *Kami* and to decide to give himself over to *Kami*, to place his full faith in *Kami*. This act of faith secured his salvation and became the archetype for Konkokyo believers.¹¹⁵ Nonetheless, Konkokyo rejects the concept of sin by holding that the evils that befall humans can be overcome and, moreover, that humanity, nature and divinity are not qualitatively different but of the same essence which is fundamentally good. Thus, humans are not essentially flawed and can aspire to become *Kami*.¹¹⁶

V RESPONSE AND DIALOGUE

The three criticisms of Christianity outlined above are, I believe, widely shared among American religious liberals, specifically Unitarian Universalists. I shall not attempt to document this point but frankly offer it as my opinion.

The paradoxical approach to rationality I find, on the one hand, in the conventional Unitarian interpretation of history wherein religious liberals are seen to advance the dictates of reason against the *a priori* assumptions of Christian orthodoxy and, on the other hand, in the legacies of transcendentalism and pietistic Universalism that continue to mitigate against the deification of reason and to support intuitive and holistic ways of approaching religion. The disagreement with Christian theism I would attribute to an historical respect for humanism and also, in parallel to the argument of Shintoists, to an increasingly organic and immanent concept of "divinity" as opposed to that of a transcendent absolute. Criticism of the idea of sin, it seems to me, has inevitably gone hand in hand with the optimistic perspective grounded largely in the Unitarian notion of the essential goodness of human beings and the Universalist idea of a good God who would not create "bad" human beings in order to see them damned.

With all this in mind, it seemed ironic for me to be a member of the Unitarian Universalist clergy arguing the opposite case, yet I do not believe the foregoing criticisms are justified as stated. Whether or not that is true, I do want to explain my response to members of the New Religions in order to offer our discussion of Christian doctrine as a lens through which to view

their approach to theology.

With respect to the use of reason, I argued first that the supernatural miracle stories in Christianity are no more evidence of irrationality than they are in the New Religions. While they are taken literally by some Christians, they are allegorized or treated as myth by others, and this did not seem very different from the approach I witnessed in the New Religions. By and large, scholars and clergy of the New Religions did not object to this response as long as I was willing to grant that their miracle stories were not more irrational or unbelievable than those of Christianity.

Regarding the charge of relying too much on reason, I responded that the influence of Aquinas still undergirds the modern Christian approach to reason. From this view, faith is neither "not rational," nor can it be "too rational" as Matsumoto Shigeru of Tenrikyo¹¹⁷ and Ofuchi Ochihiro of Konkokyo have held.¹¹⁸ Rather, in the Christian view, faith is supra-rational - faith is entirely reasonable and then something more. This approach is reflected in the distinction sometimes drawn between the rationalizing of Confucianists and that of Christians. The former sought to apply reason in all facets of life, but their logic and terms were not as precise as the Greek logic on which Christianity relied. Thus, Confucianism rationalized extensively but less thoroughly whereas Christianity applied sharper reasoning to a more limited area and marked off certain matters as mysteries of revelation.¹¹⁹ From this latter perspective, one should never argue against using rational analysis to understand faith but rather contend that additional experience is necessary of an emotional, intuitive or mystical sort.

In this vein, I maintained that contemporary Western Christianity was not unsympathetic to intuitive and experiential ways of knowing. Apart from the historical line of Gnosticism and mysticism in both Catholic and Protestant traditions, nineteenth- and twentieth-century theologians and philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, James, Heidegger and Jaspers have had a significant and widespread influence on Christian thinkers leading them to emphasize experience beside or above reason in religion.

Conversely, I argued that I found a certain degree of anti-intellectualism among the New Religions; and while this might be an inevitable counter-attack to a charge of over-rationalization, there is a context for it in Japan where rationalization of religion - "freeing the world of magic" in Weber's phrase - did not proceed so far or so fast as it did in the West.¹²⁰ Indeed, for better or for worse, Japanese have the widely accepted reputation of not developing speculative and systematic theology or philosophy. This view is held in many of the standard introductions to Japan for Westerners such as Sansom's *Japan: A Short Cultural History*¹²¹ and Reischauer's *The United States and Japan*.¹²² No less do Japanese scholars take the same position such as in the dated but still classic *History of Japanese Religion* by Anesaki Masaharu¹²³ and the modern introduction, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, by Nakamura Hajime.¹²⁴ In *Japanese Religiosity*, Joseph Spae asserts:

According to eminent Japanese scholars, the national thought patterns and racial attitudes are best summed up in words such as these: directly experiential, indirect, indeterminate thinking, largely irrational, anti-causal, anti-conceptual and betraying considerable confusion between

subject and object. This "indeterminateness in thought" is said to be relativistic, adverse to the acceptance of absolutes, anti-historical and indiscriminately syncretistic, verging on scientific positivism, basically sentimental and adogmatic. The Japanese, we are told, "confuse religion and philosophy," "they are primarily interested in experiencing, in living, in doing, and in enjoying life." Their radical empiricism is the result (or the cause) of their refined estheticism and of their remarkable bent to contact reality, not through conceptual forms, but through intuition.¹²⁵

This outlook is linked by many scholars to Japanese language. On the one hand, it is richly endowed to express many shades and facets of complex emotions, reflecting the concern of the people for this human dimension. On the other hand, "abstract concepts are rare and the formation of abstract nouns is extremely haphazard. Speech progresses from situation to situation, not from thought to thought. Rather than a *conclusion* at the end, there is an *atmosphere* within which appears what is emotionally acceptable. There is little or no subordination of sentences, a problem which is compounded by the lack of the relative pronoun."¹²⁶

Reischauer has taken issue with those who argue that the Japanese language is intrinsically less able to communicate logically than other languages, but he adds that the Japanese "prefer in their writing as well as in their talk a loose structure of argument, rather than careful logical reasoning, and suggestion or illustration, rather than sharp, clear statements."¹²⁷ With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand why philosophy in Japan has consisted almost entirely of borrowing from Western philosophy¹²⁸ or to anticipate that this perspective may carry over to the Japanese New Religions. In fact, these groups have long been belittled by Japanese intellectuals for their supposedly simplistic and unsophisticated doctrines.¹²⁹

Konkokyo is one major exception to this view. It was a leader among the New Religions in stripping away magical, folk religious practices,¹³⁰ and the twenty-two members of its Theological Research Institute are broken into study groups to critique each other's efforts in systematic theology. This degree of critical attitude was sorely missing from Seicho no Ie and PL Kyodan whose clergy and scholars appear to be unquestioningly accepting the founder's wisdom handed down to them.¹³¹ All with graduate training in religion, the members of Tenrikyo's Research Institute and Religion Department of its university are clearly the best educated scholars of any of the New Religions treated here, but the spirit of critical inquiry seems stifled by what I perceived there and in the above cases to be a degree of anti-intellectualism and sentimentality arising from the optimistic ethos of the religions.

To these observations, clergy and scholars of Konkokyo, Seicho no Ie, PL Kyodan and Tenrikyo responded that I, as a product of the rationalistic Christian tradition, was undervaluing the "experience" of religion. Religion is belief based on the subjective viewpoint rather than the objective viewpoint, to paraphrase a seminal scholar in Tenrikyo.¹³²

Understanding the attitude toward reason in Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai is inevitably linked to a historical, critical understanding of Buddhism. This is because, as we have seen, their criticism about irrationality in Christ-

ianity always accompanies an appeal to the widely-acknowledged rationalism of the historical Buddha.¹³³ Of course, it lies beyond the scope of this essay to even begin a historical, critical discussion of Buddhism. Nonetheless, we can note in passing that, while some Japanese Buddhist sects are closer to the older Theravada tradition, which preserved a degree of this original impulse,¹³⁴ most embrace the supra-rational, faith-oriented, even magical perspective of Japanese Mahayana Buddhism. Here, supernatural elements abound and the members surrender themselves to and rely on the power of the Buddha for salvation.¹³⁵

This is exemplified in the Nichiren tradition to which Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai belong, and it appears clearly in Soka Gakkai's recommendations to have "blind faith" in its worship object, which is the sole way to activate the Life Force of the Buddha through the law of cause and effect.¹³⁶ Similarly, though not as exclusivistically, Rissho Kosei Kai holds: "The Buddha teaches us that in order to be finally saved and to establish true peace in our world, we must be united with the Original Buddha, that is, must take refuge in him wholeheartedly."¹³⁷ Meanwhile, the essayists of both religions freely allegorize or treat as myth the stories of supernatural events associated with Buddha and Nichiren.¹³⁸

During my visits, I expressed the view that all this seemed rather congruent to Christian practice whereby exhortations on faith accompany the rationalizing of ancient myth. Members of the International Department and of the Theological Study Department of Soka Gakkai opined, however, that I had missed significant differences because I did not fully understand the metaphysics of cause and effect. Staff members of the seminary and the International Affairs Division of Rissho Kosei Kai (who studied religion at universities in Australia, the United States, and England) said that they agreed, as long as I was not going to argue that Christianity was more rational than Buddhism.

Addressing the criticism of Christian theism from the Buddhist New Religions also requires some historical understanding of their tradition. Let it be granted that the ideas of the historical Buddha, to the extent we can authenticate them from the Pali canon,¹³⁹ were non-theistic. Granted, too, that some Japanese Buddhist sects are closer to the Theravada tradition which, relatively speaking, preserved more of this outlook¹⁴⁰ (although some scholars regard all of Buddhism to have been infused with theism in the course of its transmission through China to Korea and Japan).¹⁴¹ In line with this, we have seen how Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai claim to be humanistic and non-theistic because they reject the idea of praying to or relying on "a god that is considered to be the almighty being who creates and governs everything in heaven and on earth . . . We do not worship a thing, a person, a spirit or a god existing outside ourselves, but devote ourselves to the Law, which causes us to live and unites us with it."¹⁴²

Nevertheless, Japanese Mahayana Buddhism posited the existence of supernatural deities, and the Nichiren tradition inherited this perspective.¹⁴³ Thus, we are told that chanting to Soka Gakkai's worship object involves "a demand for blind faith" because "the Buddha's wisdom is beyond the reach of analysis . . . only through faith can one fully attain the Buddha's wisdom."¹⁴⁴ Moreover, the Nichiren Buddhist Life Force activated by the

chanting saves, protects and rewards those who chant¹⁴⁵ because it is "the ultimate reality of life omnipresent in the universe."¹⁴⁶ At the same time, Rissho Kosei Kai holds that "salvation" is secured by placing oneself totally in the hands of the Eternal Buddha through the daily devotional chanting to that Buddha¹⁴⁷ because it turns out that:

Sakyamuni Buddha manifested the Law or truth in the form of the Buddha, whom man can view directly. He preached that the Buddha has absolute power and is an immortal existence that is present in all things and causes them to live. This Buddha is, of course, the Eternal Original Buddha. The Original Buddha is the power that makes everything live and is omnipresent in the universe. There is no place where the Buddha does not exist He also revealed that the Original Buddha always exists, from the infinite past to the infinite future, and is omnipresent in the universe.¹⁴⁸

From this, I concluded that Christian theories of the nature of Jesus Christ as fully man and fully god and of the relationship between God and Christ as a unity in two persons are broadly the same as the theories of Rissho Kosei Kai concerning the nature of Sakyamuni Buddha and his relationship to the Eternal Buddha. When I expressed this to staff members of the Rissho Kosei Kai seminary, they agreed that this seemed the case to them as well. They did, however, argue for the difference that Christians can never aspire to become God while Buddhists can aspire to become Buddha in Rissho Kosei Kai.

The members of the International Department and Theological Study Group of Soka Gakkai held that I did not completely understand the metaphysics of cause and effect and the true nature of the Life Force if I had considered it to be similar to the absolute, transcendent, omniscient lordly God of Christianity. I was never able to understand how chanting to the Soka Gakkai worship object activated the Life Force other than by supernatural power or how the omniscience, omnipresence and absoluteness of the Life Force was different from the omniscience, omnipresence and absoluteness of the Christian God.

With respect to the full monism of Seicho no Ie or the qualified monism of PL Kyodan, I did not dispute their distinction from the transcendence of the Christian Deity. In Konkokyo and Tenrikyo, I acknowledged the semantic difference between a Creator God and a Parent God, although I argued that the conventional Christian notion of the Fatherhood of God seemed to me to vitiate much of this distinction - except to the extent that the familiarity of *Kami* and humans implied contingency or dependency by the divinity on humanity, as in Konkokyo. On these points, we agreed.

Yet we came into conflict when I argued that the transcendence and absoluteness of the Christian God did not imply a rejection of immanence and that the impact of such Western thinkers as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Dewey, Whitehead, and Wieman had been to lead Christian theology away from dualism. In this respect, it might appear that we were poised to reach middle ground in Tillich's view that the Principal of Ultimacy reacts against the Principle of Concretization whereby the Christian God could be accorded the virtue of ultimacy and the New Religions' *Kami* the virtue of concretization.¹⁴⁹ However, such was not the case. We continued in polite disagree-

ment precisely because, I believe, that theologians of Konkokyo and Tenrikyo valued concretization above ultimacy.

In other words, Tillich's tradeoff makes sense only if one values ultimacy to begin with, because the necessity of concretization of the divinity follows as a corollary to the ultimacy, i.e. an ultimate that has no concrete influence is irrelevant. On the other hand, if one begins with the value of concretization of the divinity, there is no intrinsic necessity for ultimacy unless one is bothered by the contingency of the concrete divinity. And contingency of the concrete divinity is a problem only if one sees the world as a place infected by evil. If evil does not exist, then contingency of the divinity in the world is not a problem, and so concretization does not require ultimacy to preserve the goodness of the divinity.

Therefore, I theorize that, while a Christian might be ready to agree on the tradeoff between the ultimacy of the transcendent God and the concretization of the Japanese *Kami*, the theologians of Konkokyo and Tenrikyo were unwilling to do so because they valued ultimacy less than concretization. Thus, the "balance point" favored a concept of divinity more concrete than ultimate in their minds.

It is significant that the criticisms concerning reason and transcendence in Christianity should point finally to the objection against the doctrine of sin, for this is probably the most often heard criticism. Fundamentally, it is the inevitability of doing evil that strikes the New Religions as foolishly and sadly pessimistic, which is why they especially castigate the idea of "original sin." Then, the combination of this inevitability with responsibility for doing evil appears contradictory and almost insidious.

In response, I argued that the Christian doctrine of sin does not mean that God created "bad" people, or people prone to evil. Rather, God created people who are free but also necessarily finite, because they are not God who is infinite. Being free beings, people have an egoistic impulse which they can choose to follow, or they can choose to follow their natural law in the emulation of God, in whose image they were created and whose nature is love. However, being finite beings, people choose to try to perpetuate their ego rather than devoting themselves to loving others. While this is inevitable because they are not God, they are also responsible because they are free to choose otherwise and they know of this freedom. This, I maintained, is the essence of describing humanity as "sinful". The only way around the problem from the Christian perspective is if people were created with infinite power or if they were not free - but in neither case would they be human.

The reaction to this by the scholars of Konkokyo was positive. If this is what is meant by sin, they said, then it has integrity. In fact, as suggested earlier, Konkokyo holds that the experience of evil is inevitable insofar as it leads one to give oneself over to *Kami* in order to be saved,¹⁵⁰ after the realization that one cannot depend on oneself to be saved from evil.¹⁵¹

Here we find a formulation not dissimilar to Pauline "salvation by faith" which also has an analogue in Japanese Mahayana Buddhism, especially in the "Pure Land" (*Jodo*) and Nichiren traditions. Much discussion has occurred as to whether these formulations are nearly identical or have significant differences, but the entire debate takes place in the context of recognizing profound similarities between the Christian and Mahayana Buddhist

notions of "salvation by faith."¹⁵² Indeed, from the third-party perspective of the noted historian of Japanese thought, Ienaga Saburo, essential equality is posited. Ienaga argued that both involve the "logic of negation" that one must lose oneself and relinquish hope for salvation in order to find oneself and achieve salvation through faith in other power.¹⁵³ With a similar conclusion but also deprecation, a nineteenth-century Japanese Confucianist observed that "Christianity is Buddhism with hair on it."¹⁵⁴

All this provides the background to Rissho Kosei Kai's admonitions that, in order to be saved, followers must extinguish all selfishness by having whole-hearted faith in and relying totally on the Eternal Original Buddha.¹⁵⁵ No less does Soka Gakkai demand complete reliance on the Nichiren Buddhist Life Force worship object, although its admonitions against egoism are somewhat muted compared to Rissho Kosei Kai. In Soka Gakkai, the rewards to the individual for chanting are given more emphasis.

Beyond the Buddhist traditions, the New Religions in general are seen to have "salvation" as their central concern.¹⁵⁶ Historically, they emerged during times of great oppression of the peasants and laborers in the late Tokugawa Period¹⁵⁷ and then experienced a tremendous boost of growth from the devastated population after World War II.¹⁵⁸ In Tenrikyo, this concern for salvation is prominently manifested in all its literature, and the theologians in the Religion Department of its university and in its Research Institute expressed much respect for the doctrine of sin when it was described as above. Nevertheless, they still held to the eradicability of evil and sin in this world,¹⁵⁹ as did Seicho no Ie and PL Kyodan through their metaphysics of monistic goodness.

I responded that the claim of these groups, and of Soka Gakkai and Rissho Kosei Kai and Konkokyo to a lesser degree, to eradicate economic, physical and familial problems is based on the following fallacy. From the fact that pessimistic or negative thinking can lead to economic, physical or familial problems, these New Religions deduce that optimistic or positive thinking will produce prosperity, good health and happy human relations. This fallacy appeared time and time again in the citing of cures of psychosomatic diseases as proof of the ability of the heart and mind to produce entire physical happiness in the world.

Beyond such fallacious thinking, what I would call the "easy optimism" of the New Religions appears reified in their approach to "good works." When asked about their activity in this area, PL Kyodan noted first its donations to orphans whose parents were killed in traffic accidents and its training of baton-twirlers who twirl, free of charge, in parades all over Japan. Also mentioned were monies donated to research in agriculture to help grow more food in countries where people are underfed and the building of a Peace Tower between the amusement park and two golf courses at PL Kyodan headquarters.

Seicho no Ie described how its founder gives some of the proceeds of his publications to orphanages and how the members are encouraged to be helpful to others. For Tenrikyo, the doctrine of "daily contribution" (*hinokishin*) holds that one should offer spiritual or physical service to show gratitude to God the Parent "in the absence of selfish motives and desire for gain."¹⁶⁰ Most often this seems to take the form of sweeping the streets, cleaning

public buildings, visiting the sick, and working on Tenrikyo construction projects. And this donating of time and labor to institutional construction projects is commonly encouraged as unselfish "good works" by the other New Religions as well.¹⁶¹

For Soka Gakkai, Rissho Kosei Kai and Konkokyo (as seen in its largest church at Izuo in Osaka) the greatest emphasis on institutional "good works" appears in efforts for world peace. Ikeda Daisaku (who resigned as president of Soka Gakkai in 1980) has always spent a great deal of time "working for peace" by travelling around the world talking to religious and political leaders to encourage them to strive for world peace. (His 28-page "Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae" distributed by Soka Gakkai headquarters includes five pages of "notables" with whom he has had such discussions). And Soka Gakkai produces movies of his travels.

Niwano Nikkyo has pursued this same course, but without ostentatious publicity, and founded the World Council on Religion and Peace which brings together religious leaders from all over the world (excepting four of the other five major New Religions of Japan) to discuss how to promote peace. Partly for this work, Niwano was recently presented with the Templeton Award for Progress in Religion by Prince Phillip of Britain. Miyake Toshio, the head minister of the flagship church of Konkokyo, on a lesser scale has also approached "good works" through travelling for peace and participating in WCRP and has had a prayer tower built at his church dedicated to the pursuit of world peace.

Overall, I found that the "good works" of the New Religions fall into three major categories: institutional maintenance or expansion, monetary and participatory contributions to community institutions such as hospitals and charities, and ambassadorial activities for peace by the religions' leaders. While these efforts are to be applauded, to my mind the New Religions can be faulted for not addressing themselves to the really difficult problems in Japanese society, and this I attribute theologically to what I would call their "easy optimism."

For example, not one of these New Religions in any way seeks redress for the statutory inequality of women in Japanese society, such as in areas of employment or in the transmission of Japanese citizenship only patrilineally and not matrilineally. Of course, the immediate response might be that this is a cultural difference that imposes American social norms on Japan. But even if this is granted, one may still ask why not one of these New Religions addresses the problems of those living in ghettos or "villages" (*buraku*) arising from the historical segregation against a particular social group who are "now legally equal but still discriminated against."¹⁶² And the same can be said of the significant Korean population in Japan who were originally brought there as laborers during the decades after the takeover of Korea in 1905 and whose descendants are still not accorded Japanese citizenship upon birth, unless born of a pure Japanese father.

The point here is that these latter two cases are popularly recognized as injustices by the Japanese themselves, and yet the New Religions "do not wish to cause trouble", "do not wish to enter political problems," as I was repeatedly told. On the other hand, it is a common practice for leaders of the New Religions to inform their followers of political preferences at election

time, and the favor of these religions is actively sought by politicians. In fact, Soka Gakkai and Seicho no Ie both have associated political parties for which the religious institution actively campaigns.¹⁶³ Overall, the political influence is widely acknowledged to be strongly conservative,¹⁶⁴ and the director of the international affairs office of one of these six religions expressed to me confidentially that the leader of his religion would like to see the current democratic constitution abolished in order to return to the Imperial Constitution of pre-war Japan.

What I am stressing is that the New Religions seek to avoid all confrontations with controversial social problems, even concerning widely acknowledged social evils. This is why I call their optimism "easy". They ignore many of the difficult problems while offering "cures" for individual complaints. Also, they do not seem to appreciate how the different social problems can be connected to the individual complaints, such as personal ills often associated with lesser socio-economic status and education. Furthermore, they do not appreciate how their theological doctrines can even increase the problems of individuals by rationalizing the perpetuation of social evils.

For example, Tenrikyo has in the past had its metaphysical law of cause and effect, akin to the Buddhist *karma*,¹⁶⁵ attacked by pressure groups representing Korean and *buraku* people in the Osaka area. The reason was because the ills suffered by such people today were being justified as the due rewards for their evil acts committed as youths or in previous lives.¹⁶⁶ In this manner, the prevalent cause and effect metaphysics, so popular among the New Religions, can be used to justify the status quo in the society. Nowhere did I find any attention to this problem, a fact supporting the common observation that the New Religions generally lack any kind of systematic ethics, especially social ethics.¹⁶⁷

This, in turn, I attribute to the theological assumption of optimism about humanity. Since evil is simply a perturbation of the norm, easily eradicated, they have excused themselves from systematically analyzing how choices for human action are made in view of the fact that bad things happen. The complement to this intra-national attitude is the "peace work" of the New Religions. So far as I could tell, the actual membership of the religions is only remotely involved or even cognizant of this work. Instead, it is the leader and usually one administrative office that do the "peace work" in which I confess to sense more than a little self-aggrandizement, especially in the slick motion pictures of Soka Gakkai.

Beyond that, it is not clear to me how much gets done in these efforts. The peace towers, the discussions with Kissinger and Kosygin who both agree that peace is desirable, the meetings with the Pope: I am not sure what is accomplished in this. WCRP has great potential and has done much to bring together the leaders of different religious groups. I applaud such efforts at dialogue, particularly as part of a larger program of action. However, these efforts seem to amount only to dialogue.

As such, in the context of Japanese religiosity, they evidence the assumptions that "if we believe that humanity is good, then it is good"; "if we feel something is true, then it is true"; "if we all really want peace, then there will be peace." Again, from the Western Christian perspective, I could only

respond that it is evidence of human sin that history records war after war fought by people who wanted peace. I wonder if believing people are good, if really wanting peace is enough.

VI REFLECTIONS

After stepping back from the specific issues and considering the general approach to theology in the New Religions, it seems to me clear that they are reacting against past assertions of theological superiority by Christians. As indicated in this essay, several times I was told that if I were willing to concede that Christianity was not better than other religions, the contentions of superiority over Christianity by the New Religions would be withdrawn. This raises the issue of historical context because that attitude parallels what is often reported to be the large-scale retreat from Western culture in present-day Japan.

Since the "modern period" began in 1868, Japan has exhibited profound ambivalence toward Western civilization. On the one hand, it is probably accurate to say that the Japanese have consistently admired Western science and technology. On the other hand, this respect has alternately harmonized and conflicted with their attitude toward Western culture in ethics, aesthetics, philosophy and religion.

Insofar as we can generalize about the Japanese (and the oft-quoted Nakamura Hajime tells us they are far less individualistic than many peoples),¹⁶⁸ it is worthwhile to note this chronology of the cycle of Japanese attitudes toward Western culture: responsiveness to and emulation of the West for ten to fifteen years after 1868 followed by a period of nationalism and rejection of the West, responsiveness to and emulation of the West for ten to fifteen years after World War 1, followed by a period of nationalism and rejection, responsiveness and emulation for ten to fifteen years after World War II, followed by a period of alienation.¹⁶⁹

More specifically with respect to Christianity, the great missionizing impulse that occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century in Japan arose from "Puritan America," either New England itself or the "new New England" of the American mid-west. A rigorous moral code steeped in Puritan sobriety set the tone for Japanese Protestantism¹⁷⁰ which was rather uncongenial to the celebrative mindset of the native religiosity. Consequently, Protestant membership grew to only about 400,000 by this decade, a figure approximately matched by the Catholics.¹⁷¹

In my visits to Protestant and Catholic churches in Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Nagasaki and elsewhere, I found that the former group had preserved a remarkable Yankee Puritan flavor while the latter appeared to have attempted more rapprochement with the native culture. Nevertheless, both groups have perpetually been hampered in growth by the "tendency in Christian thought toward exclusiveness" and "the Christian failure to take other religions seriously"¹⁷² which is so contrary to the basic Japanese attitude of tolerance and syncretism in religion.¹⁷³

This background helps to explain why many descriptions of Christianity in the New Religions appear to be caricatures or rather antiquated and conservative interpretations: the exclusivity and past attitudes of many of the

Christian missionaries have contributed to it. This, too, is why, after I responded to the criticisms described herein, the Japanese sometimes responded positively but then questioned whether this was really Christianity.

Beyond the issue of historical context, I was also led to ask where one looks for a religion's theology: does one take the "popular version" found among the believers or the sophisticated elaboration found among scholars and theologians? This is a point that I debated with members of the research institutes at both Tenrikyo and Konkokyo because I held it was unfair for them to compare the "popular version" of Christianity to their "sophisticated" analysis of their religion. Conversely, they suggested that my interpretation of Christianity as supra-rational, divinely immanent, and non-pessimistic was not as they knew it, i.e. the popular interpretation in Japan. Apart from the issue of fairness, I am left wondering where and how one identifies the "real" theology of another religion.

With respect to the parallelism suggested here between the criticism of Christianity by the New Religions and by American religious liberals, the similarity strikes me as arising from a shared historical encounter with Christian exclusivism. I would say that many religious liberals, as do members of the New Religions, expect to hear claims of theological superiority from Christians. Compared to those of the Japanese, these expectations of the liberals are doubtlessly mitigated by the common foundation in Western culture shared with Christianity while, on the other hand, perhaps exacerbated by the minority position of the liberals within Christian culture.

In any case, the question of addressing "popular Christianity" or "sophisticated Christianity" remains problematic for both the New Religions and the religious liberals, I suggest. Beyond this, there is much to caution against positing theological analogues between religious liberalism and the Japanese New Religions. Ross takes some steps in this direction with regard to Shinto, but I find those efforts rather forced in that he attributes to Shinto a philosophical sophistication that simply does not exist.¹⁷⁴

Japanese liberalism had origins in the countryside rather than the city, contrary to the English experience; and so it did not develop much strength in Japan because such a non-urban movement tends to lack financial and intellectual support.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, Japanese liberalism never really developed roots and, even in its high tide of the 1920s, often proved no more than a sham for the opportunism of rival political parties.¹⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the New Religions survived through World War II and blossomed afterwards, and I think it can be shown that their theology in many ways is fundamentally removed from that of American religious liberals, even though they do share similar criticisms of Christianity.

NOTES

University of Houston,
Texas

1. H. Neill McFarland, *The Rush Hour of the Gods* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp.6f.; *Japanese Religion*, a survey by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in the Japanese national Ministry of Education (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1972), pp.89f.
2. *Japanese Religion*, p.27; McFarland, p.4.

3. Compare Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., *The Eagle and The Rising Sun* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), pp.16-22; Joseph Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York: Columbia University, 1966), pp.306-340; McFarland, pp.67-70; Harry Thomsen, *The New Religions of Japan* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1966), chap. 1 passim; Byron H. Earhart, *The New Religions of Japan: A Bibliography of Western Language Materials* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), pp. 4-10; H. Byron Earhart, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity* (Encino, Ca.: Dickenson, 1974), pp. 106-108. Especially helpful in describing different schemes for classifying the New Religions is the discussion in *Japanese Religion*, pp. 92-102.
4. For insight into Japanese "groupism", I am indebted to Professor Sakuta Keiichi, Sociology Department, Faculty of Literature, Kyoto University, in a discussion of November, 1978. See also Nakane Chie, *Japanese Society* (New York: Penguin, 1973) chap. 1.
5. However, Soka Gakkai and PL Kyodan both had significant forerunners before World War II and could almost be dated from the interim between the World Wars as well.
6. Earhart, *Japanese*, pp.110-111; Nakane, p. 101.
7. Discussion with David Reid, Director of the International Institute for the Study of Religions, Tokyo, in January, 1979. This point was also confirmed in discussions with Jan Swyngedouw and Jan van Bragt at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University, Nagoya, in May, 1979.
8. In the following discussion of rationality, I rely heavily on the more expanded discussion, approached from a different direction, in my article "The Problem of Epistemology in Japanese New Religions", *Tenri Journal of Religion* (August, 1979) no. 13, pp. 78f.
9. John F. Howes, "Japanese Christians and American Missionaries" in Marius B. Jansen, ed., *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1969), pp. 350-351.
10. Fukaya Tadamasu, "The Fundamental Doctrine of Tenrikyo" in *Tenrikyo: Its History and Teachings* edited by Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, (Tenri, Japan: Tenri Jihosha, 1966), p. 55.
11. Ikeda Daisaku, *The Human Revolution*, 3 vols., English translation from the Japanese (New York: Weatherhill, 1972), v. II, pp. 129-157; *Buddhism: The Living Philosophy* (Tokyo: East Publications, 1974) pp. 20 - 44, 48f.
12. Kirimura Yasuji, *Fundamentals of Buddhism* translated by the *Seikyo Times*, (Tokyo: Nichiren Shoshu International Center, 1977), pp.6f.; also discussion with members of the Soka Gakkai (Theological) Study Department in March, 1979.
13. *Risho Kosei Kai* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 1966) pp. 42,47f., 70,81.
14. Niwano Nikkyo, *Buddhism for Today* translated by Miyasaka Kojiro (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 1976), pp.185-188 and chap. 16 passim.
15. Fukaya, pp.58-60; and Uehara Toyooki, "Image of Man in Creation" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, p.80.
16. Trevor Ling, *The Buddha* (New York: Penguin, 1976), pp.138f., 202f., 283f., 245f.; Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*

- (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp.11-18, 34-43; Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove, 1974), chaps. I and VIII; William T. de Bary, ed., *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan* (New York: Random, 1972), chaps. I and II.
17. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2 vols. edited by Tsunoda Ryusaku, William T. de Bary, Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University, 1964), v.1, pp.320-325, 342-343. Joseph J. Spae, *Japanese Religiosity* (Tokyo: Oriens Institute for Religious Research, 1971), pp.134f.
 18. Heinrich Dumoulin, *Buddhism in the Modern World* (New York: Collier, 1976), pp.226f.
 19. Discussions with members of the Department of Religion, Tenri University, October, 1978 - May 1979; discussions with members of the International Department of Seicho no Ie, April, 1979.
 20. Moroi Yoshinori, *Contemporary Thought and Tenrikyo* (Tenri, Japan: Tenri Overseas Mission Department, 1972), pp.39f.; Uehara, pp.78-79; Roy E. Davis, *Miracle Man of Japan* (Lakemont, Ga.: CSA Press, 1970), pp. 45f., 149f.
 21. This opinion comes from the clergy of Konkokyo and Rissho Kosei Kai who have studied or visited in the United States and interacted with Unitarian Universalists, such as Matsuda Yoshikazu, Nagamoto Chosan, Noguchi Yoichi, Alfred Tsuyuki.
 22. Beyond the writings cited in the following notes, I rely in these judgments on discussions with many clergy and lay members of Konkokyo, Rissho Kosei Kai, Tenrikyo, and PL Kyodan.
 23. Matsumoto Shigeru, *In Quest of the Fundamental, Tenrikyo Way to Salvation* (Tenri, Japan: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, 1976), pp.40-41. See also Fukaya, p.55.
 24. Ofuchi Ochihiro, *The Faith of Konko Daijin* translated into English from the Japanese (Konko-cho, Japan: Konkokyo Honbu, 1972), p.83.
 25. Discussion with faculty of Konkokyo Seminary, Konko-cho, in December, 1978; Delwin B. Schneider, *Konkokyo, A Japanese Religion* (Tokyo: International Institute for the Study of Religions, 1962).
 26. *Perfect Liberty*, booklet prepared by the General Affairs Section, PL Kyodan headquarters (Tondabayashi, Osaka, 1978) p.2.
 27. Discussion with clergy at General Affairs Section, PL Kyodan headquarters in March 1979.
 28. Discussion with members of International Department, Seicho no Ie Training Center, Tobitakyu in April, 1979. See also "Prayerful Chant 'Jisso - Perfect Harmony'", essay distributed by International Department of Seicho no Ie headquarters (April, 1979) 6p.; Taniguchi Masaharu, "Shinsokan", essay distributed by International Department of Seicho no Ie headquarters (April, 1979) 20p.
 29. I am setting aside the question of whether "Western thinking" can be distinguished from Christianity in order to meet the issue posed by the Japanese, as they define it. I did not encounter any consideration among the theologians of the New Religions as to whether Christianity could be separated and evaluated independently from "Western thinking".
 30. Department of Religion, Tenri University; Theological Research

- Institute, Konkokyo; International Department, Seicho no Ie. See especially Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind* translated by Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946).
31. Jean Herbert, *(Shinto: At the Fountainhead of Japan)* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), p.67.
 32. Spae, *Japanese*, pp. 12-14.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-36, 70f., 157f.
 34. Joseph J. Spae, *Shinto Man* (Tokyo: Oriens Institute for Religious Research, 1972), p.11.
 35. Hori Ichiro, *Folk Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), chap. 1; Spae, *Shinto*, pp.7-15.
 36. *Sources*, v.1, pp.172f.; Donald Keene, *Japanese Literature, An Introduction for Western Readers* (New York: Grove, 1955), chap. 1; Ivan Morris, *The World of the Shining Prince: Court Life in Ancient Japan* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1964), chap. VII.
 37. Dale Todaro, *An Analysis and Translation of the Benkenmitsunikyoron*, Master's thesis of Indiana University (Bloomington, Ind.: May, 1977), pp.9f.; Kitagawa, pp.60-85; *Sources*, v. 1, chap. VIII.
 38. *Sources*, v.1, p.263.
 39. Jennifer Robertson, "From Creation to Transmission: *Shingaku* Education and Dissemination Innovations", paper for the Research Institute for Oriental Cultures (Tokyo: Gakushuin University, 1977), Preface and pp.13f., 33; Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1970) pp.148f.
 40. Apart from the New Religions, see Shibayama Zenkei *A Flower Does not Talk* translated by Kudo Sumiko (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1970), pp.14-31.
 41. Suzuki Daisetsu, *Zen Buddhism* edited by William Barrett (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p.84 and chaps. III and IV.
 42. Spae, *Japanese*, pp. 72, 29-40, 95-116.
 43. The question of translating *Kami* as "god" (singular or plural) has long been the subject of scholarly analysis which lies beyond the scope of this essay. See Herbert, pp.23f.; Spae, *Shinto*, chap. 3; Ono Sokyo *Shinto: The Kami Way* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1962), chap.1.
 44. Hori, pp.8f.; Earhart, *Japanese*, chap. II.
 45. Peter Duus, *Feudalism in Japan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p.15.
 46. George B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1952), p.46; Spae, *Japanese*, p.95; Floyd H. Ross, *Shinto: The Way of Japan* (Boston: Beacon, 1965), pp.20f., 31f., 110-113.
 47. Herbert, p.21; Spae, *Shinto*, pp.10f.
 48. Ono, p. 107; Discussion with faculty at Kokugakuin University, the national Shinto University, in November, 1978.
 49. Spae, *Japanese*, pp.167f.; Nakamura Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India - China - Tibet - Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1968), pp.351f.
 50. *Sources*, v.1, pp.320-325, 342-343.
 51. Ling, chap. 7; Rahula, pp.1f., 51f., 81f., Conze, pp.38f.; Robert C.

- Lester, *Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan, 1973) p.15.
52. McFarland, p.93; Ellwood, pp.22-28.
 53. Ikeda Daisaku, *Buddhism the First Millenium* translated by Burton Watson (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977), p.56.
 54. Ikeda, *Buddhism: The Living*, pp.12-14.
 55. *Ibid.*, pp.20-44, 48.
 56. Dayle M. Bethel, *Makiguchi The Value Creator* (New York: Weatherhill, 1973), pp.51f.
 57. Ikeda Daisaku, *The Living Buddha* (New York: Weatherhill, 1976), pp. 52, 86; *Buddhism: The Living*, pp. 20-44, 48.
 58. Discussions with members of the (Theological) Study Department of Soka Gakkai in March, 1979; Kirimura, pp.1f., 89f.
 59. *Rissho Kosei Kai*, pp.42, 66, 81.
 60. Niwano, pp.187-188.
 61. Ofuchi, pp.10-11; discussions at Konkokyo Theological Research Institute in December, 1978.
 62. *Ibid.*; Schneider, pp.102f., 120f.; *The Sacred Scriptures of Konkokyo* (Konko-cho, Japan: Konkokyo Honbu, 1973), p.32.
 63. *Tenrikyo Teachings for the Joyous Life* (Tenri, Japan: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, 1976), pp.34f.
 64. Moroi, *Contemporary*, p.21 and chaps. 7, 8, 9 passim.
 65. *Tenrikyo Teachings*, pp.16, 18; Nishiyama Teruo, "Body, Mind and Soul in Tenrikyo" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, pp.170f.
 66. McFarland, p.125.
 67. Kitagawa, p.320.
 68. *Perfect Liberty*, p.3.
 69. Discussion with clergy, General Affairs Section of PL Kyodan headquarters in March, 1979.
 70. *Ibid.*; McFarland, pp.131f.; Kitagawa, p.321.
 71. Hori, pp. 233f.
 72. Discussion with Jan Swyngedouw at Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University, Nagoya, in May, 1979.
 73. Taniguchi Masaharu, *Seimei no Jisso (Truth of Life)* 40 vols., (Tokyo: Nippon Kyobun Sha, 1962), v.1, pp.163f.
 74. Davis, pp.24-25.
 75. Taniguchi, "Shinsokan", p.4.
 76. "Prayerful Chant", p.2; "Shinsokan", passim.; "On Prayer" essay distributed by the International Department of Seicho no Ie headquarters, (April, 1979) 7p., passim.
 77. Taniguchi, "Shinsokan", p.2; "The Divine Message of Grand Harmony and Seicho-no-Ie" essay distributed by the International Department of Seicho no Ie headquarters, (April, 1979) p.5.
 78. Davis, p.25.
 79. *The Holy Sutra, The Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrines*, text available in Davis, pp.138-157 or distributed by the International Department of Seicho no Ie headquarters (April, 1979).
 80. Taniguchi, "Shinsokan", passim.; "Purification Ceremony (Joshin Gyo)" essay distributed by the International Department of Seicho no

- Ie headquarters, (April, 1979) 6p., passim.
81. "Divine Education (Part 2) (Seimei no Kyoikyū)" essay distributed by International Department of Seicho no Ie headquarters, (April, 1979) 3p.
 82. Taniguchi Masaharu, *Wondrous Way to Infinite Life and Power*, (Tokyo: Seicho no Ie, 1977), pp.17-33, 34-39, 64-69, 137-140, 159-175; Taniguchi Masaharu, *Spiritual Key to Abundant Life*, (Tokyo: Seicho no Ie, 1971), pp.209-220.
 83. "On Prayer", pp.1-2.
 84. Discussion at General Affairs Section, PL Kyodan headquarters in March, 1979; McFarland, p.131.
 85. *Ibid.*; *Perfect Liberty*, pp.3f.
 86. Kitagawa, p.321.
 87. Hori, pp.10f.
 88. Spae, *Shinto*, pp.56f.
 89. Ono, p.103; Spae, *Shinto*, chap. IV; Ross, chap. VII; Herbert, pp.68f.
 90. de Bary, pp.56f.; Ling, pp.135-141; Rahula, chap II; Conze, pp.43f.
 91. Conze, pp.21f.; Rahula, pp.16-17. See Kim Young Oon, *World Religions* 3 vols. (New York: Golden Gate, 1976), v.2, p.180, for a "popular" approach to this point.
 92. Schneider, pp.46f.; Spae, *Japanese*, chap. 2.
 93. Ellwood, pp.22-28.
 94. *Tenrikyo Teachings*, p.32.
 95. *Ofudesaki* (Tenri, Japan: Tenrikyo Honbu, 1971), XIV, 25.
 96. Fukaya, pp.65f.
 97. Moroi, *Contemporary*, p.39; Uehara, p.79.
 98. *Tenrikyo Teachings*, pp.19f.
 99. Moroi, *Contemporary*, pp.37-38.
 100. *Tenrikyo Teachings*, pp.69f.
 101. Takahashi Michio, "What is Tenrikyo?" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, pp.4f.; Uehara, pp.67-84.
 102. Nakayama Shozen, "On the Idea of God in Tenrikyo Doctrine" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, p.46.
 103. Ueda Yoshinaru, "The Life of the Foundress" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, pp.26f.; Uehara, pp.67-84.
 104. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
 105. Discussions with members of the International Department of Soka Gakkai headquarters in March, 1979; Ellwood, pp.103-106; Earhart, *Japanese*, pp.115f.; Kirimura, pp.117f.
 106. Ikeda, *Human*, v.1, pp.47, 54, 76f., 168; v.II, pp. 34f., 123f.; v.III, p.83.
 107. Ikeda, *Buddhism The Living*, pp.55f., 92f.
 108. Ikeda, *Human*, v.II, pp.129-147.
 109. Ikeda Daisaku, *Lectures on Buddhism* (Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1962), v.1, p.22.
 110. McFarland, pp.172, 183; *Rissho Kosei Kai*, pp.14f.
 111. Discussions with staff of Rissho Kosei Kai seminary (Gakurin) in October, 1978.
 112. Spae, *Japanese*, p.239.

113. Discussions with staff of Rissho Kosei Kai seminary (Gakurin) in October, 1978.
114. Ofuchi, pp.29f.
115. *Ibid.*, pp.29-63; discussions with members of Konkokyo Theological Research Institute in December, 1978.
116. *Ibid.*; Schneider, pp.117f.
117. Matsumoto, pp.40-41.
118. Ofuchi, p.83.
119. Albert Craig, "Science and Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan", in Jansen, p.150.
120. Bellah, chaps. I and II.
121. Sansom, pp.421f.
122. Edwin O. Reischauer, *The United States and Japan* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University, 1965), pp.116-142.
123. Anesaki Masaharu, *History of Japanese Religion* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1930), pp.1-11 and passim.
124. Nakamura, pp.531-576.
125. Spae, *Japanese*, pp.152-153.
126. *Ibid.*, pp.198-199. See also Nakamura, pp.531f.; Keene, Introduction.
127. Edwin O. Reischauer, *The Japanese* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University, 1977), pp.85-88, 96-97.
128. Gino K. Piovesana, *Contemporary Japanese Philosophical Thought* (New York: St. John's University, 1969), pp.1-II, 1-2.
129. McFarland, p.37; Kitagawa, pp.333-338.
130. William K. Bunce, *Religions in Japan Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1955), p.144.
131. Discussions at Konkokyo Theological Research Institute in December, 1978; International Department of Seicho no Ie in April, 1979; General Affairs Section of PL Kyodan headquarters in March, 1979.
132. Moroi Yoshinori, "The Principal Basis of Religion: On the Starting Point of the Science of Religion" *Tenri Journal of Religion* (March, 1955) no. 1, passim.
133. Ikeda, *Buddhism: The Living*, pp.20-40; idem, *The Living Buddha*, passim; Niwano, pp.185-188; *Rissho Kosei Kai*, pp.34f.
134. Discussion with Matsukubo Shuin, vice-rector of Yakushu-ji (Temple), Hosso Sect, Nara in October, 1978.
135. Conze, pp.74f., 119f., 152-153; de Bary, chap III; Ling, pp.19-20, 202f., 283f., 295f.
136. Kirimura, pp.13f., 26, 28; Ikeda, *Buddhism: The Living*, pp.55f.; discussion with (Theological) Study Department of Soka Gakkai in March, 1979.
137. Niwano, p.323.
138. Ikeda, *The Living Buddha*, passim; Niwano, discussions of parables and myths, passim.
139. Conze, p.32; de Bary, pp.13f.
140. See note #133.
141. Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1971), p.81.
143. Ling, pp.19-20, 202f., 283f., 295f.; Conze, pp.74f., 119f., 137f., 152-

- 153, 206; de Bary, chap III, pp.346f.; *Sources*, v.I, chap.X and XI.
142. Niwano, pp.204,206; Ikeda, *Buddhism: The Living*, pp.12f., 48f.
144. Kirimura, pp.26, 28.
145. *Ibid.*, pp.13f., 25f.
146. Ikeda, *Buddhism: The Living*, p.55.
147. Niwano, pp.323f.; *Rissho Kosei Kai*, pp.66-76.
148. Niwano, pp.209-210.
149. See Spae, *Shinto*, chap. III.
150. *The Sacred Scriptures*, p.33.
151. See Ofuchi, pp.33, 51f.
152. de Bary, pp.314f., 331f., 346; Conze, p.206; Suzuki Daisetsu, *Shin Buddhism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), pp.17f., 52f.; Earhart, *Japanese*, p.62; Nakamura, p.461.
153. Robert N. Bellah, "Ienaga Saburo and the Search for Meaning in Modern Japan" in Jansen, pp.383,399f.
154. Craig, p.145.
155. Niwano, pp.27-32, 222f., 323f.
156. Kitagawa, p.284.
157. John W. Hall, *Japan from Prehistory to Modern Times* (New York: Dell, 1970), p.233.
- 158/ Hori, pp.218f.
159. Yamamoto Junio, "On 'A Thing Lent, A Thing Borrowed'" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, p.111.
160. *Tenrikyo Teachings*, pp.47f.; Matsumara Kichitaro, "The Meaning of *Hinokishin*" in *Tenrikyo: Its History*, p.117 and chap. 9 generally.
161. See McFarland, pp.88-89, also on this point.
162. Nakane, p.21.
163. On political activities of the New Religions, I am indebted to discussions with Jan van Bragt and Jan Swyngedouw at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nanzan University, Nagoya, in May, 1979.
164. Hori, pp. 250f.; Ellwood, pp.157f.; McFarland, p.166; *Japanese Religion*, pp.102f.
165. Uehara, p.80.
166. Discussion with faculty members, Tenri University.
167. Spae, *Shinto*, pp.52f.; Herbert, pp.68f.; Spae, *Japanese*, pp.39, 48; Nakamura, p.414; Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1946), p.304; *Religions in Japan* prepared by the Religious Affairs Section of the Research Bureau of the Japanese national Ministry of Education (Tokyo: Ministry of Education, 1959) pp.5f. This work is now superseded by the 1972 edition, *Japanese Religion*; but it is still valuable for historical purposes.
168. Nakamura, pp.409-413.
169. Kato Shuichi, "Japanese Writers and Modernization" in Jansen, pp.443-444.
170. John F. Howes, "Japanese Christians and American Missionaries", in Jansen, pp.340-341.
171. *Japanese Religion*, p.239.
172. *Ibid.*, p.86.

- 173. Spae, *Japanese*, pp.140f.; Nakamura, pp.383-400.
- 174. Ross, pp.167f.
- 175. E. H. Norman, "Parties and Politics" in Jon Livingston, Joe Moore, and Felicia Oldfather, eds.; *The Japan Reader I* (New York: Random, 1973), pp.181f.; Carol Gluck, "Liberalism in Modern Japan," *Seminar Reports of the Program of General Education in the Humanities, Columbia University* v. 5 no. 2 (1976) pp.108-112.
- 176. Livingston, p.175; *Sources*, v.II, chap.xxvi.