

# CHANGES IN BUDDHIST ATTITUDES TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIONS: THE CASE OF THE SOKA GAKKAI

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## Introduction

Buddhism always has been in change. Some changes have been realized during the period when its teachings had not been put in writing yet. Some writings betray that some of these changes occurred when Buddha still was alive. These changes increased after the acceptance of Buddhism by new and other peoples than those who accepted Buddha's teachings first. Since then many elements from Hinduism and many other local religions have been assimilated into Buddhism. This happened in particular as soon as Buddhism reached China. In India changes and renovations of Buddhism due to non-Buddhist elements took place gradually. In this process its tolerance and flexibility played an important part. In China, however, its easiness in adopting new doctrines without more ado became a source of irritation to many Chinese monks. Some of this annoyance is still preserved in the correspondence of the monks Fan-t'ai, Tao-sheng and Hui-kuan (Liebenthal, 1955, 306). Chinese nationalism and the need of concise formulations of the doctrine and of a clear differentiation between Buddhism and other doctrines led to the creation of the first *p'an-chao* i.e. critical classifications and evaluations of the doctrines and the sutras's of all the sects of East-Asian Buddhism and even of non-Buddhist doctrines. These *p'an-chao* (Jap. *kyōhan*) are the distinguishing mark of East-Asian Buddhism. Every respectable Buddhist sect has its own *p'an-chao*.<sup>1</sup> This goes also for Japanese Buddhism.

Who wants to determine the changes in Japanese Buddhism, could – as in the study of other religions mostly is the case – just look at their external appearance and start to analyse it. It is more appropriate, however, to consider the interior structures of Japanese Buddhist sects as presented in their *kyōhan*. There are many cases to prove this. In order to be able to compete with the Shingon sect the famous Tendai-monk Ennin (792–835) added some esoteric pages to the *kyōhan* of the Tendai sect. In our days it is the Soka Gakkai which adopts its own *kyōhan* to the situation of modern Japan. In this paper I will consider a few changes of the Soka Gakkai only as far as they concern the attitude of this sect towards two non-Buddhist religions as there are Christianity and Shinto. After an introduction concerning the last developments in the religious history of Japan and of the Soka Gakkai in particular, I will look at the *kyōhan* of this sect. After these introductory remarks I will proceed to comparing the attitude of this sect towards Christianity and Shinto laid down by the Soka Gakkai in its *kyōhan*.

### 1. The Soka Gakkai and the latest developments of Japanese religion

In Japanese Buddhism changes have occurred since its beginning in the sixth century. So it will take many pages and books to describe all the details

of these developments (See J. H. KAMSTRA, 1988). In modern times many changes in the political and social fields sparked off the formation of hundreds of new religions trying to cope with the new situations on one hand and to maintain true Buddhism on the other. The development of new religions in Japan during the 19th and 20th centuries is characterized by three stages hinging on demographical and social factors.

The oldest stage comprises the period of the beginning of the 19th century until the Twenties of our century. During that period several new religions came into being as the Kurozumikyō, the Tenrikyō und the Konkokyō. The main aim of these religions mostly founded by farmers was to bring relief to the neglected people of rural Japan. These religions of Shinto origin assumed Buddhist organizational forms in order to extend their influence to larger areas than the local Shinto shrines are used to do. At the same time some of them promised to the faithful material prosperity under the guidance not of polytheistic Shinto gods but of a monotheistic deity. So did the Konkokyō with Konko Daijin, the Great God of Golden Light.

The second stage of new religions covers a period of about 50 years: from 1920 until 1970. This period is characterized by an enormous increase of the urban population at the expense of the rural population. So millions of people who migrated to the large urban areas of Tokyo and Osaka gave up their relations with the traditional Shinto and Buddhist shrines and temples of the countryside. In the cities they met with a large religious and social vacuum. Many new religions of buddhist origin as well as of Shinto brand came into being in order to fill this urban gap. In 1924 there were in Japan about 98 religious organizations. The number of new religions increased from 414 in 1930 until 1092 in 1935, "after life became more comfortable" (Kitagawa, 1987, 284). Some of these new religions are wellknown abroad as the Soka Gakkai, the Rissho Koseikai and the Reiyūkai. This second period of new religions marks an increase of their membership which is unparalleled in Japan's and – probably – the world's religious history. In Japan the religions of the first and of the second stage are named: *shinkōshūkyō*: the new(ly) arisen religions.<sup>2</sup>

In 1970 the period of the *shinkōshūkyō* came to an end and was followed by a third stage: the stage of *shin-shin shūkyō*: the "new new-religions". In 1970 Japan reached the goal of its post-war policy: the complete recovery of its industries from the wounds of war and a balance of trade surplus superior to that of the other main industrial countries. The Japanese people did not react to the prosperity resulting from these successes in industry and trade with a- (or even: anti-)religious secularism but with a new group of religions. Many of these new new-religions tend to cure people of many diseases (mostly of psychological nature) resulting from this new modern situation. The number of these new religions is not well known and did not appear yet in the official statistics of the Japanese Ministry of Education. One can estimate them at least 20. Some of them, e.g. the Agonshu and the Mahikari sects account together for nearly one million of adherents.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of these newest developments in Japan's religious history several new religions of the second period still account for an ever increasing membership and popularity. Under these religions the Soka Gakkai ranks first for many years. In 1986 it had in Japan a membership of 7 950 000 households which is equal to at least 17 million individual members against 5 600 000 individual members of the Rissho Koseikai. Also in 1986 the Soka Gakkai counts out of Japan 1 262 000 individual members in 115 countries of the world. The sect established several centers for its propaganda all over the world even in Europe. Since my first publication in this periodical in 1960 this sect tripled its membership. So the Soka Gakkai still deserves our undivided attention.

Originally, i.e. in the years preceding World War II, the Soka Gakkai<sup>4</sup> in Japan was devised to be a layman organization of a few members only. They convened at intervals in order to discuss actual problems arising from daily experience in educational institutions. Its first founder MAKIGUCHI TSUNABURŌ (1871–1943) wrote the guidelines for these discussions between 1930 and 1934 in his *Sōka Kyōiku Taikei*, which means: a system of value creating education, a work in four volumes. The principles of this "system" were derived from some Japanese interpretations of the neo-Kantian philosophy of RICKERT and WINDEL BAND (the so called Baden-school). W. KOHLER (1962, 218) is of the opinion that there is some parallelism between these theories and those of the Japanese philosopher NISHI AMANE (1829–1897), the inventor of the Japanese word for philosophy: *tetsugaku*, who studied in Leyden and Paris. This is not likely, however, for NISHI AMANE did not take much interest in Kantianism, but in the positivism and empiricism of J. S. MILL and A. COMTE (PIOVESANA, 1968, 5–18). It is more probable that MAKIGUCHI owes his value philosophy to the Neo-Kantianist philosopher SŌDA KIICHIRO (1881–1937), for since 1917 he read SŌDA's works over and over (MORI, 1977, 74ff). MAKIGUCHI tried to include the values of the common people into his philosophy. So he replaced the value of truth and holiness with the value of gain and considered gain to be the center of all values (MORI, 1977, 76). MAKIGUCHI at first denied the value of religion or holiness in his value system, but "many unusual phenomena" in his life did not only lead to the conversion to the Nichiren Shōshū, the "True Sect of Nichiren", but also to the introduction of Buddhism into his value system in the middle 1930's. This meant an important change in MAKIGUCHI's life: a shift from philosophy and pedagogics to religion. It is difficult to determine, however, whether this shift in his value system has been made by himself or by his successor TODA JOSEI (MORI, 1977, 65ff).<sup>5</sup> Since then this new brand of "western" philosophy has been added to the teachings of NICHIREN (1222–1282) and in particular to the doctrine of the Nichiren Shōshū, one out of the 37 religious sects and organizations, which inherited their teachings from Japan's medieval prophet NICHIREN. All this resulted into the official foundation of the Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai in 1937. Afterwards this name was changed into Soka Gakkai: "Institute of creative values".

MAKIGUCHI died in prison in 1944. His companion TODA JOSEI (1900–1958) started another renovation of the sect. In 1944 he began chanting the sacred phrase: *Namu myōhō Rengekyō* (I put my faith in the wonderful Lotus sutra) more than thousand times a day. After two million repetitions of this phrase he was seized by a kind of ecstasy. In the cell of the prison he shouted to all buddhas, bodhisattvas and call common men of the world. It flashed upon him that he had found “the true meaning of life” (MURATA, 1971, 89). According to Toda this chanting was the never failing machine, handed over by NICHIREN to common people. People should use this machine, for it won’t cost you any money (MURATA, 1971, 107). This new conviction brought TODA after his release from prison in 1945 abd after an interval of five years in 1950 to several steps, which changed completely the old “institute of creative values” into a radical religious organization. Thus the membership of the Soka Gakkai increased greatly from 3000 families in 1951 to 400 000 in 1954 (KAMSTRA, 1960, 47). A few of those innovations are: First he invited specialists and scholars in congresses in order to discuss assertion and discussion techniques. So he came to the institution of *zadankai*: regular meetings where members discuss their daily problems.

In the second place he shaped the Soka Gakkai into a well oiled organization, which divided Japan hierarchically into 34 sections, subdivided in districts, circles, and groups. TODA as president headed this pyramidal organization. At the same time he set up special associations for the youth, for women, for people of different occupations (e.g. for teachers and workmen), for university students, for cultural activities and for education (KAMSTRA, 1960, 46, 47).

In the third place he reorganized and reformulated the doctrine of the sect. To that end he had a manual made which should be used by all members. This manual was named *Shakubuku Kyōten*, i.e. Canon of *shakubuku*<sup>6</sup> “crushing and tearing” (the opinions and beliefs of others) (NAKAMURA, 1975, 613). It explains in a very plane language the doctrines of the value philosophy and of the Nichiren Shōshū, methods of indoctrination and a refutation of the false religions and beliefs. Every member has to know this manual by heart and prior to the appointment to important jobs in the sect he or she will be examined several times (KAMSTRA, 1960, 45ff). In this paper I will consider two editions of this manual more in detail. It was published for the first time by the “Educational Department” of the sect in 1951. In 1951 TODA proclaimed *shakubuku*, the crushing of other religions, and *hobobarai*, the destruction of all the other objects of worship in the houses of new converts: family altars, ancestral tablets, and Shinto worship items (WILKINSON, 1975, 41). This policy of Toda led to an explosive growth of the sect: In 1959 the membership of families passed the million mark. Six years later it increased to more than six millions (DUMOULIN, 1975, 275). In 1958 TODA passed away. In 1960 after an interval of two years since TODA’s death IKEDA DAISAKU (born in 1928) became his successor as president. Since 1975 IKEDA became also president of the new international organization of the Soka Gakkai: the Soka Gakkai International (S.G.I.). In 1979 IKEDA was appointed honorary president of the Soka Gakkai

and Hojo HIROSHI succeeded him as president. After Hojo's death in 1981 AKIYA EUNOSUKE (born in 1930) was elected president for a five year term. In 1986 AKIYA became reelected president for a second five year term. Now he receives assistance of 65 vice presidents. Under the leadership of IKEDA and his successors great strides were made in many fields. To mention only a few:

1. The continuing growth in membership mentioned elsewhere.
2. The politico-religious ideal, formulated by TODA in the *Obutsu myōgōron*, "Discussion on the wonderful union of king and Buddha", led to the formation of an own political party. It was founded by IKEDA in 1964: the Kōmeitō, "the Clean Government party". In 1970 it loosened its ties with the Soka Gakkai (DUMOULIN, 1975, 266–268).
3. The construction in 1972 of a new head temple at a cost exceeding 100 million dollars.
4. The foundation of several educational und cultural institutions. The establishment of Kindergarten, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools and in 1971 at the top of this school system: the Soka University in Tachikawa near Tokyo. The aims of this university, formulated by IKEDA bespeak his aims. It has to be the highest seat of learning for human education, the cradle of a new culture, and the fortress of peace for mankind. The items of education, culture, and peace return frequently in Ikeda's many writings and speeches. The university tries to accomplish these goals through five institutes: the Institute of Peace Studies (1976), the Institute of Applied Economics (1976), the Institute of Asian Studies (1977), the Institute of Information Sciences (1977), and the Institute of Comparative Culture (1982). In other cultural fields there are the Min-on Concert Association and the Fuji Art Museums.
5. The edition of an own newspaper: the *Seikyo Shimbun*. In 1965 it became a daily of 8 pages and it has now a daily circulation of 4.7 million copies. Other periodicals in languages other than Japanese are spread throughout more than 30 countries.
6. A building program of Nichiren Shōshū temples in Japan and abroad in order to reach the goal of 60 new temples in 1990.
7. The donation of books and of money to institutions in Japan and all over the world. In 1985 350 000 books were donated to schools and the United Nations received a gift of 1 million dollar.
8. The activities abroad imply: the internationalization of the Soka Gakkai. To this end IKEDA himself founded the Soka Sakkai International of which – as has been stated – he himself is president since 1975. In order to reach the aims of this international organization in 1987 a branch of the Soka University became established in Los Angeles on a 248 acre campus. It was named: SULA, Soka University of Los Angeles.<sup>7</sup> For the purpose of the propagation of the Soka Gakkai in the U.S.A. and in other countries a new conversion method was introduced: *shōju*, i.e. introduction of Soka Gakkai doctrines without the refutation of other religions. *Shakubuku* became restricted to Japan but became more carefully used (DUMOULIN, 1976, 262, 263). In

1964 the *Seikyō News* wrote: "President Daisaku Ikeda emphasized that Shakubuku, method of propagating Buddhism by refuting heretical teachings, is applicable only to Japan where people misunderstand Nichiren Shoshu, the orthodox lineage of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism." "In overseas countries, however", he said, "all you have to do is to introduce this religion to other people without refuting the doctrines of other religions. This is called the method of Shoju." For this reason the *Shakubuku Kyoten* never has been translated into english.

So the history of the Soka Gakkai, which is only a few decades old, displays a long series of changes: changes in doctrine: philosophy into religion; changes in membership not only numerical but also in professions: a shift from teachers and intellectuals involved in western philosophy, to the white collar men and factory labourers in the cities, chanting the *daimoku*, the Great Eye, i.e. the sacred phrase, many times a day; changes in conversion methods: *shakubuku* into *shoju*; changes in types of leadership: the would be intellectual and philosopher MAKIGUCHI into the authoritarian religionist TODA and later on into the more flexible champion of world peace IKEDA; and finally changes in the sect's attitudes towards other religions, which even are traceable in the sect's manual and in its *kyōhan*.

## 2. The attitude of the Soka Gakkai towards other religions in its institutionalized form: the *kyōhan*

The first *p'an chao* (*kyōhan*) we know of dates back to a certain Pao Liang of the Chinese Liang period (502–556). In a quite simple scheme he opposed three inferior buddhist doctrines, qualified by him as *upaya*, i.e. skilful means, to the "eternal and harmonious" teachings of the *Mahāparinirvāna sūtra* (Ito, 1929, 76, 77). Ever since many *kyōhan* have been devised in China and in Japan. So every Buddhist sect in East Asia possesses a *kyōhan* of its own under different names: so e.g. the Sanronsect the *nizō sambōrin* (the two pitaka's and the three wheels of the dharma), the Hossōsect the *sanjikyō* (the teachings of the three periods), the Kegonsect the *gokyō jissshu* (the five doctrines and the ten sects), The Jōdōsect the *nimonban* (the distinction of two gates) etc. The *kyōhan* of the Soka Gakkai is not an invention of its founders, but is based on the *kyōhan* in use in the Nichiren-sect and in the Nichiren Shōshū sect, which both ascribe the *Kyōhan* to NICHIREN. This, however, is not likely. It originated in the Nichiren sect (Taya, 1957, 127). This *kyōhan* is named *Guzu no gokō*, i.e. the five ropes of the propagation (of Buddhism). This Nichiren-*kyōhan* is the heart of the *kyōhan* of the Soka Gakkai, though the sect added some more distinctions in its manuals: the *goshu no sotai*, the five oppositions, the *sanshō*, the three argumentations, and some other distinctions of Buddhist doctrines. The *five ropes* to spread the doctrine (all over the world) are:

1. *kyo*: doctrine: the best doctrine to lead people to happiness is the Lotus sutra;

2. *ki*: capacity of the mind: this sutra was explained to the people with the worst disposition in the era of decay;

3. *ji*: time: the appropriate time for the spread of this teaching is now: the time of the decay of the Law(*mappō*);
4. *koku*: country: Japan is the most suitable place for this propagation;
5. *jo*: order, arrangement: the popularity of the provisional Mahayana paves the way to the true Mahayana. The Soka Gakkai changed the name of this fifth rope into: *kyōhō rufu no sengo*, the order of the spread of the doctrine and of the Law.<sup>8</sup>

The three argumentations consist in:

1. *bunshō*: arguments derived from the existence of its own literature: a real religion without its own dogmatics and writings does not exist;
2. *rishō*: arguments based on reason: even if a religion has the literature of its own, it nevertheless has to acquire reason for thousands of people based on scientific and philosophic studies;
3. *genshō*: argumentation based on real life: a good religion promotes the virtues of everyone by means of right belief and ascetic practices.<sup>9</sup>

In all these criteria the Soka Gakkai tries to draw boundary-lines, which have to indicate the position of the true religion, distinguishing it at the same time from the false religions, which do not correspond to these criteria. It does not mention, however, these "false" religions by name. To this end it developed the *goshu no sōtai*, the five oppositions, which in some of its details has its roots also in antiquity. These five oppositions in particular delineate the attitude of the Soka Gakkai towards other religions. These five oppositions are:

1. the opposition between *gedō* (the outer way) and *naidō* (the inner way). As this opposition is important for our subject I will return to this item later on.

2. the opposition between Hinayana and Mahayana. This opposition points to Hinayana-sects in Japan: the Kusha-sect, the Jōjitsu-sect and the Ritsu-sect. These sects belong to Buddhism of the Nara period (710–794). This opposition implies that Hinayana is inferior to Mahayana.

3. the opposition between provisional and real (Mahayana): *gonjitsu sōtai*. In Mahayana Buddhism there are some sects which do not teach the real doctrine of Buddha. For that reason they are provisional. These sects are: the Hossō-sect (Nara period), the Jōdō-sects, the Zen-sects, the Shingon-sect and the Sanron-sect (Nara period). Hence they cannot compete with real Mahayana.

4. the opposition between main and footprint: *honshaku sōtai*. The real Mahayana which emerges here adheres to the doctrine of the *Lotus sutra*. This distinction is based on the division of the *Lotus sutra* into two sections each section containing 14 chapters. The first section of the sutra is called the footprint gate (*shakumon*). The last section is named the main gate (*hommon*). In the first section Buddha did not yet reveal his eternal nature, but appeared as a being bound by limitations of time and space. In the *hommon* section the eternal nature of Buddha is revealed. The Tendai-sect believes to stay in the main gate, because this gate is higher than the footprint gate. All this,

however, is of no use at the time of the decay of the Law. For NICHIREN taught that then the *Lotus sūtra* and other sūtra's would be of no use. So finally only the Nichiren sects are left.

5. the final opposition between seeds and liberation: *shudatsu sotai*. Without the seeds of Buddhahood it is impossible to reach Buddhahood. In the age of decay these seeds will have to be sown first. For that reason the *Lotus sūtra* (the *Hokkekyō*) of the Tendai-sect is not sufficient. According to the teachings of NICHIREN it will have to be completed by (the invocation of) *Namu myōhō Rengekyō* (I put my faith in the wonderful *Lotus sūtra*). So at the end of five oppositions only the supreme Buddhist sects emerge: the sects of NICHIREN.<sup>10</sup>

The other distinctions employed by the Soka Gakkai in its manual intend to subdivide further all the existing Buddhist sects. Only one sect turns out to be superior to all others: the Nichiren Shōshū. It should be the only Nichiren-sect which corresponds exactly to his teachings.<sup>11</sup> Here I will not go into the further details of these distinctions but focus my attention on the first of the five oppositions: The *gedō* and the *naidō*, the outer and the inner way.

The division of religions into religions of the inner way (or teaching) and of the outer way (or teaching) is quite old. In China its purpose was to distinguish the new esoteric school (i.e. Buddhism) from the older exoteric school (i.e. Confucianism). The mandate of Heaven became renewed by Dharmakāya (i.e. Buddha's body of Dharma) "who in the sutras had outlined the way leading to the Confucian ideal of eternal peace. When Buddhism could be proved to fit into this scheme it was sanctioned by the Chinese tradition" (LIEBENTHAL, 1955, 68). This happened already in the fourth century. In 570 a monk named TAO-AN brought forward a document: the *Erh chiao lun*, "the discussion about the two doctrines". In it he divides all doctrines into two kinds: internal and external. "The former consists only of Buddhism, while the latter includes all other systems, which he considers (Taoism included) to be varieties of Confucianism" (HURVITZ, 1962, 120). Since that time this distinction always has been employed to separate superior Buddhism from all other religions. The Soka Gakkai explains this opposition in the several editions of its *Shakubuku Kyōten* in the same words: "*Naidō* touches upon Buddhism, *Gedō* (or in its profane form: *gaidō*) refers to all religions except Buddhism, namely: Brahmanism, Christianity, Confucianism etc."<sup>12</sup> It adds also some reason for this distinction: "Buddhism is based on the law of cause and effect. It preaches that where is a cause, there infallably will be an effect. This is sure for every rule and is scientific. The combination of hydrogen with oxygen leads to specific results. In science this is independent from time or place. The rules of Buddhism yield in the same causes similar effects independently from time or space. This works therefore just like science. The (religions of the) *gedō*, however, are not accurate about cause and effect. Therefore they are inferior to the *naidō*." This "scientific" principle will return many times in the discussions of the Soka Gakkai with the separate religions belonging to the outer way. In the first editions of the *Shakubuku*

*Kyōten* the Soka Gakkai concludes its manual with the sixth chapter: "the true body of false religions". So in its 1954 edition it deals with: Tenrikyo (307–311), Sekai Messiakyo (311–317), P. L. Kyodan (317–322), the Nichiren-sects (!): Reiyūkai (322–325) and the Risshō Kōseikai (325–327), the Buddhist sect Kōdōkai (327–330), Shinto (331–336), Christianity (336–352) and animism (352–355). In this chapter it does not classify the religions according to its five oppositions. Buddhist sects have been included as well. In later editions of the *Shakubuku Kyōten* it takes its *kyōhan* more seriously in classifying and discussing the values of several religions. In its 38th edition of 1969, which is except for some few pages (about the *kyōhan* e.g.) quite different in comparison with its first editions, it did not stop at the above mentioned lines on *naidō* and *gedō*, but devoted in the first part about "general discussions" (Sōron) the eighth chapter to the religions of *gedō*. It named this chapter: *gedō* and folkreligion. This chapter is divided into three paragraphs, which deal with: the concepts of god and soul, superstition and the influence of evil and the last paragraph with "the criticism on the chief false religions". These religions are: Shinto (186–190), Christianity (191–195), Tenrikyo (196–200), Konkokyo (200–201), Seicho no Ie (201–204), Ananaikyo (204–207), P. L. Kyōdan (207–208), Sekai Messiakyo (208–210) and superstition (211–219). Here Buddhist new religions are left out and quite a few other new religions are included: Konkokyō, Seichō no Ie, and Ananaikyō. It devotes less pages to Christianity (five in stead of 13), Sekai Messiakyo (two in stead of seven) and the P. L. Kyōdan (two in stead of six). It added quite a few pages on superstition to which it counts the following cults: the Inari-cult, Kishimojin-cult, Fudōcult, Jizōcult, Kannoncult and other cults (for Konbira, Ebisu and other gods).<sup>13</sup> As the Soka Gakkai takes the statistics of the religions seriously into consideration, the increase or the decrease in the number of pages might reflect the growing or the weakening influence of the religions concerned. This would mean a devaluation of Christianity and of some other new religions. The Soka Gakkai, however, did not only change the numbers of pages on these religions in the succeeding editions of its manuals, but also its view on these religions. In the following pages I will focus the attention on two of them: Christianity and Shinto being better known than the "new religions" mentioned before.

### 3. *The attitude of the Soka Gakkai towards Christianity and Shinto*

In the following pages I will consider the views of the Soka Gakkai on Christianity and Shinto as far as they are recorded in two editions of the *Shakubuku Kyōten*: the edition of 1954 (the number of it is uncertain) and the edition of 1969 (the 38th edition). The former edition has been realised under supervision of TODA JOSEI, the latter under IKEDA DAISAKU. They both wrote the prefaces of these respective editions, which somehow allude to the situation of the time of the respective edition. This change in situation and purpose of the Soka Gakkai might have influenced its views on other religions. In his

preface to the 1954 edition TODA still refers to the prewar educational organisation of the Soka Gakkai under the leadership of MAKIGUCHI and his efforts to actualise the philosophy of NICHIREN. He also refers to the war. It was in conformity with the prophecy of NICHIREN that the total destruction of Japan led to the propagation of the doctrine of the Nichiren Shōshū all over the Far East. IKEDA in his foreword to the 39th edition does not mention anymore the loss of the war. NICHIREN's saying about the total destruction of Japan was replaced by another prophecy of NICHIREN: "The great earth has to be made into our target" (1969, 1). He further mentions the ill reputation of the Soka Gakkai due to *shakubuku*. Therefore a good understanding of Buddhism is needed. "Buddhism has two ways of propagation, one being by listening, the other by *shakubuku*, based on the Lotus sutra. So the Nichiren Shōshū is no more bound for the Far East but for the whole world." It is interesting to see how far these different viewpoints are traceable in the attitudes of the Soka Gakkai towards Christianity and Shinto.

### 3.1 Christianity

The *Shakubuku Kyōten* – as its name indicates – is aimed at "crushing and tearing" the other religions. For that purpose some knowledge of these religions is required in order to demonstrate their weaknesses. So an introduction of Christianity and arguments against it are both needed for a manual, written in a very clear and plane Japanese language, in order to enable *every* member of the Soka Gakkai to crush this religion. So in both editions I will have to compare the pictures of Christianity as well as the refutations of it.

#### 3.1.1 The picture of Christianity in both editions of the *Shakubuku Kyōten*<sup>14</sup>

In the 1954 edition of the S.K. the attention is focussed on the person of Jesus Christ. It deals with his birth (336–337), his Resurrection (338–340), "the investigation of his doctrine" (341–343), "the nature of God as indicated by Jesus Christ" (343–345), his miracles (345–347), some "weak points" in his doctrine (347–350), the problems around his death (351), and his view on life (351). In the 1969 edition the Soka Gakkai is rather involved in a "controversial dialogue" not with the person of Jesus Christ, but with the Christian church. In detail it deals with its "origin and history" (191–192), "its teaching and the *shakubuku*" (192–194) and "the actual situation" (195). It mentions the life of Jesus Christ in a few lines only under the head of "its teaching and *shakubuku*" as a concoction of impossible stories (194). The churches are mentioned in the 1954 edition in the statement that "Some Christian churches teach that the real doctrine of Christ consists in the Sermon on the Mount. Others, however, teach that this is the doctrine of the disciples only as delivered in the Gospels, the Book of Revelation and the nine parts of the Bible" (1954, 340). Let us look more in detail at the picture of Christianity as delivered in the S.K. This will concern the history of Christianity and its teachings. I will deal with the "weak points" and "the actual situation of Christianity" under the heading of "refutations".

### 3.1.1.1 *The history of Christianity (in its widest sense)*

"The birth of Christ took place in the year 4 B.C. His mother was the virgin Mary, his father was God. Christianity beliefs therefore that all things are phenomena of the spiritual. It asserts that who looks at the phenomenon of religious feelings concerning the conception of a virgin, cannot have any doubt about it. No one should call in question the explanation that God borrowing the body of a virgin appeared on this world" (1954, 337). The 1954 S.K. says about other events in the life of Christ: "Though the date of the crucifixion of Christ is insure, it is reported to have taken place between the 33<sup>d</sup> and the 30st year A.D.: the crucifixion on April 3 (Friday) at 3 o'clock, the Resurrection on April 5 (Sunday) and the Ascension on May 4 (Thursday). At the time of the crucifixion one disciple Judas was manifestly in revolt, the other eleven, however, abandoned Christ out of fear. The third day Christ is said to have become restored to life. He made his first appearance to a woman and afterwards to his disciples. Finally he should have ascended into heaven. According to the general opinion the period between the Resurrection and the Ascension should have been one month" (1954, 338). To these dates (which are even more specific than in our memories!) it adds only a few other details. The 1954 S.K. mentions the miracles of Christ: "Christ performed miracles. This has been recorded 46 times. The records have been made by his followers. That it is recorded in the Bible does not prove yet that these miracles took place..." (1954, 345). Both the 1954 and the 1969 S.K. mention the prophecies of Christ: "the wild talk of prophecies" (1954, 350), "not a single prophecy of Christ has come true" (1969, 195). The 1954 edition also points at the death of Christ: "Christ achieved on his cross his end. This fact has defeated his followers harmfully, no matter what meaning they attached to it. When the great saint Nichiren took his seat of death, he shouted at a 'murderer-head-cutter': 'Cut my head before it is too late.' At that moment all the devas of our country appeared in masses and destroyed the wicked man by means of their protective powers. How powerless is the end of Christ if we compare this with the life power of his dharma" (1954, 351). The 1969 edition of the S.K. is rather scarce of historical data on Christianity. These data cover a few lines only: "Christianity proceeded from the Jewish religion, but nowadays Catholicism (*kyūkyō*: the old religion) and Protestantism (*shinkyō*: the new religion) vehemently are pitted against each other. The Protestants constitute a denomination dating back to Martin Luther, who in the beginning of the 16th century set forth to reform the church, which had become corrupted and degenerate and who has been excommunicated for religious reformation. These "new" and "old" churches are cracked up. As a matter of fact it is told that almost forty denominations are at variance" (1969, 191). The number of forty denominations refers to the Japanese statistics.<sup>15</sup> I doubt, however, that all these Christian denominations in Japan were at odds at that time. The historical picture of Christianity in both editions seems to be rather poor and biased. There seems to be some difference between the two editions considered: the 1954 edition takes the

beginning of Christianity into consideration, the 1969 edition prefers to focus its attention on the actual situation of the churches rather than on the historical data of Jesus Christ.

### 3.1.1.2 *The teachings of Christianity*

The 1954 edition of the S.K. is more extensive in its exposition of the Christian doctrine than the 1969 edition. So I will concentrate mainly on the 1954 edition and refer to the 1969 edition when needed. Under the heading "Investigation of the doctrine" (340) it introduces first the following words of Christ: "The father of heaven has the sun to shine upon wicked and good people. He causes the rain to fall on righteous and dishonest people. What will you gain if you love only those who love you? Is a publican not doing the same? As your father in heaven is perfect, so it will be good to be perfect as well" (340). Hereupon the following "exegesis" of the text is added: "The word 'perfect' which is in use here concerns love. This perfect love appeared on this world as love which forgives the sins as a result of the death penalty of the cross. In considering this one finds out: 1. for the practice of Christian belief love is necessary being an absolute condition . . . 2. what merit will be acquired if you love people as you do yourself? As your father in heaven is perfect so it is good to be perfect as well . . . 3. a person with perfect love can remit the sins of others . . . 4. "be perfect as the father in heaven" points to the thesis that the father in heaven is supposed to exist unconditionally. There is, however, no explanation for the real body, the nature and the function of this father in heaven. There is no cause why this father came into existence. Therefore on the point of coming into existence he is rather contradictory in being nothing else but a ghost (*yu*) with a name and without a body" (341–343). The 1969 edition begins its exposition under the heading "the teaching and the *shakubuku*" with a letter of a Christian woman, who happens to be sick. "Happy will be the person, who suffers, for Christ himself will let her deeply know his love on the cross. This woman will be aware of the sufferings of Christ on the cross for the benefit of the whole mankind. No matter what kind of pain she will have to bear it in silence and patience. This is named redemption" (191–192). It mentions further superficially only the quotation from the Sermon on the Mount about love and the perfection of the father (193), and the remission of sins (194). It also has its doubts about the real body of the father (192).

The 1954 S.K. adds a special section "The nature of God as indicated by Jesus Christ". Here it exposes the nature of God in ten points: "1. God is creator, 2. God is but one, 3. God is spirit, 4. God is almighty, 5. God is omniscient, 6. God is love, 7. God is good, 8. God is immanent, 9. God is omnipresent, 10. God is transcendent. In general (the nature of God) consists of these ten characteristics" (343, 344). In the 1969 edition of the S.K. this special section on the nature of God is missing. It mentions nevertheless some qualities of God: "Let us compare two or three points of the Christian teachings with those of Buddhism. First Christianity teaches that solely the absolute God has made everything. It says subsequently that God is

omniscient, almighty, perfect, love, good etc., it does not explain however in general principles the real body of God, the cause and effect of his existence" (192).

The 1954 edition concludes its remarks on Christianity with a few lines concerning the "life view of Christianity": "There is no teaching about what happens before birth of man. It teaches that man after death will be taken into the heaven of God. There is no exact theory about what will happen after that. It is really in contradiction with the life philosophy of Buddhism" (351). The 1969 edition has also a few lines on the life philosophy of Christianity, though it does not devote a special section to it: "Christianity does not possess the power to change our actual life. It constructs a kind of logic only which apologizes for the sufferings of life. While it is not capable of changing the destiny of our modern life, it has untenable statements about the heaven and guaranties of the world to come. It asserts further that only those who belief in God will be saved. People, however, who do not believe or who cannot believe will end up as children of sin to all eternity. There is a world of difference between it and the power of Buddhist Dharma, which in the long run infallably will save even those who are opposed to it according to the sins as far as demonstrable" (192).

The Christian theories concerning sin and remission of sins puzzle both editions of the S.K. In the 1954 edition the problem of sin is one of the weak points of Christianity: "The Christian doctrine does not produce evidence for the correctness of its practice. Hence only the conclusion can be drawn that it is a false religion. It teaches for instance that if someone confesses his sins, they will be remitted" (348). The 1969 edition is a little bit more elaborate in its information about sins in Christianity: "Christianity takes sin very serious. The source of the misery of man is original sin (i.e. the sin of apostasy committed by Adam and Eve). So it became decided that man by nature is a sinner. Even public and national law were included in the sphere of sin. In order to wipe out sin, man was made to confess, which is a form of penitence" (193).

In conclusion what is the picture of Christianity we arrive at in both editions of the S.K.? The 1954 edition is rather focussed on Jesus Christ: his person and his words, his ideas on love, sin, his "father" and the qualities of his father. The 1969 edition rather concentrates on the churches, which are active in Japan. Nevertheless it still sticks to the same themes as the 1954 edition: love, sin, nature of God etc. Its exposition is less systematic and disorderly. So both might betray the degree of organizational skill of its shapers (MAKIGUCHI OR IKEDA?). In both editions the picture of Christianity is rather poor. Quite a few vital elements of Christian doctrine are missing so for instance the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the organization of the churches (pope, bishops, hierarchy, rituals, sacraments [except for the confessions]), more historical details etc. What has been the principle of choice in the selection of Christian doctrines? Did the chosen topics ease *shakubuku*, their crushing and tearing? And did the others not? Perhaps we might find an answer in:

### 3.1.2 *The refutations of Christianity in both editions of the S.K.*

The purpose of the S.K. is to crush and to tear all false religions also Christianity. For crushing a religion belonging to the *gedō* as Christianity the "scientific" principle of cause and effect should be applied in order to prove the superiority of Buddhism over other religions of *gedō*. So the place which a religion occupies in the *kyōhan* system determines also the type of refutation which a religion deserves. Within the *gedō* some religions are Japanese and have some characteristics in common with Buddhist Japanese sects. So a Japanese (or Shinto) argumentation might render un-Japanese religions inferior to Japanese religions. This second type of refutation is also used in the S.K. A third type of argumentation consists in a direct confrontation with Buddhism: its teachings, its sutras, saints (e.g. Nichiren) or the Nichiren Shoshu. The last type of argumentations are the direct rejections. I will consider these four types of refutations in both editions of the S.K.

#### 3.1.2.1 *The "scientific", philosophical refutation*

In the 1954 edition of the S.K. this type of refutation turns up nine times, mostly under the name of "law of cause and effect". So it says about the immaculate conception of Mary: "No matter from what angle one looks at it, but the conception of a virgin is contrary to the laws of the science of the universe. It is absolutely impossible that a virgin can become pregnant without a human father. In order to cover this fact it is said that God borrowed the body of an immaculate virgin. . . . This opinion disregards the real facts. This description is a production of old fashioned people who fancy that without the permission of God no child will be born as a result of the sexual intercourse of man and woman. This is therefore a fallacy which from both the viewpoint of modern philosophy and of science will have to be denied" (337f). It applies this kind of refutation also to the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ: "It is a principle that it is absolutely impossible that a person who is completely dead, can revive. Moreover it is sufficient (to know) that Christianity has no mysterious proofs to support this opinion. Finally what means the ascension for a body. It is a property of the body that its weight is clearly heavier than the air. That a heavy body can ascend the air, which is lighter, is in conflict with the law of Archimedes. Who beliefs this kind of realities, has to deny all the natural laws. (338f). The Resurrection was not an abnormal phenomenon but merely was a matter of people in an abnormal condition. It is just the same as in the Japanese, absorbed in Inari believe, who in a hypnotic state fancy foxes to be witches or women.<sup>16</sup> So "Christ did not come to life with his own body. This was just an action of some women and of the disciples. Therefore this manipulation of Christianity covers its lowgrade doctrine with religious ornaments and is nothing more but a hollow, empty effort to devise a superior value of religion" (339). Concerning the qualities of God it argues: "God is creator. All the living and dead beings of the universe without any distinction are not made by some other being. We received our own lives from our parents and we are not made by God or by Buddha . . .

God is spirit. This is also wrong. All beings without distinction possess merely one life body and soul. A spirit separated from matter does not really exist. A real being that is almighty and all-knowing is therefore not conceivable. In all beings only the precise law of cause and effect is at work. Moreover we can earn that law only by means of the material world. The other qualities (of God) are human, innate and permanent qualities. It is an error that they should originate with the power of somebody else. In one word the absolute God does not exist. If he does exist, why do the peoples of the world live in different conditions? If God creates man, and he would exist within man, why then are there persons who are blind from childbirth, why then is there suffering people in lifelong poverty, why does this injustice exist? If one counts up (all these cases) one would arrive at the conclusion that God will be very cruel and this without any limits. Moreover because Christianity is not able to explain this cause it lacks theoretically any objectivity. Where objectivity is missing, there is no general adequacy and is it impossible to apply the laws of truth" (344f). It applies this argumentation also to the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ: "That they (= miracles) are recorded in the Bible does not prove yet that they really took place. Some of these miracles, e.g. the curing of an insane person, occurred also in Buddhism many times. Even nowadays in the Nichiren Shōshū there are cases of lunatics getting cured. That blind people can see and deaf persons can hear, while the roots of these faculties (the senses of sight and hearing) are only left, happens also in Buddhism. Here people will be cured according to the laws of cause and effect. Thus Buddhism procures theoretical evidence for the healing (of diseases). In Buddhism this is not unusual. Reviving a little girl, however, who died, is just a fiction. A person who is completely dead cannot revive. This is the same as in the case of Christ's Resurrection. Even nowadays Christianity explains away rare facts with the two Chinese characters of 'miracle' ('*hi-seki*'). This points clearly at the low level of those who do not know the reasons why these phenomena occur" (345f). All this leads to the final conclusion in the last lines of the section on Christianity in the 1954 edition: "Concerning the life view of Christianity . . . there is no exact theory about what happens after death. It is really in contradiction with the life philosophy of Buddhism. It is possible to demonstrate that it is of inferior quality. Its doctrine disregards *all the causes and effects*. It is alienated from real life. It is merely a collection of assumptions and ideas. It originated in the inferior religious feelings of primitive people and is hence a false religion, which conceals its incompetence to social work, to organisational and economic strength" (351f). In these last lines the Soka Gakkai emphasizes its own prerogatives.

In the 1969 edition of the S.K. the "scientific" refutation has been used only once: "Further concerning life which is the ultimate concern of religion Christianity develops doctrines which are not worth criticizing at all. First it says that the mother of Christ who was born 4 years B.C., was the virgin Mary. His father should have been God. Then Christ was 30 years old when he was crucified. The third day he came to life again. One month later he ascended to heaven. These stories are foolish no matter from what kind of

scientific common sense one looks at them. Nevertheless there are some Christians who believe them. They try to explain and to rationalize them as a kind of religious expressions. For all that the doctrine of a religion – no matter what kind of theories it develops – will have to include a philosophy, which complies with (the opinions of) everybody because of its universal adequacy” (194). The introduction of “the actual situation” has some scientific flavour: “Now in our era of scientific progress and of artistic revival, there is since the French Revolution in the peoples of Europe a sharp decrease in the number of sincere believers in Christianity. This in short subsists only in some forms and habits” (195). The “scientific” refutation of Christianity occurs in the 1969 edition less frequently and less extensively than in the 1954 edition.

### 3.1.2.2 *The Japanese style refutation*

In the 1954 and the 1969 editions of the S.K. there is one type of argumentation which supposes some knowledge of the Japanese way of thinking. Otherwise this kind of argumentation is hard to be understood. The mentality behind this kind of refutation narrows down to the general belief of two kinds of souls in everyone. Except for one Shinto sect most Shintoists agree in the meaning of these souls. Anesaki explains this belief as follows: “The soul was believed to be composed of two parts, one mild, refined, and happy, the other rough, brutal, and raging (the mild, NIGI-MITAMA, and the rough, ARA-MITAMA). The former cares for its possessor’s health and prosperity, while the latter performs adventurous tasks or even malicious deeds. Either of them can leave the body and appear to the astonishment of its possessor himself” (ANESAKI, 1963, 40).<sup>17</sup> In the argumentation of the S.K. these two souls sometimes appear as two opposite aspects of one and the same thing. The crushing of Christianity with this type of refutation is to non Japanese people rather curious.

In the 1954 edition of the S.K. this type of refutation appears 5 times. In the 1969 edition there is only one slight indication of this way of thinking. In the 1954 edition of the S.K. it is applied to God and man. Both are supposed to have a body. A god without a body is unconceivable: somehow he has to be visible in this material world (see 3.1.2.1). The assertion “God is one” is also wrong: “That is also wrong: in God there are good gods and wrong, wicked gods” (344). As is well known: Shinto is the religion of myriads of gods! Concerning man this argument has to rebut the idea of an immaculate virgin: “It is impossible that a virgin can become pregnant without a father. In order to cover this fact it is said that God borrowed the body of an immaculate virgin. No matter what kind of a woman it concerns, but chastity has the quality of purity and at the same time the opposite aspect of ugliness. The explanation of Christianity is one-eyed, as it is impossible to wipe out both properties of purity and ugliness in the life of one person. It is an unquestionable fact that Mary has been an ordinary woman” (337). This means that Mary as every human being disposed of two opposite properties. There are also other opposite qualities in man. The 1969 edition of the S.K.

points at the fact that "every human being has at the same time the power to love and to hate" (193). In the 1954 edition of the S.K. this creates a real problem for people who try to love others with the perfection of the heavenly father. "For man has not only the property to love others but at the same time the innate quality to hate them. If one disregards this innate special quality it is impossible, even literally, to accomplish love of others by all means" (342). This argumentation touches also the problem of good and evil in Christianity. So the 1954 edition of the S.K. finds it difficult to allot goodness to God and wickedness to man: "Next: Christianity maintains that the nature of God consists in love and goodness, further that while the evil deeds of man are committed of his own free will, they belong to the responsibility of man. It says also that when man will live long enough, his evil deeds will become visible in quite a few phenomena and that evil in reality does not exist. Now because the decision about the value of good and evil is a problem of opposite angles, it is theoretically wrong to contend that goodness only is the responsibility of God and evil of man. Goodness as well as wickedness are both products of man's free will in connection with human life. Moreover both do not have any relation with God" (350). For what reason is this type of argumentation more explicit and frequent in the 1954 edition? Is this due to the growing awareness of the Japanese spirit behind this argumentation which could endanger the spread of the doctrine of the sect in Christian countries of the world? The attitude of Ikeda towards Christian leaders in his efforts to establish world wide peace might be a positive answer to this question.

### 3.1.2.3 *The Buddhist type of argumentation*

As can be expected Buddhist arguments against Christianity occur most frequently in both editions of the S.K. In the 1954 edition of the S.K. at least 8 times, in the 1969 edition of the S.K. at least 6 times. The arguments are mostly in a comparative form. The main topics are: Christianity is inferior to Buddhism (or of the same level as low grade Buddhism), inferiority of Christian love to Buddhist compassion, the problems of sin, of heaven, of miracles, of prophecies and finally of the death of Christ. As I did in the two other types of refutation I will confine myself to the main refutations.

The first group of refutations concerns the inferiority of Christianity to Buddhism. In the 1954 edition of the S.K. we find rather short statements about the inferiority of Christianity to Buddhism: "According to the words of Christ Christians need conversion and love. This is simply inferior to the Āgama-section of Buddhism (= Hinayana Buddhism) which besides faith requires also these two conditions. It leads therefore to nowhere" (343). In the 1969 edition of the S.K. Christianity is even compared with the Nichiren Shōshū: "As Christianity pursues illusions be it God, love, goodness, or sin, it fails to search for the real object of worship (*hontai*) after all. This (object) is in fact the *gohonson* (i.e. the sacred object of worship) of the *Namu-myōhō Rengekyō* (i.e.: Glory to the *Lotus sūtra* of the supreme law). This is nothing else but life as preached by the Nichiren Shōshū. Modern Christianity does not know

about this essence irrespective of what 700 years ago the great saint *Nichiren* left behind in this shabby world and it accepts a false doctrine which is quite a long way off from real life. In order to cover the incompetence of its dharma (= doctrine) it is keen in engaging in social work and in seducing people" (191).

In another group of refutations Christianity is put on a par with low grade Buddhism. In both editions of the S.K. this low grade Buddhism concerns the Jōdō-sects (Amidism). The 1954 edition mentions this Buddhism along with the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ: "The Ascension etc. is nothing else but a fiction of his followers, who made it into an unworthy problem. As Śākyamuni formulated in the *Muryōju-kyō* (the *Aparimitayus-sūtra*<sup>18</sup>), the Western Paradise and Buddha Amitābha, and preached the causes and effects of his *Hōjin* (the *sambhoga-kāya*: the reward body of a Buddha),<sup>19</sup> so the Evangelists of primeval Christianity made up some fables in order to point out to ignorant people the love and power of Christ, which had to substitute the real facts" (309). The 1969 edition of the S.K. uses the formulation of the third of the "five oppositions" of its *kyōhan*: the *gonjitsu-sotai* (see under 2.): "What means life in Buddhism? What happens after death? How does it determine what is happiness and misfortune? It explains all these conditions of life by means of cause and effect. Thus it gives a new turn to present life and it opens up life to come. What doctrine is right and scientific? Moreover if we apply the heaven etc. of Christianity to Buddhism it is no more than the empty fable of the Western Pure Land by means of the *Nembutsu* (i.e. the invocation of the name of Amitābha in order to be reborn in his Pure Land) of the *hōben-gonkyō* (i.e. a provisional [*gon*] doctrine being a [false] means of salvation (= *hōben/sansk.*: *upaya*)). Heaven after death is a complete fake" (194/195).

Both editions of the S.K. devote quite a few pages to the Christian prerogative of love and compare it with the prerogative of Buddhism: *mahākaruṇā*: *jihi*, compassion.<sup>20</sup> The 1954 edition of the S.K. is quite verbose, the 1969 edition is more concise in its argumentation, which substantially in both editions is almost the same. Therefore I prefer the 1969 formulation of this argument: "What about the problem of love? Christ himself says in the Bible in the Sermon on the Mount: 'What will be your gain if you love others just as you do yourself. Have a perfect love just as your Father in heaven.' This is also a highly unjustifiable assertion. Every human being namely is endowed with the function of love and at the same time also with that of hate. Christianity teaches forcefully to exert all possible efforts in love. Buddhism, however, emphasizes *jihi*, compassion. In the midst of actions to save others, it expounds *jihi*, being an original state of mind which arises naturally. Christian love in contrast with *jihi* is completely hypocritical and weak-looking" (193, 194). In other argumentations of the Buddhist type the S.K. sets the Christian heaven against the ten celestial areas of Buddhism (1954, 347, 348). The Christian conversion due to the power of the death of Christ is inferior to the Buddhist conversion of even those who are in hell and who in the long run will become conscious of the Buddha nature (1954, 348,

349). The prophecies of Śākyamuni about the propagation of his doctrine in the three periods hit the mark, the prophecies of Christ, however, are not even slightly applicable to our modern society. "Even Christians will understand this point when they think about it" (1954, 351).<sup>21</sup>

To what result will lead the comparison of the Buddhist type of rebuttal in both editions of the S.K.?

In the 1954 edition this type of refutation seems to be rather verbose, superficial and universal. It is mostly used in combination with the two other types of refutation. The 1969 edition of the S.K. replaces rather the philosophical and Japanese style argumentation by this type of refutation. Almost every Christian tenet here has been falsified by Buddhist ideas. These ideas appear to be more centered on the Nichiren Shōshū, on Nichiren and on the Soka Gakkai *kyōhan* than in the former edition. So this edition with its scarce information on Christianity presumes in its readers a quite specialized knowledge of this religion. This becomes also apparent in:

#### 3.1.2.4 Direct rejections of Christianity

This type of refutation consists in some short negative sentences on Christianity without any arguments. The 1954 edition of the S.K. mentions these rejections mostly under the special heading of "weak points of Christianity". The 1969 edition does so in its special column: "The present situation." In order to give some impression of this type of refutations I will confine myself to a few representative rejections. In the 1954 edition the rejections are rather assertive: "The heaven of Christianity is isolated from our present life, it pursues an unrealistic situation and bewilders man" (347), or: "Christianity separates in its ideas: matter and life, spirit, body, and life, therefore it does not arrive at any conclusion. This is clearly a false view resulting from the assumption of the existence of a spirit" (350). The ideas which are rejected in this edition figure already in other pages and lines of this edition on Christianity. This is not the case in some rejections of the 1969 edition. In addition this edition presents the rejections of "the present situation" as contradictions: "Finally how will Christianity think about the following contradictions:

- the contradiction that faithful Christians though only they are said to be saved, have the duty to save those who are erring;
- the fact that Christianity, which pretends to love its enemies, persecutes Galileo and others, who are opposed to the church, and also many other scientists;
- For the first time in the history of mankind atombombs were dropped on Nagasaki, the city of Japan's Christianity, and on Hiroshima;
- The movement of the churches of the world has such an interior disunity that they testify it; is this not caused by the weakness of their doctrines?;
- While the Roman Curia was preaching poverty, spirituality and charity it displayed a history of bulky power and oppression" . . . (195).

These "contradictions" assume a more general knowledge about Christianity: the Vatican, The World Council of Churches etc., institutions which are not mentioned on other pages of both editions of the S.K.

What will be the change in attitude of the Soka Gakkai towards Christianity as reported in both editions of the S.K.? In *general* there seems to be no change in the appreciation of Christian values. It remains negative in both editions of the S.K. No sign whatsoever is displayed of a positive approach towards Christianity. In 1969 the time does not seem to be ripe yet for a dialogue with representatives of the Christian churches in order to establish world peace or to engage in actions against nuclear warfare. This is quite surprising for at present *Ikeda Daisaku* seems to be engaged in nothing more than in world peace and nuclear disarmament.

Nevertheless a more detailed look at the different types of refutation employed against Christianity reveals some important changes:

1. Compared with the 1954 edition the 1969 edition is much less philosophical. So here it follows the general trend in those days to replace philosophy by Buddhism.

2. The 1969 edition except for one minor point discontinues the refutation in Japanese style. One can only guess why this did happen. Did the Soka Gakkai because of its spread to many countries abroad become more world-minded and less nationalistic in its way of thinking?

3. In the 1969 edition of the S.K. the Buddhist type refutation became less general and more detailed. There appears to be also a more detailed knowledge about Christianity and its institutions. We can learn in it more about the Nichiren Shōshū (the *gohonson* and the Lotus sutra), *Nichiren* and his life. The argumentation takes more the system of the Soka Gakkai *kyōhan* into consideration. It is quite interesting that the argumentation is not only confined to the outer way, the *gedō*: Christianity is not only compared with Buddhism in general but it is considered worthy of a comparison with what the Soka Gakkai regards to be the highest form of Buddhism. Here it does not follow the *gedō* but the higher degrees of the "five oppositions". So here yet is a slight shift in positive appreciation. This shift in attitude, however, cannot stand the comparison with the shift in its attitude towards:

### 3.2 Shinto

*Nakamura Hajime* wrote in 1964: "It is noteworthy to point out that the Japanese turn into ridicule indiscriminately a Buddha, the Seven Deities of Good Luck, or whatever else is transplanted from abroad. But they never deride their own ancestral gods" (1964, 406). What about the Soka Gakkai? Did it have the courage to crush and to tear its own traditional and ancestral religion: Shinto? In the S.K. it considers Shinto to be a false religion belonging to the religions of *gedō*. Here I will also consider the picture of Shinto and its refutation as far as depicted in both editions of the S.K. The 1954 edition of the S.K. deals with Shinto in 7 pages under the following headings: the origin of Shinto (331-333), the meaning of *kami* (333), the relation between *kami* and Buddha (333-335), and present-day Shinto (335-336). The 1969 edition of the S.K. devotes four and a half pages to Shinto. The three topics are: the principal doubts about the *kami* (186-187),

origin and history (188–189), and the doctrine and its crushing (189–190). The 1954 edition is rather descriptive, the 1969 edition is more in discussion with some tenets of Shinto.

### 3.2.1 *The picture of Shinto in both editions of the S.K.*

In post-war Japan the official history of Japan has been rewritten completely. The old ideology of Japan's divine and mythical origin as described in the *Nihonshoki* and the *Kojiki* is replaced by the theories of Oka, Egami, Tsuda and many others. They posited in the 4th century A.D. the origin of the Japanese people, as coming from five population groups, which reached Japan from several directions. (See J. H. KAMSTRA, 1967, 22–36; F. Vos, 1959). The Soka Gakkai in its 1954 edition of the S.K. adheres also to these modern theories and connects them with the origin of Shinto. In its 1969 edition, however, no mention is made of these theories whatsoever. This fact might be connected – as we will see later – with its opinion on Amaterasu. The 1954 edition of the S.K. depicts the origin of Shinto in 5 points together with the origin of the Yamato (= Japanese) people: “The foundation of the Yamato people in Kyūshū took place before the conquest of the East by the emperor Jimmu. Long before this event in the east side of the continent in present Manchuria a tribe of the Tunguse people crossed North Korea and North China. Entrusting itself to the tide of the sea it crossed the sea and arrived in Kyūshū (This is the origin of the legend of *tensonkōrin* [i.e. the descent to earth of the descendants of the Sun-Goddess]). After the crossing to Kyūshū it set to assimilate with the other peoples of that region. That, however, the nucleus of this Yamato-people consisted of the continental tribe still can be determined upon our type of food and the system of our language. In fact the origin of Shinto took place during this continental period.

Namely during its Migration Period it maintained life in a collective body. Sometimes when it was hunting in groups it had to settle bargaining on peace or war with other groups. So they burned bones of animals and practiced divination. That is number one.

Peoples of the South abound in food. After they became united in groups, they started to conduct a collective life. Therefore much later on the organisation of their religions will consist in the worship of powers of the natural world. Hence it is unconceivable that they will enshrine ancestors. Now, when oceanic tribes of the sea-peoples of Indonesian descent assimilated with the people of divine descent (i.e. the Yamato-people), their customs and manners of worshipping the powers of the natural world became adopted. That is number two.

Because the peoples of the North usually came in need of food, and the wars with Southern peoples were quite violent, they had to get united into one people above all. Hence it is just natural that this decision became the core of the united people. This spirit usually was passed on to their descendants. Hence the older people who advised to do so and who had also a lot of experience in all matters, became highly esteemed. So their manners

became dyed deeply in respect for the people of the older generation. Next this (united people) started to revere its leaders who had been the center of the control of the people. Further considered from the point of reverence for dead leaders it is just natural that the custom of worshipping ancestors has its strong roots here. (This concerns also at present Buddhism being a false religion as far as it attaches great importance to the common cultivation of ancestors.)<sup>22</sup> The cultivation of ancestors is number three.

Number four and next is the custom to deify after their death those who accomplished meritorious deeds for the development of the people and who since then had been valued accordingly. Number five is finally the deification of the frightful powers of the natural world" (331-333).

The 1969 edition of the S.K. confines the origin of Shinto to a few lines: "Japan's Shinto originally was a primitive religion without even the name of Shinto. In ancient times the Japanese people became united around its heads of the families. This custom developed gradually. Hence the custom of worshipping ancestors was born" (188). So of the five points of 1954 only one remains: ancestor worship, being the core of the Japanese people.

In the description of further details of the history of Shinto both editions of the S.K. contain quite a few points of similarity. The 1969 edition, however, adds a few more data. Concerning the points of similarity in both editions the wording is almost the same. They record mostly facts which betray foreign influences on Shinto. So in the 1954 edition: "Later on the communication with China became realized. When Confucianism and Buddhism crossed to Japan, the quarrel broke out between Buddhism and Shinto in order to determine which one was superior and which one was inferior. Ultimately it was during the period of Shōtoku Taishi (574-622) that the public in general acknowledged Buddhism to be properly superb" (334-335). The 1969 edition adds to Confucianism and Buddhism also the introduction of the yin and yang doctrine (188). This edition adds further the statement that Shinto during the Kamakura period (1185-1333) "belonged to Buddhism and it preserved the freedom from danger as well as the worldly powers" (188). It is quite surprising that the 1954 edition of the S.K. does not mention at all the role played by Shinto in connection with the ideology which led to World War II and the defeat of the Japanese nation in 1945. The 1969 edition of the S.K., however, breaks this silence and finds even out who has been responsible for this role: "At the end of the Edo period (1603-1868) the Chinese translation of the Christian Bible entered into Japan. This exerted a strong influence upon Shinto. One might say that then for the first time the doctrine of Shinto with the touch of a creed was drawn up. Shinto of these days with the 'respect the Emperor argument' for setting became the fashionable trend of thought. This became the source of the 'Abolish Buddhism, down with the Buddhist priests movement' during the Meiji Restoration. Further as Japan's State Shinto it did dominate the whole nation. Finally it displayed its true form as a false religion. Together with the military authorities it did guide the Japanese people into the road of downfall" (188).<sup>23</sup>

Both editions of the S.K. describe the present situation of Shinto. The 1954 edition is rather succinct, the 1969 edition is a little bit more extensive. The 1954 edition mentions the existence of sects and the distribution of *kamifuda* (sacred labels).<sup>24</sup> The 1969 edition supplies more details on both items. So concerning the development of sects it phrases: "Shinto which is focussed on the (former State) shrines (Jinja-shinto) usually not only lacks a special founder, but also any doctrine. Since the end of the Edo period under impetus from Confucianism, Buddhism and others it became very much in fashion to get their systems of doctrine plagiarized. So Sect Shinto became developed apart from Jinja-shinto. As it was divided into 13 sects it was named Thirteen Sects Shinto. Recently (i.e. in 1966) we count 143 religious bodies which correspond to the confusion of the minds of people since the war. The leading ones are: Jinja Honchō, Shinto Taikyō, Ontakekyō, Fusōkyō, Kurozumikyō, Konkōkyō, Tenrikyō, P. L. Kyōdan, Inariyō, Tenshō Kōtai Jingūkyō (the Dance Religion), etc., but they cheat the people with a doctrine plagiarized from Buddhism"<sup>25</sup> (189). The same edition considers Shinto to remain powerless anyway, for "at present since the loss of the war there will be no chance that it will regain its lost power. It preserves its last days in clinging to the selling of *kamifuda*, the administration of wedding halls, to festivals and so on" (189).

Comparing these historical data with those of Christianity I arrive at almost the same conclusion. The 1954 edition of the S.K. too is focussed rather on the origin than on the present situation of Shinto. The 1969 edition on the contrary almost forgets the origin of Shinto and concentrates its attention on the present situation. In both editions it is also quite striking that both deal with the Sun Goddess Amaterasu with carefulness and respect. She appears not to deserve the negative qualifications of other Shinto gods. It is also quite peculiar that both editions ascribe the radical developments in Shinto since 1868 to foreign influences (Christianity and Confucianism) rather than to anti-Buddhist or anti-foreign movements as e.g. the Restoration Shinto of Motoori and Hirata. Creemers notes with regard to this: "At the same time, however, it is true that the 'Restoration Shinto' of Motoori and Hirata provided the basis for the development of such concepts as loyalty to an Imperial line destined to rule eternally, and a nation and a people which by their special origin possessed a certain racial superiority and privilege" (CREEMERS, 1968, 10). Why is no explicit mention made of these two 'domestic' issues? Is it because things which are 'really' Japanese do not tolerate any form of criticism or derision? Perhaps we might get more information on this point from:

### 3.2.1.2 *The teachings of Shinto*

Shinto being a practical religion of many rituals and festivals with a minimum of doctrines is considered in the S.K. under two angles: the *kami* ('gods') and some observances. Concerning the former both editions have some different information. The 1954 edition is more specific in its treatment of several types of *kami* – as can be observed in its theory on the origin of

Shinto – the 1969 edition of the S.K. seems to assume in its readers already the knowledge of *kami*. It is inclined to pay more attention to Amaterasu. Concerning the latter the 1969 edition seems to be more elaborate than the 1954 edition.

To its description of the origin of ancestor- and nature gods the 1954 edition adds a few lines concerning the meaning of *kami*: “As is clear from the above (i.e. the numbers 1 to 5) the meaning of the word *kami* became different from then. This meaning was: a human being ‘at the top’ or a human being who was ‘dreadful’ (= a superb human being with superior capacities)” (333). The 1969 edition specifies *kami* in order to introduce Amaterasu: “The core of Japan’s *kami* are the *ujigami* (= tutelary deities). Being the leaders (*kami*) of their *uji* (tribes) they protect the tribe.”<sup>26</sup> “Amaterasu Ōmikami is the leader of the whole nation. She protects the whole of Japan. Amaterasu herself made this plain in an Imperial edict of her oracle” (336). Amidst the myriads of *kami* Amaterasu and (in the 1954 ed.) Toyouke are the only ones mentioned by name. So the picture of Shinto gods is rather poor. The 1954 edition participates a little bit in the pre- and post war discussions on the meaning of *kami*. But the reproduction of the discussion is also rather minimized.<sup>27</sup> Though Shinto is abundant in rituals and festivals (*matsuri*) in both editions of the S.K. no mention whatsoever is made of the major yearly sacred events not even of the New Year visits to the shrines in which yearly tens of millions participate. Both editions inform us about the use of *kamifuda* only. So one can read in the 1954 edition: “The peculiar power of the *kamifuda* issued by the shrines reaches as far as the words and sentences written on it for it possesses a specialized kind of energy only” (335). The 1969 edition explains further this peculiar power of the *kamifuda*: “Next are the *kamifuda*. The written functions are various indeed: charms against disasters and burglary, recovery from sickness, the well being in the family, and prosperity in business, but are they really powerful? On the whole the *kamifuda* are products of the domestic industry of the family of the *kannushi* (Shinto priest) or of a subcontract factory. The *kannushi* stamps the printing block to the paper, his wife pastes them on and the children fold the paper. If sickness and misfortune would disappear this way, there would be no hardships more in the world” (187). The 1969 edition of the S.K. describes another item, which, however, is not specific to Shinto but also to Buddhism and even to many other religions: the offertory box. In Shinto shrines it consists in a large wooden box which upper side is open, but pegged off by wooden or iron bars. People who sacrifice money throw this in the opening of the box between the bars. It is named *senbako*: “The *senbako* are inevitable accompaniments to Shinto shrines only, but gods won’t need money” (186). This small detail will not enrich much the picture of Shinto as described in the S.K. This picture remains rather poor. Why is this the case? Are the other items just left out because they are not qualified for *shakubuku*, for crushing and tearing? What then is the real attitude of the Soka Gakkai towards Shinto? This will be clear in:

### 3.2.2 The refutation of Shinto in both editions of the S.K.

The *kyōhan* of the Soka Gakkai locates Shinto also in the *gedō*, the outer way. So the principles which distinguish *gedō* religions from Buddhism should also be applicable to Shinto. These principles are said to be 'scientific' or philosophical. We might say that these principles in general come down to a refutation springing from a 'universal' common sense. As such they are opposed to a second type of refutation which I observed above. This second type concerns Japanese style argumentations, or argumentations originating from a more specific, i.e. Japanese common sense. Does Shinto in the eyes of the Soka Gakkai leaders correspond to this specific common sense or not? The third type of argumentation consists in a direct confrontation of Shinto with Buddhist teachings and pronouncements of Buddhist saints and leaders. This implies that we will look more closely at the attitudes of the Soka Gakkai towards the '*ujigami*' of the Japanese nation: Amaterasu.

#### 3.2.2.1 The refutation based on 'universal' common sense

In both editions of the S.K. this type of refutation turns up quite frequently: in each of both editions about seven times. The cause and effect argument as a tool of the *gedō* is employed just once. Expressions mostly in use are: it is reasonable (*dori ga aru*), it is natural (*tōzen de aru*) or theoretically (*rironteki*). Both editions discuss the *kamifuda*, the theft of doctrines, and the existence of the *kami*. The 1954 edition adds to this arguments against divination, and the 1969 edition against the *senbako*.

The 1954 edition is rather brief in its attack on *kamifuda*, which "give rise to unlucky phenomena" (335). The 1969 edition spends a whole page on the *kamifuda*. After the introduction I mentioned above it says: "Moreover every year or every half a year it certainly is a conventional practice to burn them (= the *kamifuda*) and to have them renewed. If really the *kamifuda* would have the power to guide, would not be just that something to laugh at? Just because a piece of paper as a diploma (of graduation) can be valued highly during a whole lifetime, is the burning of the *kamifuda* every year something that fails to convince entirely. In short is all this not merely a business policy aimed at an increase of earnings? Is the thankful receipt of these scraps of paper not a bizarre habit? . . . It is just natural that in sickness we pay a call upon a doctor and that if we need fish, we go to the fishman. Even so in the case of gods only people who do not know about them, advance them and pray arbitrarily: 'cure my sickness', or 'get me making money'. Truly this is no trivial matter. Is it not just the same as saying to the fishman: 'heal my illness'?" (187).

In the 1969 edition of the S.K. the same kind of remarks are made on the subject of the *senbako*: "As a matter of fact money offerings are going to be the living expenses of the household of the *kannushi*. On the whole, however, we quite never heard the reasons why the money offerings are made to the gods. All over the world goods are acquired and facilities can be obtained in return for the payment of money. Nevertheless what will at least the receipt

of money offerings contribute to our lives? If they do not impart anything at all, what then is the difference with pickpocketing and swindling?" (186, 187).

Another 'common sense' argument against Shinto is primitiveness or childishness. So the objections against ancestor worship, divination etc. in the 1954 edition of the S.K.: "The idea of adoring the core of the people, the idea of honouring the old folks and persons of distinguished services, the habit of settling matters of grave concern by way of divination, all this is brought about by the needs of Northern peoples of the indispensable necessities of life. Therefore this beginning does not deserve the name of religion consisting in habits of life" (333). The 1969 edition on the contrary – as is observed above – renames that beginning as primitive religion. Further it reduces this objection to the cult of ancestors: "The custom of setting a high value on ancestors is in theory extremely infantile" (188).

Another objection consists in the disapproval of Shinto being a religion of theft. This kind of argumentation permeates both editions of the S.K. So the doctrine of Shinto is plagiarized from Buddhism and from Confucianism. The formulation of this kind of abjections is in both editions of the S.K. almost the same. Both editions label the practice of borrowing tenets of other religions by Shinto as theft on many places. This is e.g. the case in the historical description above under "the picture of Shinto". A good illustration of this argument, though the label of theft is missing, provides the 1954 edition of the S.K.: "Since Shōtoku Taishi – as is mentioned above – Shinto has drawn up its doctrine by linking together (its own) reverence of purity and the preservation in purity of its behaviour with the thought of the virtues of Confucianism and the thought of the three worlds<sup>28</sup> of Buddhism. It made this into a *honzon* (i.e. the object of worship). Thus it became a false religion by cheating the people. Nowadays it is divided into many sects" (335). In this respect it is quite interesting that both editions reproach Sect Shinto rather than Jinja Shinto with this kind of theft and plagiarism. The 1969 edition, however, maintains that even Jinja Shinto copied its ideology from the Bible.

The 1954 edition mentions the theft of some more items. So it records the writing of the names of gods as Amaterasu, Toyo-uke etc. in Chinese characters (334). It rejects also the *honzon* of the gods, objects of worship consisting in the name of a god written in Chinese characters (334).

Some kinds of gods are attacked with the cause and effect argument only once, namely in the 1954 edition of the S.K.: "In view of 'after death' the vague philosophy of life which is close to animism being the distinguishing mark of primitif people has as religion as such no theory based on a thorough investigation into the relation of cause and effect, therefore also its system of rituals is just childish" (333). Only this argumentation still reminds of the *gedō*. All these 'universal common sense' refutations somehow prepare the second type of refutation:

### 3.2.2.2 The refutation based on 'Japanese' common sense

To what extent can we term a religion to be still Japanese if it right from the outset was primitive or even no religion at all, if it pursues economic gains only, if it is based on foreign doctrines and finally adores gods who become observable only in foreign *honzon*? This question points to the conditions made by what I term the "Japanese common sense". Besides the conditions I touched upon in the "Japanese" refutation of Christianity there is one final condition which terms a religion to be Japanese or not. Nakamura calls this the phenomenalism of the Japanese. Even gods have to comply with it, for gods and their Buddhist counterparts alike have to have their roots in Japan. For that reason Christianity is not serious for it rejects the phenomenal world being profane and not divine. Nakamura quotes Dōgen being the mouthpiece of this general Japanese mind: "The real aspect is all things. All things are this aspect, this character, this body, this mind, this world, this wind and this rain, this sequence of daily going, living, sitting, and lying down, this series of melancholy, joy, action, and inaction, this stick and wand, this Buddha's smile, this transmission and reception of the doctrine, this study and practice, this evergreen pine and ever unbreakable bamboo" (NAKAMURA, 1964/1981, 352). Both editions appeal to this mind in pretending that the *kami* left Japan and hence Shinto ceased to be a religion. So the 1954 edition of the S.K. maintains: "Precisely because in Shinto the *honzon* (of the gods) and the doctrine came into being after Shōtoku Taishi and because all of them (*honzon* is plural!) became drawn up as imitations of Confucianism and Buddhism, both are counterfeits of religion. Therefore since that time what we term as the original *kami* became disjoined from Shinto altogether. Hence changed into a false religion it became merely an obstacle for people who reach salvation in the truthful religion of Buddhism" (334). In other words: Shinto had been left behind by its own *kami* because it failed to assign to them genuine (= Japanese) roots. Buddhism on the contrary received genuine (= Japanese) roots from Shōtoku Taishi. So it was prepared to take over this part from Shinto. As is observed above, the 1969 edition of the S.K. mentions this new function of Buddhism only in its historical explanation of what happened since Shōtoku Taishi. It reserves the "departure" of the gods for the period of the last and lost war: "Now, because there was no taste of the flavor of the dharma, all the immortals and good gods not to speak of Amaterasu left Japan. Consequently there dwell no *kami* in the shrines and in the *kamifuda*. On the contrary devils and evil spirits who ruin people inhabit them. Japan had to experience the unprecedented heavy defeat of the war" (190). So in both editions we don't find any arguments intended to deny the existence of the *kami*: they do exist, but they lost their Japanese roots and hence their influence. This is confirmed by the third type of argumentation:

### 3.2.2.3 The Buddhist refutation

In the preliminary refutations we met Buddhism several times. It was used mostly as an implicit argument against Shinto which included also Confucianism and Christianity. In both editions of the S.K. there is only one explicit

Buddhist argument. It consists in a quotation of a text written by NICHIREN. The same text is used in both editions for different purposes. In the 1954 edition it concerns all the gods of Shinto, in the 1969 edition it is rather focussed on Amaterasu. As we saw above the 1954 edition repeats this text on another place in almost the same wording. I follow the 1969 edition: "The Great Saint Nichiren says in his *Risshō-ankokuron*:<sup>29</sup> 'In this world everyone is opposed to righteousness and all end in evil. Moreover the good gods leave the country together. The saints quit their places and don't return. Consequently devils and evil spirits turn up, calamities break out and troubles arise.' And he adds in his *Shinchi-goshō*:<sup>30</sup> 'If this country is a land where the law is reviled, then all the good tutelary gods leave Japan, for they do not taste anymore the flavor of the dharma'" (190).

The 1954 edition of the S.K. does not mention any difference between Amaterasu and the other gods. Her name is only mentioned once in connection with the false use of writing her name in Chinese characters. So she too should have disappeared from the Japanese soil and have lost all influence in this country. Therefore – so it argues – Shinto is a dead religion. The 1969 edition of the S.K., however, is more cautious in its opinion on Jinja-shinto. It goes even beyond the scope of its *shakubuku*, tearing of Shinto by adding a new Japanese root to the genuine *honzon* of Amaterasu (consisting in mirror, jewels and swords) which from time immemorial has been ascribed to her. So here the refutation of Shinto turns into a defense of Amaterasu:

"Now during the last war Japan did raise the nation as a whole in reverence to Amaterasu Ōmikami (i.e. the Great Goddess Amaterasu) and fought against America which reveres the philosophy of Western Europe. This resulted in a ruthless defeat of the war. Why did Amaterasu Ōmikami, though as *ujigami* she was the general, not protect Japan? To conclude in short: while Amaterasu Ōmikami did not stay anymore in Japan." After having mentioned the above remarks of NICHIREN the text continues: "This means that Amaterasu Ōmikami is the tutelary deity of the Lotus sutra. She does not live in a country where the dharma is reviled. Now, because there was no taste of the flavor of the dharma, all the immortals and good gods not to speak of Amaterasu left Japan. Consequently there are here no *kami* in the shrines and in the *kamifuda*. On the contrary devils and evil spirits who ruin the people inhabit them. Japan had to experience the unprecedented heavy defeat of the war. Even if one agrees on this point, Amaterasu is not to blame for it. If the whole nation of Japan looses no time in becoming converted to the true Law (i.e. the Lotus sutra), Amaterasu Ōmikami will be delighted. It is our duty to speed up the propagation and dissemination (of the true Law) and to pray for the return of Amaterasu Ōmikami and the other gods" (190). So in this "Buddhist" defense of Amaterasu the Lotus sutra became the modern *honzon* of Amaterasu and of all the other gods. This argument unites this religion of the *gedō* with Buddhism as far as this occupies the highest ranks in the *kyōhan* of the Soka Gakkai. This shift in policy towards Shinto, Jinja-shinto in particular, betrays the increasing popularity nowadays of this religion in Japan.

What has been the change in the attitude of the Soka Gakkai towards Shinto between 1954 and 1969 as far as recorded in both editions of the *Shakubuku Kyōten*?

In general a comparison of both editions reveals a radical turn in its appreciation of Jinja Shinto and of the Sun Goddess in particular: the 1969 edition points out that a good Shintoist has to be a good member of the Nichiren Shōshū first. This reappraisal of Shinto in Japanese society nowadays is confirmed by the increasing popularity of Jinja Shinto.<sup>25</sup> Who still has doubts about this will be convinced by watching the tens of millions of people who pilgrimage at the beginning of the New Year to the Ise and other Shinto shrines all over the country.

In both editions of the S.K. the genuineness of Shinto is emphasized: it has to be purified from foreign stains, be it rituals or doctrines. In the 1969 edition, however is not clarified why a purified Shinto still can keep its purity while possessing a *honzon* of foreign origin: the Lotus sutra.

Both editions of the S.K. mention some data on the history of Shinto. In the 1969 edition, however, the discussion on the origin of Shinto is left out and some data on the Kamakura and Edo periods are added. It is quite extensive in its exposition and refutation of *senbako* and *kamifuda*. The customs going with these objects seem to be so deeply rooted in Japanese habits that quite a few lines are necessary in order to get them eradicated.

As distinct from the lines on Shinto in the 1954 edition the 1969 edition – printed 24 years since the war – broaches the problem of the defeat of the war. This loss of the war still seems to get on the nerves of its authors. Why is it not mentioned in the 1954 edition? Perhaps this was because everybody then was convinced that Jinja Shinto was to blame for it and no satisfying apology could be found for it yet. The 1969 edition, on the contrary, tries to apologize Jinja Shinto and Amaterasu, the general and *ujigami* of the nation.

### *Conclusions*

In these lines I will try in brief to link my conclusions with the main points touched upon in this paper: history, *kyōhan*, prefaces of the *Shakubuku Kyōten*, and refutations.

#### *1. History*

Between 1954 and 1969 the Soka Gakkai was reshaped into an international organization and gradually replaced the value-philosophy by the teaching of the Nichiren Shōshū. The shift from philosophy to religion is confirmed by a comparison of both editions of the S.K.: the philosophical refutation of Christianity in particular became almost replaced by a rebuttal based on Buddhist arguments. The spread of the Sokagakkai to the U.S.A. in particular led to the substitution of *shakubuku* by *shōju*, which means: the respectful coexistence with other religions. The refutations of Christianity and the reappraisal of Jinja Shinto explain why the *Shakubuku Kyōten* not has been translated so far.

## 2. *kyōhan*

The Soka Gakkai assigns both Christianity and Shinto to the *gedō*, the external way, of its *kyōhan*. In both editions of the S.K. it keeps Christianity together with Sect Shinto strictly within the bounds of the *gedō*. The 1969 edition, however, goes beyond these limits just by connecting Shinto, as far as it is limited to Jinja Shinto, with the *Lotus sūtra*. This development might be a result of the inborn syncretism in the minds of the Japanese people which even in modern religious bodies resists compartmentalization of Buddhism and of Shinto.

## 3. *Preface of the Shakubuku Kyōten*

The prefaces of both editions arouse hopes which in the lines on Shinto are not fulfilled. This concerns the defeat of the war. The 1954 preface mentions the prophecy of Nichiren in connection with it, but confines in its refutation of Shinto the abandonment by the gods to the period since the time of Shōtoku Taishi being the result of the double theft of Confucianist and Buddhist teachings. The 1969 preface of the S.K. mentions the prophecy of the prosperity of modern Japan, but relates in its Shinto lines the desertion of the gods as a cause of World War II to the influence of Christian doctrine during the end of the Edo period. So it twists the facts by holding Christianity responsible for the desertion of the gods and indirectly for the defeat of the war.

## 4. *Refutations*

Looking at the different types of argumentation I have to point out that the frequently used "universal common sense" refutation has not much in common with the "philosophical" and "scientific" cause/effect argument used against Christianity. This *gedō* argumentation is emphasized much less against Shinto than against Christianity. The use of the 'Japanese style' refutation occurs in the 1969 edition only once against Shinto. In the 1954 edition it is used against Christianity only. This type betrays in both editions of the *Shakubuku Kyōten* the existence of nationalistic tendencies in the Soka Gakkai be it in disguised form. The 'Buddhist style' arguments (in 1954 against and in 1969 in favour of) Jinja Shinto occurs only once in both editions of the S.K. In this respect this type of "refutation" is sharply contrasted with the type which is quite frequently used against Christianity in both editions of the S.K. It is not the purpose of the science of religion to refute these argumentations but to compare them and to draw conclusions from it. These refutations as such can be very useful for missiology and other theological disciplines in order to find out the Japanese way of thinking needed for a religious dialogue with Japan.

Finally concerning the attitudes towards the two religions as a whole we find out:

1. a radical rejection of Christianity and of Sect Shinto which gradually becomes more specified, but at the same time

2. an increasing and even surprising appraisal of Jinja Shinto with Amaterasu at the top, based on the *Lotus sūtra* which goes beyond the boundaries of the *gedō* defined in its own *Shakubuku Kyōten*.

<sup>1</sup> I will not discuss here the problem of tolerance and intolerance in Indian and Chinese Buddhism. See my points in J. H. KAMSTRA, 1978: 89–106.

<sup>2</sup> For further details on this type of rural religions see J. H. KAMSTRA, 1978: 316, 317.

<sup>3</sup> It is not so easy to get some more information on these religions as they are not listed yet in the official statistics of the ministry of education. For some details on these religions and the present-day religious situation of Japan see: J. SWYNGEDOUW, 1986: 1–14. On the Agonshū: YAJIMA TERUO, 1985. On other sects of the new new-religions see ASAHI SHIMBUNSHA, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> For further literature on the Soka Gakkai see: KOHLER, 1962: 201–235; VAN STRAELEN, 1963: 98–109; THOMSEN, 1969: 81–108; DUMOULIN, 1976: 251–270; BRYAN R. WILSON, 1987: 405–407. See for Makiguchi: M. BETHEL, 1973, and for Toda: IKEDA D., 1972–1984.

<sup>5</sup> MORI, 1977, 65: “Toda Jōsei revised Makiguchi’s original *Philosophy of Value* and added some parts to it, publishing his revised version in 1953. Since then for twenty years until 1972, TODA’s version was the only copy of MAKIGUCHI’s *Philosophy of Value* available. The original *Philosophy of Value* is not found in the collection of MAKIGUCHI’s works compiled by IKEDA DAISAKU. Since this revision by TODA the original copy of MAKIGUCHI’s *Philosophy of Value* was concealed for a long time (MORI, 1977, 65ff).

<sup>6</sup> The Japanese word *kyōten* means canon. So the Koran is translated into Japanese as *kaikyō no kyōten*, the bible into: *Kiristokyō no kyōten*. *Shakubuku Kyōten* could be translated as the bible of *shakubuku*.

<sup>7</sup> For these items in the latest history of the Soka Gakkai see the editions of Soka Gakkai News of 1986 and 1987.

<sup>8</sup> For more details see: *Shakubuku Kyōten*, 1954: 118–124; 1969: 95–98. For the *kyōhan* of NICHIREN see: TAYA, 1957: 127c; BLYTH/HUNTINGTON, 1965, 92.

<sup>9</sup> See for more details: *Shakubuku Kyōten*, 1954: 114–118; 1969: 91–94.

<sup>10</sup> See for more details: *Shakubuku Kyōten*, 1954: 106–114; 1969: 100–106.

<sup>11</sup> See *Shakubuku Kyōten*, 1969: 110–120.

<sup>12</sup> See *Shakubuku Kyōten*, 1954: 106–107; 1969: 100–101.

<sup>13</sup> For more details on these new religions see: DUMOULIN, 1976; KOHLER, 1962; VAN STRAELEN, 1963; THOMSEN, 1969.

I will confine myself to a few remarks on the cults mentioned in the pages on superstition in the *Shakubuku Kyōten*:

Inari-cult:

the worship of a great variety of gods all over Japan in thousands of shrines related to food and rice (*ina*, rice; *nari*, growing). HERBERT: “Toutefois, les innombrables temples consacrés à ‘Inari’ sont très loin de l’identifier toujours avec le même Kami. Et son sexe même varie selon les auteurs” (HERBERT, 1967, 88). For more details see J. H. KAMSTRA, 1987: 97–111.

Kishimojin-cult:

Kishimojin (s. Hārīti) is the daughter of a yakṣa. She fed the babies of others to her own five hundred children. Upon her conversion to Buddhism she became the protector of the *Lotus sūtra*. She is further invoked as a goddess who guarantees an easy delivery of children and who guarantees also their good health. See NAKAMURA, 1975: 207.

Fudō-cult:

The veneration of this god is in Japan quite popular. This deity originated in the Indian god Siva. In Buddhism this fire producing god is believed to burn out all human defilements. Generally he is believed to be efficacious 'in overcoming disease, poison and fire, conquering enemies and tempters, and bringing wealth and peace to his devotees' (MATSUNAGA, 1969: 248, 249).

Jizō-cult:

The cult of Jizō is in Japan even more popular than that of Fudō. The bodhisattva Jizō seems to be a derivation from the Indian goddess Prthivi, a personification of the earth. He is adopted into Buddhism as a bodhisattva who is believed to save all beings in the period from the time of Buddha's death to that of the enlightenment of Maitreya. In Japan he is believed to have the ability to appear on earth in the form of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist deities as well. See MATSUNAGA, 1969, 235-238 (and note 18 on p. 237). Kannon is supposed to be well-known. For details see: Matsunaga, 1969: 120-137 and passim. Konbira is a transcription of Kubera, king of the Yakṣas. He became in Buddhism one of the four Deva Kings. This god is popular in Japan as one of the seven gods of fortune. See: MATSUNAGA, 1969: 253ff. Ebisu is also one of the seven gods of fortune. He is believed to protect the fishery. See: CASAL, 1958: 12-14.

<sup>14</sup> The choice of these two editions is rather arbitrary: they are both in my possession (*Shakubuku Kyōten* is onwards abbreviated to S.K.).

<sup>15</sup> According to the 1970 statistics the number of Christian denominations amounts to forty. See: HORI, 1972: 257-261. Here at least three Lutheran denominations take a preponderant place.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. VOLKER, 1950, 77ff: "The Inari fox is good and feared by the others. The worst is the *ninko* or *hito kitsune*, the man-fox, the fox of demoniacal possession . . . When, after a fox has taken human shape, its shadow falls upon water, it is a fox's shadow . . . The principal shape taken by a fox to deceive men is that of a dangerous woman, whose art it is to debauch man, to take him into her willing instrument and to dispossess him entirely."

<sup>17</sup> Another view on the Japanese soul is held by Yamakage Shinto being an esoteric form of Shinto. See: HERBERT, 1964: 133ff.

<sup>18</sup> The *Muryōju-kyō* is according to Hōnen one of the three sūtras of Pure Land teaching. The subject of the sūtra is the description of the Pure Land, together with the history of Amida Buddha. This sutra explains also the cause and effect through which human beings attain Buddhahood in the Pure land. See: BLYTH, 1965: 203, 204.

<sup>19</sup> BLYTH, 1965: 109: "This term refers to the body of a Buddha which is produced upon entering Buddhahood as a result of the vows and religious exercises undertaken while the Buddha was yet a *bodhisattva*. Both Amida and Yakushi are generally considered *sambhoga-kāya*."

<sup>20</sup> *jihī*: the mind or mental condition of being compassionate or sympathetic toward sentient beings.

<sup>21</sup> Meant are here the three periods after Buddha's decease. They are "the period of the *shōbō* (righteous law), the period of the *zōbō* (imitative law), and the period of the *mappō* (last law): I. The period of the righteous law is the period when Buddhist doctrines, practices, and enlightenment all exist. II. The period of the imitative law is the period when both doctrine and practices still exist, but there is no longer any enlightenment . . . III. The period of the last law means the period when doctrine alone is still alive, but there is neither practice nor enlightenment" (BLYTH, 1965: 299).

<sup>22</sup> Nowadays in Japan Buddhism of the common man became a religion practicing rituals for the dead. See: J. H. KAMSTRA, 1980: 151-168.

<sup>23</sup> For further details concerning the "real" history of the arrival of Buddhism in Japan see: J. H. KAMSTRA, 1967. For the role of State Shinto see: CREAMERS, 1968, p. 32ff.

CREEMERS is also of another opinion with respect to the relation between Shinto and government: "Summing up Shinto's pre-Meiji development, one might say that the worship of the *kami* of heaven and earth, from the very beginning of Japan's history, has been an affair in which the government was involved. Eventually also Buddhism received similar attention from the ruling powers, but some early texts indicate that Shinto performances were regarded as of more importance for the government than Buddhist ceremonies" (CREEMERS, 1968; 30). The role ascribed to the influence of the Bible is rather doubtful. The formation of an own doctrine in Shinto is more due to the influence of the members of the Mito-school. See: CREEMERS, 1968: 117.

<sup>24</sup> *Kamifuda*, paper amulets used at home, are akin to the *gohei* or *nusa*. See: ANESAKI, 1969: 42: "a piece of paper or cloth, so cut that the two parts hang down . . . This is called *nusa* (or *gohei*) and was originally an offering of cloth, which was converted to a symbol of sanctity or divinity."

<sup>25</sup> It is quite interesting to look at the statistics of the Shinto sects mentioned here. HORI, 1972, presents these statistics in detail. Jinja Honchō (Association of Shinto Shrines) has a membership of almost sixty million. It outnumbers all the other religious bodies combined and mentioned here. Tenrikyō, P. L. Kyōdan, Inariyō, Tenshō Kōtai Jingūkyō are in the statistics of 1970 not anymore considered to belong to Shinto but as independent organizations. In 1984 Jinja Honchō counts more than 100 million believers.

<sup>26</sup> For *uji*, *ujigami* see: J. H. KAMSTRA, 1967: 67ff.

<sup>27</sup> For this discussion see J. H. KAMSTRA, 1967: 83–85 (note 5).

<sup>28</sup> The three worlds or *sansei*, *sanseken* are according to Blyth: "the three constituents of the world: sentiens beings, non sentient beings and the FIVE SKANDHAS composing all beings, sentient and non sentient" (BLYTH, 1965: 258).

<sup>29</sup> This is one of his three major works written in 1259 and 1260. The meaning of its title is: To establish righteousness to secure the peace of our country.

<sup>30</sup> meaning: the writings of the heart of the pond. It is unknown when it has been written.

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