

such a study, the history of Tenri must play a major part as its hundred years of history may lay down lines showing how more recent religions may develop.

## APPENDIX I

*Some Dates in Miki Nakayama's Family Life*

June 2nd, 1798	Miki born
1811	Married Zembei
1821	Father-in-law died
1822	Eldest son Shūji born
1826	First daughter born
1826	Second daughter born. Mother-in-law died
1831	Haru born
1836	Kokan born
8 p.m., Oct. 26th, 1838	Possession of Miki
1840	Running away of Shūji's first wife
1853	Husband died
1859	Final disposal of <i>ie</i> property
1863	Cure of Iburī's wife
1872	Haru died
1874	Distribution of <i>sazuke</i> to non-family members
1875	Kokan died
1882	Shūji died
2 p.m., Feb. 18th, 1887	Miki died

## Trend and Problems of New Religions: Religion in Urban Society

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SOME people regard Japan as a very religious country because of the 220 thousand temples and shrines over the whole territory; some say that Japan is going through a period of religious renaissance, pointing to the rise of *Sōka Gakkai* which has acquired several millions of members in about ten years. The writer, however, does not quite agree with such a simple and easy argument. According to the statistics on religion collected at the Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education from prefectures and various religious organizations, there are approximately 90 million followers of Shintoism and 50 million followers of Buddhism (including members of some new sects). But this number exceeds by far the total population of Japan. This is due, for one thing, to a Shinto custom of regarding the whole population of a particular area as followers. Also, there is a tradition among the Japanese of affiliation to more than one religious organizations retaining allegiance to both Shintoism and Buddhism. It is common to set up both a Shinto alcove and a Buddhist altar in the house. Some religious organizations also include in the membership those who have already left. All these factors seem to explain the exaggerated number of religious adherents quoted above. So official statistics accurately illustrate the present situation of the religious population in Japan (Ikado, 1964b, 1965b, 1967).

When we look at the data on religion obtained by a more scientific method, we get a picture somewhat opposed to such superficial interpretations. To take an example, according to the National Character Research Programme conducted once every five years since 1953 by the Institute of Statistics and Mathematics (Tōkei Sūri Kenkyūsho, 1961), only about 35% of the 50 million total adult population in 1958, and 31% in 1963 expressed a belief or some interest in religion. A great majority of the remaining two-thirds of the population may recognize the necessity of religion but say that they would not, under the present circumstances in Japan, become a follower of any particular religion. From the point of view of religious organizations, this is thought to be a great vacuum. When we consider the existence of over 30 million people totally

unconcerned with present religious activities, it may be concluded that the recent rise of *Sōka Gakkai* is after all nothing remarkable.

We cannot take at face value the figure generally believed by the public or as shown by the Ministry of Education statistics on the religious population that there are some millions of households affiliated with one or another religious organization. In fact, the figure goes down considerably when we look into the number of "active members" more carefully by calculating the circulation of religious publications and the intermediary leadership population. In 1965, for instance, the number of affiliates could be estimated at 2 million in the case of *Sōka Gakkai* which had about 800 thousand persons responsible for instruction above the status of affiliates; a similar estimate was made in *Tenrikyō* which also maintained about the same number of intermediary leaders who had received a certain period of strict training. (It is impossible, however, to make a meaningful comparison of the two because of a fundamental difference in the composition of members, i.e., the one being concentrated in urban areas and the other in rural areas.) Following these two are the two sects of *Shinshū* Buddhism (Honganji Sect and Otani Sect) which estimated their affiliates at 870 thousand and 840 thousand households respectively in 1963. Also, the influence of Shinto, which claims over 500 thousand representatives who are elected to take care of traditional services and financial matters in local shrines, is by no means small. The five groups mentioned above are said to have a membership of over a million. Further down we find the *Risshō Kōseikai*, which keeps a fairly accurate record of membership, the PL Association which has come up rapidly in recent years, and the *Seichō-no-Ie* (The House of Growth). In reality, however, these religious organizations do not have any method of obtaining an accurate estimate of members, in contrast to the Christian Church which can count members by the number of baptisms given. Moreover, the concept of membership is rather vague. The truth is, perhaps, that they themselves do not know.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, after taking all these things into consideration, it may be correct to say that about one-third of the adult population participates in one way or another in religious activities. The expansion of a non-religious stratum has been for long expected by scholars and students of religion. Due to limitation of space, it is not possible to go into a detailed historical analysis here; therefore the scope of this study will be limited to surveying the circumstances that gave rise to the large numbers of non-religious population. This perhaps will be one way to study the development of new religious organizations in Japan.

<sup>1</sup> A number of major denominations have, annually, or often irregularly, published their own statistical reports which have so far survived academic criticism. The following reports and researches should be mentioned. They are the *Tenrikyō Tōkei Nenkan*, the *Kōsan Nenkan*, the *Kyōsei Hōkoku* of the Shinshū Otani Sect, the *Shūsei Chōsa* of the Shinshū Honganji Sect, the *Shūsei Hakusho* of Sōdōshu, the *Nihon Kirisutokyōdan Nenkan*, the *Catholic Directory of Japan*, the *Jinja Ujiko Sūkeisha Tōkei* of Shinto, and the *Nichirenshū Shūsei Chōsa*.

## II. Postwar Environment of Religion

During the period immediately after the War until around 1950, there were no such big religious organizations as *Sōka Gakkai* and *Risshō Kōseikai* of today. A public opinion poll, taken at that time by the Jiji News Agency, appeared to indicate that a majority of people felt a need for religion. This was perhaps a reflection of the socially unstable situation after the war. We can safely presume, however, that people in the aftermath of the war could not have so readily participated in religious activities. In fact, about 70% of the whole population were living at that time in rural areas, counting evacuees from bombarded cities. It would be most unlikely that a new organization with a rapid growth potential would emerge in tradition-bound rural areas. Although there were quite a number of small religious groups clustering around some charismatic individuals, it was on the whole a stagnant period for even such a firmly established organization as *Tenrikyō*. When we consider the phenomenon of the massive flow of population to tradition-bound rural areas, it might be more appropriate to regard this particular period, not as that of social disorganization, but rather as a period of accumulation of unrest and insecure feelings preceding a period of social disorganization.

It is often said that the beginning of the Korean War in 1950 stimulated the recovery of cities and industries in Japan. The population statistics of the Ministry of Health and Welfare shows that the year 1950 was indeed a starting point of population migration into urban areas on a massive scale and at a rapid rate. This trend of rural-urban migration on an unprecedented scale continued thereafter even to the extent that there were only old folk and women left in rural areas. In 1963 the ratio between the urban and rural population became completely reversed, and urban dominance in the population distribution (urban 7 : rural 3) was established. Moreover, cities started exerting a strong influence even on rural areas throughout the country so that it became difficult to distinguish what is urban and what is rural. In a sense, the whole country has developed into a homogeneous industrialized society. The development of mass communication media and the transportation system promoted a dissemination of urban way of living to every corner of rural areas, which in turn stimulated further migration to cities. Especially after 1955, the average age of the migrating population became younger and younger; in recent years it is reported that more than half of the rural youth are drawn into cities. This phenomena is explained in the 1963 report on "Living of Tokyo Residents" by the Metropolitan Government by the fact that over 80% of the immigrating population are not tax-payers. This is what may be called social disorganization. Oddly enough, the progress of such a phenomenon has led to the emergence of powerful new religious organizations. According to the data of the Religious Affairs Section of the Ministry of Education, established religions, particularly Shintoism and traditional Buddhism, have run into a stalemate, while new religions such as *Risshō Kōseikai* and the PL Association have shown a remarkable growth and as for *Sōka Gakkai* the membership went up from 500 households

in 1951 to 750 thousand in 1958 (Mombushō Shūmuka, 1962, pp. 126-127).

People who came from rural areas and therefore were formerly in one way or another part of the traditional system of established religions, are more or less cut off from such an institution when they are in cities. The postwar development of mass communication media has prompted the expression of individual interests and, in the course of time, the so-called "non-religious" people appeared openly in cities, having been released from the control of the established religion of the *ie* which forced belief and membership on them.

Since olden times, politics always preceded religion in Japan, as illustrated, for example, by a traditional political motto brought from China along with Buddhism and implanted deeply in the spiritual soil of Japan for the purpose of making use of religions as mere ethical codes regulating common people; "Priests shall serve as government functionaries and temples as government offices." Religion was often used as an instrument of control of the uneducated masses or as a set of moral norms for them to distinguish good and bad. Historically in Western societies, religion has been always thought of separately from politics or else religion preceded politics, whatever the relationship between the two might have been. During the Middle Ages under Catholicism, the ruler and the ruled alike were spiritually the priests' children. Religion was living in the minds of people. Even in Erastianism ("The State must precede the Church"), English kings had to maintain the ideology of Divine Right of Kings. Therefore it seems that there was a sufficient reason for development of the modern principle of separation of religion and politics in the West. But in Japan, politics was from the beginning not distinguished from the management of fêtes and the rites of Shintoism. Even Buddhism was used as an instrument of protection of the state and later as an ideology to support the *ie* system and the worship of ancestors. Finally, during the Tokugawa period, religion became identified with census registration. When the Meiji Government was established, the policy of authorizing some religions as officially recognized was adopted in order to control the number of religious groups; this policy was enforced in spite of the ostentatious advocacy of separation of politics and religion as a principle suitable for a constitutional state. Since the Ōmoto Incident in 1921, all movements of new religions were oppressed or else controlled strictly by law. Under such a system, it was only natural that the officially recognized religions gradually lost a real interest in their religious influence (Umeda, 1962, Toyoda, 1938, Morioka, 1962, Murakami, 1958, Ikado, 1965a, and Ōmoto 70 Nenshi-Hensankai, 1964).

Thus, the principles of freedom of religion and the separation of politics and religion were established for the first time by the implementation of the new Constitution which recognized free competition of religions. This was reinforced by the large scale migration of population from tradition-bound rural areas to urban areas, as mentioned earlier, which created a huge conglomeration of "religious vacuity" or of "religiously mobile" population. More than a half of the people classified as "religiously mobile" answer, however, that they "want to have a religion if they can find one that suits their need" or "A religious mind

is necessary." (Tōkei Sūri Kenkyūsho, 1961, Ikado, 1964a, and Tanase, 1958). So, from a psychological point of view, it seems that the Japanese are not fundamentally indifferent to religion. We interpret this as an inclination toward personal ethics rather than organization ethics. That is to say, according to our observation, a great majority of masses of people living in today's industrialized society are seeking something personal that satisfies their needs and interests, rather than blindly accepting the ethics dictated by an organization under support of some social or political power.

Taiei Kaneko of Shin Sect has made a lucid analysis of this tendency (Kaneko, 1963). In prewar days, especially in such traditional social systems as village and town associations, people were concerned with any event, be it a neighbour's illness or death; everything that happened was somehow related to the life of each and of the community. In these type of communities, the commonly shared idea of the world was often expressed in the form of religion or customary rites of the *ie* and the *mura*; thus religion was usually a symbol of "public" codes. The "public" meant general principles of conduct in terms of positive morality that forced people to accept it as their own view of life. The "public" was always identified with the "common" interests of the community members, without anybody asking the members of the public their personal opinions. In other words, "public" interests firmly supported by the community patriarchs, always coincided with "common" interests of individual members in a closed society like this.

However, in a changing industrial society characterized by separation of politics and religion and by social disorganization, the "public" interests and the "common" interests do not necessarily coincide with each other. Therefore, he says, people of diverse interests must first be brought together where they can talk among themselves. Then, through arising common interests, their personal experiences may be generalized as human experience and finally they may come to understand what are "public" interests. In other words, the "public" interests would be what are created out of "common" interests which come first before the community sets any general principles. In a heterogeneous society where people are just strangers to each other, they first attempt to discuss their own personal interests, and, in this natural course of dialogue, the "common" interests would be brought forth. Later, those "common" interests in competition would be condensed or developed into forms of ethical codes, that is, newly emerging "public" interests. In prewar Japan, the "public" was often symbolized by family religions which had certainly suppressed individual interest in personal faith. But, now, under the new Constitution that guarantees us "creeds in competition", people spontaneously speak out their own opinions to organize the "common" interests into a faith, which in turn, takes a form of voluntary association. Out of this course of reversal from the priority of the public to that of the common, the religiously mobile population or the religious vacuity began to take the shape.

According to a research conducted by the author in 1963 at a town association meeting with an attendance of 3,000 people in Kanazawa, it was found

that even the *Shinshū* Sect, which is sometimes regarded, perhaps with a little exaggeration, as the only living religion among the traditionally established religions, had lost its appeal to the middle class (the old middle class in particular). It is surprising that this was so in Kanazawa which was known to be a stronghold of the *Shinshū* Sect. 60% of the people attending the meeting answered a questionnaire that "there is no religion other than one of our own." Since this was a research employing a questionnaire method of the simplest type, the findings cannot be highly reliable. Nevertheless, it is revealing in that it indicates, to some extent, an inclination for faith in personal ethics and experience, which is peculiar to the Japanese. Judging from this, the author tends to think that the possibility of expansion of new religions will be still considerably broadened, granted that the *ie* religion will eventually collapse; and also that such expansion will proceed in parallel with growing disappointment in the government. It is not hard to imagine what has happened since 1950 in such places of turbulent population movement as Osaka and Tokyo.

It seems natural that religions with powerful organization such as *Sōka Gakkai*, *Risshō Kōseikai*, the PL Association, *Seichō-no-Ie* (the House of Growth), etc. have made a great advance in the socially unstable sectors of the urban population – leaving behind other numerous new religious organizations that either depended too much on the charismatic character of the leader or became too much attached to the already established religions and thereby neglected organization-making in their own right. The socially unstable groups in urban society are composed of psychologically insecure persons who are for the first time cut off from any substantial contact with their home village, who are without connection with any big company or patronage of any powerful person and who are therefore shut off from opportunity to climb up the social ladder. They are the ones who, feeling tied down to the mediocre middle all their lives, seek an authority that may be able to soothe their feelings of discontent (Ikado, 1960, Maruyama, 1965, pp. 58–61).

Especially after 1955, as living became more comfortable for people, it is understandable that they started joining such religious organizations voluntarily since it was difficult otherwise to make friends in cities. Trade unions are to protect the interests of a particular group of people and the Socialist or Communist Party supported by trade unions represents an interest group which has not much to do with unorganized, ordinary people. The Liberal Democratic Party supported by conservative groups and the wealthy class are thought to be representing the agricultural and the business interests which are indifferent to the living of those urban people. To some extent, we can infer from this situation a process of conversion of a religiously mobile population to a politically mobile population.

### III. The Foundation of New Religions

A number of researches by the author and by the Institute of Statistics and Mathematics show (although there are many limitations to these researches)

that the *Risshō Kōseikai*, among other sects of *Nichiren-shū*, is supported by the rural middle class and relatively well-to-do small business groups in cities; their average monthly income far exceeds 40,000 yen (as of 1961) and their political sympathy is on the side of the Liberal Democratic Party. In comparison, *Sōka Gakkai* is much more urban in its character and composition. One of their characteristics is that many members are young labourers or from the urban lower middle class and thus the organization tends to take a rather provocative attitude. The majority of members are not necessarily in the poor income strata as some myth leads us to believe. The average income of member households is estimated at around 30,000 yen per month, which is much lower than the over-all average income of residents of Tokyo, but this is rather due to the young average age of members and a relatively short period of residence in Tokyo as compared with the case of *Risshō Kōseikai* members. (Monbushō Shūmuka, 1962, H. Suzuki, 1963, Asahi Shimbun 1962 and Murakami, 1965).

A characteristic feature of new religious organizations is that their development is socially "horizontal" as they try to meet demands of some particular social groups. Roughly speaking, this is discernible from a socially "vertical" composition of members in established religions which are found usually over various social strata. Both *Sōka Gakkai* and *Risshō Kōseikai* attracted in a similar manner a large number of persons in the middle class, but there are some differences between them, due partly to the time element (*Risshō Kōseikai* started earlier than *Sōka Gakkai*) and, more essentially, to a difference in religious dogmas. In the case of *Risshō Kōseikai*, "a debt of gratitude to one's parents" – a teaching of popular Buddhism – was emphasized from the beginning; consequently, self-control and cooperation between the self and the family became their important concern. Another characteristic is that they do not necessarily reject established Buddhism for they regard themselves as "Buddhists" who restored the true religious spirit from the then declining Buddhism. These are some characteristic features of *Risshō Kōseikai* that made it acceptable to conservative rural people and the old middle class in cities as well as some white-collar worker groups. Such a social background seems to explain, for one thing, the stability of the organization as indicated by the average of nine years of membership among the solid majority of members, and further, a tendency to vote for the Liberal Democratic Party.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the *Sōka Gakkai* started building up its foundation in Kōtō, Ohta and Shinagawa wards where many young and unskilled workers make their first entry to Tokyo. It is said that it quickly infiltrated into the low-ranking white-collar people who were dissatisfied with the system. Because of its dogmatic tendency to resent established religions or any traditional authority, *Sōka Gakkai* spread rapidly to other cities of medium or larger size. Unlike *Risshō Kōseikai*, it became popular only after the contemporary urban environment had been shaped, and partly because of that, it has been weak in rural areas. It

<sup>1</sup> *Risshō Kōseikai*, edited by its own Translation Committee and published in 1966, is the best source material of the *Risshō Kōseikai*, through which one may have access to the followers' way of thinking in their daily life.

has been shown, however, that in the Hokuriku Region the *Sōka Gakkai* followed wherever factories were built and labourers were brought in. It is also spreading among unsettled youths and juveniles (e.g., apprentices in their training period and students preparing for entrance examinations to higher education), who lead a rather insecure existence in a highly differentiated and competitive society. Sometimes this process of *Sōka Gakkai*'s expansion is compared to the disorganization of the Catholic Church in French villages and a parallel rise of secular organizations, pointing out the close resemblance between the two situations (Le Bras, 1955-6, Pin, 1956 and Boulard, 1960).

Notwithstanding the enumerated differences among various new religious organizations, one common denominator is their framework of thinking. Firstly, members have been all motivated to faith through appreciating their own personal life experience. Secondly, as far as politics is concerned, they belong to the so-called "mobile conservative" group or "conservative floating vote" group, who would have voted formerly for the Liberal Democratic Party as it was several years ago. Although there is no certain evidence for this, some available data appear to support such a view. There is, for example, a survey of voting behaviour of the *Sōka Gakkai* members in elections for the House of Councillors in 1956, 1959 and 1962, which illustrated the following tendencies. Usually, in nation-wide political parties, i.e., the Liberal Democratic Party and the Socialist Party, the difference between the total votes obtained in the national constituency and the sum of votes obtained in local constituencies is regarded as the "mobile votes." The Socialist Party, which depends for the most part on organized labor union votes, does not usually show much gap between the two nor fluctuation from year to year. But it is said that the Liberal Democratic Party is losing its mobile votes - losing to the extent that *Sōka Gakkai* is gaining. That is to say, the former's loss is approximately in direct proportion to the latter's gain, and this phenomenon is perhaps one of the clues for analyzing *Sōka Gakkai*'s political orientation (Ikado, 1966a).

Secondly, further notice must be taken of the fact that the substantial growth of *Sōka Gakkai* (and of other similar new religious organizations) came after 1958 when living for masses of people became relatively comfortable. According to the annual survey on National Household Income made by the Government Office of Economic Planning, there has apparently been a considerable increase of income since 1955. The extent of increase was such that some Socialist Party member started advocating the idea of so-called "structural reform" rather than pursuing the standard party line of orthodox Marxism. However, another government research entitled "Changing Distribution of Household Income", issued by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1952 tells us that disparity between the wealthy and the poor is becoming greater year by year. The prosperity of industrial society has attracted the rural population into city life. The Socialist Party, preoccupied with trade unions and insisting on the nation-wide poverty image of a decade ago, is of no help or attraction to those people, as they saw cities with opportunities for more comfort and luxury. Those people who, even with a little bit of extra money and leisure time, did not

know how to cope with their own sense of frustration, came to secure spiritual comfort in the new religions which emphasized the happiness of personal life. For in industrial society, on one hand competition to climb up the social ladder becomes more and more severe and on the other hand, the bottom layer of drop-outs becomes larger. These are some explanations why those people, who are more or less servile to authority, sought a "peace of mind" in this type of an emerging third force.

In contrast, traditional Buddhism and *Tenrikyō* which still maintain a foundation in rural areas find it difficult to put up candidates for political offices in their own right, since their members are already stable supporters of the Liberal Democratic Party. Rather, they tend to think it is safer not to appear to have anything to do with elections as they advocate the principle of separation of politics and religion. But for new religious organizations centered around cities, it has been relatively easy to appear on the front stage of politics, because they cater for the immediate interests of the urban masses and because they can get hold of "mobile votes." Most of *Sōka Gakkai*'s votes are cast out of the voters' personal interests or the interests of the organization - without any intervention by local political bosses, whereas many older religions sought political influence through dependence on local bosses and the traditional *ie* system.

After studying the recent trend of new religious organizations, some say that they are degrading what should be spiritual experience into something which is merely an instrument of securing secular "happiness" and that they are thriving through "materialization of faith". But the writer cannot wholly agree to such a view. We may not be always conscious of our own existence but we cannot stop seeking the meaning of life, fearing death and still pursuing the value of our own life, as long as we live. As was recently proven by psychopathologists such as Rollo May, this fundamental human frame of mind is found in any person however low his level of intelligence may be. They observed that those people who pursue only material interests when faced with disease, death or poverty do so out of an effort to restore a positive value of life - an effort which often turns out to be in vain and thereby converted to a more secular concern. Indeed this may be an easy displacement of an ideal goal by a more practical one, but before any hasty judgment, we must also take into consideration the failure of society to give them adequate education (Otsuka, 1963, Lewis, 1963, Fujisawa et al., 1966).

In order to spread teaching to people who do not yet have any direct interest in their faith, leaders of new religions first try to get some contact with them. So, opportunities are created where people can just get together for a talk on whatever common subject they may be interested in, be it practical problems of living or anything whatever. Leaders believe that the problem of faith can be presented after people join the organization and receive "education" or "theological training." Compared with these leaders of new religions who stress the importance of making contacts especially in a heterogeneous society, leaders of established religions usually have a more passive attitude in approaching people, typically expressed in such a phrase as the door is open to whomsoever

and the responsibility for the common cause of his organization that should be shared with other members belonging to different line-activities. Namely, in the line-activities, all other members often happen to be merely strangers to him except his direct line-parent. In order to overcome those shortcomings, the headquarters recruit certain persons from the line by way of giving examinations (such as tests on doctrine, personality test etc.) to be made "staff" members, namely, professionals in formal leadership positions, and send them as a kind of ringleaders to local districts. When a certain number of members have been recruited in a local district, they are organized as a regional bloc, in which all the parent-children relations in the vertical lines are ignored so that all fellow-members may have chances of getting acquainted with other local members with whom they share the responsibility for their local community. Also, through the bloc-activities, the denominational headquarters may easily control local members in each region. The bloc makes it possible for all the members to be reeducated on credal matters and to be given official instruction on mass-activities by the professional leaders (the staff) appointed, trusted, and educated by the headquarters. The professional leader who is sent from the headquarters is, thus, responsible for educational activities and various routine work of the bloc. These blocs together form the horizontal line of the organization. Often one bloc is subdivided into various sections according to sex, age or occupation for educational purposes. Both the vertical and horizontal lines extend their ends wherever new members are recruited and the organization grows in the fashion of a cell proliferation. Individual members are spiritually guided by their religious parents; they are required to attend not only "hōza" meetings of their "parents" but also meetings and retreat programmes of the respective branches to which they belong. Moreover, they must attend yet another kind of meeting organized by each regional bloc. The result is that members meet each other at meetings at least four or five times a month. For this very reason, their activities not only appear more conspicuous but also create among themselves a strong sense of identification with one another. Any move on the part of a member is closely watched by his "parent", by the senior staff from the headquarters and by his fellow members. Such an institution as this is extremely effective for the purpose of indoctrination, for prevention of drop-out and for assurance of loyalty of members to the organization. Also in *Risshō Kōseikai* and the PL Association certain persons are assigned as full time instructors, occupying equivalent positions as *Sōka Gakkai*'s headquarters staff. Actually, all the persons making up the line and the staff are qualified as voluntary missionaries. Especially staff members who are appointed on a full time basis become the élites of the organization and are placed in positions of full leadership.

Complete separation of the line and the staff is seen also in other aspects of organization. Activities along the vertical line may be carried out at any place at any time. Ordinarily, places which are not connected with the religious organization are used, such as a member's house or a public building. The office buildings and halls are usually run by an appointed administrator

staff. These buildings claim sanctity only as places for contact and communication among members. Let us go back to our analogy of the flexible sales system of the Coca-Cola company with local branch offices all over the distribution network. Various facilities belonging to local blocs of the religious organization would be equivalent to Coca-Cola's local offices directed by a headquarters staff. The intricate network of the vertical line and the horizontal line is so organized as to induce the individual's interests to the maximum and to reach and educate each and every member most effectively.

Further details concerning organization will not be discussed here, since reference could be made to the author's other publications. But one additional point must be made: these new religious organizations, as mass organizations, are almost exceptional in their ability to maintain autonomy, whereas other primary political units, such as the town associations and the village councils, have lost their initiative. Without going into any criticism, let me illustrate this point. In 1960, when a regional institute for social hygiene attempted to inform people that they needed to receive preventive shots for polio, it resorted to a public relations car, or announcement through town's associations or by distributing information leaflets. But the way of a new religious organization was, first of all, to inform its members in the neighbourhood of the clinic and spread the information through its organization. When the information reached the end of the established communication network, it was further extended to persons in the neighbourhood regardless of whether or not they were members, and, at least in the initial contact, without pressing non-members to become members. Then they all went together to the health clinic to receive shots. Members took advantage of this chance of contact with non-members; such opportunities of contact created for some other purpose were then led to efforts at proselytization. This attitude is indeed different from that of the older religious organizations which are used to wait for people to come. It is said that recently there are many *Sōka Gakkai* members among local managers and salesmen of insurance companies. It seems that they use their profession to strengthen contact with, for example, housewives in huge apartment blocks by giving them a part-time job of insurance sales.

About 1963, through the influence of increasing contact with experts on religion and other outside groups, some new religions started introducing into their system Saul Alinsky's theories of people's organization. Theories of group dynamics, first tried out by some Christian groups, were also introduced. Generally speaking, it appears that their manner of making initial contact with non-members has become more sophisticated.

*Sōka Gakkai* makes efforts to be alert and responsive to new tendencies and innovations in other religious groups. Especially after the formation of the Kōmei Party, it has tried to impress the public with an acceptable image with slogans of "freedom of religion" and "separation of politics and religion", so as to avoid criticism from other religious organizations.

## V. Religious Organization or Political Organization

After surveying the development of these new religions, it is feasible to arrive at a theory that under certain conditions it is possible for religious organizations, however large they may be, to expand and at the same time keep up the level of faith of individual members – although normally faith *per se* must be a concern of each individual. From the viewpoint of organization theory, new religions are a remarkable example of effective, democratic organization operating on the balance of control from above and participation from below.

But then a question arises as to what makes such a religious organization different from any other type of organization such as a political party or a business company. As was mentioned earlier, these religious organizations have taken on the needs and interests of the discontented element in urban areas. If they were successful in expanding only because of their emphasis on satisfying secular needs, they might as well be regarded as a political organization. Thus a criticism is raised that they are only able to mobilize masses because they are *de facto* political organizations.

When *Sōka Gakkai* scored an unexpectedly high gain in the 1962 election for the House of Councillors, other political and religious organizations became quite alarmed about the rise of a religious group which advocated the establishment of a state religion. The question was whether or not such a group could duly use its religious authority to exert pressure at the time of election. This controversy was tentatively settled by a legal interpretation by scholars of constitutional law that any person regardless of his creed is entitled to free participation in election campaigns. But recently, because of the way religious organizations have developed, controversy has been renewed by political scientists and students of religion about the *raison d'être* of a religious organization.

In some studies of religion, the thinking behaviour of an individual is, very roughly speaking, interpreted at two different levels, one being "behaviour based on rational conviction → interest group" and the other "behaviour based on faith → participation group". Behaviour based on rational conviction – associated with political or economic behaviour – is oriented toward an ideal embodied in concrete objectives. This ideal or goal, however great it may be, is subject to modification or a relativistic interpretation under the impact of events. When a situation is perceived in a certain way, steps are immediately taken that are considered to be the shortest or the most effective way to reach a goal. In an organization which rests on such a rational assessment of its members' behaviour, goals are embodied in the form of an ideology or manifesto and control is exercised within the framework of this perception of the goals. But precisely because of compromises in behavior, an inner struggle among members or factions becomes an inherent feature of such an organization. Any discussion about human relations tends to take on the tinge of "manipulation".

On the other hand, behaviour based on faith must be inevitably different from behaviour based on rational conviction, as long as the criteria of judgment

is the infinite existence, e.g., God, Buddha, Truth, Nothingness, etc. The goal of faith cannot be compared with any other. When given such a criterion of judgment, there can be numerous possibilities of actions to be taken in a certain situation if only because of the ambiguity or loftiness of the goal. One could be overwhelmed by the enormous distance and be driven finally to indecision and perplexity. But if and when one makes a decision and takes a move, one can only pray in suffering that the decision would prove correct. Because the goal is an invisible God (a God of sanction), behaviour based on faith is always accompanied by this "suffering-self-reflection and self-criticism", even though in appearance certain forms of behaviour may be similar to the behaviour of rational action. Only in the experiences of this "suffering" can all men be equal as human beings regardless of social status, position or personal character. In other words, only through such experience of common suffering can one become responsible for one's own behaviour and look at one's own and others' existence and behaviour objectively on the level of "human understanding".

It is thought that by sharing the experience of suffering, conflict among men is mitigated and human affairs become worthy of "Divine Law." People gather together who share common concerns and suffering as human beings. These are the people who form new religious organizations which we classify as a "participation group." The "participation group" performs a completely different role in society from that of an "interest group", although the two may have a similar structure. The "participation group" must remain outside the sphere of interest groups, and as the conscience of society, take a position to criticize and lead all interest groups equally.

In Buddhism we talk of the Way of the Bodhisattva which teaches that the ideal human society must be formed through efforts of arousing 'suffering' in others in common with one's own suffering, and through an experience of sharing human interests. It goes on to say that those who live on truth can call forth that truth which may be hidden in others. In Christianity, such a group of people is called a "community of the faithful." Human revolution, which is the ultimate objective of the "participation group," is perceived in suffering. In the end, a belief in construction of an ideal society may often be developed and maintained in the framework of an eschatology.

Be it *Sōka Gakkai* or *Risshō Kōseikai*, the organization operates, to a greater or lesser extent, on the basis of such fundamental doctrines. The essence of their activities is learning. For this reason, they are justified when they say that no person who is once admitted to their "participation group", regardless of how initial contact was made, can become a good member except through continuous self-discipline and education. That is why each organization has developed an excellent educational programme of its own directed by a fulltime professional staff.

Any argument in theology or religious doctrines becomes inevitably ideological as long as it is human beings who must interpret, but unlike the ideologies of interest groups which have a more concrete shape, the ideologies of participation groups tend to be oriented toward a non-concrete dimension.