

# MINORITY RELIGIONS IN JAPAN WITH DR ERICA BAFFELLI

## TALKING POINTS

### KNOWLEDGE

1. What is marginalisation?
2. What forms the dominant religious tradition in Japan?

### COMPREHENSION

3. What is meant by the term 'new religion' in Japan? What are possible issues with the term?
4. What is the difference between 'tradition' and 'religion'?

### APPLICATION

5. What research techniques do you think Erica uses to explore marginalisation and empowerment in minority religions in Japan?

### ANALYSIS

6. Media can have a positive or negative effect on minority religions. Write possible positive and negative effects in a table, adding in your own thoughts as well as those in the article.
7. Why do you think Japan has a more complex array of religions today than in the past?

### SYNTHESIS

8. In minority religions, marginalisation can sometimes lead to feelings of empowerment. Write down the steps by which you think this process could happen.

### EVALUATION

9. Can you think of any differences between the experiences of minority religions in Japan compared to in your own country? What are some possible explanations for these differences?
10. The definition of religion is debated in many parts of the world. How would you define it? What are some possible caveats with this definition?

## ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO AT HOME OR IN THE CLASSROOM

Imagine you are a member of Erica's research team. You are interviewing members of minority religions in Japan to explore:

- Experiences of marginalisation and/or discrimination
- Experiences of empowerment
- Portrayal by the media and public opinion
- Similarities and differences between members of different religions.

Write a series of questions to receive answers to these points. Think about:

- Whether it is best to use open or closed questions, or a mixture
- Avoiding leading questions or bias
- How long and complex to make the questionnaire
- Helping interviewees to feel comfortable and secure
- How you will process the data to reach meaningful conclusions

Compare your questionnaire to your classmates. Did they have any good ideas that you did not think of? Can you offer any constructive advice for theirs?

## MORE RESOURCES

- Erica's team has a blog all about their research. Find it here: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/religion-and-minority/blog/>
- This website, co-curated by Erica, includes an overview article and profile on major new religions in Japan: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/religion-and-minority/blog/>
- This interview with Erica explores her career in more depth, as well as the challenges facing academics: [apple.com/gb/podcast/dr-erica-baffelli-university-of-manchester/id1517458358?i=1000518355187](https://apple.com/gb/podcast/dr-erica-baffelli-university-of-manchester/id1517458358?i=1000518355187)
- Erica has written books, two of which are listed below and are freely available via Open Access:
  - o *Dynamism and the Ageing of a Japanese 'New' Religion* (with Ian Reader), Bloomsbury 2018. <https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/dynamism-and-the-ageing-of-a-japanese-new-religion-transformations-and-the-founder/>
  - o *Media and New Religions in Japan*, Routledge 2016: [www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-mono/10.4324/9780203075036/media-new-religions-japan-erica-baffelli](http://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-mono/10.4324/9780203075036/media-new-religions-japan-erica-baffelli)