

自由研究発表 1

The Consequences of Nikkyoso's 1989 Schism

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Summary of Paper

Throughout its postwar history there has been conflict within Japan's education system. The two main adversaries in this conflict were the Ministry of Education (Monbusho) and the Japan Teachers' Union (Nikkyoso). In 1989 Nikkyoso split into two parts. The larger of the two parts adopted a policy of compromise and reconciliation with its former enemies in Monbusho and the LDP, while the smaller part adopted a new name -- the All Japan Teachers' Union (Zenkyo) -- and continued the old policy of confrontation. This paper examines the nature of conflict within the education system as it existed before Nikkyoso's schism and explores the way in which patterns of conflict have changed since then. It analyses developments at the three main levels of the system, i.e. national, prefecture and individual school. It builds on the theories of Thomas Rholes and Leonard Schoppa, theories about Japan's education system that were devised before Nikkyoso's schism. The paper also examines the theories of those who regard the break-up and enfeeblement of the teachers' union as a dangerous development since it would allow Monbusho to concentrate even more power in its own hands. The paper argues that fears of a return to a pre-war monolithic Ministry of Education are unfounded. Political and Educational developments since then have moved too far in the direction of deregulation, flexibility, choice and internationalisation for the clock to be turned back. Post-schism Nikkyoso, for its part, is trying to adapt to these developments by abandoning its policy of confrontation with the government.

Nikkyoso's Road to Division

For most of its history Nikkyoso has been afflicted by a chronic decline in its membership figures. In 1958, 86% of teachers in Japan were members of Nikkyoso. From then on there was a gradual but persistent decline until in 1985 national newspaper headlines announced that membership had dropped below 50% for the

first time. Some of Nikkyoso's leaders decided that the time had come to reduce the amount of confrontation between Nikkyoso and the central government. It was widely believed that this confrontation was putting new teachers off joining the union, and was driving existing members away. Furthermore, the formation in 1989 of the new trade union federation Rengo was seen by many as a step in the direction of moderation and conciliation. Nikkyoso's more moderate leaders were keen to affiliate the union with Rengo and follow a course of more conciliatory relations with government and local board of education. Left wingers within Nikkyoso, however, were opposed to joining the new federation which they saw as little more than a giant enterprise unions, in their view a union that would be too weak in the face of government power.

Nikkyoso's Schism and the Formation of Zenkyo

Between 1986 and 1989, disagreement between Left and Right within Nikkyoso's leadership about affiliation with Rengo developed into a full-scale schism. There had been acrimonious disputes between Left and Right throughout Nikkyoso's history, but this time the stakes were too high to allow for a patching up of the quarrel. Quite simply the Left (i.e. those sympathetic to the JCP or the left wing part of the JSP) would not agree to joining Rengo under any circumstances. When they found themselves outnumbered within Nikkyoso's national leadership, they therefore took the fight to the local level, i.e. the union organisations within each prefecture. Each prefectural union had to vote on whether or not to follow the national lead and join Rengo. In 1989 across the country decisions were made that effectively split the union into two. Some prefectures opted to follow the national lead, and others refused. Those that refused formed themselves into a new national organisation which they called the All Japan Council of Teachers and Staff Unions, or Zenkyo for short. After the schism about two thirds of the members were in Nikkyoso and the other third in Zenkyo.

The Effect of the Schism on Conflict within the Education System

The arguments that say that Nikkyoso's schism will reduce conflict in the education system are twofold. Firstly there are those like Karel Van Wolferen who argue that the union's split had ended effective opposition to the government's plans for education and therefore the education system will be absorbed fully into the 'system', to serve the needs of the rich and powerful in Japan. Secondly,

there are those who argue that the post-schism Nikkyoso's change of direction to one of compromise with the authorities heralds a new era of pragmatic co-operation between government and teachers free of the Cold War ideological divide of the pre-schism era.

The weakness of the position of Van Wolferen is that it does not take into account the divisions that exist within the conservative camp over educational issues. Anthropologist Thomas Rholes and political scientist Len Schoppa have both shown how conflict within the education system was never a simple matter of Left versus Right, although the ideological slogans of both of these sides might have indicated that it was. For example, business leaders (who are normally identified as belonging to the conservative camp) are now calling for increased flexibility and choice within the education system, policies, which could well threaten the discretionary powers of the Ministry of Education and the central government. In fact a lot of the reform language of the post-schism Nikkyoso is quite similar to the language used by business groups and other previous ideological enemies. Members of Zenkyo argue that this convergence of rhetoric proves the case that Nikkyoso has 'sold out' to the enemy. For their part, Nikkyoso argue that they are trying to usher in a new spirit of compromise and conciliation. Whatever happens, it looks like the more extreme fears of Van Wolferen and Zenkyo, i.e. that Nikkyoso's change of direction will bring about a return to a prewar style totalitarianism within the education system, are unfounded.