REMNON KYŌ KWAI.

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Read 27 February, 1901.

SOURCES.

(1) Fushō 普照 Nos. 11–19 & 21–26. The Fushō, the Light of the Universe as the name may be translated, is a magazine first published, apparently, in March 1892. No. 11 is dated, January 1, 1893 and No. 26 was issued March 5, 1894. It is devoted to the interests of the Remmon Kyō Kwai and is made up chiefly of illustrations of the efficacy of the teaching of the sect, accompanied, however, by more or less historical and doctrinal matter.

(2) Kyōkai 敷海, that is, The Ocean of Teaching, Nos. 1–3 & 30–33. No. 1 is dated May 5, 1894 and No. 33, November 7, 1894. The Kyōkai is a continuation of the Fushō, the name and some unimportant matters of form alone being changed. In spite of the nominal absence of twenty seven numbers (Nos. 4–29), this collection would appear to be a full set, the publishers having concluded, after the issue of No. 3, to reckon the numbers from the first number of the Fushō. Hence, with the exception of No. 20 of the Fushō, the series is complete from No. 11 of the Fushō, to No. 33 of the Kyōkai.
(3) *Inshi Juichi Kyō Kwai*, "Eleven Irregular Sects," Perhaps *perverse* would be a better translation of *inshi*, for the term is evidently intended to *carry* with it a large element of opprobrium. Though the name indicates that it deals with only *eleven* sects, the author clearly thought that while in the business, he might as well write up a few more. The author is Itō Yojiro, at the time (1894) a *citizen* of Nagoya. A second edition appeared the following year. It is a polemic in the interest of Buddhism.

As a starting point for those wishing to study the irregular sects of Shintoism, this book is of much value, though, of course, it must be used with caution. While not paginated consecutively, there are about 280 pages.

(4) *Benmo*, published at the headquarters of the sect in Tamura Cho, Shiba, Tokyo. This is a small pamphlet of seventy-five pages, written to refute certain alleged slanderous charges against the Remmon Kyō Kwai, which appeared from time to time in the *Yorozu Chōhō*, beginning with its issue of Feb. 22, 1894, at least this is the first number of the *Yorozu Chōhō*, mentioned in the pamphlet. The principal charges are distinctly summarised, so that there are brought together here within small compass, the best and the worst to be said about the Remmon Kyō Kwai.
Rikugo Zasshi, No. 237, October, 1900; an article, entitled The Founder of the Remmon Kyō and her Doctrines, by Tokusaburo Hachihama, the author of the well-known book whose English title is "Superstitious Japan." This article is based chiefly, if not altogether, upon the magazines and pamphlets mentioned above, which I had loaned him for the purpose.

All the foregoing, except the Rikugo Zasshi article, were collected in connection with the preparation of a paper on the Tenrikyō, which I had the honor to read before this Society a few years ago. It was my purpose at that time to write an account of the Remmon Kyō, also, but as I had reason to believe that I might secure reports of a few sermons, I postponed the matter. The assistant upon whom I was relying, a very efficient newspaper reporter, was taken ill and shortly after died. He carried his investigations far enough, however, to satisfy me that the difficulty of securing reports at that time was very great, practically insurmountable, because of the extreme suspicion induced by the severe attack upon the sect by the Yorozu Chōhā already noticed. Soon after, I left Japan on a furlough and my investigations were discontinued.

A few days ago, I had the privilege of reading Mr. Lloyd’s interesting paper, the fruit of independent investigation, and it occurred to me that the Society might not be unwilling to receive a few notes based on my own reading,
and bearing chiefly on points outside the scope of Mr. Lloyd's essay.

In the preparation of these notes, I have been under constant obligation to my friend Mr. Tokusaburo Hachihama whose article in the Rikugo Zasshi is referred to above.

The Early Life of the Founder.

It is not possible, unless by a very tedious examination of the registers of several different villages and towns, to fix with perfect certainty the disputed points in the life of Shimamura Mitsuko, the founder and present head of the Remmon Kyō Kwai. I say "founder" because, though, as Mr. Lloyd has pointed out, the teaching originated with Yanagita, the public preaching and the organisation of the sect devolved upon Shimamura Mitsuko. In what I have to say, I shall depend for the most part upon the authorised biography contained in certain numbers of the Fushō, indicating now and then the opposing statements of the Yorozu Chōhō's reporter.

Mitsuko was born in the year 1831 (Tempō Ni nen) in the village of Yoshika, Toyoura District, Prefecture of Yamaguchi. Her father was Umemoto Rinzo, a farmer. There were in the family five children, Mitsuko being the second daughter, and the favorite of the household. Her older sister married early and removed to her husband's
home, while Mitsuko was selected as the heiress of the house. Accordingly when she reached the age of fourteen, a young man named Misumi Tamazo, the son of a fisherman, was adopted into the family as her husband. Pains are taken to say that this marriage was arranged through the mediation of one Miyake, probably for the sake of cutting the ground from under certain persons who charge that the marriage was not in accordance with the laws and customs of Japan.

So bright was Mitsuko that her father called her his "divine child" and sought suitable teachers for her, but she did not take kindly to books, and her teachers' efforts bore little fruit. On the other hand, she devoted herself willingly to sewing and other household duties. These duties did not, we are told, engross her thoughts, for she found time to ponder over the great problems of religion, and when she came within reach of Buddhist or Shinto priests, she plied them with questions which oftentimes troubled them sorely. She longed to know the principles from which the influence of the two religions went forth.

While her mind was full of these questions, it became necessary, so the story goes, for her husband to be retransferred to his own family in order that he might become his father's successor, as head of the family. This, of course, involved his divorce from Mitsuko, which she seems to have acquiesced in with true philosophy, apparently regarding it as opening a path into the world. At this point,
the Yorosu Chōhō interpolates an episode, which may or may not be true, namely that she lived for a time in Shimo-no-seki where she formed an alliance with certain speculators in rice, giving them the benefit of her prophecies regarding their ventures. The report further says that she also speculated in her turn for a time. Afterwards she drifted across the straits and was eventually received into the family of Shimamura.

The authorised biography, however, states that after her husband had been divorced, Mitsuko begged her parents for permission to leave home. Their consent having been received, she crossed over to the castle town of Kokura in Northern Kyūshū and became an inmate of a samurai family. Through the mediation of the head of this family, she was soon after married to Shimamura Otokichi, a dealer in rice, who is represented as a model of filial piety, for which he had been three times rewarded by the Daimyō of the Kokura clan, Lord Ogasawara. The marriage seems to have been a happy one and Mitsuko by her housewifely diligence greatly enhanced the prosperity of the family.

Unhappily, in 1852 (Kaei yen) what seems to have been a most severe attack of rheumatism reduced Mitsuko to an almost helpless condition. Her head was drawn down to one side, and one arm and one leg were sadly bent and stiffened. No physicians afforded any aid. She was in great distress. At this juncture a friend named Terazawa told her of Yanagita, a samurai of the Kokura
clan, who after having served his lord in positions of great responsibility with such faithfulness as to be marked out for special reward, was living in retirement and devoting himself to philosophic and religious contemplation. She was told that by recourse to this sage, she might hope, not merely to be cured of her painful disease, but also to gratify her desire for light upon the great problems of religion. Sure enough, at the first interview, the shrunken cords of her neck and limbs were suddenly relaxed with a snapping sound, and her distress was at an end. The suddenness of the recovery seems to have startled Yanagita quite as much as Mitsuko herself and to have convinced him that the prophetess of the new faith stood before him. He had feared that he might die and leave the world without the blessing of his doctrine, but now he might constitute this new disciple the depositary of the hardly gained truths and trust her to disseminate them through the world. Mr. Lloyd has given us the story of her subsequent relations with Yanagita and the progress of the sect.

It is, however proper to note that she is charged with having so far offended the sentiment of the community by her methods of propagandism, as to lead to a term of imprisonment for disorderly conduct. Her adherents, however, stoutly deny this, though they admit that she did incur the suspicion of the police and was summoned on one or more occasions to the police headquarters and subjected
to an examination, which, they claim, resulted in her complete justification.

It is difficult to believe that these suspicions were groundless or that Mitsuko herself lived an orderly life. The charges are quite circumstantial and affect her personal character as well as her methods of propagation. It is said that in 1875 Yanagita withdrew his sanction. This led to something like repentance on the part of Mitsuko, who begged to be received again as a pupil. After fifty or sixty days of instruction and meditation, Yanagita expressed his surprise at her attainments. On his asking her from what books she had gained such stores of wisdom, she replied, “my books have been the hearts of men. By reading them I have attained to knowledge.” At this answer, the sage clapped his hands, and after a few questions, withdrew his protests against her teaching.

The Origin of the Sect.

It is quite plain that this sect had its source in the Nichiren sect of Buddhism. This does not mean necessarily that Yanagita, who seems to have possessed a certain amount of learning, had gone very deeply into Buddhist philosophy, but the name of the sect and the words Myōhō which form the staple of the prayers of the faithful indicate the persistence of a habit formed under the influence of the Nichiren Sect. It is quite easy to believe the report that a
sister of Mitsuko was an inmate of a Nichiren temple for a considerable time and that Mitsuko herself was temporarily, at least, her guest. We are likewise told by certain opponents of the sect that Yanagita was living in a Nichiren temple when he wrought the miracle of healing.

This relationship is sometimes openly acknowledged and sometimes stoutly denied. For example, on one occasion Mitsuko in the course of a sermon said: “I was born in Kokura, Buzen, in the family of a large sake brewer, and if I had not joined this sect I should have lived in comfort and ease; but Nichiren once prophesied that after three hundred years a woman should arise who would preach the doctrine of Myōhō, the wonderful law, to all the world. I am the woman of whom he spoke. My teacher, Yanagita, was the second incarnation of Nichiren Shōnin and I am the third. It is only Nichiren Shōnin and myself who have been thoroughly versed in the mysteries of the Myōhō and are able to make it effective. In other words, though I was born in the family of a brewer, the real fact is that Nichiren Shōnin rose again in my person.”

On another occasion, however, she declared that the term Remmon had no connection whatever with Buddhism. The thought, on the contrary, was the direct suggestion of the lotus flower which rises in all its splendor out of its muddy bed. Just so the beauty of the new life, the effect of the Myōhō, springs out of the sin and uncleanness
of the human heart. Consistency, that weakness of small minds, does not hamper Shimamura Mitsuko either in her autobiography or in her doctrinal teaching. There is in the magazines Fushô and Kyôkai what is reckoned philosophical reasoning concerning the relation of the ji no myôhô, the watch word of the sect, to the ri no myôhô. The latter is explained to be the fundamental principle underlying the "wonderful law," while the former is, as I understand it, the embodiment of the law in the gracious acts of the deity, in return for which believers offer their worship.

Divine healing, and protection from the various ills of life are granted in response to prayer. As regards this matter, the Remmon Kyô Kawai stands with the Tenri Kyô Kawai and many other irregular Shinto, not to speak of Buddhist, sects. That apparently miraculous cures are effected can not be doubted. That here and there men and women clothed with an unusual degree of hypnotic power should appear is quite to be expected. That these persons should be thought, and even think themselves, to be especially favored by the deity is most natural. Without going so far as to assert that they never seek to enlarge their constituency by unworthy means, it is practically certain that the starting point is a sincere belief in the supernatural nature of their special gifts.

On the ethical side, the teaching of the Remmon Kyô Kawai is, in common with most other sects of the Shinto,
the popularised Confucianism represented by the *Kyōdō Dōwa* and *Shingaku Dōwa*.

**Testimony to the Efficacy of the Myōhō.**

The testimony of the faithful, as has been said already, forms an important part of the reading matter of the magazines. Among the letters is one from a man in Shanghai named Harding, who writes in the third person, under date of July 6, 1894, regarding the benefits which he himself had received from an amulet sent by Shimamura. There is no signature and the initials are not given. The letter refers also to the efforts of one Osugisan in behalf of the sect, as well as to the advantage she had derived from the Remmon Kyō Kwai.

Miraculous cures are especially numerous; but they are by no means the sole manifestation of the virtue of the *Myōhō*. One believer wrote from Hachioji which had just been visited by a terrible conflagration. There had seemed no hope whatever of saving his house and the connected shrine, but as the result of his persistent repetition of the words *Ji no Myōhō*, in which he was supported by believers in numerous other places, to whom he had appealed by telegraph, the fire stopped just at his threshold, leaving him unscathed.

Another man, a fisherman, was caught in a fearful storm at sea. The numerous vessels near him were over-
whelmed by the enormous waves; but as he uttered the charmed words the waves which threatened his some distance away and his life was saved.

The following translation of what purports written testimony of one of the faithful is one score recorded in the Fushō and Kyōkai.

From Takagi Yuka,

Wife of Takagi Sōjiro,

No. 14, Nichōme Kita Shinmachi,
Eastern District Osaka.

Age, Thirty two.

In the spring of 1883 I became insane and lost my true mind. I became like one in an empty world, and although my own mother was living with me, I did not recognise her as my mother, neither did I recognise my husband, Sōjiro. I flung things about, tore my clothes, indeed, everything which came into my hands, no matter what it might be, I flung about or smashed to pieces. By this devilish raving I caused immense distress to my mother and to my husband, Sōjiro. As there was no other way, they locked me up in a room and administered all sorts of treatment. Nevertheless, the insanity became more and more pronounced.

Then I was taken to an insane hospital, but still not the least benefit was received; so I was taken home again. While in utter despair of help from any human source, a caller begged my friends to visit the famous Myōken-san,
at Nose, saying that by such a visit accompanied by earnest prayers, fasting, bathing, and penance, the most obdurate diseases, whatever their nature might be, would be completely cured. So with the resolve to do what she could to heal her daughter's insanity, my mother took me to the temple of Myōken and went through the programme of prayers, fasting, and penance for three full weeks, but my disease became more and more severe in spite of all her faith.

Again she returned home, thinking that, as notwithstanding prayers to the Kami and the Buddhas the illness increased, there could be no help in this world and that rather than live on in constant torment, it would be better we should both die together and leave this world of suffering, and thus allow her adopted son, Sōjiro, to live in peace. But though she several times made all her preparations, her mother's heart would not permit her to slay her own child, and we lived on the old life of torture. This continued for nine years.

One day after a most distressing experience, some one suggested that we try the virtues of the *jī no myōhō sama*. He said that the most obstinate case of insanity could unquestionably be cured and that instantly; that in Osaka alone those who had experienced the efficacy of the *Myōhō* might be counted by thousands, and in Japan, by the tens of thousands. So my mother led me in joyous expectation to the temple and besought the help of the resident priest.
The priest on hearing the story said that all insanity and the 40 other diseases, without exception, were due to a certain disease root and that if that root be not taken away, the disease would run on and terminate in an unnatural death; that among the deceased ancestors or other relatives there had been those who had died an unnatural death; that it was of the utmost importance that resort be had to prayer for their relief; that if this be done, and the souls in limbo be released, the insanity would at the same time unquestionably be cured.

As we listened, my mother remembered that an aunt and three cousins of mine had died as a result of insanity. This aunt had had an especial affection for me and had loved me more even than her own children. She remembered also that my attack occurred just forty-nine days after my aunt’s death. During the nine years of my illness, nearly every day this aunt and my cousins used to appear to me and talk and play with me. Thus everything was in complete agreement, even in detail, with the statement of the resident priest.

So we prayed for these deceased relatives in due course on the next day, and that very night (I write it with the deepest reverence), I slept from early evening until half past eight the next morning, a peaceful quiet sleep, to the astonishment of those who cared for me. My body became light, as though a heavy burden had been rolled off my shoulders. My mother on seeing my quiet
sleep and the great change which had come over me was
overcome with joy and gratitude. To receive an intelligent
reply when she called my name seemed like a dream.
She clapped her hands and ascribed all to the power of
the Ji no myôhô. My husband, of course, I need not say,
was greatly astonished at the exalted nature of the great
law and its speedy efficacy, and my relatives, neighbors,
friends, indeed all who met or even saw me, without
exception, shared in this astonishment. From that time
onward my health and complexion daily improved, and
within a week my face which, on account of the distortion
of my eyes, had resembled a monkey's, regained its human
aspect. Within ten days my appetite returned and I ate
my food with relish. I also gradually gained flesh.

Thus within the short space of about ten days by the
honorable efficacy [of the great law] this insanity which
had held me in bondage for ten years passed away, and
I was able to take up again the different forms of womanly
duty, to draw water, wash clothing, do sewing, etc. Again
I was able to recognise my dear mother and to understand
the requirements of filial piety. It was as though I were
born over again. The precious, divine virtue of the great
law can indeed hardly be expressed by voice or pen. In all
the wide world there never was before a great sufferer like
me, afflicted with a distressing disease which would yield to
no medicine, neither to the efforts of Shinto or Buddhist
priests, on whom pain upon pain was endlessly heaped,
cured so suddenly, through dependence upon the *ji no myōhō. * * * It would be impossible to express my sense of obligation, but by this brief letter I would reverently indicate to you one ten millionth part of the gratitude I feel.

The 26th year of Meiji,  
TAKAGI YUKA.

Third month, twelfth day.

To the Honorable Chief, Shimamura,

The Great Teacher.

**Conclusion.**

A strange feeling comes over one on seeing the attempt to adapt the organised superstition of this sect to modern life. The temple in Shiba is, or was when I visited it, lighted by gas throughout the main audience room. The magazine gives the telephone member. In one of the philosophical dissertations, the English word *matter* appears written in *katakana*. Several of the words constructed from Chinese materials to represent the technical terms of modern philosophy find place also in such discussions. On one occasion, speaking of the way in which spiritual things take on the form of objective reality, a preacher said it was like the chemical action of sulphuric acid upon ammonia which reveals the reality of hydrogen.
Such attempts to adapt the teaching to the new type of mind, the fruit of the common school system, must lead to decay. Even now the impression prevails that the strength of the sect is waning. It will ere long pass away.