

Yiguan Dao in Japan: A Case Study of a Chinese Religion in the Japanese Settings

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Yiguan Dao arrived in Japan in 1946 after ruthless suppression of new religion by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Mainland China. Nowadays, the two main sects of Yiguan Dao found in Japan are: (1) *Kōmōseidōin* (孔孟聖道院Kong-Meng Shengdao Hall, 8000 members) and *Sentendaidōnihonsoōtendan* (先天大道日本總天壇The Xiantian dadao Japan Headquarters, 8000 members) founded by followers of *Shimupai* (the Great Mistress Section) which claims to be the orthodox sects of Dao, and (2) *Tendo* (天道 Tiandao, 300 members) and *Tendo Sotendan* (天道總天壇 The Tiandao Headquarters, 30,000 members), established by *Shixiong pai* (Senior Disciple Section) (Inoue, Kōmoto, Tsushima, Nakamaki, and Nishiyama 1996). Based on my field studies on Yiguan Dao in Japan, this presentation discusses how Yiguan Dao has developed from a religion mainly associated with ethnic Chinese in Japan to one that has mass appeal to the Japanese public. This research first offers a historical review of Yiguan Dao's development in China and Japan, followed by an analysis of the conversion experiences of twelve members (five ethnic Chinese and seven ethnic Japanese). The author argues that Yiguan Dao appeals to ethnic Chinese and ethnic Japanese in different ways. In brief, treating “Yiguan Dao's Buddha hall as an ethnic Chinese community centre in Japan” is the most commonly cited reason for Chinese interest in the membership, while “seeking a healthy life style”, “adopting a vegetarian diet”, and “interest in Chinese classics” are more common motivations among its Japanese members.