

# The Institutionalization of a New Religious Movement

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*The problems that tend to accompany the institutionalization process of a new religious movement reveal themselves with particular clarity in a movement of large size. The present paper takes up the case of Risshō Kōsei-kai (founded in 1938) as an example of such a successful movement. First, with regard to the stage of "efficiency" that this organization appears to have entered about 1942, the paper discusses the problems of struggle for leadership, changing the branch organization principle, and the processes of institutionalization and bureaucratization. Second, with regard to the stage of "formalism" in which it seems to have found itself since about 1968, the paper deals with the measures taken to counter the apathy and rigidity that tend to accompany a matured state of organization and institutionalization. Finally, a number of general and particular hypotheses concerning the institutionalization of a new religious movement are presented.*

A new religious movement consists of two principal parts: a core group composed of followers who continually participate in the activities of the movement, and a peripheral group composed of those who cease to participate after a short time. In addition, one can distinguish a transitional, intermediate group. When a new religious movement develops from a small-scale group led by its founder to a larger one in which the core group (or the core and intermediate groups together) exceeds the size of a face-to-face group, organization of the movement will inevitably commence. The term "organization of a religious movement" means the differentiation and integration of roles among participants.

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An organized religious movement, that is, an organization for religious movement, sooner or later starts on the path of institutionalization by explicitly defining the values of the movement and the allocation of roles among its participants. Once a new religious movement has attained a certain number of followers and maintained its existence over a certain period of time, when, in other words, it has achieved a certain degree of success, it is sure to begin the process of institutionalization (Wilson 1976, p. 23).

*Four stages.* R.D. Knudten noted a few years ago that the institutionalization process involves four basic and potentially overlapping stages of development. The first stage is that of "incipient organization." At this stage people form an informally structured group for the sake of defense and mutual assistance. When the group becomes formally organized, it reaches the second stage, that of "efficiency." In this stage, the values of the group are more explicitly defined and actualized. Along with these developments, the group begins to make the kinds of adjustments that will help it survive for a long period of time, thus approaching the next stage. The third stage, "formalism," results when organizational structures, leadership roles, religious rituals and beliefs, and ecclesiastical purpose are strictly defined and upheld by a bureaucratic organization. In addition, a final stage, that of "dissolution," may result when the institution begins to disintegrate as it loses its sense of purpose, its organization, and even its members (Knudten 1967, pp. 285-286).

Institutionalization can be grasped as a cumulative process in which a fluid aggregate forms a group with definite membership, an informal group becomes a formal organization, the role structure of the group is differentiated for greater efficiency, leadership is established and stabilized, both the belief system and the ritual system unique to the group become elaborated, and the procedures for training and screening

lay preachers are institutionalized. Since this process takes time, it is seriously affected by the social and historical situation in which the new religious movement finds itself. In the present paper I will deal with the institutionalization process of a new religious movement in contemporary Japan.

*Four foci.* The process of institutionalization differs as between a movement with many members and a movement with few. Particularly important is the point that the problems accompanying any process of institutionalization are likely to be more evident in the larger. Such problems include, for example, that of establishing leadership. When a movement has more than one main objective, this problem may take the form of resolving conflicts between different objectives or making one objective central. A second problem is that of reforming the vertical system of organization that follows naturally from missionary work into a horizontally linked system of districts in order to achieve more effective communication within the organization. A third problem is to take into account the provisions of laws governing religious organizations and the requirements of the group so as to work out a systematic body of rules and regulations. A fourth problem that arises for movements that have reached the stage of formalism is to overcome the feeling of estrangement that ordinary members are likely to experience as a result of rationalization and bureaucratization, to overcome the rigidity that tends to follow institutionalization – in a word, to work out countermeasures so as to prevent the group from being sucked down into the stage of dissolution.

Out of a number of sizable new religious movements in contemporary Japan, I have selected one that can be regarded as having arrived at the stage of formalism, namely, Risshō Kōsei-kai (here to be called Kōsei-kai), and propose to consider its process of institutionalization with particular reference to the four problems just mentioned. Before doing so,

however, it is necessary to describe how Kōsei-kai got started.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF KŌSEI-KAI

Kōsei-kai took its start in the spring of 1938. At that time, a man named Niwano (b. 1906), assistant head of a Reiyūkai branch who carried on missionary work while running a milk delivery service in the Nakano area of Tokyo, and a woman named Naganuma Myōkō (b. 1889), a housewife who shared in his missionary endeavors while helping carry on the family business of selling ice in summer and roasted sweet potatoes in winter, broke away from Reiyūkai and started Kōsei-kai.

*The parent organization.* Reiyūkai is a lay Buddhist association that looks primarily to the *Lotus sutra*. It began during the mid-1920s. According to Reiyūkai teaching, one cannot hope for good fortune in this world unless his or her ancestors in the spiritual world have their desires met. It is held that if people observe services for their ancestors by reciting the *Lotus sutra*, at the same time repenting of their faults and reforming their inner nature through the performance of good works, they will invariably receive spiritual assistance and acquire merit that leads to happiness (Kubo 1972, pp. 62, 96, 132). The extraordinary spiritual power manifested by Kotani Kimi, one of the leading figures, together with the actual benefits experienced by followers of this teaching, drew adherents from among the lower middle class of metropolitan Tokyo – especially people suffering from illness. During the latter half of the 1930s, with the extending of battle lines in China and the tightening of government controls within Japan, a sense of anxiety spread among Japanese people. At this time, the number of adherents increased sharply, making it possible for the group to construct, in the Azabu district of Tokyo in the spring of 1937, a headquarters hall with a floor space of one hundred *tatami* mats.<sup>1</sup>

*The break.* Niwano left Reiyūkai when it was on the rise. His reasons for leaving were essentially two, neither of which can be construed as ex post facto rationalizations since they constitute the substance of his *Taikō shudai* [Statement of objections], written at that time in opposition to the Reiyūkai of that day. One reason had to do with the principles involved in the techniques for winning new members. The other, more fundamental, had to do with the place of *Lotus sutra* study. The head of the Reiyūkai branch to which Niwano belonged, a man named Arai, had long studied the *Lotus sutra* on his own, and his lectures on the sutra made a deep impression on Niwano. He perceived that, in contrast to the teachings of onomancy and hemeromancy he had hitherto relied on, this sutra involved something far more profound, nothing less than a system of teachings that, if followed universally, would lead to salvation for every human being. At Reiyūkai headquarters, however, Arai's lectures were received with something less than warmth. At a meeting of branch heads from all over the nation in January 1938, Mrs. Kotani, speaking as president, not only characterized lectures on the *Lotus sutra* as passé but even denounced them as works of the devil. This triggered Niwano's departure from Reiyūkai (Niwano 1976, pp. 144-145, 161-166).

*The new group.* It was the "Statement of objections" that defined the way that ought to be followed and gave Kōsei-kai its start. This statement also played an important role in establishing the *chūshin shudai* or "central objectives" of Kōsei-kai development — a matter to be treated in a later section.

1. A *tatami* is a mat of woven straw comprised of three parts: (1) a coarsely woven base, (2) a finely woven, replaceable upper surface sewn to the base, and (3) cloth hems that run the length of the mat. One *tatami* is approximately 180 cm. long, 90 cm. wide, and 6 cm. thick (6' x 3' x 2"). To be more precise, 100 *tatami* would cover an area of about 166 sq. meters (1,800 sq. ft.). Ed.

The devoted missionary work performed by Niwano and Myōkō on behalf of Reiyūkai had brought in over two hundred new members. They constituted the Niwano circle (*hōza*) of Arai's branch. On leaving Reiyūkai, Niwano asked Arai to look after the members he had led into the group, but about thirty of them elected to leave Reiyūkai and follow Niwano and Myōkō. These people formed the nucleus of the new religious movement. Looking back on the beginnings of Kōsei-kai from the vantage point of later years, Niwano writes:

It was a time of great upheaval. Ordinary people were hard pressed to keep body and soul together. Many suffered from chronic illnesses, particularly from pulmonary tuberculosis. Since there was no health insurance whatever at that time, anybody who came down with tuberculosis was almost invariably forced into abject poverty. What people sought, therefore, was not a body of religious teachings to be digested little by little, but something more direct and practical (Niwano 1976, p. 171).

In order to save people suffering from poverty and disease, Niwano decided that the immediate primary goal should be not to spread *Lotus sutra* teachings but to heal the sick. His partner, Myōkō, by virtue of her considerable spiritual powers, brought relief to many who had been beaten down by illness or misfortune. Through guidance based on the similarity between her own experience of suffering and the distress of those who came to her, she won many followers, particularly among women. By 1941 when Japan went to war with the Allied powers, Kōsai-kai had grown to about 1,000 member households, and Niwano and Myōkō alike came to realize that they could no longer carry on missionary work and run their businesses at the same time. First Myōkō and then Niwano thus gave up their gainful employment so as to concentrate on religious work. At about the same time, they built a meeting hall of twenty-five *tsubo*<sup>2</sup> in the Sugunami

2. One *tsubo* equals the area covered by two *tatami* (3.31 sq. meters or 36 sq. ft.). Twenty-five *tsubo* equal, therefore, approximately 83 sq. meters (900 sq. ft.). Ed.

district of Tokyo and transferred the headquarters from Niwano's Nakano-district house to the new building in May 1942. The four-year period between the spring of 1938, when Niwano and Myōkō adopted Buddhist names as a sign of their vow to devote themselves to mission work, and the late spring of 1942, when they erected the small central meeting hall separate from their private residences, corresponds to what Knudten speaks of as the stage of incipient organization. With this, the curtain opens on the stage of efficiency. Institutionalization, however, brought with it a number of problems demanding solution.

#### ESTABLISHING LEADERSHIP

*Oracles and interpretations.* Naganuma Myōkō was seventeen years older than Niwano, but since it was he who led her to Reiyūkai faith, she looked on him as her "guiding parent" (*michibiki no oya*). When she later acquired extraordinary spiritual power as a result of ascetic training, the head of her branch, Mr. Arai, gave her systematic guidance in a kind of spirit possession called *hatsuon* in which a person, while in a trance, becomes the mouthpiece of gods and buddhas. About a year and a half after her entry into Reiyūkai, the organization formally recognized her as a qualified practitioner of *hatsuon*. In accordance with this development, Niwano undertook ascetic training to fit himself for the task of serving as an accurate interpreter (*toritsugi*, literally "intermediary") of the divine messages. While still in Reiyūkai, their paired activities on behalf of spreading the faith, activities characterized by Myōkō's oracles and Niwano's interpretations, brought remarkable results. So far as this matter is concerned, each played a role that complemented the other.

The gods and buddhas by whom Myōkō become possessed were mainly Fudō Myō'ō (Skt., Acala), the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman, Bishamon Ten (Skt., Vaiśravaṇa), the Seven-Faced

Kami of Great Brilliance (Jps., Shichimen Daimyōjin), and the Great Bodhisattva Nichiren. Niwano complied even with such harsh messages as “Live apart from your wife and children” and “Read nothing but the *Lotus sutra*.” For believers, he also interpreted divine messages that stood up under scrutiny in the light of the *Lotus sutra*. Messages that did not accord with the central teaching of the sutra, however, he openly resisted, absolutely refusing to submit. Later he described this experience as one of “debating with the gods” (Niwano 1976, pp. 243-248). So far as this debating with the gods was concerned, Niwano’s and Myōkō’s roles were at odds. Involved in this disparity was the necessity of making a choice as to whether the teaching of the sutra or the messages uttered by Myōkō in her role as shaman were to be made central – a matter that concerned the very *raison d’être* of Kōsei-kai.

*The wartime police.* As between these two antagonistic positions, a fortuitous event that occurred in the spring of 1943 tilted the scales in the direction of the position advocated by Niwano. Acting on the basis of information secretly supplied by people living near the headquarters, the local police became suspicious of Myōkō’s “guidance based on spiritual power” and summoned both her and her “guiding parent,” Niwano, to appear at the police station for questioning. Because it was then wartime, the government was tightening its control over every aspect of people’s lives. Religious activities, especially activities intended to propagate Christianity or new religions, were under unremitting police surveillance. If they had any kind of evidence at all, the police were empowered to investigate religious activities at will.

The police put pressure on Niwano to change the principle that governed how guidance was given, but because he refused to do so, he was held in detention for two weeks. Myōkō



was released after three weeks of detention, and with this, the case was closed. Its aftereffects, however, led Kōsei-kai into a period of trial just when it had been building up for expansion.

*Structural repercussions.* The period of trial began when the nominal president of the organization, an older man nearly sixty years of age, was frightened by this affair and resigned his post. Niwano, still less than forty years old at that time, was obliged to assume the presidency, and he recommended Myōkō for the vacated office of vice-president. Other office-holders, however, opposed his recommendation for fear of further police intervention. They held that the reason for the interrogation was that Myōkō had gone too far with her guidance based on spiritual power, and that in future the organization should adhere strictly to Niwano's leadership as based on the teaching of the *Lotus sutra* as well as on onomancy and hemeromancy. They contended not only that Myōkō should not be made vice-president but also that even though she had hitherto been Niwano's partner, she should now be demoted to the status of an ordinary member.

Niwano, in rebuttal, insisted as mentioned before that even though he had rejected some of the messages Myōkō communicated while possessed if they did not accord with the *Lotus sutra*, he had never denied the significance of divine messages in principle for this religious movement. Thus rejecting the argument of the opposition, he named Myōkō as vice-president.

Kōsei-kai already had at this time ten branches. The heads of all but two branches, dissatisfied (or perhaps pretending dissatisfaction) with this appointment, withdrew from the organization. But since withdrawal of a branch head meant the dissolution of the branch, Kōsei-kai went through a severe ordeal. This ordeal is referred to in Kōsei-kai as the "first step." As a result of crossing this first step, a ranking

in central objectives was established under Niwano's leadership, such that Niwano became the principal leader and Myōkō his subordinate (Niwano 1976, pp. 209-219).

*Recovery and growth.* The Niwano-Myōkō team for propagation of the faith soon recovered its vigor. By the end of 1945, the year of Japan's surrender, it had attained a membership of some 1,300 households. That year saw both the nullification of the Religious Organizations Law that had been used to muzzle religious organizations and activities during the war, and the beginning of a period when religious activities could be carried on freely without fear of police interference. This was also a time when, on the one hand, Japan's traditional values fell into disgrace and, on the other, the new values introduced by the Occupation simply spun around in people's heads – a time of anomie and social disintegration. To cap things off, many people were tormented by disease, poverty, hunger, and anxiety. In this situation, there was every reason for religious movements to experience rapid growth, especially a movement like Kōsei-kai that had already won 1,300 member households, that could testify to countless cases in which people were saved from war death or disaster as a result of Niwano's and Myōkō's guidance, and that called on each and every follower to engage in *o-michibiki* (missionary work, literally, "showing the way") in order to free themselves of affliction-producing karmic bonds. The rate of membership increase was amazing: 148% in 1946, 194% in 1947, 88% in 1948, 80% in 1949, and 87% in 1950. By the end of 1950 Kōsei-kai membership amounted to 60,000 households or approximately 300,000 individual adherents. In contrast, Reiyūkai, which had shot up to become the largest of the new religious movements, entered into a period of stagnation because of the censure of the public following certain incidents that occurred in 1949 and 1953, and because in the interim several of its

branch heads withdrew from the organization. As a group that stressed traditional values, Kōsei-kai, riding the tide of the time in reaffirming the old ways (a reaction against postwar reforms), chalked up a remarkable growth record. Claiming 320,000 member households or 1,120,000 followers as of the end of 1955, it became one of the largest and most influential religious organizations in Japan.

The essence of Kōsei-kai teaching during that period was as follows:

The reason people suffer from disease and adversity is that they have ancestors who have not yet arrived at the state of buddhahood. If these people do as Kōsei-kai prescribes, holding services for their ancestors in reliance on the *Lotus sutra*, the ancestors, freed of karmic ties, will attain buddhahood, and the ancestors' descendants, present and future, will find their difficulties resolved. But this is not all. The sufferings of the present have their origin in the bad karma and evil karmic ties deriving from one's ancestors. (Suffering is the "awakening" through which the Buddha makes one aware of bad karma and evil karmic bonds.) In order to eliminate this bad karma and these evil karmic ties, one must not only repent and, with a contrite heart (*sagaru kokoro*), enter into the spiritual discipline that will give him a new inner nature, but also accumulate merit by helping suffering people through leading them into the group (Tsurufuji 1954, pp. 1-9).

So far as this teaching is concerned, there is no difference between Kōsei-kai and Reiyūkai. The difference appears in the fact that Niwano, making use of onomantic techniques he had learned before entering Reiyūkai, was able to point out to new members specific aspects of disposition and character that called for improvement and to provide them with concrete suggestions for inner reform (*konjō naoshi*).

Like Reiyūkai, Kōsei-kai advocated the holding of services for ancestors that made use of the *Lotus sutra*. But whereas Reiyūkai used the sutra only as a magical healing text, making no effort to work out a logical foundation for the teaching

summarized above, Niwano devoted himself tenaciously to clarifying this matter. His lectures on the *Lotus sutra*, serialized in the organization journal *Kōsei* that made its debut in 1950, used so many difficult terms, however, that among the middle-aged women who constituted the greater part of his branch heads and who had received only an ordinary education, they were distinctly unpopular. Myōkō's homilies, conversely, which were published in the same magazine, presented Kōsei-kai teachings in simple, easily understood language and were warmly received. Above all, her spiritual power to heal the sick made people frantic to join. The rapid growth mentioned above owed primarily to Myōkō's spiritual power and the magnetism she exercised over people's hearts. In this situation, it was only natural that Myōkō became the central figure of Kōsei-kai faith. It became evident that her charismatic leadership had overshadowed that of Niwano.

The striking growth of Kōsei-kai manifested itself not only in the construction of a series of buildings to accommodate members who assembled for religious observances and spiritual training, but also in the purchase of land for building sites. It was also indicated by the great number of followers who gathered at the Tokyo center on the days set aside for ancestral services. In combination, these developments attracted the attention of the public. It was at this juncture that the *Yomiuri shinbun*, a newspaper, published a series of articles attacking Kōsei-kai as a sinister religious body. This was the "Yomiuri affair" that occurred in the first half of 1956.

*The Yomiuri and joint proposal affairs.* The *Yomiuri* opened its campaign with a defamatory article on "Kōsei-kai's illegal buying up of land." Continuing, it attacked (with little foundation) the content of the Kōsei-kai life of faith and the organization's payment of taxes. Finally, it singled out

Myōkō as its target and criticized her pre-Kōsei-kai career and her guidance of believers. Because of these articles, Kōsei-kai's faith propagation activities came up for discussion in the Legal Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, and President Niwano was summoned to appear before the assembled committee as a witness. His testimony and the remedial measures he instituted were clear and open, and he spoke and acted with the humility befitting a man of religion. But to Kōsei-kai officers who were blind followers of Myōkō, his humility was a source of great vexation.

Their discontent first surfaced in August 1956 in what was called "the joint proposal affair" and later took concrete form in the recommendation and movement with which Niwano was confronted to have "Myōkō as founder and Niwano as president." Administrative authority for the organization had already been transferred from President Niwano to the Chairman of the Board, a nephew of Myōkō. The purpose of the recommendation, therefore, can be characterized as that of depriving the president of all religious authority and concentrating this authority in Myōkō. Niwano, however, rejected the proposal on the ground that the founder of Kōsei-kai teaching was Sakyamuni himself. He further maintained that the person who gave guidance and instruction in Kōsei-kai was not Myōkō the medium, but himself, the one who interpreted the messages and explained them to Kōsei-kai leaders.

In the "first step" of 1943, Myōkō's guidance based on spiritual power occasioned an outburst of denunciation. In the *Yomiuri* and joint proposal affairs of 1956, referred to in Kōsei-kai as the "second step" and "third step" respectively, it was again Myōkō's spiritual power that was at issue. This time, however, it was Niwano who had to bear the brunt of the attacks from within Kōsei-kai. In this contrast one can see that the two objectives represented by Myōkō and Niwano held different ranks at different times.

Upon the rejection of their recommendation, the anti-Niwano faction initiated steps to realize a plan whereby to found an independent body with Myōkō as leader. They prepared a fund of over ¥40,000,000 and decided that Myōkō's villa on the outskirts of Funabashi was to be the interim headquarters if the plan succeeded (Niwano 1976, pp. 276-302). Myōkō, however, fell ill in February 1957 and died in September of the same year. Consequently, the schismatic movement collapsed. With this, the possibility that the objective for which Myōkō stood might compete with or overwhelm that for which Niwano stood was completely eliminated.

*A new age.* Because of Myōkō's death, it was no longer possible to receive messages from the guardian divinities of Buddhism. Niwano interpreted this to mean the end of the age in which divine guidance could be obtained, an age he designated "the age of accommodated measures" (*hōben no jidai*). He further took it to mean the dawning of "the age of manifest truth" (*shinjitsu kengen no jidai*), an age in which people should reform their inner nature and outer behavior in accordance with the teaching of the *Lotus sutra*. To proclaim the dawning of this new age, Niwano declared on New Year's Day 1958 that the focus of worship in Kōsei-kai was henceforth the Eternal and Original Buddha (the Eternal and Imperishable Great Life) rather than the mandala common among Nichiren Buddhist organizations. He further announced that Sakyamuni was to be understood as symbolizing the Eternal and Original Buddha (Niwano 1976, pp. 316-334). This can be taken as establishing Niwano's leadership.

*From charisma to doctrine.* From the year announcing the age of manifest truth, seminars in doctrinal training, heretofore disparaged as superficial, were initiated. They began

with seminars for educable young men and women, followed by training for middle-aged branch heads previously content with religious observances and spiritual guidance. The group's leaders were being reeducated. The consequences of this doctrinal education soon became evident in the Kōsei-kai response to the attacks mounted against it by Sōka Gakkai, beginning in 1960.

With the growth of training seminars, textbooks were compiled one after another, and in 1966 these were gathered into a single, comprehensive textbook. In addition, Niwano brought out his *Hokekyō no atarashii kaishaku* [New interpretation of the Lotus sutra] (5 vols., 1959-1960), *Shinshaku hoke sanbu kyō* [New interpretation of the threefold Lotus sutra] (10 vols., 1964-1968), and his clearly explained outline of the *Lotus sutra* published under the title *Bukkyō no inochi: Hokekyō* [The life of Buddhism: The Lotus sutra] (1969). It is worth noting that in place of the forbidding *Lotus sutra* lectures formerly published under his name, these books follow Myōkō in using colloquial, easy-to-understand language. Also, in connection with the widespread holding of seminars, regulations governing the certification of missionaries were instituted in 1963. In 1964 Kōsei-kai's central facility, the Great Sacred Hall, was completed, and the association's focus of worship, a statue of Sakyamuni, was installed. Training for the purpose of becoming a medium, however, dropped out of sight during the course of these developments. Thus the age of manifest truth revealed its overall features in less than a decade from the time of its proclamation. A time had come when believers would "rely on the truth rather than on a person" (*ehō fuenin*), a time, in other words, when charisma had become routinized.

A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE PRINCIPLE OF BRANCH ORGANIZATION  
*Organization based on personal ties.* Like the ten other groups that split off from Reiyūkai, Kōsei-kai long followed

Reiyūkai's lead or in some way treated it as a model in respect of doctrine, forms of spiritual training, symbols, and organizational structure. With particular reference to organization, Kōsei-kai began as a body of 30 members, approximately the size of a small circle group (*hōza*) in Reiyūkai. Two years later, in April 1940, when Kōsei-kai sent to the Tokyo Prefectural Government a report on its circumstances as a religious body, it had increased its membership to 500 households and organized its members into 5 branches. It may be supposed that each branch was subdivided into a number of circle groups. This kind of vertical organization – from headquarters through branch to circle – conformed to that in effect in Reiyūkai. Circle members were directly or indirectly “children” under the guidance of the circle head, the circle heads were children under the guidance of the branch head, and the branch heads were children under the guidance of the president. The “parent-child” guidance relationship constituted the principle that generated and maintained the vertical system of organization.

Kōsei-kai, though severely buffeted by the “first step” of 1943, soon recovered and, after Japan's surrender, entered into a period of growth. By August 1948 when it became qualified as a religious juridical person, it had grown to 15,000 member households organized into 12 different branches. Identifying Tokyo's stronger branches by number and its weaker branches by branch head name, the awarding of a flag to each numbered branch and to strong branches outside Tokyo – all this followed the Reiyūkai model. New branches were formed one after another: 18 in 1948, 3 in 1950, and 18 in 1951. By the end of 1951, Kōsei-kai counted some 90,000 member households or 450,000 followers, and it had as many as 50 branches. But more than an increase in the number of branches is evident. During 1950 and 1951, out of the 20 branches bearing branch head names, the 18 in Tokyo were elevated to number status, and the 2 outside



Tokyo were given area names. The disappearance of new branches with branch head names after 1951 suggests the termination of Reiyūkai's status distinction between numbered branches and branches named after their heads. This reform was introduced to simplify clerical and administrative tasks that had become increasingly complex with the addition of new branches. That is to say, for administrative purposes it was easier to identify branches if, instead of using branch head names, the Tokyo branches were identified by number and the rest by area names.

New branches were formed by dividing larger, older ones. An older branch that gave birth to a new one was called a "parent branch," and the new branch a "child branch." As opposed to Tenrikyō and Reiyūkai, where a child body is subject to its parent body, Kōsei-kai is distinctive in that every branch is by definition directly under the authority of the president.

The average branch consisted of 1,500 households in 1948, 1,100 in 1949, 1,900 in 1950, and 1,800 in 1951. As contrasted with Reiyūkai, where the numbered branches are very powerful – number 7, the largest, was said to have between 150,000 and 250,000 members immediately prior to its secession – Kōsei-kai can be regarded as having chosen a small branch system. Inasmuch as the Arai branch where Niwano served as assistant head was a small one, the small branch system was one that experience had made him familiar with. Moreover, Reiyūkai itself, having learned a bitter lesson from the 1949-51 years when the heads of several of the largest branches withdrew, gave up the large branch system, and this seems to have strengthened Kōsei-kai confidence in the small branch system. Under the small branch system, believers who actively spread the faith could rise in a fairly short time, depending on the number of "children" they guided into the organization, to circle head, then assistant branch head. Eventually, they might lead their own

branch. Furthermore, in this way a large branch produced child branches. Consequently, for the purpose of stimulating a desire to win others to the faith, the small branch system was more suitable than the large. In addition, comparatively frequent division of a branch prevented its head from acquiring too much power and thus had the effect of nipping in the bud any likelihood of branch-unit secessions. Kōsei-kai, therefore, by setting up numerous small branches directly responsible to the president, by putting branch heads directly under his leadership, and by keeping the membership lists in the headquarters, adopted a centralized authority system.

Membership increase, and thus the increase in the number of branches, tended to occur first in Tokyo where Kōsei-kai got its start and then spread to other areas. This is indicated, despite the membership increase in Tokyo, by the decreasing ratio of Tokyo members to members in other parts of the country. For example, the total membership grew markedly from 90,000 households in 1951 to 207,000 in 1953 and to 386,000 in 1958, but the proportion of the total constituted by Tokyo members fell from 60% to 48% and again to 28% over the same period. This tendency is also evident in the decreasing ratio of Tokyo branches to branches throughout the country. In 1948, 10 (83%) of the 12 branches were in Tokyo, in 1951 36 (72%) out of 50, in 1956 84 (62%) out of 135, and in 1959 84 (57%) out of 148.

During these years, a new member joined the branch to which his "guiding parent" belonged. As a result, members of a given branch did not necessarily live in the same area. On the contrary, it was quite normal for them to be dispersed among several areas. This tendency was particularly conspicuous in Tokyo branches that had a comparatively long history and were vigorously engaged in faith-propagation activities. Branch number 39, for example, founded in 1952, had in 1957 more than 100 households spread not only over

7 of the Tokyo wards but also over Shizuoka, Mie, and Kyoto prefectures. The rapid growth of provincial (non-Tokyo) branches noted above resulted from the dividing of Tokyo branches, the dividing of provincial branches that had themselves sprung from Tokyo branches, and sometimes from the coming together of members with diverse branch affiliations but a common area of residence. Thus the successive formation of provincial branches, particularly of the last type, had the hidden effect of reorienting branch members in accordance with a propinquity principle.

*Conditions making for a change of principle.* In order to accommodate the throngs of members who made pilgrimages to the headquarters, Kōsei-kai built in 1949 a hall of 148 *tsubo* (490 sq. meters or 5,328 sq. ft.), but this soon proved insufficient, so in 1951 a two-story hall of 357 *tsubo* (1,182 sq. meters or 12,852 sq. ft.) was erected. At the same time, in order to cope with the growing number of members outside Tokyo, halls were built for the expanding provincial branches. To start with, a hall of 100 *tsubo* (331 sq. meters or 3,600 sq. ft.) was built in northern Ibaraki Prefecture in 1950. Subsequently, 1 hall was erected in 1952, 4 in 1953, 6 in 1954, 5 in 1955, 5 in 1956, 9 in 1957, 4 in 1958, and 9 in 1959. Each hall was assigned one or more branches that made it the base for their religious training. This construction of assembly halls, combined with the previously mentioned formation of new branches, promoted the localization of formerly dispersed branch members. The liaison station (*renrakujo*) that can be regarded as a small-scale assembly hall, a base for the members of a given neighborhood, had much the same effect.

As a result of branch divisions and the designation of assembly halls for branch use, the system of branch organization based on the "parent-child" guidance relationship was gradually giving way to the propinquity principle. At

length, the original organizational principle was weighed in the balance and found wanting. This took place during the 1956 "*Yomiuri* affair" and the 1958 actualization of "manifest truth."

In the *Yomiuri* affair, Kōsei-kai was acutely aware of the need to communicate to the rank-and-file members the position of the leadership regarding the *Yomiuri* attack so as to prevent turmoil. The monthly journal *Kōsei*, however, was inadequate for this purpose. Accordingly, in June of the year the attack began, the newspaper *Kōsei shinbun* was founded, being issued every ten days. The problem was how to distribute it promptly. The journal *Kōsei*, being a monthly, allowed sufficient time for distribution to the farthest corners of the organization by means of the vertical structure that linked branches and circle groups. But under a branch organization system that involved the diffusion of branch members over a number of areas, it was next to impossible to deliver the *Kōsei shinbun* once every ten days. To solve this problem, a delivery station was set up in each area, and the delivery system was based on the neighborhood principle.

In 1956, as a result of the *Yomiuri* attack, Kōsei-kai experienced a membership decrease (7%) for the first time since the end of the war. In 1957, in order to rebuild the shaken organization, area rallies were convoked at twelve places throughout the nation, and participants were urged to attend not as members of any particular branch but as residents of their area. These rallies thus served as a large-scale test of the propinquity principle.

On the occasion of the *Yomiuri* attack, the group that developed a research program so as to present the facts to the public was the Kōsei-kai youth division. It was also this division that, in the year of the declaration of "manifest truth," was the first to receive doctrinal training through study seminars. These study seminars, moreover, prompted the youth division to undertake a new form of organization.

That is to say, for young people who worked during the days and participated in study seminars as evening courses, the kind of branch organization that conformed to the "parent-child" guidance principle and ignored the neighborhood or propinquity principle proved an impediment. The youth division thus pioneered the way by organizing circle groups based on local areas.

The question arises as to whether, for branch heads, branch officers, and ordinary members, organization of the branches in accordance with the guidance principle was warranted. To be sure, association developed on the basis of the "parent-child" guidance relationship entailed affective satisfactions. On the other hand, the guiding parent, in order to care for those he or she had led into the group and particularly in order to help them solve problems that arose, had to visit his or her "children" frequently. Travel costs and the like fell entirely to the parent. Consequently, when children lived in places far removed from the residence of the parent, the financial burden was often exorbitant. This matter also affected Kōsei-kai as a whole because it constituted an obstacle to the gathering of funds for the Great Sacred Hall.

*Switchover.* In view of these circumstances, a policy decision was made toward the end of 1958 to the effect that the principle of branch organization should be changed from one based on guidance to one based on the local area unit. After nearly a year of gathering and analyzing information and drafting plans, the system of branch organization in accordance with the principle of local area units was inaugurated at the beginning of 1960. In consequence of this reform, the 84 numbered Tokyo branches gave up all their non-Tokyo members, formally dissolved themselves, and then reorganized themselves into 25 branches bearing Tokyo ward names. The 64 non-Tokyo branches likewise reorganized themselves into 38 branches, and at the same time, the non-Tokyo people

who had been struck from the rolls of the Tokyo branches formed themselves into 64 new branches. Thus the 148 old branches that were nothing but agglomerations of people gave way to 127 new branches, each with clearcut boundaries and an identifying area name.

The geographical boundaries, however, with the exception of the 25 branches in Tokyo, did not always coincide with those of cities, townships, and villages. As membership increased from 400,000 households (1,620,000 adherents) in 1960 to 512,000 households (2,500,000 adherents) in 1956, new branches were founded, bringing the total to 176 as of 1968. Consequently, it was deemed advisable to make the boundary lines of the non-Tokyo branches conform to those of the local public entities, and this idea went into effect as of the beginning of 1969. Nearly ten years after its inauguration, therefore, the system of branch organization based on the local area unit was brought to completion.

#### INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND BUREAUCRATIZATION

*Initial considerations.* The just-described change in organizational principle would not have been necessary had it not been for the membership increase and the spatial expansion that enlarged the scale of the organization. In this sense, the basic factor in this change was the remarkable increase in the number of members. Membership increase alone, however, does not necessarily entail a change in organizational principle. Such a change appears to require yet another factor, namely, a demand for administrative rationalization. The demand for more efficient administration of a wideflung organization, occasioned by incidents that make the need for change painfully evident, gives rise to a change in organizational principle.

An organization desiring continuity will try to guarantee this continuity, at least as an ideal, through enacting regula-

tions, that is, through objectifying the order that is supposed to obtain within the organization. Regulations, therefore, are products of a desire for stability more than of a desire for rationalization. Inasmuch as the regulations enacted govern arrangements internal to the organization, they reflect its internal order in respect of such matters as the previously mentioned central objectives and organizational principles. Since, at the same time, the chief regulations are enacted in accordance with the provisions of the national law governing religious organizations, they function as a bridge between the order expressed in state law and the legal structure of the group. In this sense, the relationship between a religious organization's regulations and the state law governing such organizations may serve as a clue in a consideration of its process of institutionalization.

*Internal regulations while under the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance.* During its stage of incipient organization, Kōsei-kai was already in process of enacting regulations, but at this time it was regarded not as a legitimate religious organization but as a quasi-religious body (a religious association), and as such was put under police surveillance. Only with the end of World War II and the guarantee of maximum religious freedom, more particularly, in accordance with the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance, did Kōsei-kai first obtain the status of a legitimate religious organization. But Kōsei-kai did not obtain the prerogatives of a religious juridical person until August 1948 when it enacted articles of incorporation and completed the registration process called for under the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance. Kōsei-kai, now a religious juridical person, became a "local church" (*tan'i kyōkai*) under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Tokyo.

As mentioned above, the Ibaraki Branch hall was built in July 1950. In order to obtain tax exemption for this hall and the land on which it stood, it was necessary to register

them as property belonging to a religious juridical person. But it was deemed difficult for Kōsei-kai, as a religious juridical person under the Governor of Tokyo, to hold property in another prefecture as a base for religious activities. In order to resolve this difficulty, Kōsei-kai first had its Ibaraki Branch register as a religious juridical person under the Governor of Ibaraki Prefecture, thus becoming a property holder in its own right. Next, it had its Tokyo branches and their "child" branches (except for the Ibaraki Branch) form a single body and register itself under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Tokyo as the "Headquarters Church," the successor to the previously existing Kōsei-kai religious juridical person. Finally, it reorganized itself as a superordinate religious juridical person consisting of the Headquarters Church and the Branch Church, the new body now coming under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education. The legal steps necessary for this organizational change were completed in October 1950, and terms such as "church" (*kyōkai*) and "religious organization" (*kyōdan*), employed in conformity with the terms used in the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance, now appear for the first time. Thus the building of a hall in Ibaraki Prefecture occasioned a legal change that made a complex structure of Kōsei-kai.

According to the law, however, whereas the Headquarters Church and the Ibaraki Branch Church could hold real estate, Kōsei-kai itself could hold property only in the form of membership fees and contributions. Moreover, the executive officers of Kōsei-kai served concurrently as executive officers of the Headquarters Church, which, until it formed its own branch churches of religious juridical person status, was regarded as comprehending all branches other than the Ibaraki Branch and its sub-branches. As a result, the superordinate religious juridical person, Kōsei-kai, had little substance, whereas the subordinate religious juridical person, the Headquarters Church, gave the impression of being Kōsei-kai



itself. This state of affairs reflected the organizational structure that connected the headquarters to the branches (which in turn became “parent” branches of “child” branches) in accordance with the guidance relationship.

*Internal regulations while under the Religious Juridical Persons Law.* In 1951 the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance, based on the registration system, was replaced by the Religious Juridical Persons Law, which was based on the certification system. In accordance with this change in the law, Kōsei-kai, the Headquarters Church, and the Ibaraki Branch Church revised their regulations during 1952 and 1953. The major revisions enacted were three.

First, the responsibility for representing Kōsei-kai and the Headquarters Church and for overseeing the administration of their affairs was transferred from the president to the chairman of the board. Like many religious organizations of that period which adopted the principle of differentiating the sacred from the secular, Kōsei-kai chose to discontinue the practice of having its highest religious authority, the president, bear responsibility for secular administration. But what happened as a result of adopting this principle was that administrative power was transferred from the president to the chairman of the board, Myōkō's nephew. This revision can thus be taken as a reflection of the fact that the really central figure in the Kōsei-kai of that time was Myōkō.

Second, a regulation stipulating how the Headquarters Church, Kōsei-kai, and the branch churches were to be related was enacted. The Headquarters Church, that is to say, was defined as the teaching and worship center from which Kōsei-kai had sprung. Moreover, the Headquarters Church was to be maintained perpetually by the branch churches of Kōsei-kai and by all its members. Consequently, the Ibaraki Branch Church, though equal in status to the Headquarters Church so far as the law was concerned, was made subordinate

to the Headquarters Church in actuality. This disposition more accurately reflected the guidance relationship principle on which the structure of the organization was based. The *Kōsei-kai nenkan* [Kōsei-kai annual] even went so far as to say that the Headquarters Church and the branch churches were bound together like cause and effect.

Third, it was stipulated that Kōsei-kai itself could hold real estate such as land, buildings, and the like. With these revisions, the Kōsei-kai that had been a “comprehensive juridical person” in name only at the time of the 1950 “first step” now began to assume the form of a substantive organization.

Since its juridical person regulations contained no provisions regarding the president, Kōsei-kai built on those regulations to frame and enact its set of fundamental rules, the *Kyōki*. These rules included not only provisions dealing with the offices of president, vice-president, and chairman of the board but also articles dealing with doctrine and faith. From the *Kyōki* one receives the impression that Kōsei-kai, in identifying the president as the symbol of the members’ unity, the vice-president as primarily responsible for religious guidance, and the chairman of the board as the one responsible to formulate plans for propagating the faith, had adopted a troika-type system.

On the occasion of the “joint proposal affair” of 1956, the executive officer faction that recommended recognizing “Myōkō as founder” undertook, in line with this idea, a clandestine revision of the *Kyōki* and the Kōsei-kai juridical person regulations. But because of the president’s rejection of the recommendation and Myōkō’s subsequent demise, the draft revisions were buried without ever seeing the light of day.

As mentioned above, the conflict over objectives so sharply revealed in the “joint proposal affair” was almost completely eliminated by Myōkō’s death, and the establishment of the

objective for which Niwano stood as the central objective of Kōsei-kai was revealed in the January 1958 declaration of "manifest truth." In accordance with the spirit of this declaration, seminars on doctrine were vigorously promoted on the one hand, and at the same time the branch organization principle was changed from the guidance relationship basis to the area unit basis. In connection with these two reforms, the latter half of the 1960s saw major revisions in the *Kyōki* and in the Headquarters Church regulations.

Because these revisions were so far-reaching, the name *Kyōki* [Regulations] was amended to *Kaiki* [Constitution]. In this constitution it was stipulated for the first time that the president holds supreme authority over both propagation and personnel. Further, it was also stipulated for the first time that the office of president is both lifelong and hereditary. Notice must also be taken of the fact that the authority of the chairman of the board, apart from serving as the Kōsei-kai juridical person representative and overseeing Kōsei-kai's administration, was limited to assisting the president.

The major revisions in the Headquarters Church regulations reflect the fact that the constitution contains no provisions regarding the Headquarters Church, but provides for the formation of area churches. That is to say, the revised regulations call for changing the name of the Headquarters Church to the "Tokyo Church" and making it merely one of the area churches that together constitute Kōsei-kai. Its branches, moreover, organized as blocks, were limited to the 27 in Tokyo and 2 overseas. As a result, the management structure of the Tokyo Church was completely separated from that of Kōsei-kai. Thus the Tokyo Church and the Ibaraki Branch Church were put on the same level, and it further became apparent that in areas not embraced by the churches of juridical person status, other churches could exist as unincorporated entities. In this way the umbrella-like function previously performed by the Headquarters Church came

to be absorbed by Kōsei-kai, which now emerged, so far as its regulations are concerned, as a completely formed religious organization.

Following these revisions, most of the property previously held by the Headquarters Church and the Ibaraki Branch Church was gradually transferred to Kōsei-kai as its own property. In this transfer the intent of the revisions is clearly revealed.

The next year, Ibaraki Branch Church revised its regulations. Its change of name to "Ibaraki Church" can be seen as a logical corollary to the dissolution of the Headquarters Church and its reestablishment as Tokyo Church. Also, the districts outside the Tokyo Church parish were divided into nine unincorporated churches, each of which included a considerable number of locally organized branches. With this, regulations expressing the area unit basis of branch organization were brought to completion.

*Administrative structure.* In this process, the administrative structure of the organization was refined. As Kōsei-kai expanded, areas of special administrative responsibility came to be differentiated as needed. The seven sections that had come into existence prior to 1953 were combined in that year into an administrative structure of three divisions: one for general affairs, one for religious affairs, and one for financial affairs. Further differentiation and rationalization followed, and rules governing the allocation of administrative responsibilities were elaborated. In a word, bureaucratization got under way. It should be added that the bureaus responsible for statistical surveys and planning were reinforced in 1958. These developments led to an increase in the number of people employed in administration (281 persons as of 1958).

For the first ten years or so of its existence, Kōsei-kai income derived solely from membership fees (.20-.30 yen

per month during the war years, 10 yen per month after the war and during the 1950s). Since voluntary donations and contributions went to Niwano and Myōkō in their individual capacities, however, funds for the purchase of land and the construction of buildings came, quite literally, out of their own pockets. Since the people doing administrative and office work at the headquarters were volunteers, they received no fixed salaries, but only occasional tokens of appreciation from Niwano and Myōkō. But from about 1952, along with the increase in membership, contributions came to be treated as Kōsei-kai income, construction costs were borne by the organization, and office workers began to receive a small but regular salary. Not until 1959, however, stimulated by the impending switch in organizational principles, was a salary system established for office workers that put them on a level with ordinary secular workers.

The relationship between Kōsei-kai and its constituent branches was equivalent to the leader-follower relationship between the president and the branch heads. The chairman of the board, as the person responsible for administration at the headquarters level, occupied an intermediate position. Branch heads, especially the heads of large Tokyo branches, served concurrently as executive officers of Kōsei-kai. Moreover, it often happened that their spouses worked as division or section heads in the administration. Thus the volunteer labors of executive officers helping out with the office work at headquarters naturally gave rise to a secretariat.

Introduction of the area-based system of branch organization beginning in 1960 put an end, for the most part, to the system whereby Tokyo branch heads were simultaneously officers in the headquarters administration. That is to say, not only were the 148 branches reduced to 127, but also the 84 Tokyo branches were drastically reduced to 25, as a result of which it became necessary to cut down the number of Tokyo branch heads, either through transferring them or

calling for their retirement. As a rule, branch heads and their spouses who served in the headquarters administration were expected to retire, and of 24 such heads, 16 did so. This means that even though the situation called for a reduction in the number of branch heads, only those with secure means of support were actually asked to retire – a measure born of concern for their livelihood. But ending the system whereby branch heads were also administrative officers did promote the formation of a more firmly established and specialized administrative bureau. Needless to say, the new system was bound up with the regulations on salaries and retirement benefits introduced the previous year. In this perspective, the year 1960 with its inauguration of the area-unit branch organization plan can be understood as a major turning point in the institutionalization and bureaucratization of Kōsei-kai.

At about this time, Kōsei-kai was bending every effort to construct the Great Sacred Hall that was to be the chief sanctuary and the center for faith propagation activities. On completion of this undertaking in 1964, it next turned to the construction of a youth training institute in Ōme, a suburb of Tokyo, finishing this project in 1966. In addition, in order to provide accommodations for groups of Kōsei-kai members who make the trip to Tokyo for the purpose of visiting the Great Sacred Hall, a pilgrims' hospice was built in 1969. In 1970 one building to house the administration bureau and another, the Fumon Hall, a facility for training seminars and other meetings, were created in the shadow of the Great Sacred Hall. This successive expanding of headquarters facilities took place under the leadership of the influential planning section instituted in 1965 with the devoted co-operation both of the rationally organized bureaucratic apparatus at the headquarters and of the efficiently coordinated branch structures. The planning section, on the basis of its experience in fund-raising for the construction of the Great Sacred Hall, apportioned to each branch a fund-raising

target suited to the members' capacities and thus procured the funds needed for each construction project in turn. With regard to the winning of new members, it set one million households as the goal to be reached by 1968, the 30th anniversary of the founding of Kōsei-kai, and sought to help make the organization grow. With the enactment of regulation-coordinating regulations in April 1968, the operational system of this administrative structure was brought to tentative completion.

#### MEASURES TO COUNTER ALIENATION AND RIGIDITY

*A rapid transition.* Judging from the foregoing considerations, it is evident that by the mid-1960s Kōsei-kai had reached a point of maturity in the stage of "efficiency." From 1942, it had taken over twenty years for Kōsei-kai to solve the three major problems already discussed and enter into a stage of mature efficiency.

In religious organizations formed during the feudal period when the *ie*- or household-system constituted the foundation of the social structure, the branch, in accordance with the model of main and branch households or super- and subordinate households, took shape as a household-like offshoot. Institutionalization and bureaucratization (of a feudalistic kind) proceeded apace in conformity with this household system. But precisely for this reason, effecting any change in the principle of branch organization was extremely difficult. Priority was given not so much to rationalization as to the stabilization that followed from institutionalization and bureaucratization. Consequently, they entered the stage of formalism without ever having passed through a mature stage of efficiency. Among established Buddhist organizations in the stage of formalism, only the True Pure Land organizations, during the Meiji Restoration when the structure of national government itself went through a period of radical reform, managed to achieve a conversion in organi-

zational principles.

Kōsei-kai, in contrast, achieved its conversion to a new organizational principle and the institutionalization and bureaucratization thus entailed in less than three decades.

*Enabling factors.* What made this rapid transition possible was, first, the fact that Reiyūkai, where Kōsei-kai was cradled, drew its adherents primarily from lower class people who had only a weak relationship to the household system. Moreover, by the time Kōsei-kai itself began to develop, the household system had already started to lose its position as the matrix of the social structure.

Second, an age had dawned in which the business enterprise, rather than the household system, was taken in greater or lesser degree, and consciously or unconsciously, as the model for large-scale organization. In Kōsei-kai, as a matter of fact, business management was added to the subjects covered in executive officer seminars as early as 1963. Furthermore, the planning section that was founded in 1965 set annual targets both for the organization as a whole and for its individual branches, and reference was made to "management by objective." Adoption of the business enterprise model promoted organizational rationalization and hastened the maturation of the stage of efficiency. According to Knudten's theory, the curtain necessarily opened on the stage of formalism at this point.

*Hōza torpor.* Signs of Kōsei-kai's entrance into the stage of formalism were evident in its stagnation in respect of membership growth and in a tendency toward sluggishness on the part of its circle groups or *hōza*. A small-group discussion form that Kōsei-kai took over from Reiyūkai and developed in its own way, the *hōza* is defined as a place where people can present their problems and receive guidance as to their solution. It was the *hōza* that made it possible for



women with no doctrinal training to participate in propagation activities solely on the basis of their experiences in the life of faith. It was also the *hōza* that made it possible to satisfy people's desire for solutions to the problems from which they were suffering. The *hōza* provided the driving power of Kōsei-kai growth. But it was in this *hōza* that a tendency toward sluggishness began to appear.

Until the mid-1950s, the motive that dominated all others in leading people to join Kōsei-kai was to obtain cure from illness. But during the 1960s, with economic recovery and the assurance of income and medical care, it was distress over human relationships and inner problems, more than distress over sickness, that led people to join. Illness, because it has externally visible symptoms and cannot be hidden from people, is comparatively easy to talk about, but the suffering that comes from human relationships or inner problems can generally be concealed, so people often hesitate to take the step of laying bare their feelings before a group of strangers. In this way, the general shift in problem focus, corresponding to the change in the state of the world, deprived the *hōza* of the spellbinding power of its early days – a fascination owing to the fact that people's presentations of their problems and the guidance offered for their solution were vibrant with life.

Also, many of the second-generation members, whose numbers began to increase about this time, did not join Kōsei-kai because of any particular motive, but simply drifted in because their parents were members. This meant not only that they had no problems to present but also that the *hōza* itself lost its fire.

Moreover, after the "manifest truth" declaration, the increased emphasis on doctrinally based logical interpretations had the effect of discouraging spirited reports on the practice of faith. Then too, the bewilderment of leaders who had not yet digested the doctrines made *hōza* guidance falter.

From another angle, in branches organized according to area, many *hōza* participants were people acquainted with one another in daily life. For this reason they balked at speaking openly about personal or family problems, so the problems presented went no further than the conventional.

In brief, quite apart from changes in the world at large, there were also changes in the organization that accelerated *hōza* stagnation. Consequently, the question of how to revive the *hōza* as a locus for dialogue and instruction became an important problem for Kōsei-kai. The taking up the *hōza* as a theme for joint research in 1972 and the publication of the guidebook *Hōza: Sono jissen to ronri* [*Hōza: Its practice and relevance*] in 1973 are examples of how Kōsei-kai is coming to grips with this problem.

*A new growth principle.* Organizing branches by area unit had a positive effect in that it facilitated looking after members, but it also tended to hold back the development of missionary work outside the branch area and thus to inhibit vigorous faith-propagation activity in general. For this reason, the years since 1968 have seen a leveling off in the number of members. This too may be taken as a sign of the stage of formalism.

At the time of the change in the principle of branch organization, ordinary citizens could not even begin to imagine the immense progress in transportation systems that was just around the corner – particularly the Shinkansen bullet train route that linked Tokyo to Osaka in 1964, Osaka to Okayama in 1972, and Okayama to Hakata in 1975, not to mention the fact that one family in two now has its own car. It is by no means unusual these days for the members of a branch to take long trips together for the purpose of recreation. Accordingly, the idea of going beyond the branch boundaries to propagate the faith is now a possibility that does not entail inordinate burdens. In view of this situation, the headquarters

administration has recently begun to encourage faith-propagation activity that is not bound to the branch area. Developing a will for faith-propagation even beyond the bounds of the branch area means no less than this: that the turn from growth based on the guidance system to growth based on the area unit system is now being repeated with a turn to person-to-person growth.

*Interplay of rational and non-rational.* The transition from an emphasis on spiritual powers and ascetic disciplines to the emphasis on study of the *Lotus sutra* signifies the rationalization of doctrine. But rationalization of doctrine also involves the possibility that the affective dimension may be slighted. The fact that onomancy and hemeromancy, despite public disavowal, are still carried on informally as a way of meeting people where they are, prevents the rationalization of doctrine from being carried to extremes. Again, the fact that those who had sought to break away and make Myōkō the leader of a new group were not removed from their posts after her death but continued to serve as officers of the organization brought into the rationalization of doctrine for which Niwano stood a degree of tolerance that was doubtless advantageous to the growth of the organization.

Changing the principle by which the branches were organized meant not only structural rationalization but also elimination of the warm, affective dimension inherent in the guidance relationship. Members who valued these affective ties, ignoring the change in organizational principle, have kept up their old connections and made no attempt whatever to participate in their new branch. The leaders of the organization, however, do not try to force them into line but, as a transitional measure, approve their doing what they are used to. Such people are called "islands" because they are left high and dry in areas assigned to other branches. Some "islands" have joined the branch in their vicinity and

thus ceased to exist as anomalies, but new "islands" have also been formed. The existence of these "islands" shows that structural rationalization has not been carried so far as to crush the resistance to it that sprang from human affections.

The non-rational sentiments and experiences preserved because of incomplete rationalization of doctrine and organization can be looked on as facilitating avoidance of the alienation that people experience as a result of rationalization. In this connection, mention should be made of the fact that the headquarters worship and training facilities function in a positive way to make possible direct contact between the top leaders and members from the remotest districts. In particular, the seven-story Great Sacred Hall that looms up so imposingly in the Suginami Ward of Tokyo and the nearby Fumon Hall with its great assembly room capable of seating five thousand people give to members who look up to them and use them a sense of gladness and satisfaction at being affiliated with Kōsei-kai. Nowadays, when even people holding positions of responsibility in Kōsei-kai find it difficult to obtain instruction directly from the president, the substitutionary function these facilities perform cannot be overlooked.

*Measures to counter ossification.* Progress in institutionalization stabilizes organizational management and activity, but the other side of the coin is that it also tends to make them rigid. Examples of how rigidification has brought religious organizations to ruin can be found in abundance among the established Buddhist groups in Japan. In the case of Kōsei-kai, the movement for world peace led by the president in reliance on interreligious cooperation can perhaps be regarded as a frontier where activity has the effect of staving off rigidification. The origin of this movement can be traced back to 1963. In that year Niwano, as vice-president

of the Peace Delegation of Religious Leaders for Banning Atomic Weapons, visited Europe and was granted an audience with Pope Paul VI, at which time he handed the pope a peace proposal. The movement began in earnest in 1969 when the International Conference of Religionists decided to hold the First World Conference on Religion and Peace in Kyoto and appointed Niwano as chairman representing the host country.

Another Kōsei-kai frontier is the Brighter Society Movement that began in 1969. The World Conference on Religion and Peace achieved a brilliant success when Niwano was invited to give an address on peace to the United Nations General Assembly in 1978. This, however, was an activity of Niwano and the special department that assists him with international conferences; ordinary members were left applauding his international activities from the bleachers. In contrast, the Brighter Society Movement holds conventions in every region of Japan. Since the purpose of the movement is to draw in non-members for social interchange, it stands to reason that all the members in an area where a convention is scheduled are called on to participate.

Development of these two frontiers commenced seriously about the time that the stage of efficiency reached a point of maturity and the rationalization and stabilization of the organizational structure began to show the dysfunctional symptoms of alienation and rigidity. Today, a third frontier is being added to the others, namely, support for certain National Diet candidates during election campaigns. Since election results are clear and unmistakable, involvement of this kind may serve as an activator for the prevention of organizational ossification. As such, it can be expected to receive increasing emphasis in years to come.

Whether with regard to society at large or to other religions, Kōsei-kai has from the outset manifested a conciliatory spirit. For this reason, the first and second frontiers do not

represent a turn from intransigence to cooperation. With regard to the third frontier, it is particularly important to add that its activities in this area aim neither at having a national ordination hall constructed as Sōka Gakkai once advocated, nor at blocking the bill for the nationalization of Yasukuni Shrine as advocated by the Liberal Democratic Party.

#### CONCLUSION

This paper has considered the institutionalization process of Kōsei-kai from its earliest period to the present day with particular reference to the four problems it faced during the stages of efficiency and formalism. In conclusion I would like to draw out some hypotheses of a general nature and some hypotheses that pertain to Kōsei-kai in particular.

1. In situations where religious affiliation is decided by the household to which one belongs and the winning of new members through faith-propagation activities is suppressed by political power, the religious institution waxes and the religious movement wanes – as in the Japan of the Tokugawa period.

2. A religious movement is distinguished by activities intended not merely to train believers and their children but also to make unbelievers into believers. This characteristic is particularly marked in new religious movements.

3. New religious movements have achieved signal successes in societies that have adopted the principle of separation between religion and state – as in postwar Japan.

4. Successful new religious movements necessarily assume organized form as their adherents increase, and further membership increase stimulates organizational rationalization, administrative bureaucratization, and institutionalization of the movement. These developments in the enlarged movement make for higher efficiency and greater stability.

5. On the other hand, rationalization leads to affective

estrangement, bureaucratization leads to the alienation of remote members, and institutionalization leads to ossification. In a word, efforts to achieve growth in a new religious organization bring about certain desired results, but eventually these efforts give rise to dysfunctions. In consequence of these dysfunctions, the movement is prevented from expanding further and enters the stage of formalism.

6. Accumulation of dysfunctions bears within itself the danger that before long the movement will disintegrate. Consequently, it must devise measures to counter these dysfunctions.

7. Measures to counter dysfunctions are effective to a certain extent, but at the same time they in turn manifest dysfunctions of their own. With regard to organization, therefore, the stage of formalism can be characterized as a dynamic process of interplay between dysfunctions and countermeasures.

8. In the case of Kōsei-kai, the "Yomiuri affair" and the law governing religious organizations were external factors that stimulated the rationalization and institutionalization of the organization. There are no indications, however, that Kōsei-kai followed either the Reiyūkai or the Sōka Gakkai model for the sake of rationalization and institutionalization. Kōsei-kai rationalization and institutionalization followed from its positive efforts to cope with conditions internal to the organization, conditions such as the rapid increase in members year after year, the need to construct assembly halls and other facilities to accommodate them, the death of Myōkō, etc. The formulation of countermeasures was likewise a response to internal conditions.

9. The reasons for Kōsei-kai's success in winning an immense number of followers are given below:

- a. It provided solutions to the problems of troubled people (the frustration-compensation hypothesis).
- b. To people in a state of value-confusion it gave per-

suasive advice (the ethical deprivation-compensation hypothesis).

c. To people confronted by the abrupt collapse of traditional community ties it provided strong, new bonds of human solidarity (the social integration hypothesis).

d. In accomplishing the points specified in items a, b, and c, the guidance offered on the basis of the primary-group relationships between "guiding parents" and "children" as well as between people in the *hōza* was effective (the interaction hypothesis).

In short, the four hypotheses that Beckford advances to account for why people join religious groups all prove to be valid, and as emphasized by the same author, the fourth is particularly significant (Beckford 1976). Consequently, whether *Kōsei-kai*, despite its approximation to established religious organizations as a result of institutionalization, can retain the characteristics of a new religious movement and continue to gain new members will depend largely on its guidance activities.

10. *Kōsei-kai*'s original organizational principles were the "principal-subordinate" relationship between headquarters and branches and the fictive parent-child relationship between parent branches and child branches. These two types of relationship, traditional in Japan as principles of institutional organization, have penetrated both secular and religious bodies. It is assumed that the reason *Kōsei-kai* was successful in extricating itself from this tradition and rationalizing its structure was, first, that it seized the opportunity for rationalization under the impact of the state law governing religion and, second, that it promoted this rationalization through adoption of the business enterprise model.

11. *Kōsei-kai* permits its members to belong to one or more other religious groups. For this reason, whether in regard to interreligious cooperation or the Brighter Society Movement, it is a group that people soon feel comfortable



with, a group in which there is virtually no idea of forming an isolated community. Consequently, the theory holding that institutionalization goes hand in hand with the change from sect to denomination is not applicable to Kōsei-kai.

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