To say that the sociology of religion in Japan has entered a new stage of development is by no means an exaggeration. In order to describe this new stage, perhaps no term is more appropriate than the word “internationalization.”

Admittedly, this term has become very fashionable in recent years. It is used by all kinds of people in season and out. Nonetheless, or perhaps because of this, it points to a dimension of social reality that no one can disregard. Internationalization is blossoming everywhere in Japan, and Japanese sociology of religion is not impervious to its influence.

The internationalization of Japanese sociology of religion is not, however, merely an index or exponent of a broader trend that affects Japanese society in general and the academic world in particular and has now suddenly manifested itself in broad daylight. Nor is it an abrupt and belated response to a need that people have become increasingly aware of throughout the country. It roots in the past, and its present stage is one prepared for by many Japanese scholars who have long endeavored to give their discipline a broader horizon. If one may be so bold as to mention the name of only one such scholar, it would be that of Ikado Fujio, currently a professor at Tsukuba University.

The present writer, a non-Japanese living and working

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in Japan, takes a special interest in the international aspects of the Japanese sociology of religion. He is well aware that his assessments of the theories of Japanese sociologists of religion may differ in some respects from those of his Japanese colleagues. If these assessments are sometimes critical, it is because he continues to count on them for guidance and new incentives that will lead to a deeper understanding of Japanese society and religion.

This brief essay, then, is intended as a tribute to Professor Ikado who, through his work and personality, has without fail responded to such expectations. It is also intended as a small token of gratitude to him and to the many other Japanese teachers who have guided the writer in his study of Japanese religion.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

International character of Ikado’s work. “Internationalism,” “cosmopolitanism” and the like, though much used, are hard to define. Even more is this the case when the academic work of a scholar like Ikado is characterized as international. As a basic starting point, however, perhaps we can say that internationalism implies a bridging function between cultures. In order to carry out this function, particularly in the case of academic theories, several conditions are required. Some pertain to their content, some to how they are expressed, and still others to how they are transmitted.

With reference to content, such theories must be able to transcend the limits of a single country or culture. This does not necessarily mean that they must deal with so-called universal themes. On the contrary, even in this era of internationalization the research subjects most appreciated are often those that relate to phenomena peculiar to a particular society or culture, but for this very reason constitute an original contribution to other cultures. As
will be shown, Ikado's work gives evidence of an unfolding interest of this sort. The international character of his work has in fact deepened with his turn from Western (primarily American) religion to the religion of his fellow countrymen.

The same principle holds true of the interpretation of the data, finding expression in what is called "the search for a Japanese conceptualization and methodology." It is not only the Japanese who call for "Japanese theories." Non-Japanese scholars do the same. But when we compare the two in respect to motivation, it appears that they have different perspectives on why such theories are needed.

When Japanese scholars emphasize the need for truly Japanese concepts and theories, they leave the impression that this is part of the more general identity quest that characterizes the whole of Japanese society today. Among academics the demand for peculiarly Japanese concepts and research methods seems to function as a kind of defense mechanism by which to preserve an identity put to the test precisely because of growing internationalization. On the other hand, when foreign scholars press their Japanese colleagues to be more original in their research, they see such originality not as a mere defensive stance but as Japan's proper contribution to the world community of academics. They see it as enriching a conceptualization that was in fact too unilaterally Western and not nearly as universal as claimed or assumed.

In this respect too a development in Ikado's work will become evident. It may be characterized as a development from concepts and methods intended as universal but in fact too narrowly Western, to a search for more genuinely Japanese theories. At first glance, this development might look particularistic. In fact, however, it intends not a step backward into closedness but forward into greater openness. It envisions a contribution to true universalism.

Still another condition must be satisfied in order to
safeguard and enhance the universal-international nature of research oriented to particularistic themes and carried out with particularistic concepts and methods. The results of such research have to be transmitted in such a way that they create real communication. This is more than a matter of language and of having concrete contacts with other cultures. At bottom it has to do with the personality of the scholar and his competence or talent for being a real bridge-builder between cultures. As students of intercultural communication often point out, this kind of talent presupposes that one can in some sense belong simultaneously to two different cultures. One is the particular culture in which one was born and reared, the other that of which one is a part by virtue of being a member of the human race. Scholars who deserve the title “international” or “cosmopolitan” must be participants in this larger human culture. Later we will see that Ikado’s work, particularly his emphasis on “human values,” points toward this dimension.

Role of personal history. In addition to the elements noted above, there is one other point that seems particularly important in the case of Japan. It is often said that in order to understand scientific theories, we need to know the people who propose them. By the same token, in order to gain insight into Japanese sociology of religion and its development, we need some information about the persons who have played or still play a role in this discipline.

This close relationship between personal biography and academic achievement among Japanese sociologists will doubtless have to be viewed in the light of certain Japanese social structures such as the oyabun-kobun (“parent role-child role”) relationship. From this angle it becomes only too easy to reduce the history of the scientific study of religion in Japan to a history of the relationships among...
scholars engaged in this kind of research. This approach admittedly raises several problems as to the objectivity and value-free nature of the scientific enterprise. Yet it can hardly be denied that, together with the matters of research themes and methods, the matter of personal history is of great influence in determining the international character of academic achievements.

These reflections apply also to the work of Ikado. As will be seen from the account of his career that follows, and from the list of his chief publications appended to this essay, the scope of his interests and activities is broad indeed. When we remember that his career has by no means yet reached its apogee, it becomes obvious that at the present stage no definitive evaluation can possibly be made as to his role in the development of Japanese sociology of religion. Requesting the reader to keep this reservation in mind, I should now like to turn the spotlight on a few of the salient points in his career and try to discover how his work has evolved.

HIGHLIGHTS OF IKADO'S LIFE AND WORK

Teachers. The first period in Ikado's academic career can be designated as the time of training in the study of religion at the University of Tokyo Department of Religious Studies. If there was any single influence that awakened the talents of the young scholar, it was no doubt that of the late Kishimoto Hideo, a prominent figure in the history of Japanese Religionswissenschaft. Kishimoto cultivated in Ikado an interest in contemporary religion and is said to have advised him to engage in research that would be of practical use to religious organizations. This period concluded with a graduation thesis that is still remembered as one of the lengthiest ever submitted. A sociological analysis of the missionary methods of John Wesley, this thesis superbly reveals, both in its subject matter and in its sheer volumi-
nousness, the “Protestant work ethic” of Ikado himself. Whether the Ikado of this period can properly be called a “true internationalist” is a moot question. There is no doubt, however, that this was the time when his interest in foreign cultures was kindled and when he decided to go to the “promised land” of America to continue his studies.

The second period consists of the five years (1955–59) that Ikado spent at the University of Chicago in the study of American religiosity and is again marked by his contact with an outstanding scholar, James Luther Adams. A theological liberal of the Unitarian tradition, Adams combined deep scholarship with a warm human personality and shared these gifts with his students. One of the foci of his thought was the importance of voluntary associations as the locus for “being human religiously.” In much the same way that Kishimoto had exercised an influence on Ikado in Japan, the harmony of scholarship and personal warmth in Adams made a lasting impression. It may be that Ikado’s “applied” sociology of religion and the harmony that emanates from it have their roots in the influence of these two teachers.

**Budding interest in Japanese religiosity and theorization.** After his return to Japan in 1959, the opening of what I call the third period in his career, Ikado’s scholarly interests give evidence of a gradual change. Though an interest in Japanese religiosity was not completely lacking earlier, from this time on it grows more and more central to his research, particularly in the comparative study of Western and Eastern religious organizations. One reason for this shift is doubtless to be found in the circumstance that, beginning in 1959, he spent eight years as a specialist on the staff of the Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education. Even more influential, however, may have been his reunion with Kishimoto. As Ikado himself states, Kishimoto warned him that study limited to Christianity alone would not make
of him a true scholar of religion. At any rate, it is precisely in this shift of interest toward the problems of Japanese religiosity that we can see the awakening of true internationalism in Ikado’s work. Admittedly, at this stage Ikado did not devote great attention to the question of Japanese theorization. In point of fact, the mass of knowledge he had acquired while in the United States, plus that accumulated subsequently through extensive reading of foreign literature, could not possibly be “translated” immediately. A period of transition or adaptation seems to have been needed.

After this “bureaucratic” period, during which he also did some part-time teaching, Ikado became fully engaged in educational activities. From 1968 on he resolutely set out on the path toward a more genuinely Japanese conceptualization and methodology. This is also the time when his achievements increasingly begin to draw attention both within the Japanese academic world and abroad. The opening years of this period, incidentally, coincide with the time of worldwide student unrest—a phenomenon in which Ikado, with his keen eye for present-day trends, took a special interest. Study of this phenomenon gave him an excellent opportunity to reflect on the relationship between “internationalism” and “Japanese distinctiveness,” a problem that neatly accorded with his teaching assignment as professor of comparative cultures at the newly established Department of International Relations of Tsuda Women’s College. It also provided an occasion for broadening his contacts with scholars not only in the United States but also in Europe and Southeast Asia. During this hectic period, Ikado published his Sezoku shakai no shūkyō [Religion in a secular society] (1972), a work hailed as a “challenging masterpiece.” This work will doubtless be remembered as one of the culminating points of Ikado’s career, both for the richness of its content and for the depth of its insights. I venture to suggest, however, that this work
should be seen as belonging to an earlier period of his life. It consists largely of articles written in earlier years, but more important, it is only after writing these studies that Ikado really starts to reach beyond the theoretical framework propounded in this book and in consequence becomes a more maturely “Japanese cosmopolitan.”

The universal in the particular. In 1975 Ikado accepted a teaching position at Tsukuba University. Just as Japanese society and culture showed some changes in the years that followed, so the themes and approaches of Ikado’s research undergo deeper changes. It is too early as yet to grasp their significance fully. It seems, however, that this last period is characterized by steadily deepening insight into the “universally human hidden in Japanese religiosity.”

One illustration of this insight—trivial on the surface, but symbolically important—is the interest he shows in the religious quest as expressed in science fiction novels and young people’s comic magazines, not to mention his continuing attention to other movements in present-day society. Is it not precisely Ikado’s talent for discerning the universally human in the lowly and unpretentious things of everyday life that, as his scholarly reputation grows, confirms him as a true builder of bridges between cultures?

THEMES IN IKADO’S WORK
Against the background of this brief survey of Ikado’s career and its influence on his academic work, we turn now to a consideration of some of his main research themes. Though it hardly needs saying, it is next to impossible to give a full account of all that Ikado has accomplished. This is so not only because his output is so prodigious but also because, in reading it, one is often reminded of the biblical passage in which Peter, commenting on a letter by Paul, says that Paul writes “with the wisdom that is his special gift”—adding
that "this makes some points in his letter hard to understand; these are the points that uneducated and unbalanced people distort ... a fatal thing for them to do" (2 Peter 3: 15–16). Moreover, since probably no other sociologist of religion in Japan is as zealous as Ikado in keeping up with what is going on in the academic world and in the world of human beings at large, the pace of his research development is genuinely amazing. Since, therefore, a definitive evaluation of his work is premature, we will have to limit ourselves to a few themes which have an international resonance and which, indeed, have made his name known among foreign scholars of the sociology of religion in general and of Japanese religiosity in particular.

One further reservation needs to be added. As the preceding review of Ikado's career shows, his work had its starting point in Wesley and Methodism, and this interest continues to remain influential, not least in regard to the organizational aspect of religion as manifested in voluntary associations. This theme will doubtless reverberate through the following discussion as a kind of ground-bass, but no particular attention will be given here to Ikado's view of religion in the Anglo-Saxon world. This restriction is called for not only because a treatment of this subject falls outside the competence of the present writer but also because the international character of Ikado's work does not seem to depend on this facet of his research. Indeed, if I may venture a critical remark that follows, admittedly, from my own preconceptions, Ikado's writings occasionally seem to manifest a slight bias toward uncritical acceptance of the value of individualism, presumably as found in some segments of Anglo-Saxon Protestantism. Ikado himself has called the treatment of this theme his "life-work," but one can certainly argue that the true significance of his academic achievements far surpasses the limits of this particular issue.
Ikado's theory of the new religions. If there is any one phenomenon that, more than others, has aroused the interest of sociologists of religion from many nations, it is doubtless that of the "new religions," meaning primarily the new religious organizations that came into being or into flower after World War II. It is not surprising that Ikado, with his interest in contemporary religious movements, has given a prominent place to the study of this phenomenon. A full account of what he has contributed in this field is not possible here, but at least we can point out a few developments in his thought on this subject. These developments seem to have evolved in what can be called a typically Japanese way.

Following the revered principle of "selective adoption and adaptation" of foreign theories (and for the most part leaving us to guess what has been adopted and what adapted), Ikado has gradually built up a "multi-layered theoretical system." This means that once-employed theories are never completely discarded, but linger somewhere in the depths of his mind and reappear now and again, sometimes rather unexpectedly.

In his theory of the new religions we see, for example, that Ikado first seems to view the new religions as a kind of Japanese version of the Methodism that he studied in his early years as a scholar of religion. On this basis, and never losing sight of it, he builds up a theoretical framework that focuses on the phenomena of postwar social mobility and urbanization. This social change has resulted in a floating religious population which, he claims, has moved away from the established religious organizations characteristic of traditional communal society and become reorganized into "voluntary religious groups" (denominations) typical of an associational society. The religious organizations that best illustrate these changes in the social structure of postwar Japan are, he maintains, the new religions—though he
sometimes softens this assertion by saying that they "resemble" denominations. Noteworthy in this connection is the distinction Ikado draws between the "emergence" of new religions (the increase in the number of religious groups) and their "strength magnification" (the increase in the number of adherents). This distinction deserves high evaluation as a correction to the unilateral view of social unrest as the sole factor in the rise of new religious movements.

A further development in Ikado's thought becomes evident as of the time that issues like those of secularization, civil religion, and the privatization of religion became new foci of discussion among sociologists of religion. Ikado was not slow to see these matters as useful for carrying forward his theoretical framework. Before long he proposed a new typology, one that differentiated established religion, organized religion, culture religion, and private religion. Japan's new religions, in accordance with his earlier "floating religious population" theory, are classified under the heading of organized religion.

Interestingly enough, Ikado's most recent works give evidence not only of further theoretical refinement but also of a certain awareness of the limits of theorization itself. In the present period of rapid social change it becomes increasingly difficult to treat theoretical categories as immutable. This obtains for religious phenomena in general, and of course for the new religions. To be sure, their organizational aspect remains a valuable object of study. The concrete life of believers, however, shows dimensions that cannot be locked into theoretical schemes. Quite apart from the question whether his theory of the new religions alone has led him to this awareness, Ikado's recent statement that "sociology of religion is increasingly regarded as part of the science of man" is very suggestive in this regard. When living people come to the center of
attention, theorization quickly shows its limitations. Ikado has recently suggested that in the study of religious organizations, a “symbolic balance” should be found between the challenging and comforting functions of religion. Perhaps we could extend this view a step further and argue that with regard to the four categories of religion he differentiated, some kind of symbolic balance will increasingly be required, and that in this connection a reconsideration of the place and function of the new religions will be called for.

*View of Christianity in Japan.* Besides the phenomenon of the new religions, another issue in which foreign scholars are often interested is that of the fate of Christianity in Japan. This is indeed one of the main concerns of Ikado, who is himself a Christian. This issue receives extensive treatment in his *Sezoku shakai no shūkyō* [Religion in a secular society], though one must immediately qualify this assertion by pointing out that he limits himself to Japanese Protestantism. This limitation is not surprising when we take into account his career as a sociologist of religion and the main subject of his research, namely, organizational theory with a focus on voluntary associations. His study of Protestant Christianity can then be seen as an attempt to apply to the contemporary situation his general theory that in the mobile society of present-day Japan the denomination type of religious group is the most suitable.

Without going into detail here, I should point out that it is in his handling of this theme that Ikado’s sociology of religion most clearly exhibits the character of an “applied” science. As many other reviewers of Ikado’s work have indicated, it is particularly when he takes up Protestant Christianity that Ikado’s work manifests an inclination to move beyond “descriptive science” toward “normative science”—an interpretation that Ikado himself sometimes
acknowledges and sometimes denies. Insofar as this view is accurate, Ikado’s work can be seen as playing a pioneering role in Japanese sociology of religion, for he challenges the traditional understanding that true science can only be safeguarded by uncompromising adherence (at least publicly) to the position of value-neutrality. From the standpoint of “normative science” Ikado compares present-day Protestantism with the new religions, at once criticizing the Protestant churches unsparingly and advising them to learn from the new religions and return to the hallowed tradition of voluntaristic denominationalism.

This view of Protestant Christianity is certainly a valuable part of Ikado’s scientific work. Another point that needs to be stressed in this connection is his suggestive treatment of the influence of Christianity in general on Japanese culture. Since this is more a question of the “cultural reach” of Christianity than of its organization, it belongs to that part of his typology that deals with “culture religion.”

To put it most simply, Ikado’s view is that Christianity, though usually seen as a foreign element, has in fact quietly become an integral part of Japanese culture. In proof of this assertion he points to the general acceptance of Christmas as an annual event celebrated in one way or another by most Japanese, and also to the wide distribution of Bibles in Japan. One might take the liberty of adding to this list the tendency to have wedding ceremonies performed at Christian churches.

Unfortunately, this interesting point has not been further developed in Ikado’s work, and it is not clear how he himself evaluates these examples of “Japanized” Christianity. If we take our cue from his critique of Protestantism, however, we may venture to say that he probably does not view it with great favor. At any rate, insofar as this “Japanized” Christianity is seen as an example of “culture religion,” Ikado would probably call it an example of “invisible re-
ligion” as well, since in his writings he often seems to equate the two. Against this equation one would wish to ask how such patently visible phenomena as annual observances and rites of passage can truly be called instances of invisible religion. Admittedly, there are many invisible elements in culture religion. But to apply this term of Luckmann’s to a type of Japanese religiosity that stands rather close to what Bellah has called “civil religion” and that in any case is certainly not what Luckmann himself understands by it might have to be assessed as a slight “overadaptation” of a foreign scholar’s concept and theory.

Theory of secularization. The last theme to be considered, that of secularization, might well be considered the most central research theme in Ikado’s writings. This is almost inevitable, since this problem has been at the core of almost all discussions in recent sociology of religion. Since the 1960s secularization has become a kind of “magic formula” in the discipline. It is no wonder, therefore, that in Ikado’s work too it constitutes an axis around which all other themes seem to revolve. In this sense his theory of the new religions and of Protestant Christianity in Japan have to be understood within the frame of reference that sees present-day socioreligious change under the heading of secularization.

One point stands out clearly in Ikado’s thought on secularization, namely, that it cannot be equated with religious decline. In this respect he is in agreement with many other sociologists of religion. But when we probe more deeply into what he means positively by secularization, we discover certain problems and even confusion. This is not to say that this state of affairs is entirely due to Ikado; he merely reflects the present state of sociology of religion all over the world. Conceptual confusion is hardly a new problem for the discipline, but the secularization debate has intensified rather than alleviated the problem. At the same time,
however, this debate has stimulated systematic reflection on the relationship between religion and social change. Ikado's contribution to this reflection in Japan may be one of his most important achievements. Again, this is not to say that he has solved the problem. What he does, rather is to bombard us with challenges. How, for example, do we classify Ikado's secularization theory in the typologies that sociologists of religion like Luckmann, Robertson, Glasner, and others have recently proposed? This writer is obliged to confess that, however he tried, he could not reach a satisfactory answer to this question. He is inclined, therefore, to follow Ikado's lead and leave it to the reader to pick up the gauntlet. Ikado's work does not clear away the confusion surrounding the secularization problem; in fact it offers us few hints that would help in that task. About all one can say is that Ikado has here applied in a really masterly way the previously mentioned Japanese principle of "selective adoption and adaptation." Thus in order to substantiate his view that religion in the modern world is not on the way out, Ikado cites a plethora of authors whose opinions on secularization are by no means always mutually reconcilable. Yet he knows how to "make use" of them "appropriately" and comes up with insights that, if at times bewildering, reveal a stroke of genius.

In the background, providing a constant "ground-bass," is his view that society develops from a communal to an associational form. Accompanying this view is the oft-repeated assertion that secularization means increasing differentiation and what he calls the "internalization of ethics" (naishin rinrika). It is far from clear, however, whether Ikado's theory of secularization ultimately derives from a functionalist view of religion with global intentions à la Parsons, or from a substantivist view that would seek, à la Berger, to explain how traditional religion changes as it carries over into modern industrial society.
What conclusions can we draw from all this? Ikado’s ideas about secularization are open to the same questions directed to other secularization theories. One question is whether evolutionary schemes like the transition from communal to associational society with correlative changes in religious forms constitute an adequate description of reality. It is always possible, of course, to redefine secularization by taking account of new social developments that seem to contradict former trends. But there are limits to redefining, and the confusion surrounding the concept of secularization may be due in part to the attempts of sociologists to make the new phenomena fit into their preconceived schemes.

Another question has to do with the metatheoretical assumptions and ideological background of the secularization thesis—and indeed of all theories of society, history, religion, and human behavior. More and more people are becoming aware of this problem and suggesting that these generally tacit assumptions be articulated and systematically reflected on. Metatheoretical presuppositions are to be found in Ikado’s work, including his theory of secularization. They relate to a specific view of history and of man. This view centers in the notion of progress and regards history as an essentially evolutionary process moving toward ultimate completion. Man is the driving force of this process and is expected to persevere in unremitting efforts to attain this goal, aware as he is of his vocation within this world and of the right he has to enjoy the fruits of his endeavors. Ikado’s work cannot be fully understood without these ideological assumptions. In his case they originate from his personal ties with Christianity, and it is this faith which has made of Ikado the socially committed and humanly concerned scholar he is.
CONCLUSION
Several developments in Ikado’s work have been traced. One was characterized as a growing internationalization, paradoxically finding its clearest expression in his search for a more genuinely Japanese approach to the sociology of religion. Perhaps we may now attempt to relate this development to the trend just described: the growing awareness of the existence of metatheoretical assumptions.

In Ikado’s case this relationship is to be seen early in his scholarly career when his research took the form of “applied sociology of religion,” and nowadays in his increasing emphasis on sociology of religion as a science of and for man. That metatheoretical assumptions exist and play a role in empirical scientific research presents difficulties for which no solution is yet in sight. But even if the progress of science itself is a kind of metatheory, does not scientific progress consist in the overcoming of such difficulties?

For Ikado, and perhaps for other Japanese sociologists of religion as well, these difficulties may be further compounded by elements peculiar to the present-day Japanese situation, one dimension of which is the almost frenetic search for a uniquely Japanese identity. Insofar as man himself becomes more explicitly the central concern and beneficiary of research, the resultant science of and for man will have universalistic implications that transcend particularistic interests. This matter of the balance to be struck between universal and particularistic values is a problem in Japan that is far from solved.

When we call Ikado a “Japanese cosmopolitan” or an “internationally-minded Japanese,” this is no static concept but a dynamic reality. It implies tension and effort to overcome what appears to be a contradiction in terms. When we see that Ikado, in his research, turns increasingly toward man himself and at the same time continues his search for what is genuinely Japanese, it becomes clear,
however, that the contradiction is only apparent, for true universality may be found not so much in foreign paradigms as at the core of one's own sociocultural tradition. The value of being human, and being human religiously, can only be mediated by the particular and the concrete. Only in the common quest for ways of being human in one's own and in other cultures can truly cross-cultural human encounters take place that may enhance the way of being human that we call science. Ikado's work—and the man himself—stimulate us to move in this direction.

Ikado Fujio's Career

1924 Birth in Shiga Prefecture
1949 Graduation from the University of Tokyo (Humanities Division, Department of Religious Studies)
1954 Completion of studies at the University of Tokyo Graduate School (Department of Religious Studies)
1955 Departure for the United States on a Fulbright scholarship
1958 Graduation from the University of Chicago Divinity School
1959 Return to Japan
1960 Specialist on the staff of the Religious Affairs Section, Ministry of Education, plus part-time teaching at the University of Tokyo (Department of Literature) and Keio University (Department of Economics)
1968 Professor of Comparative Cultures at Tsuda Women's College (Department of International Relations)
1975- Professor at Tsukuba University (Institute of Philosophy)

Chief Publications

Books

Translations


Coauthored and edited works


