

宗教に対する日本人の態度

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宗教団体や宗教者がスキヤンダルや犯罪さえも引き起こしている今日、日本人は宗教を嫌い、恐れ、避けていると言われているが、同時に、現在は戦後の第3次宗教ブームとも言われる勢いで、新興宗教が発展し、数百万の信者を抱える組織も少なくない。さらに、「宗教白書」では日本の宗教人口がほぼ2億人(つまり総人口の2倍)に達している。この一見矛盾した現象はどう説明がつくであろうか。これは個人と社会レベルの違いなのであろうか。またはいわゆる「表」と「裏」の心理が働いているのであるうか。本研究で日本人の宗教観を改めて見直してみた結果、次のことが判明した：(1)日本人の大部分は単なる無神論者・無宗教者ではなく、文化的な要素、道徳的な要素としての宗教は受け入れられる傾向にある。(2)自分なりの「信念」があり、ある意味ではバハイの考えに近い。たとえば、「神は理解できないから信じられない」という考え方は、バハイの教えである「不可知論」と大きく異ならない。(3)日本人が「嫌い」なのは「宗教」というよりも、「宗教」にまつわる様々な「邪悪」である。バハイは実際、これらの「邪悪」をすべて否定し、打破する。人々は「言葉でなく行動」また「愛」を求めている。したがって、一方ではバハイの宗教観を正しく伝える必要があるが、同時に、他方では、バハイの宗教観を行動で表す必要がある。5年計画の核活動はまさにその効果的な方法である。つまり、共同体の公式なメンバーになる、信者になるということを心配せずに、活動と実践に参加できるのが核活動であるからである(「関心ある人々の集まり」[=Community of Interest]の概念)。同胞を愛し、同胞に仕え、共に歩むことが(万国正義院の宗教メッセージ2003年、イラン学生へのメッセージ、2007年、参照)が、バハイを効果的に伝える方法論の最後の砦ではなからうか。

Japanese attitudes towards religion

Nozomu Sonda

We all talk about "negative attitudes" toward religion of Japanese people and society. Scandals and crimes caused by so-called "religious" organizations and individuals in recent history, from an attempt to murder mass using poisonous gas to a family committing a collective suicide, all seem to aggrandize this negativity. Most of the people the present author associates with seem to regard religious topics are taboos and likewise public institutions do not allow any explicitly "religious activity" in their facilities.

On the other hand, according to the Japanese government's white paper on religion, the "religious population" of Japan well exceeds the double of the country's population itself, meaning that most of Japanese people are affiliated with at least two "religions." Social analysts say that we are in the third religious boom after the WW I, and in fact newly emerging religious organizations are attracting millions of believers into their fold.

So what is exactly the attitude of the Japanese people and society towards religion? Is it positive or negative? Is there a difference between personal attitude and social attitude? Could it be influenced by the same old notion of "omote" (stated intention) and "ura" (true motive) of the Japanese culture?

This study explored the Japanese attitudes toward religion from different perspectives and discussed how "religion" can be beneficial or harmful to people and society. The results showed that (1) A majority of Japanese people are probably not mere atheists or non-religionists; (2) Many Japanese people seem to have their own beliefs, which are often close to Bahai' ideas; (3) What Japanese abhor is really not religion per se but "evils" often attached to what they think is "religion".

The Bahai' Faith in fact has nothing to do with all these evils. What people is looking for is not mere words but actions and also true love. Thus, it is important to clearly convey what Bahai' view of religion is but at the same time it is imperative to manifest that view in action. In this sense, the core activities of the current Plan prove to be very effective methods; members of the community of interest are enabled to participate in the most essential aspects of Bahai' community life without being forced to become a believer or member of the organization.

As the Universal House of Justice stated so befittingly in its message to the Bahai' world in relation to the message to religious leaders of the world (2003) and also to the recent message to Bahai' students in Iran (2007), to love the fellow-countrymen, to serve them and to walk together with them, may be the last resort to truly successful teaching method.