

RISSHO KOSEI-KAI

A Sociological Observation of Its Members,
Their Conversion and Their Activities

By Eimi Watanabe
London School of Economics,
London

Chapter 1. Introduction

Section 1. Purpose of this thesis

According to Takagi Hiroo¹ and McFarland², in order for a new religious movement to develop into an organization that is recognized by the public as a religious body, a certain specific social condition must prevail. This social condition is that there must be a state of social crisis in which the people feel anxiety about their future. Takagi maintains that Risshō Kōsei-kai, along with Sōka Gakkai, arose to prominence a short while after the War, around 1949 and 1950, and this period was a time of economic and political instability. At such a changing period the part of the population which does not belong to the major industrial enterprises and is not organized finds itself alienated, and to be saved from this alienation, seeks comfort and satisfaction in a new religious movement.

Another popular theory concerning the New Religions in Japan claims that they are playing the role which the family system used to play before the War.

1. Takagi, Hiroo, *Nihon no Shinkō Shūkyō*. Tokyo, Iwanami-shoten. 1959.

2. McFarland, H. Neill, *The Rush Hour of the Gods*. New York, The Mac-Millan Company, 1967.

By providing in these times of change a sense of emotional and social security for the individual, the New Religions take over an important function of the traditional family.³

I do not propose to examine here whether the above theories were true for the period immediately following the War. But, it is an indisputable fact that Japanese society has transformed greatly since then. The rapid development of the economy, the rising standard of living which accompanies this, the spread of mass communication, the universalization of higher levels of education are just a few of the changes. In answer to these changes in society, there must have been corresponding changes in the role played by the New Religions in society, and when the value systems of the Japanese people change, it is likely that their opinions and thoughts about the New Religions change.

On my first visit to the Risshō Kōsei-kai (hereafter abbreviated as R. K. K.) headquarters in Suginami Ward, Tokyo, I came across hundreds of members who seemed to be chatting gaily and enjoying each other's company in the *hōza* sessions, and I received the impression that such a word as 'alienation' did not quite fit into this picture. Of course, alienation is not necessarily felt by the individual himself, but the way these people dressed or the expressions they wore on their faces or the fact that they were attending the *hōza* on a weekday during daytime seemed to point out that they were not the people who were suffering from the lowest of living conditions. But since it is precarious to judge from superficial impressions, I decided

3. Jaeckel, Theodor, "The Psychological and Sociological Reasons for the New Religions," in *Japanese Religions* Vol. 2, No. 1, April 1960. Kyoto, The Christian Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, 1960. p. 9.

then to seek within possible means, to listen to the voices of the members of R.K.K. and discover what they desired when they joined R.K.K., and what they received by joining. This is the motive, and at the same time, the purpose of writing this thesis.

When one makes a study of a religion, even if the study is concerned with organizational or physical aspects and not the doctrinal, the description of the religion differs greatly according to the values and attitudes of the student. Especially in the case of the New Religions, the general evaluation tends to be that, leaving aside the organizational aspects of the religions, they are inferior in doctrine compared to the established religions, this perhaps being due to the fact that great numbers of these New Religions were formed in the years following the War 'like bamboo sprouting up after a rain fall.' Therefore such value-loaded phrases as 'they (New Religions) are consciously avoiding any traces of superstition' or 'while bringing in the results of modern medicine when convenient' are used even by students of the New Religions. In this thesis, I hope to avoid such value judgements as much as possible. The material I use will be mostly the results of the interviews I had with the members of R.K.K. I used previous articles written on the R.K.K. only as references. This is because I want to place primary importance on the viewpoint of the members.

Section 2. The history of Risshō Kōsei-kai

R.K.K. celebrated its 30th anniversary in 1968. These thirty years can be divided into three periods, the first period being

the Founding Period (1938–1947), the second is the Training Period (1948–1957), and the third is the Repletion Period (1958–present). This division into three periods is not simply for convenience, but it denotes the pattern of development. The first period begins with Niwano Nikkyō and Naganuma Myōkō leaving Reiyū-kai and establishing Dai Nippon Risshō Kōsei-kai, which grows to have a membership of a few thousand, and this period, in which revelations by Naganuma Myōkō are of primary importance, ends with the war. The second period is said to be the period in which Action (*gyō*) played the leading role, and it is at this time that the name changes to Risshō Kōsei-kai (Juridical Religious Person), and membership increases by leaps and bounds. This second period ends with the Yomiuri Incident¹ and the death of Naganuma Myōkō, two great trials for the organization. The third period begins with the declaration of the Manifestation of Truth by the president, and since then doctrine becomes as important as action, and the system of doctrinal study is introduced. The ceremony of purifying the building site of the present headquarters (Dai-seidō, or Great Sacred Hall) takes place at the beginning of this period, but membership-wise, there is not much of the rapid growth as in the preceding period. This is said to be due to the Yomiuri Incident and also to the ‘Anti-Risshō Kōsei-kai Drive’ organized by the Sōka Gakkai in 1960. But the

1. The *Yomiuri Shinbun* reported that there was some fraudulence concerning R. K. K.’s attainment of land for building its school and also concerning its finances. Naganuma Myōkō was also criticized for her methods in healing the sick. This led to the examination of R. K. K. activities by the Legal Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, which later concluded that the above criticisms were without grounds.

activities of the R.K.K. become varied and enriched in content, and besides the great importance placed on the study of doctrine, branch churches (*shibu*) are formed abroad, President Niwano visits Pope Paul VI, the organization undergoes a drastic change, and the system of dividing the country into blocks (diocese system) is introduced.

Outline of R.K.K. History

First Period

- 1938 March Dai Nippon Risshō Kōsei-kai formed
 November Building of first headquarters begun

Second World War

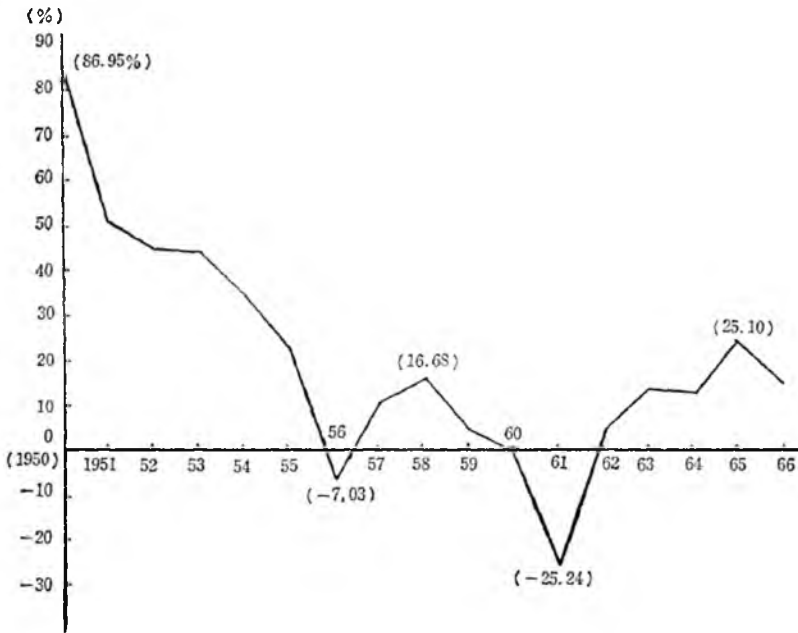
Second Period

- 1948 August Religious Judicial Person Risshō Kōsei-kai established
 49 Young People's Division formed
 51 Jointly established the Union of the New Religious Organizations in Japan (UNROJ)
 53 Kōsei Library constructed and opened
 56 Ground breaking ceremony of the Daiseidō;
 Yomiuri Incident
 57 Naganuma Myōkō died

Third Period

- 58 March Declaration of the Manifestation of Truth
 September Doctrinal seminar for all *shibu*-leaders held
 59 February Hawaii *shibu* formed
 September Los Angeles *shibu* formed
 61 Reorganization of *shibu*, the block-system introduced, which divides the country into 18 *kyōkai* (church)
 Department of Doctrine formed
 64 Opening ceremony of Daiseidō
 65 President Niwano met with Pope Paul VI

The increase rate of membership is shown in the following graph :



The increase rate is highest in 1950, then comes a gradual decline until 1956, when because of the Yomiuri Incident, the increase rate was negative. Following this, there was a slight growth, but once again in 1961, because of pressure from Sōka Gakkai, the organizational reform to the diocese system and the raising of the membership fee (from 10 yen per month to 100 yen), the increase rate dropped to the all-time low of minus 25.24. Since then, there has been a steady climb, and in recent years, the increase rate has constantly remained around the 20% line.

R.K.K. owns and runs numerous and varied enterprises,

among them, the Kōsei Gakuen High Schools, Kōsei Hospital, Kōsei Library, Kōsei Publishing Company, a nursery, cemetery, and a comprehensive cultural centre, the Fumon Kaikan (Hall of the Open Door) is presently being constructed opposite the Great Sacred Hall.

As of August, 1968, R.K.K. divided the country into 21 districts (*kyōkai*), under which came the *shibu* or branch churches. There are 193 *shibu* inside Japan and three abroad. The *shibu* are divided into *chiku-hōza*, units containing from 300 to 700 households. Under the *chiku-hōza* are the *kumi* (20 to 50 households) and the *kumi* again are divided into the smallest organizational unit, the *han*, which include several households.

Section 3. On the research

My survey is an attempt to discover the motives of the R.K.K members for joining the organization, what they seek in it, and what they do as members, and what they think they gain from it.

For this purpose, I conducted an interview survey of 75 of the members of the R.K.K. from September 9 to September 17, 1968.

The 75 were of the following groups of people :

	<i>Kambu</i>	Ordinary members	Total
Male	11	15	26
Female	20	29	49
Total	31	44	75

Distribution according to age :

Eimi Watanabe

Age	<i>Kambu</i>	Ordinary members	Total
20—29	6	8	14
30—39	9	11	20
40—49	9	16	25
50—59	5	7	12
60—69	2	2	4
Total	31	44	75

(*Kambu* may be translated as leader or staff, meaning those members who have been chosen from among the fervent members and given responsibilities of propagation and teaching of the doctrines. The lowest rank of *kambu* is the leader of a *hōza*. *Kambu* are voluntary workers and receive no financial support for their services, although they might spend over sixty hours in serving the causes of R. K. K.)

The age and sex structure of my sample coincides approximately with the total structure of the R.K.K. membership. As for the geographical grouping, one to six members were chosen from each of the 25 *shibu* (the 23 wards of Tokyo plus Mitaka-shi and Kawasaki-shi) which have their headquarters in the Daiseidō.

The 75 members whom I interviewed were chosen through the following procedure: I had asked the Tokyo Kyōkai to select 80 people whose age and sex distribution matched that of the total R.K.K. population, and the Tokyo Kyōkai thereby asked each *shibu*-leader to recommend those who fitted the age and sex requirements. The 75 people were those among the 80 thus recommended who cooperated with the interview. Since I have no means of knowing the method by which these members were selected by their respective *shibu*-leaders, this sample might be somewhat biased.¹ In fact, since the *shibu*-leaders

1. I could take no other method of sampling, since I did not have free access to the membership list. Also, in order to collect the necessary materials, I had to ask for permission at each phase of the survey.

chose these people as instructed by the Tokyo Kyōkai, they might have felt obliged to recommend the more devout members in their *shibu*. This is most likely to have been the case, since I found that among those listed as Ordinary Members, there were actually two *kambu*. Since *kambu* are especially devout and active members, perhaps the *shibu*-leader, who wanted to choose the best members, recommended these *kambu* as ordinary members. Among the five on the list whom I did not interview, I could not get in touch with three of them (they had moved), and the remaining two did not come to the appointed place twice in a row. But the fact that 87.5% cooperated with the interview was, to me, an unexpected success.

The interviews took place in one of the guest-rooms at the Daiseidō at a previously arranged day and time, and the interviewees answered the questions that had been prepared in advance. The interviews took from 15 to 40 minutes, averaging about 25 minutes per person.

Before and after the interviews, I surveyed all the literature that was available on R.K.K., and read through the back numbers of the magazines published by R.K.K. But unfortunately, aside from the materials published by R.K.K. itself, I found very little concerning R.K.K. specifically. I also attended the *hōza* sessions of various *shibu* over ten times, and made observations of several ceremonies. The staff at the headquarters and the Young People's Division were very helpful and offered me information and advice which I asked for, and I am infinitely grateful for their cooperation.

Chapter II. A Portrait of the Risshō Kōsei-kai

Section 1. Geographical distribution

The number of *shibu* per each *kyōkai* can be seen in the following list :

<i>Kyōkai</i>	No. of <i>shibu</i>	<i>Kyōkai</i>	No. of <i>shibu</i>
Tokyo	27	Shizuoka	8
Overseas	3	Niigata	8
Hokkaidō	6	Hokuriku	5
Ōu	7	Kōshin	7
Tōhoku	6	Chūkyō	13
Fukushima	6	Kinki	7
Ibaragi	6	Chūgoku	11
North Kantō	9	Shikoku	6
Saitama	11	North Kyūshū	9
Chiba	11	South Kyūshū	5
Kanagawa	6	Total 21 <i>kyōkai</i>	177

The size of the *shibu* varies greatly, but when *kyōkai* are compared according to the number of *shibu* they contain, it can be seen that the Kantō area alone holds about one third of the total number of *shibu*, and especially Tokyo, Chiba and Saitama are densely populated with R.K.K. members. It is said that there are proportionally more members in the east than in the western parts of the country and in the urban than in the rural districts.

Within Tokyo, Nakano and Suginami wards have been traditionally the stronghold of the organization, and recently, membership has been increasing also in Shinjuku and Setagaya wards, and Mitaka-shi. Minato, Bunkyo and Arakawa *shibu* show a relatively low rate of increase in membership.

The following list shows the number of people I interviewed in each *shibu* :

The number of people interviewed in each <i>shibu</i>	<i>Shibu</i> name
6 (people)	Suginami, Shinjuku
5	Setagaya, Mitaka
4	Adachi, Itabashi, Ōta
	Nakano, Nerima
3	Kita, Kōtō, Shinagawa
2	Edogawa, Kawasaki, Katsushika, Shibuya, Sumida, Taitō, Chūō, Chiyoda, Toshima, Bunkyō, Minato
1	Arakawa, Meguro
	25 <i>shibu</i>

The geographical distribution of the interviewees seems to be approximately proportional to the total geographical structure of R.K.K. members in the Tokyo district.

Section 2. Distribution according to age and sex

I have not been able to obtain data from R.K.K. concerning the distribution of members according to age and sex, but the Planning Department of the R.K.K. conducted a survey in 1956, taking a sample of 650 new-comers to R.K.K. The age and sex distribution of this sample was as follows :

	Number	20—29	30—39	40—49	50—59	Total
Male	267	19.3%	25.0%	20.5%	20.5%	85.3%
Female	383	13.9%	30.1%	28.5%	17.3%	89.8%
						(Planning Department: 1965)

The age and sex distribution of my sample is as follows

	Number	20—29	30—39	40—49	50—59	60—69	Total
Male	26	10.8%	42.4%	26.9%	15.4%	4.5%	160.0%
Female	49	22.5%	18.4%	36.8%	16.3%	6.0%	100.0%

My sample, being small, is inclined to be biased, but from the samples of the survey of the Planning Department, it can be seen that 50% of the members are in the thirties and forties. In recent years, it has been noted that the Young People's Division has become active, especially since the establishment of the *Rensei-Hall* (Training center) at Ōme, and as a result, younger members are increasing. But when one attends the daytime *hōza* on weekdays, 80 to 90 percent of the participants are middle-aged women. Therefore, it can be assumed that over half of the active members are women, and particularly those over thirty. The most reasonable explanation for this phenomenon is that women of this age bracket have the largest amount of time to spare or to use according to their free will. These women are probably mothers and housewives, but since their children are in school already, it is possible to be away from the home during daytime. Also, attending daytime *hōza* means that they are not working women, and this implies that they are probably not in their twenties and that they are of an economic stratum in which the women are not required to work after they are married.

The men and the working women members attend the night time *hōza*, or the Sunday *hōza* (see Chapt. IV, Sec. 2).

Section 3. Occupational distribution

According to the survey by the Planning Department quoted before, the occupational structure of the 650 members was as follows (nation-wide sample):

Risshō Kōsei-kai

Salaried Workers	28.1%	Fishing	1.7%
Merchants	23.1%	None	35.4%
Agriculture	11.7%	Total	100.0%

(Planning Department: 1965)

Among those who answered as having no occupations, there is a large proportion of housewives. As a nation-wide sample, those who are engaged in agriculture and fishing hold a low proportion of the total, and this confirms a previous statement to the effect that R.K.K. is more influential in urban than in rural areas. It can also be seen that merchants hold an important position numerically, and this, i.e., the large proportion of self-employed, small and middle-sized business, is claimed to be one of the major characteristics of R.K.K. membership.

My sample shows a somewhat different distribution, mostly due to the fact that they are all people living in and around Tokyo, whereas the former is a sample from all parts of Japan.

Occupation	No.	%	Occupation	No.	%
<i>Self-employed</i>	9	20.4	(Salaried workers continued)		
Commerce	5	11.4	Service	2	4.5
Industry	3	6.7	Transportation-	0	0.0
Others	1	2.3	Communication		
<i>Salaried workers</i>	9	20.4	Manual labour	1	2.3
Professional	0	0.0	<i>Occupation none</i>	26	59.1
Clerical	5	11.4	Housewives	25	56.8
Administrative	0	0.0	Students	1	2.3
Sales	1	2.3	Others	0	0.0
			Total	44	99.9%

Because half of the total sample consists of housewives, those listed as having no occupations form the largest single group, but when we consider only the men, out of the total of 15, 7 are self-employed, 8 are salaried workers (of which 7 are clerical and service), thus entrepreneurs and white-collar

workers forming the majority. I have no data on the extent and size of the enterprises, but in the case of those engaged in commerce, they employ from 2 to 5 workers (in most cases, the employees are also members of R.K.K.), and in the case of manufacturing industries, the products are accessories and other small articles, like bicycle parts, which shows that they are likely to be small-scale industries. But whatever the scale, the self-employed have more control of their working and leisure time than salaried workers, and therefore, they can spend more time on R.K.K. activities than others. One factory owner explained that all his employees were R.K.K. members and that their factory maintained a 'socialistic management' and the profits were distributed equally among the workers. Therefore, each worker feels a sense of responsibility to do his work well, and thus the owner himself hardly ever needs to go to the factory since the work is performed perfectly without his supervision. Therefore, he uses all his spare time for R.K.K. activities.

The husbands of the 25 housewives are in the following occupations :

Occupation	No.	%	Occupation	No.	%
<i>Self-employed</i>	12	48.0	(Salaried workers continued)		
Commerce	7	28.0	Administrative	3	12.0
Industry	3	12.0	Sales	3	12.0
Others	2	8.0	Service	0	0.0
			Transportation-	1	4.0
<i>Salaried workers</i>	13	52.0	Communication		
Professional	1	4.0	Manual labour	1	4.0
Clerical	4	16.0	Total	25	100.0

From this chart, it can be seen that the self-employed form 48% of the total, and the majority of the rest are white-

collared workers.

To repeat, the fact that housewives and self-employed form a majority implies that these are the people who have the largest amount of free time, but also, when we consider the fact that the white-collared workers form the next largest group, this points to a certain connection with the teachings of R.K.K. The purpose of the movement in R.K.K. is not to cause a revolutionary change in society, but to teach each individual the way to discover a better, more meaningful means of living in the present conditions of life. The instructions given in the *hōza* sessions are such that members are not taught to remove the causes of their anxieties, but to change their own minds and hearts so that they take a different view of the problem which caused the anxiety, thus making them immune to the pain or hardship that they had felt because of the problem. For example, one woman member in her fifties had been deeply troubled by her husband whose extra-marital excursions never ceased and who neglected his family. She used to hate her husband and blame him for everything, but upon entering R.K.K. she learnt that she herself had been the cause of her husband's actions, so she turned over a new leaf, stopped blaming the husband, and took a humbler attitude towards him, and miraculously, the husband returned to her, and they are now living happily together. Not only in this instance, but in most cases of the *musubi* of the *hōza*, members are taught to reflect upon themselves, change their hearts and minds and mend their ways, and they are told that this will result in the removal of anxieties. They are not taught to act directly upon what is causing the problem and change the circumstances.

I believe that for such a teaching as this to be acceptable, the followers will have to be above a certain level of living. By this I mean that if they are facing immediate and crucial problems such as what to eat on this day, being taught to mend their ways would not ease their pain, unless some definite change in the physical environment occurs. The R.K.K. teachings appeal more to those whose pains and problems would disappear if only they change themselves. Therefore R.K.K. members are constituted not from the lowest strata in society but from people of the strata above that, as one *kambu* explained to me. But, as will be shown later, the fact that many members do have problems that are not spiritual points out that the members are not of the class for whom every physical need is fulfilled.

Thus, to generalize, most of the R.K.K. members belong to the old middle class, whose levels of living are not the lowest but not extravagant.

Section 4. Educational background

Educational background of the ordinary members :

	Male	Female	Total
Primary education	5 (33.3%)	10 (35.6%)	15 (34.9%)
Secondary education	3 (20.0%)	16 (57.2%)	19 (44.2%)
Higher education	7 (46.7%)	2 (7.2%)	9 (20.9%)
Total	15 100.0%	28 100.0%	43 100.0%

In the *hōza* sessions, R.K.K. teachings are presented in simple language and developed with examples from personal experiences. This seems to be the most effective method since according to the results above, 34.9% had received only primary

school education. One lady in her sixties had not even graduated from primary school and can therefore read very little *kanji*. Thus she cannot read the various publications of R.K.K. even if she desired to do so, and the only way for her to learn the doctrine is through listening to other people talk in the *hōza*.

In recent years, though, the percentage of those who have received higher education is increasing among men and women, and the study of doctrine has become vital to satisfy these members. The R.K.K. members are encouraged to sit for the examinations for the various ranks of *kyōshi* (teacher), and for those members whose chances of advancement in outside society are limited, passing one examination after another and climbing the R.K.K. pyramid fulfills their desire to stand above other people.

As I mentioned in the introduction, the public tends to regard the New Religions as inferior in doctrine and containing an excess of magical elements, and therefore, it becomes necessary for R.K.K. to develop and perfect the doctrinal features to meet these outside pressures as well as to answer the demands of the educated members inside.

Section 5. Religious background

To which religions did the interviewees belong before they joined R.K.K? The sample was divided into *kambu* and ordinary members, and also into those who had an individual religion and those who belonged to a religion of the family.

Eimi Watanabe

KAMBU

	Individual religion	Family religion		Individual religion	Family religion
Number	31	14	(Buddhism continued)		
			Zen	2	1
<i>Shinto</i>	0	0	Shingon	1	3
			Reiyū-kai	1	2
<i>Sect Shinto</i>	1	0	Tendai	0	0
			Sōka Gakkai	0	0
<i>Buddhism</i>	16	10	Others	3	0
Jōdo	2	1	<i>Others</i>	0	0
Jōdo Shin	4	0	<i>None</i>	14	4
Nichiren	3	3			

N.B. Those who had individual religions (17 people) were not asked what their family religion was. Those who were asked what the family religion was (14 people) were those who did not have individual religions.

ORDINARY MEMBERS

	Individual religion	Family religion		Individual religion	Family religion
Number	44	38	(Buddhism continued)		
			Zen	0	5
<i>Shinto</i>	0	1	Shingon	0	7
			Reiyū-kai	3	0
<i>Sect Shinto</i>	0	0	Tendai	0	0
			Sōka Gakkai	1	0
<i>Buddhism</i>	6	27	Others	0	1
Jōdo	1	1	<i>Others</i>	0	1
Jōdo Shin	1	7	<i>None</i>	38	9
Nichiren	0	5			

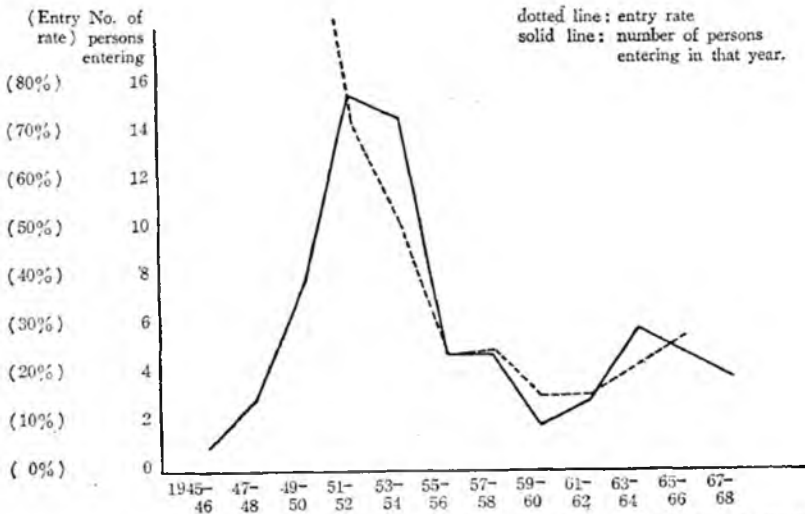
Generally speaking, the majority were from a Buddhist background. There was one Shinto, one Sect Shinto, and though there were some who had attended Christian schools or participated in church services, there were no baptized Christians. Within Buddhism, there is a large proportion of those who come from Nichiren sect-orientated groups, and since R.K.K. doctrine is believed to be the modern interpretation of the *Hoke-kyō* (Lotus Sutra), those from Nichiren sects who have had some

contact with the *Hoke-kyō* have little difficulty in adapting themselves to R.K.K. There were six people who had left Reiyū-kai to join R.K.K. Since Niwano and Naganuma Myōkō broke away from Reiyū-kai when they established R.K.K., the doctrines and organization of R.K.K. are modelled after those of Reiyū-kai, and thus the transition from one to the other goes with the utmost smoothness for those concerned. Apart from Reiyū-kai, there was only one person who had transferred to R.K.K. from another New Religion. This was rather unexpected, for generally speaking, the procedures for joining the New Religions and also for leaving them are relatively simple, and thus, many people are known to go from one religion to another in search for what the previous religion lacked. According to the survey by the Planning Department of R.K.K., among those who entered R.K.K. recently, for 72.5% it was the first time they joined a religion, and the remaining 27.5% had been members of other religions before. In my survey, only 13.6% of the ordinary members had been members of other religions before R.K.K., but the results of the Planning Department survey implies that a higher proportion should have had the experience of being a member of another religion.

The statistics show that *kambu* are more likely than the ordinary members to have belonged to some other religion before entering R.K.K. *Kambu* are those members who are especially ardent in their activities and beliefs, and therefore it can be said that those with an experience of belief in some other religion tend to be more active after joining R.K.K.. As I shall explain in a later section, there are very few among those who belonged to some other religion before who have

complaints against the doctrinal aspects of the former religion. They were converted mostly because they were dissatisfied with the organizational or human relations aspects of the former religion, and therefore, differences in doctrines do not prevent the converts from becoming active members in the new religion as long as they are satisfied in the organizational and human relations aspects of the newly-joined religion.

Section 6. The year of joining R.K.K.



(Source of entry rate: *Kōsei Nenkan*, 1967)

There were also two other members who replied that they had joined automatically. These are 'second generation members' whose parents were members of R.K.K., and since R.K.K. takes a system of registration by the whole family unit, the second generation members joined R.K.K. either with their parents when they were young, or became members at birth.

The entry rate is highest in 1950, drops rapidly until 1956, then a slight decline until 1961 which shows the lowest rate of 13.30%. After that, the entry rate remains steadily above 20%. The entry rate of the interviewees in my sample shows a fairly similar tendency as the total entry rate, as can be seen in the chart.

Section 7. Summary

The preceding sections portrayed a typical R.K.K. member. To summarize, the typical member is a middle-aged person living in urban areas, belonging to the old middle-class or white-collar stratum, and has received primary or middle school education. He or she is likely to have come from a Buddhist background, and often from a Nichiren-orientated sect.

Chapter III. Joining Risshō Kōsei-kai

Section 1. The motives for joining R.K.K.

I compared the motives for entering R.K.K. by arranging the interviewees into three groups according to the year they entered R.K.K.

Motives for joining R. K. K.	Year of entry			Total
	1945—52	53—60	61—68	
I was persuaded into it	4(36.4%)	0(0.0%)	6(33.3%)	10(22.7%)
Because of illness	3(27.2%)	3(20.0%)	3(16.7%)	9(20.5%)
For the purpose of ancestor veneration	0(0.0%)	6(40.0%)	0(0.0%)	6(13.6%)
I was impressed by the doctrine	0(0.0%)	1(6.7%)	4(22.2%)	5(11.4%)
Because of anxiety concerning human relations	1(9.1%)	1(6.7%)	2(11.1%)	4(9.1%)
Because of economic difficulties	2(18.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(4.5%)
Other	1(9.1%)	4(26.6%)	3(16.7%)	8(18.2%)
Total	11(100%)	15(100%)	18(100%)	44(100%)

When the three groups are compared, 'illness' is found decreasing and 'I was impressed by the doctrine' increasing. The reason particular to the first group is 'economic difficulty' and to the second group 'ancestor veneration,' 'Human relations' and 'other' exist through all three groups.

The R.K.K. Planning Department had compared those members who had received *michibiki* six years ago and earlier, and those who received *michihiki* since then, and surveyed their reasons for joining R.K.K. The following were the main motives :

Risshō Kōsei-kai

Motives for joining R.K.K.	Those who received <i>michibiki</i> 6 years ago or earlier	Those who received <i>michibiki</i> since then
Illness	25.8%	19.9%
I was persuaded	15.6%	13.6%
In order to train myself	10.2%	19.6%
Discord in the family	9.4%	7.9%
As spiritual support	9.4%	12.5%
	70.4%	73.5%

Number: 650

(Planning Department: 1965)

According to this survey, the reasons 'I was persuaded' and 'discord in the family' do not show much fluctuation, but 'illness' declines, and 'as a spiritual support' increases. On economic motives, even among those who received *michibiki* six years ago or earlier, only 2.3% mentioned 'poverty' and 1.6% gave 'failure in business' as their motive for joining R.K.K.

These two results explain that the reasons for entering reflect the development of society. During the forties and early fifties, many joined R.K.K. because of economic reasons or because of illness (material-phenomenological motives) but as the level of living rose, an increasing number of people began to seek to train and polish their hearts and minds, or to find peace of mind in religion. According to an article by Morioka of the Propagation Headquarters of R.K.K., the reasons for joining R.K.K. given by newcomers are in the first place, 'peace of mind,' then followed by 'children's education and delinquency problems,' 'management of small and middle scale industries,' and though some mention 'economic difficulty' and 'illness,' they are few in number (*Kōsei Shimbun*, July

26, 1968). When a person is suffering from severe poverty or illness, it is difficult for him to be impressed with doctrines however excellent they might be, and for him acquiring a comfortable means of living has the priority rather than developing his mind and heart. During illness, when one is hardly able to sustain himself and unable to receive proper medical care, illness is a cause of anxiety, but when he is leading a more comfortable life, and society in general is better off, the medical system is more developed, and he is able to receive the necessary medical care. Thus illness, though always painful, causes less anxiety than before.

According to my survey, 'ancestor veneration' is mentioned by only those who entered during the second period. I imagine that during the first period, the physical and economic problems occupied such a great proportion of people's minds that they could not spare themselves to worry about their ancestors. But as life became more tolerable and people began to reconsider the values of the family system, more attention was paid to ancestor veneration. Then, as society developed further, with the tide of industrialization and urbanization came the nuclearization of the family, and in families where there were no elderly people, they cared very little about ancestor veneration. This is probably what has happened, and thus after 1961, no one gives 'ancestor veneration' as the reason for joining R.K.K.

In such a way, in post-war Japan where there has been a rapid transformation in all aspects of society, in the level of living and the value systems of the people, there is a corresponding change in what people seek in religion.

Section 2. Motives for joining and *kudoku*

In Section 1, the transformation of the motives for joining R.K.K. was examined. The motives for joining R.K.K. can be understood to mean that these are the phenomenological and spiritual matters that people lack in their lives and desire to find by joining R.K.K. If they, after joining R.K.K., are successful in their pursuit, this will be interpreted by them as having received a *kudoku*. Therefore, it can be predicted that there would be a transformation in the kinds of *kudoku* members receive which correspond to the transformation in the motives for joining R.K.K. we examined in Section 1.

<i>Kudoku</i> received by joining R.K.K.	Year of entry			Total
	1945~52	53~60	61~68	
<i>Kudoku</i> of the body	10(35.7%)	12(44.5%)	5(26.3%)	27(36.5%)
<i>Kudoku</i> for the family	8(28.6%)	7(25.9%)	5(26.3%)	20(27.1%)
Economic <i>kudoku</i>	5(17.8%)	5(18.5%)	5(26.3%)	15(20.3%)
Spiritual <i>kudoku</i>	4(14.3%)	1(3.7%)	3(15.8%)	8(10.8%)
Other <i>kudoku</i>	1(3.6%)	1(3.7%)	1(5.3%)	3(4.0%)
None	0(0.0%)	1(3.7%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.3%)
Total	28(100%)	27(100%)	19(100%)	74(100%)

When the first and the third groups are compared, the most radical change occurred in the ‘*kudoku* of the body,’ which shows a decrease of 9.4%. This *kudoku* has a similar tendency as in the motives for entry, where ‘illness’ as the motive decreased with time. But as for ‘economic *kudoku*,’ this seems to contradict the prediction that motives for entry and *kudoku* show similar patterns, for economic motives for joining R.K.K. became less with time. But when the character of the economic *kudoku* is examined, during the first period, the *kudoku* was in being able to raise oneself from the lowest levels

of living. The economic *kudoku* of the third group were, for example, 'had a raise in salary' or 'bought a colour television set,' which prove that these people are already far from being poverty-stricken. Therefore, an increase in the economic *kudoku* does not necessarily contradict the decline in the number of those who join R.K.K. for economic motives. Though there is an increasing number of those who join R.K.K. for non-material reasons, the *kudoku* of the spirit shows little fluctuation. Therefore, it cannot be said that the motives for joining R.K.K. and the *kudoku* received by joining show exactly the same patterns of transformation, but since the word *kudoku* is frequently interpreted as meaning something material or concrete rather than spiritual (especially by those who are not so well versed in Buddhist doctrine), perhaps the interviewees purposely stressed the material-phenomenological *kudoku* in their answers.

Section 3. Risshō Kōsei-kai on medicine

This section diverts from the main theme, but 16.7% of the motives for joining R.K.K. and 26.7% of the *kudoku* were related to illness and physical need, although they were declining aspects. Since scientific medical knowledge is becoming more widespread within society at large, amongst the R.K.K. members also, a growing proportion considers that illness of the body can best be cared for by medical doctors. But when one attends the *hōza* session one often discovers that the person who is most eager to talk about his or her experiences is the one who has benefited from some *kudoku* of the body. Also, when the *kudoku* received by the ordinary

members and by the *kambu* are compared, 27.2% of the ordinary members replied that they had received *kudoku* of the body, whereas for *kambu*, 48.5% had received *kudoku* of the body. Again, when the *kudoku* of the body is divided into two categories, 'I was healed of an illness' and 'I have remained constantly healthy,' amongst the ordinary members, 'I was healed' and 'I have been healthy' occur at a ratio of 5 to 6, whereas among the *kambu*, all had the experience of being healed of some illness. Thus, it can be concluded that since *kambu* are ardent members, those who have received *kudoku* of the body, and especially those who had the dramatic experience of being healed of an illness are most likely to be active members. Since these active members pride themselves in telling others of their personal experiences, receiving a *kudoku* of the body is regarded by R.K.K. members generally as an especially desirable experience.

During Naganuma Myōkō's lifetime, she had conducted faith-healing (praying for the sick or touching the sick to heal them), but at present, such practices are not performed. However, people who join R.K.K. in order to have their illnesses healed are not refused, because,

even if the primary purpose was to be healed, through learning more about R.K.K. teachings, the person will come to realize that unless he mends his soul, his body shall not be healed, and thus he will try to better his ways and transform his soul. And then, according to the Law of Good Cause-Good Result (when there is a good cause there will always be a good result), if the person does some good act, then some good result will appear, so his illness shall be cured. (One *shunin* of Suginami-*shibu*.)

In the R.K.K. monthly magazine *Yakushin*, there is a special issue entitled 'Belief and Medicine,' in which two personal

experiences are related. The first one is the case of a member who underwent an operation for ileus, volvulus, peritonitis and appendicitis all at the same time. His doctors found his condition beyond their means and closed up the wound without having treated anything. But this person was completely healed when all his relatives became members of R.K.K. The second story is that of a woman who was hospitalized eight times and operated on five times because of some incurable disease, but when she joined R.K.K., she was miraculously healed. Examples such as these of wondrous recoveries can be heard in abundance at the *hōza* sessions.

R.K.K. policy states that healing does not occur as a direct result of joining R.K.K., but because of entering, the person's soul is transformed which causes or helps to cause the illness to be healed. Therefore, R.K.K. has a hospital of its own, the Kōsei Hospital, which is fully equipped with modern medical appliances.

We need not quote the theories of psychotherapy to explain that the spirit and the body are interrelated. Therefore, it is not improbable that through faith, the illness of the spirit is cured which in turn heals the illness of the body. In such a case, it is the person himself who did the healing and not some particular religion or some leader... We see many examples among R.K.K. members where the faith of the person overcame his illness and he was cured. But this is completely different from praying to be healed. Also, there are many illnesses where even though a transformation of the spirit does occur, the person cannot be healed of the illnesses.¹

This is the reason given by R.K.K. for the establishment of the Kōsei Hospital. The director of this hospital, in the

1. *Risshō Kōsei-kai*, Committee for the Interpretation of Doctrine (ed.), *Risshō Kōsei-kai*. Tokyo, Kōsei Publishing Company, 1965 pp. 31-32.

special issue 'Belief and Medicine' writes that 'Kōsei-kai members recover from their illnesses very quickly. They have a calm and peaceful spirit, and they obey the instructions of their doctors well, so that the effects of treatments appear rapidly.'

The authorities of the R.K.K. emphasize that being cured by entering R.K.K. is not a miracle, but the most natural result of a change in the spirit. But in reality, the personal experiences of those who receive the *kudoku* of the body are tales of miracles, in which illnesses that could not be healed by modern medicine disappeared by some inconceivable method when they joined R.K.K., and this miracle is what is being pursued by many who come to R.K.K., no matter what the policies of the authorities are.

Section 4. Those who were not given their *kudoku*

Because the sample in my survey consisted of those who are active members of R.K.K. at present, I had no means of knowing how many members leave R.K.K., and for what reasons they do so. Every few years, R.K.K. goes through the membership list, and when the *kambu* finds someone who has not been paying the membership fees for a long time or has not attended the meetings or who has moved out of the district, they take the name off the register, and thus, they 'readjust (*seiri*)' the register. In 1965, the Department of Doctrine of R.K.K. made a survey of the members who were thus 'readjusted.' There were 3,471 such households who were taken off the register between September and October of 1964. The reasons for this were as follows:

Eimi Watauabe

Reason for readjustment	All-Japan(%)	Tokyo(%)
New address after moving unknown	26.9	37.9
Joined other religion	14.9	16.0
Opposition from family	11.6	5.0
Have no will to believe	10.8	12.6
Death	7.4	6.1
Dues unpaid	6.2	3.4
Lack of instruction given, due to remoteness	5.5	0.2
Adjustment of those who were transferred	4.6	4.0
Other	3.8	2.0
Double registration	8.3	12.8
Total	100.0	100.0

If we disregard the unpreventable reason 'new address unknown,' 'joined other religion' becomes the most frequent reason for the members to leave R.K.K., and in Tokyo, 16% gave this particular reason. No specific answer is given as to why they join other religions, but at least, it is apparent that these people have not been disillusioned with religions, for if they had been, they would not join the other religions. There are two possible explanations to this. First, they might have had some dissatisfaction concerning human relationships within R.K.K., and secondly, they were not given the *kudoku* which they sought for when they joined R.K.K. I will devote a section to the important role that human relationships play in the New Religions in general as well as in R.K.K., so here I shall focus on the second point.

According to my survey, nearly one fifth of the members join R.K.K. in search for some material-phenomenological effects, and nearly half of the members receive material-phenomenological *kudoku*. Therefore, it can easily be predicted that there are many who sought material-phenomenological effects and were not benefited by these *kudoku*. From this line

of argument, though they may be decreasing proportionally, there are many who enter R.K.K. in pursuit of material-phenomenological *kudoku*, and when they receive these *kudoku*, they become especially active members, and when they do not, they leave R.K.K. in search for another religion which would give them what they desire.

I feel that there is a gap between what some of the members desire and the policies of the organization. From the point of view of R.K.K. teachings, material-phenomenological *kudoku* are natural results of the transformation of the spirit, but for some of the members, material-phenomenological *kudoku* is their ultimate purpose in joining R.K.K., and whether they are given the *kudoku* or not becomes the measure by which the value of the religion is judged. I believe that bridging this gap is one of the major tasks for R.K.K. in the future.

The Department of Doctrine survey was concerned with those who did not receive the *kudoku*, probably, and left. But returning to my survey sample, among those who joined R.K.K. because of illness, 55.5% had been given *kudoku* of the body, among those whose motives for joining was trouble in human relations (mostly among family members, as mother-in-law versus bride problems), 75% were given *kudoku* of the family (peace and harmony in the family), and similarly, 100% of those who joined because of economic difficulties were given economic *kudoku*. The other motives for joining and *kudoku* did not show the same degrees of coincidence. Thus, of the members who did not leave R.K.K., it cannot be said that they had all received the *kudoku* which they had desired, but especially if material-phenomenological *kudoku* are what they had

sought, they are most likely to have received such *kudoku*.

Section 5. Who is the *michibiki-no-oya* ?

Returning to the circumstances surrounding entry into R.K.K., in this religion, the act of propagating on an individual basis for the purpose of converting and attaining new members is called *michibiki* (similar to *shakubuku* of Sōka Gakkai). The person who leads the newcomer is called *michibiki-no-oya* by the latter, and before 1960, when the present diocese system had not been established, the vertical system of the *michibiki-no-oya* and *ko* (child) line was practised, by which new members automatically joined the *shibu* to which his *michibiki-no-oya* belonged. At present, since membership in *shibu* is determined by residence, the relationship of *michibiki-no-oya* and *ko* does not play such an extensive role as before. But when one is in need of advice, or when there is someone whom he cannot convert alone, it is to the *michibiki-no-oya* that he goes, and this parent-and-child-like relationship lasts for a lifetime (at least until the member leaves R.K.K.). Also, as will be dealt with in a later chapter, the number of people whom one has done *michibiki* to is regarded as a measure of devoutness, and thus the greater the number, the more the merit. Therefore, an understanding of *michibiki* relationships is vital to the study of R.K.K.

<i>Michibiki-no-oya</i>	Number	Percentage
Member of family	13	29.6
Neighbour	8	18.2
Friend	8	18.2
Relative	7	15.9
Colleague at work	3	6.8
Acquaintance at P. T. A.	2	4.5
Others	3	6.8
Total	44	100.0

All the *michibiki-no-oya* in this chart are those with whom the interviewees had contact with in everyday life. In the survey conducted by the Planning Department on the new members, the *michibiki-no-oya* were: friends 24.4%, acquaintances 26.2%, family members 5.4%, relatives 22.5%, *kambu* 19.1%, and others 0.5%, and in this nation-wide sample, at least 78.5% replied that their *michibiki-no-oya* were people whom they had contact with for purposes other than *michibiki*. I also asked the 31 *kambu* as to whom they had done *michibiki*, and most of them replied, neighbours, relatives, family members, friends, people they met through work, people who were hospitalized in the same room. Only 4 *kambu* replied that they had the experience of doing *michibiki* to passers-by they met on the street. But in the majority of cases, *michibiki* occurs among those with previous contacts.

In my sample, 45.4% had been converted by family members and relatives, and in such cases, according to the survey results, they are most likely to have entered because of illness. That is to say, since family members and relatives are best acquainted with what is happening inside the household, they can do *michibiki* when there is someone ill and the family members are disturbed or worried. Among those who enter R.K.K. because they were impressed by the doctrine, a large proportion had neighbours as their *michibiki-no-oya*. I interpret this as follows: since neighbours have not the detailed knowledge of family affairs as relatives do, they tend more to preach the objective value of R.K.K. doctrine rather than appeal to the disturbed psychology of the person with family problems, and thus when neighbours are *michibiki-no-oya*, the *michibiki-no-ko*

are likely to have joined because they were impressed by the doctrine rather than because there were illnesses or other difficulties in the family.

Section 6. The length of time until they join R.K.K.

The next question presented to the interviewees was, 'How long did it take you to join R.K.K. after you attended your first R.K.K. meeting?' But after I started receiving the answers, I discovered that this question was not appropriate for R.K.K., and that it evolved from a Christian outlook on religions. That is, usually in the case of Christian churches, when a person seeks to join, he starts attending church services and at least several months lapse before he receives baptism, which he does when he is to some degree acquainted with Christian teachings and can confess his faith. I had expected a similar process in R.K.K. But I found out that 43% of the interviewees had entered R.K.K. before they went to their first meeting, and another 36% replied that they entered at their first meeting.

Time sequence between first meeting and entry

	Number	%
Entered before attending meeting	19	43.2
Entered at first meeting	16	36.3
Entered 2 weeks after	1	2.25
Entered up to 1 month after	1	2.25
Entered within 3 months	2	4.5
Entered within 1 year	2	4.5
Entered within 2 years	1	2.25
Entered within 5 years	2	4.5
Total	44	100.0

Generally speaking, since R.K.K. members join as a result of the *michibiki*, they enter before or at the same time as their

attendance at a R.K.K. meeting for the first time. This is partly due to the fact that procedures for entering are relatively simple,¹ but it also proves how effectively *michibiki* is being conducted, since the decision to join is the result of the *michibiki*. This time lapse according to the difference of *michibiki-no-oya* is shown in the next chart :

	<i>Michibiki-no-oya</i>		
	Neighbours	Relative, Family	Friends
Entered before attending meeting	2(25%)	10(50%)	6(75%)
Entered at first meeting	5(62.5)	5(25.0%)	1(12.5%)
Entered within 1 month (after first meeting)	1(12.5%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)
Entered within 6 months	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Entered within 1 year	0(0.0%)	2(10.0%)	0(0.0%)
Entered within 5 years	0(0.0%)	3(15.0%)	0(0.0%)
Total	8(100%)	20(100%)	8(100%)

According to this result, those who received *michibiki* from neighbours and friends all join within a month, but when the *michibiki-no-oya* are relatives and family members, there are 25% who take more than half a year to join R.K.K. after they have attended their first meeting. The survey by the Planning Department shows that for those who received *michibiki* recently and joined, their *michibiki-no-oya* were firstly friends, secondly acquaintances and in the third place, relatives and family members, but for those who received their *michibiki* five

1. Procedures for joining R. K. K. : I. Fill in name and address of household head, surnames of both his parents, wife's maiden name, *shibu*-name, *michibiki-no-oya's* name on application form, pay 3 months' dues in advance. II. Obtain scrolls, lamps and bowls for *butsudan* etc. III. Place the *sōkaimyō* tablet in the family *butsudan*, after it has been through a special service at the headquarters. IV. Visit *shibu*-leader and *michibiki-no-oya* to show gratitude.

or more years ago and joined recently, their *michibiki-no-oya* were, 1. family members and relatives, 2. acquaintances, 3. friends, exactly in the reversed order. This shows that the greater the time lapse between the first contact with R.K.K. and their actual entry, the greater is the possibility that their *michibiki-no-oya* are relatives and family members.

This, at first sight, seems odd, for one is inclined to think that kins have the greater power of persuasion, but the results point in the opposite direction. I suspect that this is due to the tendency that it is more difficult to refuse or reject a friend or neighbour, or that since relatives and family members are involved in the personal problems of the individuals concerned, the *michibiki-no-oya* cannot give objective instructions as he could to a non-relative. This is perhaps why *michibiki* takes more time among relatives than among non-relatives.

Section 7. On the religions before entering R.K.K.

The preceding discussion has been on the relative shortness of the time that is necessary for one to decide to join R.K.K. This casual attitude towards joining is true both for those who had believed in some other religion before joining R.K.K. and those who had not. I asked the interviewees what they thought of the religion that they had belonged to formerly, and they replied that they had been more dissatisfied in the aspects of organization and human relations than on the doctrinal aspects.

Risshō Kōsei-kai

‘What do you think of your previous religion?’

	Individual religion	Family religion
No opinion	6(26.0%)	5(19.2%)
It was deficient in doctrinal aspects	2(8.7%)	6(23.1%)
It was deficient in aspects of organization, human relations	10(43.5%)	8(30.8%)
It has much in common with R. K. K.	5(21.8%)	7(26.9%)
Total	23(100%)	26(100%)

Deficiency in doctrinal aspects includes such criticisms as ‘the doctrine is infantile,’ ‘it has no reality,’ and deficiency in organization and human relations aspects denotes opinions such as ‘they just wanted to make money,’ ‘they did not do enough propagation activities.’

43.5% of those who had believed individually in some religion were dissatisfied in the organization-human relations aspects of the former religion and only 8.7% were dissatisfied with its doctrine. That is, the organization-human relations aspects are more important as a measure of the value of the former religion, but could the same thing not be true with R.K.K.!? To have a thorough knowledge of the doctrine is a painstaking task, but one can acquire some idea about the human relations aspects by listening to the members speak, reading the magazines, or looking around the R.K.K. buildings. If doctrine becomes the means of judgment whether to join or not, one could not decide to join in a short period of time. The fact that those who join R.K.K. because they were impressed by the doctrine remain under one tenth of the total, and that they take a relatively long period of time in deciding to join R.K.K. illustrates the difficulty and scarcity of the cases where doctrine is the measure for evaluating the religion. But since the number of those who are impressed by the doctrine and join

as a result is increasing, it can be predicted that in the future this factor will play a major role.

The last chart shows that those who had a religion individually are less inclined to be dissatisfied with the former religion than those who had a religion as a family, but this is explainable by the general tendency that those who had a family religion are by definition those who did not have an individual religion, and thus are likely not to have internalized the family religion into being a personal belief, and thus they probably considered that it is because the religion was faulty that they could not believe in it.

Amongst those one fifth of the answers that regarded the former religion as having much in common with R.K.K., some of the replies were that the doctrine of the former religion, being similar to that of R.K.K., served as a basis for the study of the R.K.K. doctrine, and some of the answers were, 'since all religions strive towards the same goal, there is essentially no difference in which religion to believe in.' This latter answer is a repetition of president Niwano's policies concerning the cooperation between religions, and therefore, they are model answers, but perhaps not truthful.

Section 8. Summary

In the preceding sections, it was discovered that the procedures fore entering R.K.K. are relatively simple and liberal. This points partly to the effectiveness of the *michibiki*, and this effectiveness is probably due the fact that *michibiki* is done in the following manner: 'Doctrine is explained in simple language, and one listens to the other and tries to analyze

his anxieties, and more than being too logical, one tells about one's own experiences about how one was saved' (*Yakushin*. October 1967. p. 6 ff). When the one who is converting tells of his experiences of being healed of some illness or saved from economic difficulty, the one who is being converted sees a flicker of hope, thinking that perhaps he too might be saved in a similar manner, and anyway, he has little to lose by joining, and thus he gives it a go.

But I repeat that in recent years, an increasing number of members join because they were impressed by the doctrine, and thus for performing *michibiki*, one cannot rely too heavily on experience alone but needs to have some knowledge of the doctrine. Therefore, since ten years ago, the system of studying the doctrine has become popular, and R.K.K. members are urged to participate in these groups and sit in the doctrine examinations as much as possible. Whether the *kambu* are meeting the demands of the present day and of the policies of the organization that places importance on doctrine, I shall discuss in Chapter 5.

Chapter IV. Activities after joining R.K.K.

Section 1. What appeals about R.K.K. ?

The 75 R.K.K. members I interviewed are those who found some value or meaning in R.K.K. activity (otherwise they would have left), and the next question was an effort to find out what it was that attracts and appeals to them about R.K.K.

What appeals about R. K. K. ?	Age groups					Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	
(A) R. K. K. helps to develop character and train spirit	5	4	3	2	1	15
(B) R. K. K. teaches correct way of life	2	1	8	1	1	13
(C) Organization-human relations aspects have value	0	3	2	1	0	6
(D) Doctrine has value	1	3	3	3	0	10
Total	8	11	16	7	2	44

(A) decreases with age. The aspect of developing one's personality is especially meaningful to the youths. In 1967, a training centre was constructed in Ōme for the youths, and many of them have participated in the training camps which last for four days. These four days are such a dramatic experience that it often changes the youth's whole outlook of life. Therefore, the youths who have attended these camps are called '*Ōme gaeri*' (returnees from Ōme), and this term has a certain connotation so that an *Ōme gaeri* is regarded automatically as being an especially active and devout member. During the Ōme camp, discussion sessions and *kuyō* (ancestor veneration) are held, and at the end, there is a period of con-

profession when everyone is given a chance to confess all his past sins in front of all the other participants. This has an enormous effect on the participant's psychology that he returns feeling like a new man. For such youths, the purpose of belief is inner-directed, that is, the development of their personality and polishing of the soul are the most important motives for their religious activities.

(B), namely that R.K.K. teaches the correct way of life, is the answer most common among those in their forties, and this is probably because at this period in life one is leading a relatively stable life, but at the same time, has lost the energy of youth and feels anxiety about the future. On this point, R.K.K., especially in the *hōza* sessions, advises the members on how to deal with everyday problems and instructs them on minute details of all aspects of life, thus being most fulfilling for a person seeking guidance on 'how to live.'

(C) and (D) could be grouped together as aspects influencing the individual, and this group amounts to 63% of the total answers. So, in R.K.K., what appeals is not the organization or doctrine per se, but how they affect the individual and bring about a change in the individual members. Therefore, no matter how perfect the doctrine might be, unless they are of some influence to the members through some effective method, they are of little meaning.

At first thought, this result appears odd. For it has generally been agreed upon by students of New Religions that the success of R.K.K. is owed greatly to the *hōza* system, and the organization and human relations aspects have been particularly stressed as being of primary consequence. Therefore, I had

expected that to the question, 'What appeals to you most about R.K.K?', I would receive a large number of answers mentioning the *hōza*. But in reality only two had answered that the *hōza* had appealed to them. Thus there seems to be a contradiction.

But on further thought, such aspects as (C) and (D) which bring about some change in the individual member would simply not arise unless the teachings of R.K.K. had been transplanted in the minds of the members, and thus, of these members one could say that R.K.K. instruction had borne fruit. Since instruction is given mostly through the *hōza* sessions, the members place more importance on the result of the instruction, namely the change in themselves, than on the means of instruction or the *hōza* system. The *hōza* system has been so internalized as a function of the organization that one does not mention it as what appeals about R.K.K.

This result, that 63% consider the values of R.K.K. as being not the static or universal aspects of doctrine or organization but more the way they reflect on the individual, is similar to the findings concerning the motives for joining R.K.K. and the *kudoku*, where the effects on the individual were more important than universal values per se. But, the 22.7% who regarded the values of R.K.K. as being its doctrine must not be ignored. If the same line of reasoning as in the case of the motives for joining and *kudoku* are applied, this aspect (D) is likely to increase in the future.

Section 2. The activities of the members

The major activities of the members, time-wise and evaluation-wise, are the *hōza* and propagation activities. Besides these there are the *seppōkai* (held thrice a month, when some members speak of their secular and religious experiences and confess their past sins from the platform), *dantai sampai* (mass worship at the Daiseidō), doctrine study groups, culture groups (e.g. cooking lessons for housewives), and various ceremonies, religious and secular, throughout the year (the coming-of-age day celebrations, Buddha's birthday, birthday of president). But in this thesis, I propose to concentrate on the propagation done through visiting private homes (*hōmon fukyō*) and the *hōza*.

It is natural that *kambu* spend more time on R.K.K. activities than ordinary members, but even the ordinary members spend a monthly average of 27.6 hours on *hōza* alone. Among the *kambu*, 8 people spend more than sixty hours per week on R.K.K. activities and on the average, they spend 45 hours per week. Comparing male and female *kambu*, more than half of both sexes spend fifty hours or more per week on R.K.K. activities, but comparing those who spend 29 hours or less, there is only one male *kambu* in this category while there are four female *kambu*. It seems that the ratio of the most ardent *kambu* is the same for both sexes, but there are more females than males among those *kambu* who are the least active time-wise. As explained before, since women in general have more spare time than men, this result seems contradictory, but since *kambu* are the exceptionally exemplary members to begin with,

once they are chosen to be *kambu*, perhaps the male members concentrate more on R.K.K. affairs than the female members. Almost all the male *kambu* are spending more than thirty hours per week on R.K.K. activities, but this would be almost impossible if they were salaried workers, and thus they are most probably self-employed or unemployed. So for these male *kambu*, R.K.K. activity becomes their main 'job,' and therefore they devote this large amount of time and energy on it. On the other hand, the female *kambu*, even if they are chosen as *kambu*, are not exempted from their tasks as housewives and mothers, and therefore in most cases there is a certain absolute amount of time that they cannot spend away from home. Especially, since the average age of those female *kambu* who spend more than fifty hours per week on R.K.K. activities is 43.7 years and that of those who spend less than 29 hours per week is 31.0 years, one can guess that those female *kambu* who devote a smaller amount of time on R.K.K. activity, do so not because they are weak in faith but because they are unable to sacrifice more of themselves for R.K.K. In 1964, the Department of Doctrine of R.K.K. made a nation-wide survey of female *kambu* on the hours they spend per day on housework and on sleeping.

Rank name of <i>kambu</i>	Hours spent on housework	Hours spent on sleep
<i>Shibu</i> -leader	1 hr. 42 min.	6 hrs. 47 min.
<i>Kaikei-gakari</i>	2 hrs. 35 min.	6 " 09 min.
<i>Shunin</i>	2 " 55 "	6 " 00 "
<i>Kumi</i> -leader	5 " 29 "	6 " 16 "
<i>Han</i> -leader	6 " 04 "	6 " 44 "

(*Kaikei-gakari* is the person in charge of the finances of the *hōza*; *shunin* is the *hōza*-leader.)

The hours spent on housework decrease as the degree of

responsibility increases. But this is greatly due to the age differences, for the more the responsibility, the more they are likely to be higher in age, and thus the number of hours they must spend on housework lessens. On the hours of sleep, the *shunin* sleep the least. For *shibu*-leaders, their high status is recognized within the family and thus they are likely to be exempted from household chores, but *shunin* is not much higher than a non-ranking member, and to be one is still considered as 'side-business.' Therefore, in order to fulfill all the household requirements, they have to cut down on their sleeping hours.

One *shunin* of Kōtō Ward in her fifties replied that she rises each morning at half past five, and sweeps the road in front of her house from one end to the other (thus fulfilling the duties towards the neighbourhood), then cleans her house and prepares breakfast by eight thirty, and from nine to three, she is sitting at the *hōza* in the Daiseidō, after which she visits several houses for propagation, returns hurriedly home to prepare supper, and in the evening takes charge of in the local *hōza*. This *kambu* explained that she must not forsake her responsibilities towards her family and neighbourhood because of R.K.K., so she fulfills all her tasks as a good housewife at the expense of cutting down her hours of sleep and leisure. Since R.K.K. places great value on the family, they cannot allow housewives to sacrifice their families because of their devotion to R.K.K.

According to the Planning Department survey on new members, among the 59.6% who replied that there is something disturbing them, the 'thing which disturbs them most about R.K.K. belief' is listed in the next chart.

Eimi Watanabe

1. I have not enough time	56.0%
2. It is not respectable	14.0%
3. I am doubtful as to whether the belief is valuable or not	13.3%
4. It requires a lot of money	14.0%
5. Others	4.3%
Total	101.6%

More than half reply that having not enough time is what disturbs them most, and this is because the new members observe their seniors spending a great deal of time on R.K.K. activity and fear that if it is so demanding, their personal lives will be somewhat sacrificed. This again proves that R.K.K. members spend an unusually large amount of time and energy on R.K.K. activity, even at the expense of cutting down hours of sleep and leisure.

Activity (1): Propagation (mainly *michibiki*)

When a person joins R.K.K., he is persuaded to begin *michibiki* as soon as possible, even if he has little knowledge of R.K.K. doctrine, for 'by doing *michibiki* towards others, a person realizes his own deficiencies and therefore an urge to study the doctrine arises' (*Yakushin* 1968 February, pp. 80-81). In this way, by performing *michibiki*, the members train and improve themselves. Among ordinary members, the activity to which the second largest amount of time is devoted after *hōza* is *michibiki*, and among *kambu*, they spend nearly as much time on *michibiki* as on *hōza*. The number of those one has converted varies from none to two hundred in my sample, but there is a close correlation of this number to the years since joining the organization and to the total amount of hours spent on R.K.K. activities. In the majority of cases, the earlier one joined and the greater the total amount of time spent on

R.K.K. activity, the larger the number of people one has converted. But there are a few exceptions.

As an exception, I present the case of F, who spends the greatest number of hours on R.K.K. activity among ordinary members (160 hours per month) and has converted the largest number (100 people). F, a male in his forties, has graduated only from primary school, but is now the representative managing director of a firm producing and selling metal accessories. He entrusts most of the company responsibilities to his son and devotes all his time and energy on R.K.K. The reason that F can be considered an exception is that he is a newcomer to R.K.K., having entered in May, 1965, from Reiyū-kai. He left Reiyū-kai for the reason that they were not active enough, and he joined R.K.K. having received *michibiki* from one of his employees. He believes that the teachings of R.K.K. are worth devoting all his life to, and feels that he will never tire of it. He attends all the *seppō-kai* and other ceremonies, and reads the publications of R.K.K. thoroughly. The *kudoku* he received from joining is spiritual stability and betterment of human relations. F is equipped with the ideal conditions for becoming an active member. Being self-employed, he has free access to his time and money, and he has the energy and will-power that raised himself to the present status with having only little education. Also, although being new in R.K.K., he has the Reiyū-kai background whose doctrine and organization resemble those of R.K.K., and therefore, when he was given a chance to use his abilities, he began to devote his whole self to R.K.K. work.

K, who among the *kambu* did *michibiki* on the greatest

number of people (200), is a *shunin* of Suginami-*shibu*. He entered R.K.K. in 1950. K claims that he has personal contacts with all the conservative members of the Tokyo metropolitan diet, and is a well-known figure on the local scene. The people he converted are business acquaintances or people he met in various meetings. Since K has connections with the Suginami Ward authorities, he acts as go-between for R.K.K. and Suginami Ward (the Daiseidō is located at Wada, Suginami Ward). K is regarded with respect in R.K.K. because of his power and influence in the Suginami locality, and vice versa, he maintains his status in local politics because of R.K.K. backing. This tactful maneuvering probably attained for him his position, and enabled him to convert as many as 200 people.

Completely opposite to F and K is the case of O, a young man in his twenties, who has not yet done a single *michibiki*. O joined R.K.K. at an early age because his parents were R.K.K. members, and R.K.K. takes the policy of membership according to family units. But at present, his activities as a member are confined to attending *hōza* once or twice a year. I had the greatest difficulty in arranging an interview with O, for he would not answer my telephone calls, but instead, his mother talked to me and promised to send O at the appointed time for my interview. O did arrive for the interview, but to most of my questions he either answered, 'I don't know,' or, 'I'm no concerned,' and our interview ended in a record time of just ten minutes (he was quite a contrast to the majority of the interviewees who would talk on and on about their personal experiences unless I stopped them). I imagined that O himself sees little meaning in being a member of R.K.K.

but does it to please his parents. As long as R.K.K.'s policy of membership according to family units prevails, there will be more 'second-generation members' like O, who lack eagerness in R.K.K. activity.

The first example of F was an exception because he was active in spite of the fact that he joined R.K.K. fairly recently, and O was exceptional for exactly the opposite reason, that is, he is inactive although he joined at an earlier stage. But through the description of these cases, I hope I have made apparent the circumstances calling for this exceptional behavior.

When the number of those on whom one has done *michibiki* is compared between the ordinary member and the *kambu*, the average for the former is 16.5 persons and for the *kambu* 43.7 persons. This is natural since *kambu* are more experienced and have a deeper knowledge of the methods of *michibiki* and of R.K.K. doctrine, but one can also state that the ability to convert a large number of people might be one of the requirements for being a *kambu*. In order to become a *kyōshi* (teacher), one has to take qualification tests, but *kambu* are generally appointed by their superiors, and thus if a member outshines others by being particularly active by for example making many converts, he is likely to be recognized by his *kambu* and chances are that he will be appointed to some post.

I dealt in detail about those on whom one does *michibiki* (see chapt. IV sec. 5). There the conclusion was that usually it is done towards relatives and acquaintances. Members are advised that when they first try *michibiki*, it is better to choose among acquaintances, 'for you know what they are thinking and you have ample information about them' (*Yakushin* 1968, February).

p. 84). In my sample, only a few had the experience of converting someone hitherto unknown, and I suspect that it is the veteran *kambu* who stops a man on the street and starts preaching to him about the merits of R.K.K.

As a means of mass propagation, R.K.K. occasionally borrows public halls to hold conventions, inviting non-members to attend.

To summarize, R.K.K. members are urged to perform *michibiki* as soon as they join, and at first, they do their *michibiki* towards relatives and acquaintances. Also, the earlier the year a member joined the R.K.K., and the greater the total number of hours spent on R.K.K. activity, the larger also the number of those on whom one has done *michibiki*. Since *kambu* have converted 2.5 times as many persons as ordinary members have on the average, it can be said that this number is a measure of the activeness of a member.

Activity (2): *Hōza*

I have been mentioning *hōza* several times, and here I would like to summarize. According to *Risshō Kōsei-kai*, *hōza* is defined as follows ;

From several up to about ten people make a circle around the leader (*kambu*) and each participant questions and receives answers on problems in matters of faith or other aspects of social life. The leader instructs according to the *shitai no hōmon*¹ and gives advice as to the correct perception of faith and to the solution of problems, and does not minimize the minute details of everyday life, but gives a guiding hand so that the member will renew and change his spirit and start performing acts of goodness.²

1. *Shitai no hōmon* is the Law which explains the causes of anxiety and the way to overcome this anxiety.

2. *Risshō Kōsei-kai*, pp.191—192.

The *hōza* takes place in the Daiseidō and in the local *hōza* meeting places everyday from nine to three, and at nighttime in members' homes. In the case of the members living in the Tokyo vicinity, since the *shibu*-headquarters are all located in the Daiseidō, they tend to participate mainly in the Daiseidō *hōza*. The atmosphere of the *hōza* varies with the personalities of the leader and the participants. For example, when a male *shunin* is taking the lead, the atmosphere might be tense and serious, with Buddhist terminology being amply used, but in one of the *hōza* I attended, where a middle-aged female *shunin* was the leader (Kōtō-*shibu*), it was casual in the following manner. Since it was a very hot day in summer, the *shunin* started off by saying, 'I come to the Daiseidō as to a summer resort' (the walls of the Daiseidō are made of marble so that the inside is constantly kept cool). Then a young housewife told about an incident which occurred the day before. A robber had tried to break into her house while she was taking a nap, but she woke up in time to prevent any harm that might have been done. Then the *shunin* scolded her rather violently and told the young woman that the incident was a warning towards her laziness (taking a nap in the middle of the day when the husband is grinding away at his work), and an uneasy silence fell on the *hōza* because the woman started sobbing at the *shunin*'s harsh reproach. Immediately, the *shunin* started telling jokes of '*kuma-san, hachi-san*' (a favorite *manzai* theme) in the Edo dialect and everybody, including the scolded housewife, started laughing, and once again the *shunin* succeeded in creating the cordial atmosphere of the *hōza*.

One staff-member at the Daiseidō commented on the *hōza* as being ‘a successful application of the principle of *ido-bata-kaigi* (literally, beside-the-well-conference, meaning housewives casual chattering),’ and I sensed the similar atmosphere of casualness and frankness.

The members were asked how many times per month, and which *hōza*, they attended :

Number of times per month	Place where <i>hōza</i> is held		
	Daiseidō	Local branch	Members' homes
	5.3(2.3)	4.3(4.8)	3.9(5.6)

The numbers in brackets show the average for male members only. The order of frequency of attendance for the whole sample is Daiseidō, local branch and members' homes, but when the sample is limited to male members, the result is reversed. Since most of the male members work during day-time, they can attend only the evening *hōza* held at members' homes, or the local *hōza* which requires less time and trouble to participate, and they are able to go to the Daiseidō *hōza* only on Sundays and holidays, and thus male members can attend Daiseidō *hōza* only 2.3 times per month.

For the female members, attending evening *hōza* might be difficult considering their situation as housewives, but why do they attend the *hōza* at Daiseidō more than at the local branch? One reason is that there is a monitor system by which members have to perform various duties at the Daiseidō, such as filling in the *hōza* diary, cleaning the Daiseidō building, working in the shops (there is a cooperative system among R.K.K. members, and shops from pharmacies to sweet shops, are run in the Daiseidō), the great dining hall, information

desk, elevator, etc. These tasks come around about once a month. But besides this, female members seem to particularly enjoy going to the Daiseidō. This becomes apparent when one observes, for instance, the central hall on the third floor of the Daiseidō (area of 1,000 square metres) at lunchtime. There, the members form groups and sit on the carpeted floor, with little children running around them, and they chat gaily over their lunches, just as at a picnic. This picture gives the observer the impression that R.K.K. is playing also a recreational function in the lives of these people. Another facet of the Daiseidō that cannot be disregarded is the fact that the building is made from expensive materials, gold, marble and precious stones, and when one hears the music of the huge pipe organ (order-made in Germany) echo in the eight-story building, one is overwhelmed by the air of grandeur and richness. Thus, when a member is reciting the sutras with tens of thousands of other people of the same belief in this atmosphere, he is bound to feel the pride of being part of the organization that owns this splendour and the solidarity of all these people chanting the same words of the same belief.

I believe that it is because of the recreational element and the splendour of the building that the female members are attracted to the Daiseidō, although it might be much farther in distance than their local branches.

The rate of the total *hōza* attendance is higher among those who entered R.K.K. at earlier stages, but among those who entered fairly recently, there are those who attend very frequently (35 times per month) and those who attend rarely (less than 14 times per month). From the previous statement

that the earlier one joined the more one attends the *hōza*, it is natural that newcomers attend infrequently. But how are the three newcomers who attend more than 35 times a month to be explained? When their motives for joining R.K.K. were examined, it was found that all three had joined because they were impressed by the doctrine. Also, the three spend more than the average number of hours on activities other than the *hōza* and felt that what appealed to them about R.K.K. was that it helped to develop personality. These three members show a strikingly similar pattern. If we describe the typical R.K.K. member of the past, he or she would have been a member who joined because of material-phenomenological reasons, and receiving that particular *kudoku* after joining, he became an active member. But I believe that the new type of member is shown by the three described above—joining because they were impressed by the doctrine, and being active in order to develop one's personality and to train one's spirit.

On speaking out in the *hōza*

The *kambu* at the *hōza* sessions tries his utmost to give all the participants some chance to speak, but among the members, perhaps because of their timidity, there are some who hardly give any opinions.

The interviewees were asked how frequently they spoke up in the *hōza* sessions.

Frequency of speaking out			Total
Always	Sometimes	Rarely	
26(59.0%)	12(27.3%)	6(13.7%)	44(100.0%)

For those who do speak up, 60% offer some new topic and also comment on other people's topics, 16% only give

opinions to other people's topics, and 17% mainly introduce their own topics. Also, I discovered that the more one attends the *hōza* sessions, the more one is likely to speak out in the *hōza*. People who always speak out attend the *hōza* on the average of 18.5 times per month, those who sometimes attend 12.6 times, and those who rarely attend go to the *hōza* 7 times per month. Since the number of times one attends the *hōza* is directly proportionate to the total hours one spends on R.K.K. activity, it can also be said that the more active one is time-wise, the more one speaks out in the *hōza*.

In my sample, with the exception of two people, all attended the *hōza* at least once a month, and therefore, they were likely to have experienced receiving a *musubi* (answers and guidance members receive for their own problems that were discussed in the *hōza* sessions). I asked them whether they were satisfied with the *musubi*, when they received it from a *kambu*, and when from an ordinary member.

	Frequency of satisfaction				Total
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Have not received <i>musubi</i>	
<i>Musubi</i> from <i>kambu</i>	27 (61.4%)	17 (38.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	44 (100.0%)
<i>Musubi</i> from ordinary member	20 (45.4%)	16 (36.4%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (18.2%)	44 (100.0%)

Since *kambu* are more experienced and have deeper knowledge of R.K.K. teachings, it is natural that members are more satisfied when they receive *musubi* from the *kambu* than from the ordinary member. But in both cases there were none that were rarely satisfied, although there were just under two fifths who were sometimes satisfied (and sometimes unsatisfied). It has been said of the rapid growth of the new religious movements

after the war, and particularly of these new religions with organizational mobilization power, that such growth occurred among those 'who seek authority in a certain sense—especially the strata seeking such authority which satisfy their souls.'¹ But in my sample I found nearly forty percent of the replies implying that they do not accept the words of their *kambu* blindly because of their authority, but are choosing at times to accept and sometimes not to accept. I asked their reasons for being satisfied or not with the *musubi*.

Reasons for satisfaction	Number	%
1. Because the person giving <i>musubi</i> is well-versed in Buddhist doctrine	21	77.8
2. Because the <i>musubi</i> is logical	4	14.8
3. Because the person giving <i>musubi</i> excels in personality	1	3.7
4. Because I accept <i>musubi</i> as the teaching of the Buddha	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

Reasons for being sometimes satisfied, sometimes not	Number	%
1. Because <i>musubi</i> is unreasonable	8	47.1
2. Because <i>musubi</i> is one-sided, containing the person's emotions and personal opinions	5	29.4
3. Because I have not yet accepted R. K. K. teachings	3	17.6
4. Because the person giving <i>musubi</i> is well-versed in Buddhist doctrine	1	5.9
Total	17	100.0

(1, 2 and 3 are reasons for being dissatisfied, 4 for being satisfied)

Theodor Jaekel writes in the following manner on the New Religions :

1. Ikado, Fujio, *Shinkō shūkyō no dōkō to kadai*, in *Jiyū*, July 1964, Tokyo, Jiyū-sha, 1964, p. 131.

Theological depth is not considered necessary if religion yields practical results. In cases of dispute the word of the leader, usually a strong personality, settles the matter.²

Jaekel explains that what is important in the New Religions is not the theological and doctrinal aspects but the strong personality that is the basis for the authority which satisfies the members' souls.

If the word 'leader' used by Jaekel is to mean founders or presidents, the highest ranking leaders of the New Religions, in an organization such as R.K.K., where membership is enormous and the organization complex, it is physically impossible for the president to have personal contacts with all his followers. Therefore, compared to smaller religions or religions that have been recently founded, in R.K.K., with its 31 years of history and membership of three million, the influence which the president's personality has on his followers is minute. Thus, in the case of R.K.K., the administrative abilities of the president or the development of doctrine become more meaningful than the charismatic personality of the president. Also, when the organization becomes complex, a majority of the responsibilities and rights of the president are delegated to various committees and individuals, and therefore, it is not always the decision of the president that is the final word (though one staff-member commented that in matters of dispute, sometimes the president does have the final say). But for the most part, Jaekel's opinions about the New Religions do not apply to

2. Jaekel, Theodor, *The Psychological and Sociological Reasons for the New Religions*, in *Japanese Religions* Vol. 2, No. 1, April, 1960. Kyoto, The Christian Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, 1960 p.9.

R.K.K. of the present day if we take his 'leader' to mean the highest ranking person.

Next, if the word 'leader' is interpreted in a wider sense to include all those who stand above the ordinary members (*kambu*, in general), according to the results of my interviews, I found that when the members are satisfied with the *musubi* they receive, they are satisfied not so much because the *kambu* has an excellent personality but because he is well-versed in Buddhist doctrine. When they are not satisfied, it is because the *musubi* is unreasonable and contains the personal emotions and opinions of the one giving the *musubi*. Here I discovered that the members place the judgment according to their own reasoning above the personality of the leader. If, as Jaeckel explains, the leader has absolute authority, and this authority springs from the personality that he possesses, then 100% of the members should always be satisfied with the *musubi*, and the reason for satisfaction should be that 'the leader giving the *musubi* excels personality-wise.' But this was not the result of my interviews. Therefore, I conclude that it is not true that members of the New Religions are blindly obeying the orders of the leaders.

But again, it is neither true to say that the members are completely independent of their leaders in making judgments, for when I was making contact with the interviewees for the first time to arrange the date of the interview, many of them had replied that they had better consult with their *shunin* first (although I told them that I had been given permission to conduct this survey by the head of the Department of Propagation and the head of the *Tokyo-kyōkai*, and that their names

had been recommended by their *shibu*-leaders). When I was conducting the interviews, there were several people who brought their *michibiki-no-oya* with them because they were uncertain, and to every question I asked, they discussed it with the *michibiki-no-oya* before giving the final answer. The members whom I portrayed here seemed to be heavily dependent on their *shunin* or their *michibiki-no-oya*.

The meaning of the *hōza*

It was discovered in the previous section that there are some who are sometimes not satisfied with the *musubi* they receive in the *hōza*, and from this, it can be expected that the meaning *hōza* has for its participants is not necessarily that of gaining peace of mind by the discovery of a satisfying authority. The interviewees were asked what they regarded as the meaning of the *hōza*.

Meaning of <i>hōza</i>	Male	Female	Total
To learn the teachings of the Buddha	4(26.7%)	13(44.8%)	17(38.6%)
To train one's self for the attainment of Bodhisattavahood	5(33.3%)	9(31.0%)	14(31.8%)
To gain peace of mind	1(6.8%)	4(13.9%)	5(11.4%)
To talk with companions	3(20.0%)	1(3.4%)	4(9.1%)
Others	2(13.3%)	2(6.8%)	4(9.1%)
Total	15(100.0%)	29(100.0%)	44(100.0%)

'To gain peace of mind' was mentioned by 11.4% of the total, and it centered around middle-aged women. Of these 11.4%, the explanation about the satisfaction of having found an authority is perhaps applicable, but it can also be that this peace of mind is the result of finding a *musubi* which matches their reasoning. Of the rest, if R.K.K. is a gathering of the

alienated, more people should find the meaning of the *hōza* in the fourth item, 'to talk with companions'.¹ But 70% gave items one and two as their answers. This emphasis on doctrine by the members proves how effectively the policies of the organization (i.e., to stress the doctrinal elements) has been internalized. We had found before that more members were joining R.K.K. because they were impressed by the doctrine. Therefore it is natural that more people regard the *hōza* as a place to increase their knowledge of R.K.K. teachings. Those who saw the meaning of *hōza* in the training of themselves for the attainment of Bodhisattavahood proved that they spend from 1.1 to 1.7 times as many hours on R.K.K. activities than those who answered differently, and these people, together with those who answered that what appeals to them about R.K.K. is that it helps to develop the personality and to train the soul, make a group totalling about 35% of the whole who spend a great amount of time and energy on R.K.K. activities and hope to improve themselves through it.

Musubi, from the point of view of the *kambu*

I questioned the *kambu* as to the vital point in giving a *musubi*.

Vital point of <i>musubi</i>	No.	%
To find the clue of <i>usubi</i> in what the participant is saying	9	29.5
To make the person promise something which he can do immediately	7	22.5
To make the person realize the necessity of changing his heart for himself	6	19.4
To clarify the true state of anxiety	3	9.7
To explain until the person is satisfied	2	7.5
Total	27	87.6

1. One thirty-years-old male who replied that the meaning of *hōza* for him

The remaining points were 'the *musubi* must be based on Buddhist doctrine,' 'one must sense quickly what the person is troubled about' and 'to explain with logic.'

Some of the answers were similar, and, on the whole, the vital points about *musubi* are that it must not be one-sided, but the *kambu* must listen carefully to what the participants are saying and unravel the causes of anxiety, and when giving *musubi*, it must be given in such a way that the person receiving the *musubi* realizes what had troubled him so that he himself feels motivated to change.

In reality, when I attended the *hōza* held in the Daiseidō, where the majority of the participants were middle-aged women, some of the *musubi* seemed unreasonable to me, although they might have satisfied the persons receiving the *musubi*. For example, though it is a diminishing tendency, sometimes onomancy and geomancy are used in the *musubi*. In one case, a woman by the name of Shizue suffered greatly in the past due to various illnesses, but after joining R.K.K., she has found happiness, and to her, the *kambu* preached that the name 'Shizue' denotes the phenomenon of hardship, but because this woman joined R.K.K., which was a good *en*, she is now enjoying a circumstance which is completely the opposite of what her name calls for, and she must keep up her activities for the R.K.K. if she wants this happiness to continue. To an outsider, it is puzzling why 'Shizue' must suffer more than people with other names. In another *hōza*, I came across

is 'to talk with companions' was from Fukushima prefecture, and lived away from his family in a tailor shop, where he worked. To him, perhaps, the explanation concerning alienation is applicable.

a young housewife who reported that she just drew the winning lottery number for the right to enter an apartment house at the popular H-danchi, and she wanted to move immediately, but she was worried about the direction and the *kambu* suggested that she consult with the *shibu*-leader who has knowledge of geomancy so that she might know whether the direction of H-danchi was appropriate or not. In other instances where geomancy and onomancy were not used, I found some *musubi* which appeared unreasonable. McFarland writes that 'they (new religions) have not explored the sources of man's problems in the depth of human nature or in the intricacies of social structure and personal interactions'¹ and calls this religious escapism, and I feel that some of the *musubi* are thus, avoiding the real issue and just repeating the phrase, "be more active in R.K.K. and your problems will disappear."

Through the interviews, I found that 40% of the members sometimes feel that this sort of *musubi* is unsatisfactory. There has been a gradual change in what people seek in R.K.K., and whether the *kambu* are in full realization of this change and are capable of meeting this change will be the crucial point on which the future success or failure of R.K.K. will depend.

Activities (3): Other activities

R.K.K., as in most of the organized New Religions, emphasizes the importance of propagation and instruction through publication and literature. Apart from the several books written by the president (of which *Travel to Infinity*, an autobiography

1. McFarland, H. Neill, *The Rush Hour of the Gods*. New York, The MacMillan Company, 1967, p.227.

of the president has been recently translated into English and sent to all the major libraries in the world), the Kōsei Publishing Company issues the weekly *Kōsei Shimbun*, the monthly magazines *Yakushin*, *Kōsei* and *Kōsei Graphic*, the English paper *The Kōsei Times* for the members of R.K.K. and for purposes of propagation towards outsiders. There is also the *Kōsei Nenkan* (Annual) which gives the yearly vital statistics, and as an introduction of R.K.K. to outsiders for the purpose of gaining their understanding there is the *Risshō Kōsei-kai* (also in English), which gives a rough outline of the history, teachings, and organization. Besides these, there are many book on Buddhist doctrine and sutras.

I asked the interviewees how much they read these published materials.

	How often they read			Total
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	
<i>Kōsei Shimbun</i>	34(77.3%)	7(15.9%)	3(8.8%)	44(100.0%)
<i>Kōsei</i>	36(81.8%)	4(9.1%)	4(9.1%)	44(100.0%)
<i>Yakushin</i>	40(90.9%)	3(6.8%)	1(2.3%)	44(100.0%)

The figures show a remarkably high rate of reading, and the *Yakushin* seems particularly popular. *Yakushin* is edited with the Young People's Division in mind, and contains interpretations of the doctrine, methods of propagation and of holding the *hōza* and perhaps is appealing to those members who are eager to study. *Kōsei* is similar to *Yakushin* in content, but the layout, wording and article choice is more suitable for older members. One woman in her sixties replied that she rarely read the newspaper or the magazines, for as much as she wanted to, she was almost illiterate having had only a few years of schooling. But in all these publications, every issue

includes a *hōwa* (sermon) of the president, and in this *hōwa*, each *kanji* has *hirakana* attached, so that even the almost illiterate old woman mentioned above could read it.

As a religious activity inside the home, R.K.K. instructs the members to hold *kuyō* (memorial services for the ancestors) every morning and evening in front of their family *butsudan* which contains the *sōkaimyō* (Section 6 in Chapter 3). In my sample, 89% conducted these services every morning and evening, and the remaining 11% performed them either in the morning or in the evening, or on some occasions, and there were none who never held *kuyō*. In the case of families where the whole household were R.K.K. members, 92% performed *kuyō* services every morning and evening. When there is someone in the family who is not a member (and especially if the non-member is of a higher status than the member), the member is likely to feel uncomfortable about performing the ceremony in the presence of the non-member, and in some cases the non-member obstructs the member from performing *kuyō* services (see Chapter 3, Section 4, where the third largest reason for members leaving R.K.K. was that they received opposition from the family). In one of the *hōza* I attended, one young housewife complained that her mother-in-law, whom her family lived with, was not a member of R.K.K., and did not like her (the bride) to be a member, so the mother-in-law, when she was in a bad mood, took out the *sōkaimyō* from the family *butsudan* and threw it on the floor and repeated this act every time the bride returned it to where it belonged, inside the *butsudan*. Incidentally, the *musubi* to this was that the Lord Buddha probably did not enjoy being taken in and out of the

butsudan, and so for the time being, it was best for the bride to set up a temporary *butsudan* in her private living quarters and hold the *kuyō* services there until the mother-in-law's rage subsided (which was bound to happen, the *kambu* explained, if the bride kept on being humble and obedient).

The fact that almost 90% of the members are performing *kuyō* services every day shows that being a member of R.K.K. not only means a restriction in the way one spends one's free time, but necessitates a change in the pattern of family life as well.

Section 3. How members change after entering

I asked the interviewees how they themselves thought they had changed as a result of entering R.K.K. and receiving its influence. With no specific differentiation according to age or sex, 80 to 90 percent replied that their outlook on life had changed, from a self-centred one to an outlook focused on helping humanity, and with this inner improvement, their attitudes towards other people had become generous and considerate. Among the male members, seven replied that they had formerly been short-tempered, but now they hardly ever were angry, and the majority of the female members replied that they had become cheerful and bright. One female member related that she had a strong inferiority complex because of a scar on her face, but after joining, she realized that there were other things in life that were more important than physical attractiveness and lost her inferiority complex, and as a result, she was able to find a wonderful marriage partner. Several of the answers mentioned a change in the ways of living, such

as, 'I get up earlier than before,' or, 'I do not play around so much.'

Because in the *hōza*, the members are taught not to have a grudge against the person who is causing them to suffer, but to reflect upon their own attitudes and thoughts to improve their personalities.

One point that must be mentioned here is that, throughout the whole survey, the interviewees, especially the veteran members, were inclined to answer how they ought to be (normative) rather than how they are (descriptive). Therefore, in reality, the members might not be as humble, considerate, cheerful etc. as they describe themselves to be, and these answers are partly what they are striving at rather than what they are at present. So the more exemplary the members are, the more similar their answers are, for their ideal images are formed from the teachings of the organization, which, being exemplary members, they study most ardently.

But I consider the fact that 87.5% of the members I contacted cooperated with me in the interview although they were under no obligation to do so, as a proof of the generosity of these members, and thus I do believe that R.K.K. has good effects on its members.

Chapter V. Ten Years Ago and Today

Through the observations made thus far, I discovered that what has been said generally of the New Religions does not necessarily apply to the R.K.K. of today. The ideal members, namely, middle-aged persons, coming from the alienated strata of society, seeking material-phenomenological benefits and entering the religion, finding satisfaction in the charismatic personality of the leader and receiving material-phenomenological benefits which they had sought, and evaluating the religion highly and beginning to be particularly active, perhaps exist today with some variations, but I also found a completely new type. Is this not due to the change in society at large?

Over four fifths of the *kambu* observe that during the past ten years, an increasing proportion of men and young people are attending the *hōza*. Also, they claim that the topic of discussion in the *hōza* is changing.

Changes in topic	% of the total of 31 <i>kambu</i>
Less discussion on personal, phenomenological sufferings	97.0
More discussion about human relations	35.5
" " " social problems	38.8
" " " doctrines	6.5
" " " internal, spiritual problems	29.0

A similar question, 'Is there any change in the anxieties of the members?' was asked.

Changes in anxiety	% of the total of 31 <i>kambu</i>
Less anxieties of personal, phenomenological aspects	71.0
More anxieties about human relations	71.0
" " " social problems	9.7
" " " way of life	22.5
People in recent times do not suffer	12.9

With the levelling up of living conditions in general, people's problems have changed from those of every day living conditions to those of human relations and finding the correct way of life. The latter problems existed in the previous periods too, but because during those times people suffered from the more urgent problem of 'what do we have to eat today,' they were latent, and only came to the surface when the urgent problems diminished. One quarter mentions that the members today are suffering in search for the way of life, the right outlook of life, and this shows the uncertainty of the people. Society at present, though economically more prosperous than ever before, is unstable with student disorders, political insufficiencies etc., and the value system of pre-war periods has been forced to change, yet alternate value systems that are presented instead are so varied and numerous that one is at a loss of which to choose. But when one comes to R.K.K., he is told exactly what to do in each particular situation, and what is the correct way of living and thinking, so that he does not have to worry about making choices for himself. This is certainly satisfying and comfortable when one is lost.

The *kambu* mentioned that social problems are discussed in the *hōza*, and it seems that this is particularly so before elections. Since R.K.K. is in rivalry with Sōka Gakkai, they explain that it is not the thing to do for a religious organization to create its own political party, and therefore, R.K.K. has no political party of its own, but through the Union of New Religious Organizations in Japan (*Shinshūren*), it works as an effective pressure group (at present, it is active in the Yasukuni-shrine problem). Also, among the members of parliament of the

conservative camps (i.e., Liberal Democratic and Democratic Socialist Parties), there are some who were strongly supported by the R.K.K. and elected. For example, a certain Mr. N, who had been an undersecretary in the Ministry of Education, had been a presbyter in a Christian church, but joined R.K.K., received support of R.K.K. members and ran in the election for the House of Councillors, and was successfully elected. I could not obtain precise information on how the members are given instructions concerning their political behaviour, but judging from the results, it is apparent that some sort of instruction takes place. Problems of student movements and of education are also frequently discussed topics.

These changes in what people suffer from and therefore what is discussed in the *hōza* necessitates a corresponding change in the methods of instruction in the *hōza*. For the person suffering from poor living conditions, it might have sufficed to say that if you continue to do your *kuyō* services and attend the *hōza*, then some day, the sun will shine on you, but when the *kambu* is asked questions concerning the right life, social problems and difficulties of human relations, the *kambu* must have knowledge of Buddhist doctrine, social affairs, and even psychology.

I asked the *kambu*, 'In order for R.K.K. to develop further, what methods should they take, and towards what strata of society should they propagate?' The majority answered that they should propagate towards the intelligentsia and the leaders in society. This is a repetition of recent R.K.K. policy which is that in present society where there is such a great demand for religion, it is just not enough to convert people

one by one, and therefore, the effective method is to convert people with influence so that his followers will also be converted after him. There are many cases where the company president becomes a member and then his employees follow suit and join R.K.K. But to the other half of the question, which was, in order to convert such people, what is the effective method, very few had definite answers. Some gave concrete ideas, such as that 'by performing voluntary services for the good of the local community they give a good impression to the community,' or that 'they conduct consultations (similar to *hōza*) publicly,' but the majority gave vague answers, such as 'by interpreting the Lotus Sutra in modern terminology,' or 'through social intercourse,' or 'appealing to people's hearts by earnestness,' which gave me the impression that they had no clear vision as to their own roles in the future works of the organization.

This brought me to feel that although the top brains of R.K.K. are quick to realize the movements in society and set forth policies that match the demands, the *kambu* who in reality are responsible for the acts of instruction and propagation, are sometimes, though informed of the new policies, unable to digest them and transform their thoughts and minds to answer to the new policies, so that they continue to teach and preach just as they have been doing for many years.

This discrepancy is evident in the opinions that the *kambu* hold for Naganuma Myōkō, co-founder of R.K.K. As mentioned in the introduction, Myōkō died in 1957, and is said to have had special powers which could sometime heal illnesses, and was therefore considered to have been a Living Buddha by her

followers in her lifetime. But after her death, the magical activities of Myōkō were regarded as expedient (*hōben*) for revealing the truth to those who were in the elementary stages of belief, and with the declaration of the manifestation of truth (1958), they no longer needed magical practices to guide people but can teach by directly preaching the doctrines of Buddhism. I asked the *kambu* what they felt about Myōkō, a decade after this manifestation of the truth.

Feeling for Myōkō	Age					Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	
I respect her as a model believer	2	3	1	0	1	7
I worship her as a Bodhisattva	3	3	5	2	0	13
I am convinced that she had extraordinary powers	0	0	2	2	1	5
Others	1	3	1	1	0	6
						31

The term, Bodhisattva, is used in R.K.K. to mean a person who regards the sufferings of other people and of the world as his own sufferings, and wishes to eliminate these sufferings and make other people happy, and strives towards this end by devoting all he has towards others. This word is used quite frequently and casually among members. For instance, describing a member who ardently serves the welfare of others, members would say, he is like a Bodhisattva. Since Myōkō was an ardent worker, sacrificing herself for R.K.K., she is regarded as a Bodhisattva by people of all ages. But when the aspects 'model believer' and 'special powers' are compared, the former is prevalent among younger *kambu*, whereas the latter is common among older *kambu*. For the young people who were raised in such a time when scientific accuracy is given

primary importance, perhaps 'extraordinary powers' are too much to believe, even though it may be the foundress of their religion. I do not wish to argue about the authenticity of these 'extraordinary powers,' but when the R.K.K. policy makers are so eager to stress that science and belief do not run counter to each other, for some of the *kambu* to imply that Myōkō possessed extraordinary powers might well be misleading and a setback to scientific-minded people.

Thus, among the *kambu*, who come in direct contact with the believers, there are some, who, though perhaps realizing the changes in society, in the minds of the members and in R.K.K. policy, are not flexible enough to transform their own ideas and methods, so that they are liable to cause dissatisfaction in some of the younger members, and thus hinder the growth of R.K.K.

Chapter VI. Conclusion

For lack of materials concerning R.K.K. (I found only one article devoted entirely to R.K.K. written by an outsider), and also because of the small size of my sample, I cannot give definite conclusions nor statements that are valid for every segment of R.K.K. What I did in my survey was to observe and describe what I saw of a limited segment of R.K.K. Therefore, my concluding chapter will take the form of a list of findings :

1. In the motives for joining R.K.K., 'I was persuaded into doing so' ranks first among those who entered two decades ago and those who entered recently, but material-phenomenological motives, such as poverty or illness are decreasing whereas people entering because they were impressed by the doctrine are on the increase.
2. Among the *kudoku* that members feel they received by joining R.K.K., material-phenomenological *kudoku* are decreasing, and *kudoku* of the spirit are increasing.
3. Entry into R.K.K. is done as a result of *michibiki* and in a relatively short period of time, and thus one has little knowledge of R.K.K. teachings at the time of entry.
4. What appeals about R.K.K. has mostly to do with such aspects that concern a transformation in the individual, such as R.K.K. helps to polish the individual's personality or it becomes a guide in his life.
5. In R.K.K. activities, the earlier one joined, and the more the total number of hours spent on R.K.K. activity, the more

one is likely to have done *michibiki* and the more frequent becomes the attendance at the *hōza*.

6. *Michibiki* is usually performed towards relatives and acquaintances, and the number of those one has converted becomes a measure of his devoutness.
7. With regard to the *musubi* given in the *hōza*, 40% are sometimes not satisfied. The reason for dissatisfaction is that *musubi* is too emotional and one-sided. The reasons for satisfaction, on the other hand, is that the *kambu* who gave the *musubi* is well-versed in Buddhist doctrine rather than that he is a charismatic personality. The basis for the judgment of whether to accept the *musubi* or not lies in the fact of knowledge of R.K.K. theology rather than in the personality of the *kambu*.
8. The meaning of attending the *hōza* sessions is (1) to learn the teachings of the Buddha, (2) to train oneself for the attainment of Bodhisattvahood. 'To gain peace of mind' 'to talk among companions' etc. were mentioned only by few.
9. Comparing ten years ago and today, the problems which the members suffer from have changed generally from material-phenomenological ones to problems of human relationships and the way of living, according to the *kambu*. But among the *kambu*, there are some, who though perhaps realizing this change, hold on to the ideas and ways of teaching that they had ten years ago and do not meet the demands of the present period.

At this point, I would like to return to some of the theories mentioned in the introductory chapter. On the theory that the

New Religions thrive at such a period when society is in a state of social crisis, from the economic point of view, Japan today is enjoying such a high level of living she has never experienced before. Therefore, the sort of alienation caused by economic reasons is not so prevalent as before, but on the other hand, economic stability alone is not sufficient to satisfy man's needs. The older generation still faces the problem of reconciling the values and ideas they learned before the war and the values and ideas of their children and of the present period. For the younger generation, there is dissatisfaction with the political and social systems, inequalities and injustices. Therefore, though perhaps some might disagree with calling the present state of society one in social crisis, at least all would readily admit that there is general anxiety about the future condition of the country. But these anxieties are not the same as the worries of the people immediately after the war who were confronted with the problem of obtaining food and clothing. Today, the anxieties have drifted from these material-phenomenological ones to spiritual anxieties about human relations, and problems of the philosophies of life. Throughout my survey, I came across R.K.K. members of a new type, who sought the answers to these spiritual problems in R.K.K., and though they are yet a minority, I believe that they are on the increase.

In connection with the above words of Jaeckel claiming that the personality of the leader was more important than theological depth in the New Religions, I believe that they are not quite applicable to R.K.K. of today, for, especially with the new type of members mentioned before, they were observed to place

doctrine above the personality of the leader as the basis for the judgment of whether to accept the instructions of the leader or not. In other words, they are not blindly obeying every command of the leader, but there is selectivity on the part of the members. But I must not stress this point too far, for those who are completely independent in their activities are yet few in number.

In addition to the charismatic personality of the leader, magical practices have been characteristic of the smaller and more unorganized New Religions, but in R.K.K., at least since Myōkō's death, there is a conscious turning away from such practices, and since the declaration of the manifestation of truth 11 years ago, the importance of studying the doctrine at all levels of the organization has been stressed. This has become a vital necessity since an increasing proportion of the members are joining R.K.K. because they are impressed by the doctrine, and they consider as primary purpose of the *hōza* the learning of the doctrines, and secondly, to meet the criticisms from the outside, which usually consider the New Religions as something illogical, irrational and inferior in doctrine.

As a final word on the future of the organization, I believe that further success of R.K.K. depends on how it will be able to satisfy those members who still seek material and phenomenological benefits by joining, and yet at the same time, develop and perfect the doctrine in order to meet the demands of the younger and the more highly-educated members, and also to stand against public criticism. Secondly, the success will also be determined by the ability of R.K.K. to re-educate the

kambu who come in direct contact with the ordinary members. Only *kambu* who can adapt themselves to the new times will be able to lead modern members.