

## The Expansion of Japan's New Religions into Foreign Cultures

SHIMAZONO Susumu

島園 進

The beginnings of the expansion of Japan's New Religions overseas go back as far as the Meiji period.<sup>1</sup> At first it spread to nearby colonies and among immigrants to new continents. Then war brought an end to propagation in migrant communities, and defeat in the war checked propagation in colonial territories. Most of the New Religions at first restricted their postwar propagation activities to Japan. But it was not long before they were renewing their efforts in immigrant communities. Eventually propagation to people of non-Japanese descent "took off," using prewar propagation bases in colonial territories and immigrant communities as springboards. Following the economic boom of the 1960s, propagation within Japan eventually approached an upper limit, and there was renewed enthusiasm for overseas expansion. This enthusiasm came just at a time when second and third generations of migrants were assimilating in local societies. The overseas expansion of the New Religions entered a new phase from the 1960s on: that of expansion into foreign cultures. As a result of defeat in the war, Japan suffered an almost complete loss of the foundations upon which its imperialistic, authoritarian control overseas rested. Until the 1960s, it also lacked economic reserves for overseas expansion. As a result, the New Religions relied on Japanese ethnic communities in North and Latin America. With the exception of the old colonial territories of Taiwan and Korea, until the beginning of the 1960s the spread of Japanese New Religions overseas was almost exclusively in Japanese ethnic communities, where Japan's cultural traditions were strongly preserved.<sup>2</sup>

After the 1960s, however, Japan's New Religions were slowly accepted

<sup>1</sup> The history of the overseas expansion of Japan's New Religions can be found in summary form in INOUE et al. 1990, pp. 608-57.

<sup>2</sup> One exception was Ōmoto. More will be said about this group in the sections below.

by non-Japanese. In North and Latin America, where there were migrant ethnic communities, non-Japanese believers in New Religions would increase steadily. This was a period when new migrants were few in number and assimilation of Japanese communities into local societies proceeded apace. The situation in Taiwan and Korea was slightly different. The results of propagation in colonial times were not completely negated by defeat in the war. Churches run by local people carried on religious activities independently of organizations within Japan. Expansion of membership, begun even in the 1950s, became conspicuous in the 1960s and afterwards. And in the 1970s relations with the organizations in Japan tended to be restored, so that, with increased exchanges of personnel and the propping up of operations by organizations in Japan, the amount of energy put into propagation also increased greatly.

The aim of this study is to consider the significance of this spread of New Religions to non-Japanese, so conspicuous from the 1960s on. At present Sōka Gakkai and other groups have reached out to virtually every corner of the world through their missionary activity. The teachings and thought of Japan's New Religions have been translated into many languages and have been accepted by people of widely different cultural backgrounds. What has made this situation possible is, first and foremost, the rapid improvement in Japan's economic strength; another factor has been the rapid growth in world communication and information distribution. The expansion of Japan's New Religions overseas is primarily the result of changes in economic life. This question of the influence of economic change on Japan's New Religions is itself a deeply interesting subject for study. The aim of this present study is, however, a little wider. The entrance of New Religions into foreign cultures may even provide hints for thinking about what changes are at present occurring in religions around the world, and also about what special position Japan's New Religions occupy in the history of world religions.

#### *Present Status of Expansion*

To what extent have Japan's New Religions spread among non-Japanese?<sup>3</sup> As of 1990, non-Japanese believers in New Religions are decidedly most numerous in Latin America and East and Southeast Asia; next comes North America (including Hawaii). Brazil and Korea far exceed all other countries in membership, with the United States and Asian countries

<sup>3</sup> Most of what follows is based on information I received and materials presented to me when I visited, in summer and autumn 1990, the headquarters of Sōka Gakkai, Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō (Shinseiha), PL, Tenrikyō, and Sūkyō Mahikari.

distant seconds. While there are some believers in Europe, Oceania, South Asia, West Asia, and Africa, their numbers are insignificant in comparison with those in the Americas and East and Southeast Asia.

#### BRAZIL

Seichō no Ie boasts the largest membership, followed by Sekai Kyūseikyō, Perfect Liberty Kyōdan (PL), and Sōka Gakkai.<sup>4</sup> Brazil's news weekly, *Veja*, carried an article in its 28 March 1990 issue entitled "The Gods of the Sun: The Progress of Eastern Religions Promising Heaven on Earth and Prosperity in the Present World." According to this article, Seichō no Ie had 2,500,000 members, Sekai Kyūseikyō and PL 250,000 each, and Sōka Gakkai 150,000. Not mentioned in the article but growing remarkably in recent years are Sūkyō Mahikari, with several tens of thousands of followers, and Reiyūkai, with 44,000 (as of March 1989; see INOUE et al. 1990, p. 650). Other groups as well, such as Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyōdan, include many non-Japanese believers, as do such groups as Burajiru Kannon Jiin 伯国観音寺院 and the Inarikai 稲荷会 begun in Brazil by Japanese. There are said to be 800,000 people of Japanese descent in Brazil, and another 300,000 of mixed descent; thus the influence of Japanese New Religions goes far beyond Japanese circles. If one accepts the figures given in *Veja*, more than 2% of Brazil's population of 150 million people are members of Japanese New Religions.

Those figures are, however, considerably exaggerated. NAKAMAKI Hirochika has said of PL that, as of 1984, "active believers are estimated to have peaked in the neighborhood of 30,000 people" (1989, p. 417); if this is true, then actual membership is about one-eighth that of the figure given in *Veja*. Of course, it is difficult to say exactly what "active believers" means. In the case of Seichō no Ie, the official overseas membership is 1,257,907 (as of the end of 1989), of whom roughly 1,200,000 are in Latin America. One of the most important religious practices in Seichō no Ie is subscription to their official publications; as of December 1989, 608,000 copies of the two Portuguese-language publications, *Acendado* and *Pomba Branca*, were printed. No data is available for exact numbers of copies of the Japanese-language publications printed in Brazil, but it is estimated that about 10% of Brazil's Japanese belong to Seichō no Ie (MATSUDA 1989). Of the members of Shirohatokai 白鳩会 [White dove society], the women's group, approximately three belong to the Portuguese section for every one who belongs to the

<sup>4</sup> Sōka Gakkai's overseas organizations are known by a variety of names. In this study I shall refer to them all simply as "Sōka Gakkai," except for the organization in the United States, which is widely known as NSA.

Japanese section. Again, there were about 362,000 (as of December 1989) who were paying monthly dues to the Seishimeikai 聖使命会 [Holy vocation society], while the same year there were 821,998 Seishimeikai members in Japan. When looking at these comparisons, however, one must take into account that Brazilians tend to feel it odd to pay membership fees to the religious group one believes in, so that canvassing among members of the Seishimeikai is not done as aggressively as it is in Japan.

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In the United States the NSA (Nichiren Shōshū Sōka Gakkai of America) far surpasses all others in its spread among non-Japanese. According to Sōka Gakkai's own statistics, it had 333,000 adherents in North America as of 1985, very few of whom were Canadians. George WILLIAMS (1989) states that the racial makeup of NSA membership in that year was 25.6% Asian, 47.9% white, 20.4% black, and 6.1% others. Since most of the Asians are of Japanese descent, roughly three-fourths can be regarded as of non-Japanese descent.

Aside from NSA, it seems no other New Religion has succeeded in going from Japan and gaining several tens of thousands of adherents. There are some Japanese New Religions, however, that spread in the United States without initiatives from groups in Japan, such as the Reiki of Mikao Usui and Macrobiotic, founded by Sakurazawa Yukikazu and propagated in the United States by Michio Kushi (see ALBANESE 1990). *East West Journal*, which Macrobiotic started publishing in 1970, was printing close to 80,000 copies in 1985. Another New Religion, the Unification Church (Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity) founded in Korea, spread its forces to Japan and then to the United States, where at the end of the 1970s it claimed a membership of approximately 30,000 (INAZAWA 1986, p. 60; BROMLEY and SHUPE 1981).

#### ASIA

In Korea the Sōka Gakkai and Tenrikyō have made the greatest impact. The former group maintains that it has 709,000 adherents in the Asia/Oceania area (as of 1985); we can safely assume that two-thirds of these are Koreans. Tenrikyō puts the number of its adherents at about 370,000 (see, for example, TENRIKYŌ DŌYŪSHA 1987, p. 146). Similar figures are given in Korean government reports. Still, officials of the religious groups themselves consider actual figures to be far lower. One mark of deepening faith in Tenrikyō is participation in a three-month "character-building course" [*shūyōka* 修養科] at the group's headquarters

in Japan. Because people could not travel freely from Korea to Japan, from 1973 several sites were set up in the country where these long training sessions could be carried out. As of April 1990, there were fifty-one churches scattered throughout Korea, with prospects for that number to increase. By February 1990 the total number of people who completed these courses came to 37,000.

In the rest of Asia, there has been a considerable growth among communities of ethnic Chinese in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other countries. Sōka Gakkai has enjoyed far and away the greatest success overall, but in Hong Kong Shinjishūmeikai 神慈秀明会 has been quite strong, and in Thailand Sekai Kyūseikyō claims over 60,000 adherents.

This summarizes the countries and groups with the largest numbers of adherents, but I would like to conclude this section with a quick look at the range over which some of the groups have extended their propagation activities overseas. Sōka Gakkai and Seichō no Ie are the two groups with the largest number of overseas adherents, with the former's membership scattered all over the world and the latter's heavily concentrated in Brazil. In 1985 Sōka Gakkai was estimated to have 1,262,000 members in 115 countries. Another wide-ranging group is Sūkyō Mahikari, with approximately 100,000 adherents spread over 75 countries.

### *Periods of Expansion into Foreign Cultures*

#### BRAZIL

Expansion into Brazil practically began with the first migrations of Japanese in 1908. Groups of Honmon Butsurūyūshū 本門仏立宗 and Tenrikyō adherents were already formed by 1930. Seichō no Ie had also gained a considerable number of followers by the end of the war. But all of these members were restricted to Japanese ethnic communities. The one exception was Ōmoto, which from about 1930 had begun propagation; right from the start it reached out to non-Japanese (MAEYAMA and SMITH 1983). But because of stiff local opposition, the dissolution of Japanese headquarters due to government suppression, and the death of missionaries, Ōmoto was unable to form a large group of adherents. At the end of the 1960s solid members numbered only a few hundred.

From the early 1960s large-scale penetration into non-Japanese society began. The two groups that took the lead in this regard, PL and Sekai Kyūseikyō, had no bases in the migrant communities prior to this period. Tables 1 and 2 present the number of adherents by group and the proportion of Japanese to non-Japanese in 1967 as reported by MAEYAMA Takashi (1983, pp. 192–93). At this stage Japanese were still in the majority in the New Religions as a whole, though signs of the

expansion to non-Japanese were already evident in Sekai Kyūseikyō in particular as well as in PL. From the end of the 1960s Seichō no Ie began an explosive penetration into non-Japanese society. And according to NAKAMAKI, by 1984 non-Japanese amounted to more than 90% of total PL overseas membership (1989, p. 417). Therefore, the rapid development of Japanese New Religions from the late 1960s was clearly a result of the spread of activities to non-Japanese.

TABLE 1.  
The Adherents of New Religions in Brazil (1967)

Sect	Initiation of Propagation	Estimated Number of Adherents
Ōmoto	1926	600
Tenrikyō	1929	4,000
Seichō no Ie	1932	15,000
Sekai Kyūseikyō	1955	5,000–7,000
PL	1957	8,000–10,000
Sōka Gakkai	1960	15,000–20,000
Total		47,600–56,600

TABLE 2.  
Ethnicity of Adherents of New Religions in Brazil in 1967 (est.)

Sect	Japanese (%)	Non-Japanese (%)
Ōmoto	50	50
Tenrikyō	100	0
Seichō no Ie	99–100	0–1
Sekai Kyūseikyō	40	60
PL	80–90	10–20
Sōka Gakkai	100	0

In the 1980s Sekai Kyūseikyō and PL membership tended to remain stagnant, but Seichō no Ie continued to grow, and other groups, such as Mahikari, have recently shown conspicuous growth. Overall one can say that diversification and expansion of Japanese New Religions has continued.

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Missionary activity in the United States had an early start through the activities of such groups as Kurozumikyō in Hawaii, which has a history of immigration from Japan going back to 1868. From the late 1920s groups such as Tenrikyō and Konkōkyō carried on organized propagation in Hawaii and California. They were followed later by Seichō no Ie, Tenshō Kōtai Jingūkyō 天照皇大神宮教, and several others. Propagation, however, was mainly confined to people of Japanese descent (INOUE et al. 1990, YANAGAWA and MORIOKA 1979 and 1981, and INOUE 1985).

It was Sekai Kyūseikyō and PL that, as in Brazil, were the first to stress propagation to non-Japanese; they were unable, however, to achieve the same conspicuous penetration of non-Japanese society that they achieved in Brazil. The breakthrough in the United States was made by NSA. The first group of Sōka Gakkai members was formed in 1960.<sup>5</sup> At first the mainstays were women who had married American men and gone to live in America, and other people of Japanese descent. As early as 1964 there were discussion meetings in English, the journal *World Tribune* was being published, and other early efforts were being taken to penetrate non-Japanese society. In the latter half of the 1960s a remarkable number of non-Japanese, especially white youths, joined the New Religions, even exceeding the number of Japanese who joined. NSA's most surprising growth took place in the latter half of the 1960s, and the impetus continued on into the first half of the 1970s. Official adherent numbers are given as 200,000 in 1970, rising to 245,000 by 1975.

After that, however, NSA membership fell rapidly. The number of copies of *World Tribune* printed in 1975 was 60,000; this dropped to 33,000 in 1975, and down to 19,000 in 1980. The drop in membership was not to prove a long-term phenomenon, however, for in the early 1980s there was a resurgence in strength, and by 1985 the number of copies of *World Tribune* printed rose to 94,000. Still, the figure of 333,000 given for North American membership in 1985 does not reflect actual numbers. Also, penetration into non-Japanese society to such an extent that non-Japanese made up three-fourths of the membership had already been realized in the late 1960s. According to NSA's own survey of 1970, members who identified their racial background as Asian were already no more than 30% of the total.

## ASIA

Propagation in this part of the world was begun by Tenrikyō missionaries working in Korea in the 1920s. Along with colonial expansion after

<sup>5</sup> The following description is dependent on WILLIAMS 1989.

the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, many religious groups made inroads into colonial territories; groups such as Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō, the Kokuchūkai 国柱会, Ōmoto, and Nihonzan-myōhōji 日本山妙法寺 had bases established before 1925, while groups such as Hito no Michi and Seichō no Ie achieved rapid growth after 1925. Of all the groups, the inroads made by Tenrikyō were something spectacular: by 1944 they had 211 churches in Korea, 39 in Taiwan, 124 in Manchuria, and 46 in China (INOUE et al. 1990, p. 644). This expansion of New Religions along with imperialistic expansion naturally aimed not only at Japanese but also at local inhabitants. And these New Religions were also accepted by non-Japanese (mainly Koreans) within Japan, people who either moved to Japan or were sent as conscript labor. Prior to 1945, therefore, penetration of New Religions into non-Japanese society was evident in many regions of East Asia.

Nearly all of the fruits of imperialistic expansion were lost by defeat in World War II. Still, some remained, and Tenrikyō used some of its prewar propagation achievements to renew missionary activity in East Asia after the war. In fact, of all the New Religions that were active before the war, it was only Tenrikyō that had some of its churches maintained by local inhabitants. Of the 51 churches it had in Korea as of April 1990, eight were churches that had been founded in the thirty-one years between 1912 and 1943. In Taiwan only one of its churches remained. Up to a certain point in time after the war, these churches all barely managed to survive despite violent anti-Japanese feelings, and it is easy to surmise that open propagation was not easy.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, some brave souls proceeded to former colonial territories after the war in order to carry out missionary activity. The most representative of these is Choi Jae-Whan, who established the Won Nam Seong church in Pusan (YAMAMOTO 1982). Choi had come to Japan in 1927 at the age of sixteen and joined Tenrikyō in 1947 after suffering from Hansen's disease. Following some time in missionary activity among Koreans living in northern Kyūshū and Hiroshima, he smuggled himself into Korea in 1955 and thereafter achieved spectacular results. By the time of his death in 1988, the Won Nam Seong church had given birth to seventeen other churches. Propagation continued after his death through the efforts of other Koreans living in Japan who returned to Korea. It is estimated that there are now more Tenrikyō adherents belonging to churches established by such repatriates than there are members belonging to churches from prewar days. We can safely conclude that Tenrikyō's membership expansion in postwar Korea went

<sup>6</sup> One can obtain some idea of conditions during this period from YAMAMOTO 1982 and HUANG 1989.



hand in hand with the development of Choi's Won Nam Seong church, and hence took place in the 1960s and 1970s. It would seem that Tenrikyō's growth in Taiwan followed a similar timetable, with remarkable growth occurring in the 1980s.

In contrast, the situation has been very different for Sekai Kyūseikyō in Thailand. Prior to 1970 there was almost no penetration by Japanese New Religions into Thailand. Sekai Kyūseikyō missionaries had taken up residence in Bangkok in 1968 and begun propagation, but up to the beginning of the 1980s there had been no great progress made. In early 1982, however, rapid growth finally began. By 1990 membership exceeded 60,000, and a yearly increase of over 10,000 members is expected. Tenrikyō also reports remarkable growth recently in Thailand.

At present I do not have available to me data on Sōka Gakkai, which has had the biggest expansion in membership in Asia, so I am unable to say where and when its growth has been most notable. Judging from the above data on Tenrikyō and Seichō no Ie, however, we could conclude that the expansion of Japanese New Religions into Asian cultures began with notable progress in Korea, then spread among ethnic Chinese communities, and more recently into Thailand and other countries.

#### *Conditions in Receiving Societies*

Why is it that Japanese New Religions succeeded in penetrating foreign cultures at this time? It is a belief of most of the New Religion groups that each member of the human race has dignity as a human being, but existence involves suffering, and for this very reason human beings are in need of salvation. Hence they have a strong desire to extend, if possible, their teaching to people of other cultures as well. Besides, New Religions are in general extremely keen to expand membership, and not only out of a desire to save people. In a capitalistic competitive society, one's legitimacy is graphically brought home on the basis of success in expanding numbers. What is more, when the following of one's teaching by people of other cultures is felt to be proof of your religion's universal adequacy, missionary activity to people of other cultures overseas can stir up stronger impulses than propagation among one's compatriots.

Still, sometimes propagation does not produce great results, regardless of how strong the desires or how much energy is poured into it. For propagation to succeed, suitable conditions must exist in the receiving society. Also, the religion doing the propagation must have, along with the strong desires, certain features making it easily acceptable by people of foreign cultures. In other words, by considering the special features of both the receiving society and the religion being propagated, we shall be better prepared to understand why, in a certain place at a certain

time, particular religions succeeded in expanding. In this section, we shall first consider the special features of the receiving societies.

The first condition for expansion is the cultural and political condition, i.e., how generally tolerant the local government and inhabitants are toward a religion derived from another culture, and how favorable and friendly they are toward that culture, especially a Japanese, Oriental culture. In the period of imperialistic expansion, the fact that the religion belonged to the culture of the side exerting authoritative control was in itself a major cause for expansion. Colonial authority is keen to surround local inhabitants with influences of that authority's own culture. This is especially true when assimilation is deliberately pursued. Under such a political, legal, and military aegis, propagation has an extremely high chance of success.

Yet the postwar expansion of the New Religions did not take place under this kind of powerful political aegis. On the contrary, by being different from the existing, dominant religions, in many cases they had to expand by overcoming governmental regulation and the opposition of local inhabitants. Also, success would be difficult if the religion were too exotic for the dominant culture, thus becoming an object of antipathy. This is the condition I am referring to when I talk about a degree of political and cultural freedom and tolerance. When the Japanese community has excellent relations with the outside world, as in Brazil, Japanese culture in general naturally enjoys a good reputation. Economic expansion through the export of goods and capital and personnel exchanges, even if they invite antipathy at first, eventually serve to make people feel attracted to the new culture, and they soften people's antipathies.

But it is even more important that cultural freedom be expanded widely in that society and that the authority of the traditional cultural system be seen as relative. In a society where the traditional religion has monopolistic authority—where freedom of religion is not recognized—one cannot expect success in propagation. Progress in industrialization and urbanization, along with progress in worldwide interchange of personnel and information, are eroding these cultural and political barriers.

In both Brazil and Korea in the 1960s and 1970s, when there was so much expansion of the Japanese New Religions, the countries were in the midst of development through rapid industrialization under authoritarian military-rule systems; it was not a coincidence that both military rules were as a result in a process of breaking down. Thailand in the 1980s, too, was in a state of rapid industrialization and cultural liberalization and relativization. In both Brazil and Thailand, prior to those changes, there was little scope for tolerance of any other religions besides Christianity or Theravāda Buddhism. Even in the case of Korea, which had religious diversity, political regulation was strict. Industrialization brought change in its wake, however. Industrialization requires

free accumulation and investment of capital, the formation of a competent middle class, and the creation of a free labor force. For these ends, even though doing so carries the risk of a certain amount of social unrest, it is necessary to recognize freedom of belief and thought. Also, the liberation of people from traditional ways of life linked with the dominant religions must, if anything, be encouraged. Added to this process of liberalization that follows industrialization are the waves of worldwide information exchange and cultural relativization.

In Korea there was fierce opposition from the inhabitants towards Japanese culture. Yet the expansion of general cultural freedom and the increase in everyday contacts with things Japanese as a result of economic expansion to some extent softened the opposition to Japanese culture on the level of everyday life. In the case of the United States, despite the outward facade of freedom of thought and belief, there always existed a strong confidence in the superiority of Christian, Occidental culture, with a corresponding rejection of Oriental culture. This rejection mechanism, and people's confidence in Christian Occidental culture, began to be badly shaken in the 1960s, a tendency that has continued to the present day. One of the striking manifestations of this unrest is the counterculture movement revolving around young middle-class whites. Positive interest in Oriental religions supported the most powerful wing of this counterculture movement. Disappointment with the Christian Occidental culture manifested itself in a yearning for its antithesis, Oriental religion. The expansion of *Sōka Gakkai* and *Sekai Kyūseikyō* into the foreign culture of the United States of America was something that accompanied the tide of interest in Oriental religions stemming from this aspect of the counterculture movement (INOUE 1985, pp. 170–73, 204–206, and YAMADA 1983, pp. 206–207).

To sum up what happened in Brazil, Korea, and the United States of America in the 1960s and in Thailand in the 1980s: greater expansion of capitalism than ever before; advances in communication, transportation, information exchange, and the concomitant relativization of culture. In Japan, driven by a desire to catch up with and surpass Western nations, political leaders were quick to try to build a strong nation by aggressive introduction of Western culture, and they were ruthless in destroying the authority of traditional religions such as Confucianism and Buddhism. Defeat in World War II and the Allied occupation added further impetus in this direction. What emerged and developed from that experience of cultural relativization were Japan's New Religions; they not only emerged under these conditions, they also offered people many cultural resources for coping with these new conditions. On the other hand, countries like Brazil and the United States had absorbed immigrants from all parts of the world, and as a result were more accustomed

to cultural diversity than Europe; consequently, they had a tendency to prefer a pragmatic way of thinking that did not insist upon a single tradition.<sup>7</sup> There can be no doubt that in these countries the essential prerequisite of familiarity with cultural diversity encouraged openness to and acceptance of Japanese New Religions.

The second condition for expansion is the emergence of a demand for new religions as a result of socio-economic changes. The various New Religions in Japan grew and developed by satisfying the new spiritual yearnings of people living in the midst of modern Japan's socio-economic changes. One of the common characteristics of the New Religions is their response to strongly felt needs of individuals in their daily lives, their solutions to discord in interpersonal relations, their practical teaching that offers concrete solutions for carrying on a stable social life, and their provision, to individuals who have been cut off from traditional communities, of a place for group activities where congenial company and a spirit of mutual support can be found. As capitalistic industrialization and urbanization advance, large numbers of individuals are thrown into new living environments, thus producing conditions that require spiritual support for the individual. Many people have lost the support of their traditional communities and face a situation in which they must get by on their own resources in the midst of the pressures of competition and the dangers of isolation. Those who have overcome such problems no doubt make up the lion's share of the stable middle-class urban population (including the lower stratum of middle-class laborers). Japanese New Religions are abundantly equipped with cultural resources that answer the needs of just these people in the process of treading the path towards the urban middle class. The second condition for expansion, therefore, is the existence of socio-economic conditions that nurture a latent demand among people for a religion that gives guidance in daily life.

In Brazil and Korea from the 1960s, and in Thailand in the 1980s, such socio-economic conditions did in fact exist. Let us take a brief look at Brazil.<sup>8</sup> Brazil, whose principal industry was a monocultural agriculture based mostly on coffee, began to tread the path of industrialization in 1934, with the "Vargas Revolution." Amidst the trade slump that accompanied worldwide depression, and backed by the military, the new government forced through the domestic production of many industrial products that had been previously imported. This policy of industrialization imposed from above was to bear fruit in the 1960s, after a period

<sup>7</sup> For a consideration of these features of Brazilian culture and their relationship to features of the religious situation, with a comparison with the United States and Japan, see NAKAMAKI 1986, pp. 204-28.

<sup>8</sup> For the following summary I have relied upon YAMADA 1986 and HORISAKA 1987.

of democratization following World War II. The military rule that began in 1964 would prove to be a period of large-scale development and high growth. The result was a rapid increase in population coupled with a rapid decrease in the rural population, which had once constituted the greater portion of the nation's population. Between 1940 and 1980 Brazil's total population grew 2.8 times larger, and the ratio of urban to rural population reversed itself from 3:7 to 7:3 (NAKAMAKI 1989, pp. 421–22). Whereas 54% of workers were engaged in primary industries in 1960, in 1970 this figure was down to 44.3%, and in 1980 down even further, to 29.3%. The rapid economic growth that drew attention to Brazil as one of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) took place from 1968 to 1973, exactly the same time that Seichō no Ie's expansion to foreign cultures was being energetically promoted.

During the course of such industrialization and urbanization the Japanese community occupied a singular position. Japanese immigrants very early purchased small plots of farmland (as compared to the huge plantation-type farms that were the mainstay of Brazilian agriculture) and set out to produce on self-managed farms commodity crops for sale to urban residents. While accumulating wealth through their characteristic industriousness, the majority of people of Japanese descent were extremely keen on giving their children a good education. As a result Japanese were quick to improve their status to that of the urban middle class when the industrialization and urbanization of Brazilian society came about. Japanese stood for the dream of the new industrialized society: individual success through self-reliant effort. From the 1960s on, Japanese New Religions took over this idea of individual success, and in addition presented themselves to Brazilian society as the religions of these urban middle-class Japanese, religions that were eager to form congenial communities, that were deserving of respect and affection.

In respect to socio-economic conditions the situation in the United States of America was somewhat different. There, propagation of the Japanese New Religions succeeded in a society where industrialization had already reached a certain stage and society was about to move into a post-industrial period. In the United States of the 1960s there was also a large number of inhabitants who had left rural areas for the big cities, from the South and Midwest as well as from Central and South America, Korea, and other places. Yet it was not necessarily such people that the NSA attracted in its growth period. Rather, it attracted urban residents isolated in an advanced industrial society, represented most often by young whites in California and in large eastern-seaboard cities such as New York (WILLIAMS 1989). Offering a pragmatic value system, a congenial community, and an alternative to the individualistic, rationalistic Western civilization became the role of the Japanese New Religions in this country. NSA, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and Macrobiotic were accepted

because they belonged to a group of New Religions that were counter-cultural, in that they counteracted the existing Christian, utilitarian culture (see INOUE 1985, YAMADA 1983, and ALBANESE 1990).

Some of the Japanese New Religions responded to the fact that it was possible to retain their vigor within a post-industrial environment as well as within an industrial one. Most of Japan's New Religions developed in response to the religious needs of lower-class inhabitants who had left rural areas for urban areas with the advent of industrialization (SUZUKI 1970). Still, between these nuclei of the New Religions in their growth periods and upper middle-class people with a higher education there was not a great cultural gap. When in the course of time the living standards of the Japanese people improved overall, the number of well-educated people who joined the New Religions also increased. As a result, the cultural resources of the teachings and group management skills that members of the New Religions had nurtured so long were available in sufficient amounts to enable those religions to meet the needs of urban middle-class residents isolated in post-industrial society. This phenomenon can be compared with the way the Pentecostal movement, which began in the United States at the beginning of this century as a movement among the lower middle class, developed from the 1960s into a movement that involved the whole middle class, including those with a higher education (SHIMAZONO 1989a and 1991a).

In this way, though there are differences in the socio-economic conditions forming the background to the New Religions' expansion into the United States and other places, still, if taken as the formative process of an urban culture common to cities worldwide in the wake of international capitalism, the phenomenon can surely be seen as the product of one and the same socio-economic condition.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the New Religions gained the support of urban residents by offering in the midst of worldwide urbanization the support of congenial communities and cultural resources that deal with things in a practical, realistic way and preserve stable identities in the midst of diverse human relationships.

#### *The Features of Expanding New Religions and Their Appeal*

The preceding section outlined the way New Religions as a whole might appeal to inhabitants of a society accepting them, showing the connections with cultural and political conditions and with socio-economic conditions. In this section I would like to consider the way those New Religions that were accepted appealed to local inhabitants. First, I will

<sup>9</sup> SHŌJI 1986 is an example of a work that presents this point of view.

note which specific groups expanded successfully into foreign cultures and then consider their particular features.

Though there are hundreds of New Religions in Japan, only a few have garnered a sizable following in foreign fields. Representative of the successful groups are Sōka Gakkai, Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, PL, and Sūkyō Mahikari. While Tenrikyō has been successful in Korea and Taiwan, it has not produced notable results in other regions. Two groups representative of New Religions whose expansion into foreign cultures has been relatively unsuccessful despite the size of their membership within Japan would be Risshō Kōseikai and Shinnyoen. Lack of success overseas, however, is also greatly affected by accidental circumstances. For example, Seichō no Ie in Brazil was accepted as a religion offering the wartime and postwar Japanese community support for their identity as Japanese. When the Japanese community built up a large foothold in Brazilian society, a foundation for expansion was available to Seichō no Ie without any extra effort on its part.<sup>10</sup>

It is still possible to say that religions that succeed in expansion into other cultures have some inherent features making them deserving of that success. For example, Sōka Gakkai's spirit of aggressive, argumentative proselytization of complete strangers is easily surmised to be effective in circumstances where isolation in urban society has increased and diverse cultures coexist and clash with one another. Here I do not intend, however, to go into the self-evident factor of aggressive proselytization; what I want to do is consider what aspects in the contents of the teachings and beliefs are suited to expansion into foreign cultures.

#### STRAIGHTFORWARD MAGICAL PRACTICE

Sōka Gakkai, Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, PL, and Sūkyō Mahikari are, all of them, groups in which straightforward magical practice forms the essence (or at least is one of the things forming the essence) of religious life. In Sōka Gakkai, performing *gongyō* 勤行 and reciting the *daimoku* before the *gohonzon*; in Seichō no Ie, performing the simple meditation of *shinsōkan* 神想観 and intonation of the sacred scriptures 聖經読誦 for the spirits of the ancestors; in Sekai Kyūseikyō and Sūkyō Mahikari, pouring the deity's "light" into the body through the out-

<sup>10</sup> SEICHŌ NO IE HONBU 1980, MAEYAMA 1983, and MATSUDA 1988, 1989. STARK and ROBERTS (1982, pp. 53–68) point out that sometimes a new religious movement that began in a large-scale society is forced to remain a minor movement there, and so early hopes wither and die, but when it shifts to a small-scale society it reaps unexpected success—that is, supported by many influential members at first, it develops into a powerful, prestigious religion in that small society. The assumption that another religion might have reaped the greatest success in Brazil if it had become the most influential in the Japanese community, cannot be completely groundless.

stretched palm (called *jōrei* 浄霊 and *okiyome* お浄め); and in PL, praying to have one's problems transferred to the instructor together with a vow by means of the *oyashikiri* 祖遂断—these are the main, or some of the main, religious practices. The belief that such magical practices produce mysterious, miraculous effects needs no explaining, one merely observes the practice and one understands it at once. And one can try it for oneself and see that it works. When this belief is transmitted to people of another culture, it is attended by almost no difficulties in communication. That is because it is something in the physical, experiential sphere, which needs little meaningful articulation on the linguistic level.

Similar types of religious groups did not just happen to form by chance. Except for *Sūkyō Mahikari*, which can be considered an offshoot of *Sekai Kyūseikyō*, all these groups were founded between 1910 and 1930 by intellectually gifted founders with large cities for their bases. In the context of the clashes of diverse value systems and the relativization of traditional culture, both keenly experienced in large cities, they all intended to present straightforward magic as the foundation for unswerving faith, and by this means overcome relativism.<sup>11</sup> The expansion into foreign cultures of those religious groups was advanced with the intention of transcending the relativization of culture in places where such relativization was on the increase.

#### PRACTICAL LIFE ETHICS

NAKAMAKI (1989) has made a very interesting study of the reasons for PL's success in Brazil. One of the things about PL that is appealing is the belief in miracles based on the magical prayer referred to as the *oyashikiri*. Still, merely a miracle belief based on magical practice is not enough to take hold of large numbers of people. The reason why people make an effort to follow PL over a long period of time is, he says, the appeal of its ethical teachings and guidance. Its ethics are adapted to the concrete situations of daily life. It preaches the mutual support of equal partners in a nuclear, rather than a patriarchal, family; a work ethic that includes not only honesty and industry but also working for society and for one's neighbors, and regards work as a form of self-expression; and an ethic of "citizenship" that encourages service to the local community. Furthermore, through one-to-one counseling it provides concrete, practical guidelines. All these things were, he says, lacking in the traditional Catholic Church and were features that appealed to Brazil's rapidly growing urban population. Nakamaki also mentions actual cases of people who talked of the appeal of the teaching that responsibility for

<sup>11</sup> This viewpoint is suggested in SHIMAZONO 1989a.



one's good or bad fortune rests with oneself, or the appeal of the teaching that labor freely and gladly rendered ultimately redounds to one's own happiness. Practical ethics that include the utilitarian idea that service ultimately brings happiness reveals particularly well the characteristic feature of ethics in the New Religions (see FUJII 1990, pp. 236–44, and SHIMAZONO 1991b).

Explaining the appeal of PL in terms of its miracle beliefs and practical urban ethics would also apply to most of the other groups that have succeeded in advancing into other cultures. Whether Brazil, or the United States of America, or Korea, or Thailand, cultural resources that were lacking in the traditional religious groups but abundantly available in Japan's New Religions appear here in their classic form. Only, in the case of PL, the manner of presenting the practical ethics is systematic and thoroughgoing, and herein lies the reason why it has had a greater appeal than the other groups. As Nakamaki explains, PL's ethical guidance reaches out into the practical details of living in an exhaustive and minute way. Another feature of its ethical statements, like those of *Seichō no Ie*, is that they pay careful attention to subtle shifts of mentality and present technical, mind-control-type methods for bringing about psychological stability (SHIMAZONO 1988a, 1989b). Like the "new thought" and "positive thinking" that has been popular in the United States since the end of the nineteenth century, or the "human potential" movement of recent years, techniques for preserving mental stability in the midst of urban living, with its isolation and stressfulness, have been linked with ethical practice.

#### LOGICAL STATEMENTS

What accounts for the appeal of *Seichō no Ie* and *Sekai Kyūseikyō*? They, too, stress miracle belief and preach practical ethics for living. In this respect they have something in common with PL. Yet they also have a slightly different appeal: their systematic, logical statements. The founder of *Seichō no Ie*, Taniguchi Masaharu, and the founder of *Sekai Kyūseikyō*, Okada Mokichi, both were culturally refined men blessed with a gift for writing discourse in a coherent way. In this they were both quite different from other founders. In the cases of female founders most at home in the world of oral tradition, or male founders lacking in literary knowledge, the words they left behind are not too logical, but what they want to say is conveyed through delicate nuances. This makes translation of their teachings extremely difficult. Also, such religious groups tend to be averse to logical explanations of their teachings and to learning. Typical examples of this are the groups in the *Reiyūkai* family tree (SHIMAZONO 1988b). These groups are not suited for expansion to other cultures when one considers the importance of transmitting

teachings in a readily understandable form. In contrast, Seichō no Ie and Sekai Kyūseikyō are able to draw non-Japanese to the world of their teachings through written expression that, while easy to understand, is logical and coherent, rather than a delicately nuanced mode of expression that is bound to one determinate culture.

In addition, I believe that Seichō no Ie's stress on the importance of members reading its literature is one of the very important points of its appeal. In present-day urban society, being proficient in written expression and having a habit of reading is an important condition for social success. As was true in Japan in the 1930s, in a society where urbanization advances rapidly, religions that make positive use of easily comprehensible literature as a tool for propagation are, by that fact alone, already attractive. Also, if easy-to-read, easy-to-understand doctrinal literature is available in translation, the message can get across even without the mediation of close person-to-person contact. In propagation to people of a different language, and in an age of cultural diversity, propagation that relies on the medium of literature that is not so bound by the delicate nuances of a specific culture is especially effective.<sup>12</sup>

#### A POSITIVE APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

What was said in the preceding section could almost be said about Sōka Gakkai as well.<sup>13</sup> But there is one important difference between Sōka Gakkai and Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and PL. This is the attitude

<sup>12</sup> The leader of Seichō no Ie's Brazilian propagation program, Matsuda Miyoshi, has written that "another unique and absolute deciding factor in Seichō no Ie's enlightening not only of Brazil but also of the whole world, is the new campaign method of propagation through the written word. There can be no denying that Seichō no Ie's spread to the most distant land from Japan, Brazil, in the very same year Seichō no Ie began in Japan (1930), its spread to the remotest corners of Brazil, and the fact that the Brazilian translation of *Seimei no jissō* was widely diffused and became a pillar of strength, are all due to the power of propagation through the written word" (MATSUDA 1989, 331–32).

<sup>13</sup> This also has a bearing on what I said earlier: Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and Sōka Gakkai have in common the fact that they were founded by men of intellectual ability who were familiar with history, religious doctrine, modern thought, and scientific statement. This sort of religious group forms a large type within the New Religions, standing alongside the "indigenous-emergent type" that a fairly unlettered founder began from a folk religious background, and the "moral-cultivation type" in which popular ideas of character building and virtue come to be linked to a salvation belief—a type that can be called the "intellectual thought type." Further, the groups in the Reiyūkai tradition and most of the groups derived from Shinnyoen fall midway between the "indigenous-emergent type" and the "intellectual thought type," so they belong to a fourth type we might refer to as an intermediate type. According to my tentative classification of the New Religions, most of the religious groups that have succeeded in expanding into alien cultures belong to the "intellectual thought type." In contrast, the lack of success overseas of the quite numerically large "intermediate-type" groups is particularly striking (SHIMAZONO 1990, 216–23).

towards other religions, especially the attitude towards the traditional religion dominant in the overseas country. Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and PL take a positive attitude to the dominant traditional religion and allow their members to continue to belong to, for example, the Catholic Church. This attitude is based on the idea that all religions are in fact rooted in the same reality and seek the same thing. They preach that their religion and Christianity are not fundamentally different, but they are merely complementing and perfecting what was lacking in the earlier Christian religion. They therefore adopt a flexible policy of leaving such things as rites of passage to the Catholic Church. This line of thinking is readily accepted by people who have taken on traditional Catholic views and rites out of custom. Also, the adoption of such a generous attitude has the additional benefit that it avoids the troubles that arise when people with many ties to a traditional religion sever those ties to join these new religious groups.

Sōka Gakkai, on the other hand, demands exclusive commitment. Its members must sever their relations with their traditional religion. This can be the cause of troubles with the traditional religious bodies, with relatives, and with neighbors. In this respect, Sōka Gakkai can be described as putting itself in a slightly unfavorable position.

Yet, seen from another perspective, these two types of groups have something in common: both assume the coexistence of diverse religions, both have prepared coherent statements for handling this situation and have prepared positive measures to cope with it.<sup>14</sup> People in present-day society are placed in circumstances that make them keenly aware of the coexistence of diverse religions. For a person to choose one from among the different religions and be committed to it, something is needed that will convince the person. By insisting that other religions are wrong and that it is correct, Sōka Gakkai is showing one type of a response to the pluralistic coexistence of religions. What this means is that Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and PL on the one hand, and Sōka Gakkai on the other, are adopting differing approaches to a situation they all consciously recognize, that of the coexistence of diverse religions.

I have attempted to explore the appeal of Japanese New Religions to local residents by analyzing the features of those groups that have succeeded in expansion into other cultures. It is necessary, though, to consider also the basic feature shared by all the New Religions of Japan, that of their being this-worldly oriented religions.<sup>15</sup>

To be this-worldly oriented first of all implies that a systematic con-

<sup>14</sup> For the philosophy of Ōmoto, which was the source of Seichō no Ie's and Sekai Kyūseikyō's idea that all religions are the same, see TSUSHIMA 1989.

<sup>15</sup> The brief discussion that follows can be fleshed out by consulting TSUSHIMA et al. 1979.

ception of salvation provides the framework for these religions of magical, this-worldly salvation. In Japan's New Religions, the healing of sickness, harmony in the family, and success in one's work are directly linked to the highest goal of belief: salvation. Secondly, it means putting weight on self-help and effort in one's present life. This is closely connected with the PL characteristic described earlier. An extremely large number of Japanese New Religions do not preach reliance on the power of God, the power of Buddha, the power of this or that holy person, but preach that happiness cannot be attained unless one changes one's own mental attitude and manner of daily life.

This-worldly orientation in the above two meanings is linked with an immanentist view of the divine that recognizes the divinity of the human being and recognizes divinity in existence in the present world in general. These characteristics were lacking in traditional religions with their strong tendency to be affirmative with regard to the other world and negative toward this world. It is easy to understand why such this-worldly orientation and an immanentist view of the divine are attractive to people living in a competitive society where industrialization and urbanization have advanced and changes are extreme.

#### *Cultural Discord Due to Expansion Overseas and Religious Unification*

It has been reported many times that religious groups propagating their religion in other cultures have attempted to adapt themselves to the respective alien cultures. PL, for example, takes a variety of steps to make their translations of documents readily understandable to the local people. It has also been reported that they have also introduced elements that differ significantly from the way ceremonies and assemblies are conducted in Japan (NAKAMAKI 1989, 440-45). Seichō no Ie is said to have omitted from its translation of *Seimei no jissō* and other documents passages that might encounter resistance from Brazilians. The NSA has also made repeated efforts to Americanize; one example is its "pioneer spirit" catch phrase in connection with its active involvement in the Bicentenary of American Independence (WILLIAMS 1989).

Apart from these attempts to adapt on the part of the religious groups themselves, there can be spontaneous changes made to the contents of teachings or practice by the non-Japanese members of the groups. Consciously or unconsciously, local religious culture or local ways of group management can be introduced, leading to ways that differ from the parent body in Japan. If steps are taken to ensure control by dint of force, discontent can arise among local believers, and this in turn can even lead to a splitting off of whole groups. While adaptations made by religious groups are done for the sake of more effective propagation, at the same time they can be viewed as strategies to control local believers

within the framework of the larger group. This means that New Religions accepted by people of alien cultures have to face new problems of cultural discord and religious unification as a result of their adaptations.

Even within Japan itself it is not unusual for groups of believers in a particular religious organization to deviate from the regulation of the central body, or even split off entirely. Reiyūkai and Sekai Kyūseikyō, for example, have seen large numbers of groups escape control of the central body, and some have branched off completely, and perhaps there are but few examples of medium-sized groups that could not be classified as branches from larger groups. In the case of groups overseas, it is probably even more difficult to maintain control, given the geographical and cultural distances separating them.

Deviation of overseas believer groups from the control of headquarters in Japan already occurred in various places around the time of World War II as a result of loss of contact. In Brazil a group of Ōmoto followers that included a large number of non-Japanese was beginning to form from around 1930, but contact with Ōmoto headquarters ceased after government oppression of the group within Japan in 1935 (MAEYAMA and SMITH 1983). The group of believers in Brazil developed rather independently and began to engage in activities similar to those of such popular Brazilian religions as spiritism and Umbanda. After the war contact with headquarters was restored, and organizational affiliation was formally renewed, but the contents of its religious activities underwent no change; headquarters has done almost nothing to intervene.

In the case of Tenrikyō in Taiwan, contact with headquarters was cut after the war, and the Chiaitungmen church, which was run solely by local believers, adopted *poe* (divination stones) and the drawing of lots to divine the right times to pray, the offering of gilt paper to gods and ancestors, and other elements of Chinese folk religion (HUANG 1989). But with the resumption of operations of the Tenri propagation office in Taiwan in 1967, slowly but steadily, the church was restored to something similar to what exists in Japan. Still, it is said that some subordinate missionary stations even now maintain deviant elements. In Korea, where anti-Japanese feelings run high, problems of this sort are even more serious, and control by headquarters is a difficult matter, including the problem of church unity within Korea itself.

A recent example of discord occurred in Sōka Gakkai's overseas organization. NSA (Sōka Gakkai in the U.S.A.), which achieved explosive growth at the end of the 1960s, attempted to hand over leadership of the local organization to non-Japanese (WILLIAMS 1989). But the new leadership stratum made up principally of non-Japanese did not like the central-administrative, organization-mobilizing nature of the group and attempted to adopt policies that set a value on the autonomous activities

of regional groups and on democratic procedures for running NSA as a whole. This happened to coincide, however, with a sudden slowdown in NSA growth and even signs of decline. From the 1980s, under the guidance of headquarters, there was a return to a central-administrative, organization-mobilizing type of religious group along with a return to a leadership setup in which Japanese formed the core. In the process, a group of people, mainly whites who for a time had been in leadership positions, separated and began independent activities. While detailed information is not available, a similar large-scale secession also has occurred in Indonesia.

Judging from the experiences of groups splitting away from parent bodies within Japan, we can anticipate that the problem of regulating overseas believer groups will occur often in the future. There will no doubt be some groups in which the overseas believers will be numerically stronger. There is already a faction, the Shinsei-ha, within Sekai Kyūseikyō in Brazil, that is larger than its sponsoring body in Japan. Also, the sources of propagation activity have shifted in recent years with, for example, Brazilian members of Seichō no Ie and Sekai Kyūseikyō doing successful missionary work in Europe, or with a Korean member of Tenrikyō propagating in Argentina.<sup>16</sup> At present, it appears that in most of the groups the authority of Japanese propagators is preserved, but it is only a matter of time before local propagators will have more say. In the future, financial aid coming from headquarters will undoubtedly decrease when Japan's status as an economic superpower begins to decline. When that happens, the question will surely arise, how will the central body in Japan be able to maintain control over religious bodies overseas? It is impossible to predict whether or not it will be able to maintain its present unity as a single multinational organization. New Religions that have expanded overseas can be compared to multinational enterprises, it has been argued, and they can be characterized as multinational religions (INOUE 1985; NAKAMAKI 1989, 1986), but when separations occur overseas and a religion ceases to be a single organization, we shall have to think again about the appropriateness of this designation.

#### *Significance from a History of Religions Perspective*

The expansion of Japan's New Religions into other cultures from the 1960s on was founded on the imperialist-inspired invasions before the war as well as massive migrations from Japan, which continued even after the war. Without these two factors there probably would not have

<sup>16</sup> NAKAMAKI (1989, pp. 445–47) draws attention to this aspect of PL.

been such an extensive expansion into other cultures. It is also clear that Japan's economic prosperity is another contributing factor to recent expansion into other cultures. The success of Sekai Kyūseikyō and Sōka Gakkai in Thailand, for example, cannot be fully comprehended unless one takes into account the huge economic influence wielded by Japanese businesses in the country and the financial and spiritual help liberally poured into Thailand from Japan for the sake of propagation. In a certain sense, then, the expansion into alien cultures of Japan's New Religions must be seen from one viewpoint as the fruit of the growth in economic and military influence of the Japanese.

Still, the expansion into alien cultures from the 1960s on also has to be grasped in the light of the rapid expansion in cultural exchange worldwide, with movements of personnel and information on the increase. This is also linked with a spread of cultural tolerance. Societies that previously were closed to other religions have in the past twenty years become open to missionary activity. In years to come, places like the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China will no doubt be thrown open as markets where propagation can be freely conducted. We can expect that places for extensive activity will open anew to those religions in the world that favor propagation and evangelism, and that they will expand.

What sorts of religions will be active in these new markets and vying for results from missionary activity? There are four categories:

- 1) the Catholic Church, Greek Orthodox Church, and Islam will probably extend their influence to neighboring regions by enlarging their present bases;
- 2) the various Protestant sects will probably show growth in Catholic areas and other regions where traditional Christian culture still has strong influence; they will also probably grow in places like Korea and ethnic Chinese societies, where the influence of Confucianism, which shares the Protestant character of a religion of moral duties and stress on scriptures, is strong;
- 3) loosely organized religious philosophies that are mystical and psychotherapeutic in character, such as the "New Age" in the United States of America and the Anthroposophie movement in Germany, will probably gain wide acceptance among people in the higher education class; and
- 4) new religions that have been born in various parts of the globe, with the potential for huge development side by side with all of the above, especially as a force to compete with the Protestant sects.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> STARK and BAINBRIDGE (1985) divide religious groups in contemporary North America and Europe into three categories and attempt to depict the ways in which they have taken

The most conspicuous cradles of these new religions have been the United States and Japan. The new religious groups originating in the United States are also often called "cults": the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, etc. The Unification Church that was born in Korea is also powerful. The Wat Dhammakāya movement begun in the 1960s in Thailand is an example of a new religious movement with a high potential for spreading to other countries. Seen in a global perspective, Japan's New Religions have much in common with these religious groups and movements.

As I suggested above, Japan's New Religions have garnered great success in societies where urban populations have increased as a result of industrialization. Again, in those societies where industrialization has already been attained and the loneliness of urban living has deepened, they are considered to have the potential for a certain degree of success in missionary activity. In such societies the New Religions try to indicate concrete, practical guidelines for overcoming the problems isolated individuals face in ordinary daily life. And they offer such people spiritual support for self-help and mutual-support communities. In doing this, they offer something people can hang on to as they acquire moral self-discipline and continue to live as urban middle-class citizens. Furthermore, they have more this-world intentionality than sects, and they try to respond to urban residents' this-worldly aspirations.

In a world community characterized by increasing industrialization and urbanization, the demand for religions that fulfill such functions will probably increase. The various New Religions in Japan have, alongside cults originating in the United States, been in the vanguard in various regions throughout the world, nurturing and storing up the cultural resources for meeting that demand.

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turns being influential. The categories are: "church," "sect," and "cult." "Cult" is subdivided into "cult movement," "client cult," and "audience cult." I have made four categories, but they are not that far apart from Stark and Bainbridge's. I have singled out their "cult movement" and taken it to be "new religions." Again, what I have placed in my third category to a great extent overlaps with their "audience cult" and "client cult," though not completely.



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