



Title	Geopolitical mission strategy : the case of the Unification Church in Japan and Korea
Author(s)	Sakurai, Yoshihide
Citation	Japanese journal of religious studies, 37(2), 317-334
Issue Date	2010
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/47996
Rights(URL)	https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/
Type	article (author version)
File Information	Geopolitical Mission Strategy-1.pdf



[Instructions for use](#)

Geopolitical Mission Strategy

The Case of the Unification Church in Japan and Korea

Sakurai Yoshihide

Abstract

Japan presents a useful case for studying new religious movements and their development of public relations and growth strategies, not only because there are large numbers of new religious movements in Japan, but also for the presence of controversial movements such as Aum and the Unification Church. The strategies employed in recruitment and fundraising have become increasingly important for such movements in Japan—as well as for research on these movements—in the wake of the “Aum Affair.” This paper will focus on the strategy employed by the Unification Church which is broadly perceived as a social problem.

Keywords: cult controversy—new religion—recruitment—fundraising—Unification Church

Career summary

Dr. Yoshihide Sakurai, Ph.D., is a professor of sociology, the Graduate School of Letters, Hokkaido University, Japan. He has been conducting research on the new religious movements in recent Japan, especially Aum, the Unification Church, and other small cult groups. He is a board member of Japanese Association for Religious Studies.

saku@let.hokudai.ac.jp

Recent Criticisms of Cults in Japan

Ever since Aum Shinrikyō members carried out the sarin gas attack in 1995, the “cult controversy” has been considered a major social problem in Japan. The word *cult*, used by Margaret Singer when she referred to Aum as a “doomsday cult” in the Kyodo News Service report of 24 March 1995, fed the public anxiety. Aum believers, especially those convicted of the crime of mass murder, were considered by the public to be under the “mind control” of the group’s founder, Asahara Shōko. Various professionals have diagnosed pathological religious conversion in cults, which has given authorization for individuals with cult problems to be treated with medical care as well as legal remedies (Kimiaki, 1995).

As for Aum, the acts of violence were dealt with by judiciary authorities as self-centered organized crimes, even though its members were following the orders of the founder under the intense pressure of religious dogma. Moreover, psychiatrists and clinical psychotherapists who participated in cult criticism began withdrawing from their attempts to rescue members, when they learned that approximately 1,500 members still remained affiliated with Aum (later renamed “Aleph”) and still believed in the founder’s teaching and practices (Public Security Investigation Agency, 2008). Contrary to the development process of anti-cult movements formulated by Shupe and Bromley (1994, 9-25), Japanese anti-cult movements could not use the Aum incidents as examples for their “professionalization” (not clear what this means??) and raise consciousness with the general public (?? Not clear what this means??).

Recently, the “cult problem” has been fading from view as topic in the news. The anti-cult movements, however, have been continuing their regular activities such as reporting on cult issues, counseling, and working to fix problems.

Among those problem cases, the Unification Church (Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity; hereafter “UC”) in Japan must be noted because this religion has persistently provoked cult controversy, and critics of this religion have succeeded in suggesting a new perspective on the “religious freedom” of the proselytized (?? Not clear what this means??). In Japan, the liability of the Unification Church with regard to former members and private citizens has been the center of many court cases. Its proselytizing has been found illegal, and its fundraising activities (including the sales of spiritual goods) ruled fraudulent. Yet they continue these illegal missionary activities and fundraising.

The Unification Church has been behind (???) Has taken a low profile

during ???) the Aum affair in the 1990s, but it has eagerly conducted their missionary and fundraising work for more than fifty years in Japan. The matter of “conversion” has been discussed from the perspective of the sociology of religion, and this organization has been a continuous subject of investigation in connection with this issue.(1)

Compared with Aum, which is still active but small, the influence of the UC should not be understated in terms of their membership (more than fifty thousand) and financial strength. And there is cause to believe that the UC is antagonistic to Japanese society.

Confrontation Between Particular Religions and the Social Order

Bromley formulated his theoretical model that initial conflict between a religion and a society could be intensified to a “dramatic denouement,” by the intervention of cult-watch groups and government agencies. He also pointed out that there were very few new religious movements that continue to be antagonistic to secular society to the point of self-destruction by mass suicide and indiscriminate mass-killing (Bromley 2002:11-29). From this fact, sociologists of religion have drawn the conclusion that most new religious movements, pejoratively called “cults” by anti-cult movements, are “harmless” (Melton and Bromley 2002:42-56), and that the role of intermediate groups must be stressed to avoid improper criticism of cults and unnecessary intervention from state agencies against controversial religions, which are crucial factors in the formation of conflicts (Wright 2002: 116-20; Barker 2002: 134-46).

Admitting that the polarization structure as a whole causes conflicts and “violence,” these propositions require revision from two points: 1) why and how do both a religion and a society remain in conflict without reaching a compromise; and 2) by what criteria can we define “harmfulness” and “violence” with regard to religion.

First, while most religions tend to accommodate to the social order, some religions still challenge the common sense of a society, even to the limit of illegal actions. Concerned people opposed to controversial groups, as well as defenders of human rights and religious tolerance, have made recourse to court rulings. Although particular religions may have to deal with Supreme Court rulings in individual countries, this does not necessarily lead to comprehensive changes in their missionary strategies; they can continue their activities in other countries, and it is important to be aware of this kind of strategy.

The UC of Japan is one example and has maintained its fundraising strategy

created on the religious and historical background of Japanese-Korean relations. According to its religious dogma, Japan must be subservient to Korea, which is the Divine country, and Japanese must compensate for its thirty-six-year colonization of Korea. This religio-political dogma has strongly influenced Japanese members.

Since European countries, the USA, and Korea were not allotted to special roles in missionary work or fundraising, members of the UC in these countries could adjust to the prevailing social order of their respective country. Occasionally, organizations affiliated with this church could conspire with some conservative politicians, as well as the fourth estates, using vast financial resources drained from Japan. As a result criticism of the UC grew to such an extent that religious tolerance toward UC members was insisted on not only by UC-affiliated advocacy institutions such as the “Coalition for Religious Freedom,” but also by some sociologists of religion, as will be discussed later.

Second, with regard to the plaintiffs’ appeal against particular religions, “violence” is not limited to just homicide and injury, but includes fraudulent missionary and fundraising activities. Sociologists of religion must acknowledge that the cult controversy is not always based on intolerance toward a particular religion or on a divergence of views of the people concerned, but occasionally on substantial suffering brought about by the violation of human rights and property rights.

Direct evidence for my discussion is the case of the Unification Church in Japan. Its apocalyptic dogma of “Kingdom of heaven on earth,” and the charismatic leadership of the “True Father,” are not directly related to illegal and violent activities against the general populace. Its mission strategy, however, seems largely to be devoted to the recruitment of members in order to raise funds by any means. Japanese Church members have devoted themselves to meet the financial demands of Sun Myung Moon and his Korean followers, and have constructed what can be called a Unification Church conglomerate.

Research Dispute Over Studies on the Unification Church

As for studies of religious cult groups that may be problematic in society, there have been debates between Barker, Beckford, Robertson, and others over the study of the UC in the U.K. First, we shall examine the characteristics of Eileen Barker’s study (1984). In *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* Barker attempted to clarify whether the conversion of UC followers was a voluntary act or a result of brainwashing or mind control. The research was meticulously conducted as a

sociological study (2).

The resulting findings were that there was a significantly high percentage of followers who remained at the church with the motivation, “I was seeking something important to me before joining the church; I didn’t know what it was.” Barker verified that in the second half of the 1960s, young people, somewhat disappointed within the existing British society, were seeking alternatives of some sort. Some encountered the UC and its missionary work, but only a very small number of followers who were satisfied with the life in the church continued their activity (merely 2% or 3% of the participants in the First-Stage seminar). She then rejected the possibility of the use of mind control on the followers (Barker 1984).

Barker’s research findings would make sense within the Britain members at that time. She observed the initial stage of the UC expansion in a peripheral region, in the Britain of the 1960-70s, where fundraising and recruiting were not conducted as fiercely as in Japan of the 1960-2000s. But she stated the UC issue not only in academism but also in expert testimony, which dismissed the criticism to the UC as no more than an intolerance to new religious movements.

Moreover, questions have been raised about Barker’s research methodology. She contended that regardless of the circumstances of research, if the researcher gathered data following appropriate sociological procedures and followed this with analysis, it was possible to extract facts. However, Beckford pointed out that Barker received hospitalities such as the travel expenses for attending the “International Coalition for Religious Freedom” after the “New Ecumenical Research Association” of the UC (Beckford 1983: 189-96). (3)

Roland Robertson, after pointing out the conflict between intervening-type researchers Bryan R. Wilson, Eileen Barker, Roy Willis, and the outside critic James A. Beckford, claimed that researchers should at least recognize that 1) the Unification Church takes advantage of academics, 2) the Church regards conference participants also as participants in the Unification movement, and 3) the funds of the Unification Church were raised through special methods (Robertson 1985: 179-84).

This type of conflict-of-interest problem --- negotiation between the researcher and the researched in a study of new religions--- could easily occur in Japan as well. The issue is, what kind of favor they did the researcher receive, and whether it was

within socially acceptable bounds. Presenting the context of research activity to the reader as well as to future researchers may be indispensable for critiquing or re-examining previous studies.

Here, allow me to clarify my policy on the survey research I conducted. The data used for this research owes much to the movements who are against the UC. More specifically, the sources were interviews with lawyers at the “National Network of Lawyers against Spiritual Sales,” along with religious personnel, counselors, and former members who continue to support defectors from the UC, as well as books and publications by the UC, plus a small number of interviews with church members. Compared with other studies on the church represented by Eileen Barker, mine is more of a look at the church from the outside; thus, in terms of research context, my standpoint cannot help being critical of the UC. Whether to consider this a limitation of the research study or a practical form of social research is up to the judgment of the reader.

Mission Strategies of the UC and Social Antagonism

Chronological analysis of the UC’s Strategy

Bromley and Shupe (1980) showed how new religions motivated their followers to collect donations in the streets and estimated the amount of fundraising by the number of members and the quantity of their labor. In addition, Bromley (1985) studied fundraising strategies of the UC through the analysis of UC affiliated companies. Although he acknowledged the large flow of money from Japan, he did not focus attention on how the UC raised those funds. At that time the UC in Japan changed their missionary strategy. Why and how was this changed?

We will begin with chronological analysis of the UC’s strategy from the 1960s.

In 1954 Sun Myung Moon founded the UC in Seoul, South Korea. An early disciple, Choi Bang Chun (Choi Sang Ik), entered Japan illegally in 1958, and initiated Japanese missionary activities from 1959 to 1965. During those days he successfully laid the foundation and acquired the leadership of the UC of Japan. In 1964 the UC of Japan headed by Chairman Osami Kuboki was officially recognized as a religious corporation.

In 1966 the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP) was established and their missionary activities were expanded on university campuses. As CARP encouraged student members to drop out of school and dedicate themselves to

missionary work, their parents criticized CARP and formed an anti-CARP Group in 1967. This was reorganized into the Victim Family Meeting by CARP in 1975.

In the 1970s the UC of Japan extended their activities to politics, academism, and the economy. The International Federation for Victory over Communism was established in 1968 to cooperate with conservative Japanese politicians. They utilized the manpower of UC members for political and election campaigns, and in exchange helped defend the UC despite social criticism. The Professors World Peace Academy, established in 1973, also encouraged the mass media and academics to authorize the aims and activities of the UC. At that time the headquarters of the UC, and the Sun Myung Moon family as well, migrated to the US and initiated their activities there. The cost of these activities was supported by the UC of Japan, which began business activities such as the well-known selling of flowers and miscellaneous goods.

In the 1980s, the UC of Japan eagerly conducted their fundraising, leading to accusations of the fraudulent sales of spiritual goods. These financing activities developed into importing Korean goods such as Korean ginseng tea, marble urns, and two-storied pagodas. Initially they were sold through normal business venues, but were gradually coupled with fraudulent sales techniques such as telling fortunes based on names and appeasing the spirits of ancestors. A corporation called the "National World Happiness Liaison Council," voluntarily created by UC members according to the spokesman of the UC of Japan, took power among several sections because of large contributions to send money to the US and Korea.

In the 1990s, some members of the UC of Japan who were eagerly conducting their missionary work were accused of masked recruitment of their novices. Their notorious fundraising strategy disturbed normal missionary activities on school campuses and streets, so that they had to develop controversial masked recruitment methods that were in turn criticized as "mind control." Added to that, the UC sponsored several mass weddings that were sensationally and critically responded to by the mass media. Even worse, cult phobia and the anti-cult movement in Japan further accelerated the UC downturn of fundraising and missionary activities.

Although the UC in Japan certainly faced difficulties, its religious families would survive by the strategy of producing a second generation and a community of the UC. The financial shortfalls of the UC in the 1990s were covered by mass marriages held by Sun Myung Moon, in which Japanese participants paid \$14,000 or more as donations. Eligible single female members were persuaded to participate in mass marriages and went to Korea and other countries to begin families. The second generation of the UC would be central figures in the UC.

When I interviewed recent defectors, it was clear that many had exhausted their lives by depending on Sun Myung Moon’s unstable providence and his need for money. They wanted to terminate their mission but could not do so out of fear of what might happen to them. They were warned by the Unification Church that they and their families would suffer misfortune in this life as well as in the afterlife.

Court Battle over Illegal Mission and Fundraising

According to the “providential history” of the UC, Japan has a role as the “Eve” country and Korea as “Adam.” This means that Japan should dedicate their valuables to Korea, because Eve committed spiritual “adultery” with a fallen Archangel and then seduced Adam, which caused original Sin in the “Divine Principle.” Therefore, the Japanese Church has covered most of the expenses of world missionary work and Sun Myung Moon’s businesses since the 1970s. Fraudulent sales of spiritual goods, reported by the Lawyers Liaison Meeting for the damages charged to the Unification Church, have generated more than \$10 billion (29,039 cases and ¥102,447,200,425) over 20 years (Lawyers Liaison Meeting for the damages, 2008).

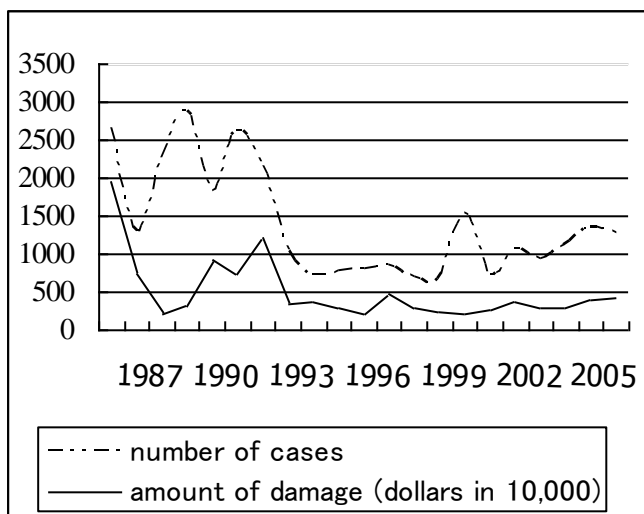


Figure 1 Financial Damage by the Unification Church 1987-2007

As Figure 1 indicates, severe criticism from attorneys and the mass media has made UC members change their methods of fundraising spiritual goods sales since the beginning of the 1990s. Because the UC received the rulings in several courts to compensate the purchasers for damages, they simply asked for more donations and borrowed money from their members and their families. Exploitation was shifted from the general public to their own members.

High tension and severe criticism formed the path of the “cultic” recruiting (??? This sentence is not clear???). The notoriety of the UC’s fundraising made the

recruitment of new members difficult, so since the early 1980s the UC has developed culture centers that concealed their name and purpose. The new method produced many novices, but most of them soon dropped out and some were rescued by exit counselors who accused the UC of practicing “mind control” and proceeded to file lawsuits. The plaintiffs, who were former members, were able to win verdicts in the 2000s because awareness of cult problems changed the respectful distance Japanese had kept from religious matters. Table 1 shows lawsuits against the “illegal” recruitment of the UC.

Table 1 Lawsuits against the UC: illegal recruitment

case	1987	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	2004	
Sapporo	D	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	○→H			○→S○	
Nigata		D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	D2○→H		○→S○	
Okayama1		D	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	×	→H	○→S○				
Okayama2							D	→	→	→	→	→	×						
Nagoya			D1	D2	D3	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	D1-3×→ H		△				
Tokyo1				D1,2	→	D3	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	△					
Tokyo2													D	→	→	○→ H		○→S○	
Shizuoka					D1	→	D2	→	→	→	→	D2△	→	→				D1 △	
Kobe						D	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	→	×	→H			○→S○

D:District court
H:High court
S:Supreme court
→:on trial
×:lost lawsuit
△:reluctant settlement
○:winning lawsuit

Attorneys criticized the fraudulent sales of spiritual goods and filed damage suits for civilian victims. They could win in almost all cases for a short time at the end of 1980s. Then they encouraged former members to file lawsuits for compensation, claiming that members were illegally recruited using “mind control” techniques. The arguments of those plaintiffs were dismissed by courts for about ten years in the 1990s. In the early 2000s, however, at last they obtained new judicial precedents against “illegal recruitment.”

Moreover, the Public Safety Bureau of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department searched camouflaged voluntary groups affiliated with the UC on suspicion of fraudulently-obtained contributions on 18 February 2008. In the same year the prefectural police of Fukuoka and Nagano also searched UC-affiliated companies that were suspected of extorsionary sales of signet and crystal by using the threat of a curse.

Marriage Brokerage through Mass Weddings

Since the 1990s the UC has arranged for Japanese female members to marry Korean men through dozens of international mass marriage ceremonies. According to the UC magazine for blessed couples in Korea, until this day approximately 7,000 Japanese female members have come to Korea.(4) They believed that they went there to give birth to an “Immaculate Child” blessed by Sun Myung Moon and lead their lives as if in Heaven.

If Korean and Japanese UC members became involved in religious marriages and lives in accordance with their beliefs, such marriages should be respected as religious. In fact, until the 1980s, mass marriages were conducted among UC true

believers. But recently, the UC has recruited potential male members and their families who could not find Korean brides. Korean women sought a man with a good job, an education, and housing in a city. Disadvantaged Korean men, who had sought international marriages with Korean Chinese, Filipina, and others who came from economically underdeveloped countries since the 1990s, gained another option provided by the UC to marry with Japanese women.

At the same time, Japanese female members were indoctrinated to believe that a Korean man was the most blessed partner in the world, even if he did not have faith. Furthermore, in the UC dogma, the Japanese women were persuaded to be obedient to Korean men in the Adam country, because Eve fell first and Japan is the Fallen Eve country. The UC evokes their consciousness of redemption for Sin and disbelief of Christ, and superimposed it onto the memory and compensation for Japanese colonial rule in Korea a century ago.

Tables 2 and 3 show the location of Japanese women who are in local areas and of marriageable age. The capital city of Seoul and the second largest city Pusan have more men than women, while particular provincial areas have unnaturally high ratios of Japanese women who are presumed to be the UC members. (5)

Table 2 Japanese inhabitation by regions

	2000			
	Total	Man	Woman	Woman/man
Seoul Metropolitan-city	5,599	3,047	2,552	0.84
Pusan Metropolitan-city	1,425	992	433	0.44
Daegu Metropolitan-city	204	60	144	2.40
Incheon Metropolitan-city	330	128	202	1.58
Gwangju Metropolitan-city	204	63	141	2.24
Daejeon Metropolitan-city	159	44	115	2.61
Ulsan Metropolitan-city	130	41	89	2.17
Kyongi-do Province	1,602	462	1,140	2.47
Kangwon-do Province	363	24	339	14.13
Chungchongpuk-do Province	290	51	239	4.69
Chungchongnamu-do Province	722	258	464	1.80
Jeollapuk-do Province	411	20	391	19.55
Jeollanamu-do Province	497	24	473	19.71
Kyongsangpuk-do Province	665	202	463	2.29
Kyongsangnam-do Province	634	212	422	1.99
Cheju-do Province	163	87	76	0.87
Total	13,398	5,715	7,683	1.34

Ministry of Statistics 2001 『Report of Population and Housing 2000 vol.1 nation 3-1』

Table 3 Japanese Residential in Korea by Cohort

Age	2000			
	Total	Man	Woman	Woman/man
0	52	28	24	0.86
1 ~ 4	369	188	181	0.96
5 ~ 9	417	210	207	0.99
10 ~ 14	268	125	143	1.14
15 ~ 19	545	248	297	1.20
20 ~ 24	755	338	417	1.23
25 ~ 29	1,435	460	975	2.12
30 ~ 34	2,484	602	1,882	3.13
35 ~ 39	2,512	654	1,858	2.84
40 ~ 44	1,282	608	674	1.11
45 ~ 49	676	473	203	0.43
50 ~ 54	787	627	160	0.26
55 ~ 59	507	415	92	0.22
60 ~ 64	390	297	93	0.31
65 ~ 69	163	113	50	0.44
70 ~ 74	98	62	36	0.58
75 ~	129	44	85	1.93
Unknown	529	223	306	1.37
Total	13,398	5,715	7,683	1.34

Ministry of Statistics 2001 『Report of Population and Housing 2000 vol.1 nation 3-1)』

Most Korean bridegrooms have no beliefs and no stable job. While Japanese women continued to believe in the UC dogma, they could be happy. However, once they lost their religious faith, they had to acknowledge that they are just foreign brides and, worse still, their disadvantaged marriage would not provide them with stable lives. Not a few Japanese women divorced and returned to Japan with their children in a state of deep dismay.

Case Studies on Unification Church Followers

Methodology

The primary resource of this study consists mostly of interviews with defectors from the UC and court documents.(6) However, we must also acknowledge that there is a limitation to the admissibility of those documents as evidence in court. From the standpoint of treating defectors fairly and impartially, there is a possible difference in evaluating the church between the family-intervention defection type (in contrast to

voluntary defection) and the statements made by those who decided to be a plaintiff (in contrast to those who did not)(Bromley, 1998).

Yet, when it comes to the facts involving the conversion and defection of ex-members, and the monetary figure for damages such as donations and the purchase of goods, there have been relatively few conflicts between the plaintiff and the defendant (UC). One contentious issue is whether or not the plaintiff understood his conversion as occurring through coercive mind control tactics or by free will. In this study, I attempted to comprehend the religious life of those followers typologically, setting aside evaluations by defectors concerning their own religious experience. For this limited purpose, the data on defectors is sufficient for analysis.

In Japan, where there are several thousand current members as well as an almost equal number of ex-members, it is impossible to conduct random sampling of current followers or sampling of only defectors based on the UC membership list (as Barker did). Therefore, this research focused on highly accurate available data, and then conducted so-called theoretical sampling in grounded theory in order to extract hypothesis-forming findings.

Various Characteristics of Conversion and Defection

[Social Attributes of Former Followers]

It is said that two thirds of UC followers are women. The reason is that proselytizing methods in the form of fortunetelling by name and family tree are effective on young women, and middle-aged or older stay-at-home housewives. In terms of family structure, education, and employment, most followers are from a middle-class background and their education is slightly higher than that of others of the same generation. In other words, they were leading quite ordinary lives.

Table 4 Basic Attributes of Former Members Before Joining the Unification Church

Attribute	Characteristic
Gender	Male: 21%; Female 79%
Member Type	Youth Members (Unmarried) 89%; Middle-Aged or Older Members (Married) 11%
Family Structure (Youths Only)	Nuclear Family (Two Parents 86%; Single Parent 10%); Three-Generational 4%

Education	High School Graduate 23%; Vocational School Graduate 20%; Junior College Graduate 17%; College Graduate 20%; Unknown 20%
Employment	Company Employee 72%; Temp Staff 5%; Student 15%; Housewife 6%; Unknown 2%

(Source: tabulated from survey data)

[Typical Patterns of Conversion]

There were two methods of missionary activity that the UC began to implement in the 1980's. One was the method of recruiting single youths. Specifically, for recruiting purposes, church members would interview young people on the street or by going door to door under the pretext of conducting a "young people's awareness poll," or invite their friends or acquaintances to a facility called a "Video Center." After completing a 12-volume culture course, a series of training sessions awaits the potential members: a 2-Day Seminar, Life Training, a **4-Day Seminar**, New-Life Training, and Practical Training. After the 4-Day Seminar, they are strongly urged to become dedicated members (a status equivalent to full-time Unification Church staff, but with a monthly salary of approximately \$150). Dedicated members are assigned to a front line "missionary work squad" or to the sale of delicacies. Afterwards, they would accrue experience by being transferred from section to section, and then wait to participate in a mass wedding ceremony.

The other method was recruiting middle-aged or older, mostly married, women. Youth members or the mature-aged women who had joined the church earlier conducted recruiting activities in the form of fortunetelling by palm reading or name in order to sell goods such as personal seals, Korean marble jars or vases, and multi-story model pagodas. Those sales, however, were branded as fraudulent sales of "spiritual goods," and dramatically slowed down after being ruled illegal in court decisions. In the 1990's, the church delved into and exploited the family problems of middle-aged or older women allegedly through various forms of fortunetelling, typically by name or family tree. They then aggressively solicited donations in exchange for clearing up bad karma.

[Patterns of Conversion and Defection]

In the case of the UC, there are no members who joined it without going through the pattern of being recruited on the street or door-to-door recruiting, or being invited by a friend. Of the newly recruited, 57.6% managed to reach "dedication"

through a series of seminars and training sessions of the UC. Not only that, but it took them only an average duration of five months to be converted, and 19 months on average to reach dedication status. There was a short-term intensive system to train followers. New followers would receive a blessing (mass wedding ceremony) after serving in missionary and economic activities and then return to their hometown and leave full-time church life (youth members only). It took 4 years and 3 months on average to reach defection from dedication; it took supporting members 2 years and 4 months to do the same. The duration of religious life ranged widely from a short to a long period. Thus, typically and predictably, religious life for UC members begins with the intervention of the church and ends with the intervention of the family (exit-counseling).

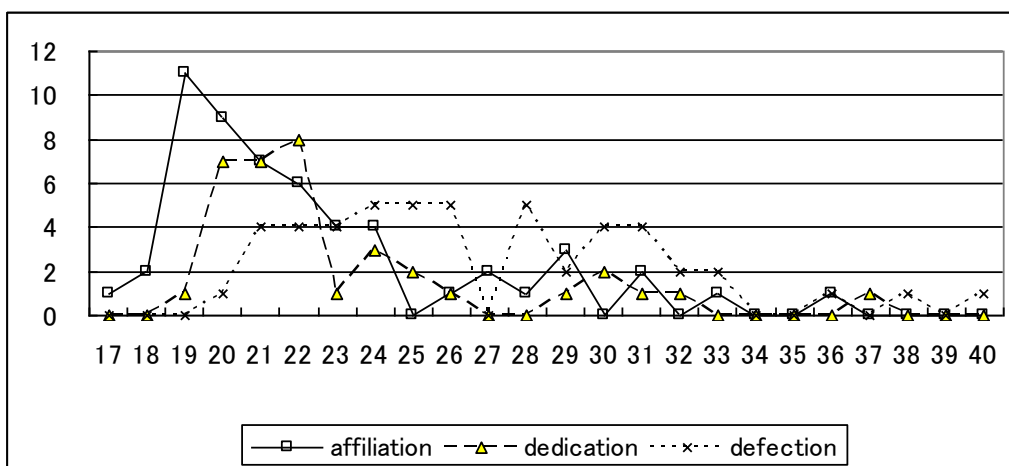


Figure 2 Summary of the age of members' affiliation, dedication, and defection

I will now discuss the issue of the voluntary nature of, and intervention by others in, the faith of UC members. The following can be said about the faith of the UC members in Japan.

(1) According to the seven stages of the Lofland and Stark (1965) conversion model, 1) to receive missionary work of the Unification Church and 2) to strengthen the social relationships with UC members and to be estranged from their family can be regarded as the conditions for their religious faith to begin and continue. The UC orders their members not to tell the fact of conversion to their family and, once they are devoted, to cut off the ties with their family.

(2) As Lofland discussed (Lofland and Skonovd, 1981), viewing the corresponding

relationship between the proselytizing methods and the types of conversion for each individual religious group, the UC has succeeded in converting ordinary citizens by extremely heavy proselytizing and its indoctrination process (seminars and residential trainings). In Japan, with the exception of Shungendo mountain trainees and Buddhist monks in ascetic training, the only other religious group that conducts such a long indoctrination with ordinary citizens in closed spaces is the Aum Shinrikyo cult.

(3) The defection rate of UC members who have completed the entire indoctrination process does not reach even 50%; it is thus extremely difficult for remaining members to voluntarily escape the church. One very common reason for this is that they have severed contacts with all of their family, schools, former colleagues, friends and acquaintances for several years. Consequently, they could no longer find values or any means to earn a living outside the world of the UC. In Japanese society, where passing education and employment phases at certain ages is considered a model life course, it is very difficult for those who have experienced things in their adolescence about which they cannot put in a resume to have a new start.

(4) In terms of the time course of religious life of UC members, their experience in a way was that of typical adolescence. Western researchers in the field of studies on the UC and other new religious groups, including Barker, cited the self-discovery of youths, the confirmation of their identity, and the desire for social reform as the motives for their conversion. But this argument gets it backwards. In the case of the UC, before they became religious seeker, they were targeted and chosen by the UC through their proselytizing strategies.

Conclusions

My first question is why and how particular religions cannot reach the dramatic denouement that is adaptation to secular world. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the mission strategy of particular religions first caused seeds of polarization between the religion and society, and then the antagonistic social structure changed the subsequent strategy of the religion, which amplified controversies. The fundraising strategy of the Unification Church in Japan first raised controversy among Japanese; thereby this religion concealed its name and used the threat of the curse of Japanese ancestor worship for gaining new members. Defrauded civilians and former members filed lawsuits and won, while at the same time Japanese society experienced the

problems with Aum, which popularized and demonized the concept of “cult” and “mind control” among ordinary Japanese.

This study is limited to a case study of The UC in Japan, yet its research implications shift it from the simple question of whether new religions/cults per se are in conflict with society, into an examination of the conditions by which resulting problems are generated. Moreover, this research suggests that the description of the UC movement should be interpretive and evaluative rather analytical. The transfer of Japanese fundraised money and of brides to Korean UC members may be helpful to Korean society, but at the same time it is harmful to Japanese, because this mission strategy has generated serious financial damage to the general public, as well as causing the disintegration of families in Japan.

As for the issue of “religion and violence,” this should be discussed within its geopolitical context. The historical consciousness between Korea and Japan, as well as resentment and guilt, lies behind the dogma and mission strategy of the UC, in which the religious order of each nation is fixed. This underscores the question of whether the mission strategy of new religions is based simply on global marketing and management, or on certain historical configurations.

Notes

(1) The author and Hiroko Nakanishi published the book, *Unification Church: Its Mission Strategy and Blessing in Japan and Korea*, in 2010, which is 650 pages of Japanese edition; however, it is most comprehensive study of the Unification Church in recent times. This book explains about its dogma, organizational structure, mission strategy and tactics for fifty years, affiliated groups and its activities, process of affiliation, conversion, and defection, believers’ life history, and lives of international marriage (Mass Wedding) couples in Korea.

(2) Barker conducted sampling based on the church membership list; she classified the followers into three groups based on the duration between the time they joined and departed from the church, and together with a control group outside the church, analyzed the reason for conversion using survey questionnaires on the personal traits of individual followers, their motivations, and the problematic situations at the time of conversion.

(3) Beckford argued that the church would make use of the authority of academics; conversely, it would block any publication of private memoirs or studies by defectors.

He contended that if researchers might welcome receiving subsidies or any other benefit for their research from the Unification Church, in the long run, that would certainly undermine the trust of the circle of other researchers, which would be a problem in terms of research ethics.

(4) Shusei Oyamada, president of the Japanese UC, spoke at the seminar “Japanese female leaders for World Peace in 21st century,” held at the Marriott Hotel in Seoul, and referred to the number of Japanese women who lived in Korea as UC blessed families. (Hiroko, 2004)

(5) As for brokered international marriages in Japan in the 1990s and 2000s, Korean women in their mid-thirties and city dwellers came and married with Japanese men who were disadvantaged in terms of education, employment, and a certain age. The UC women chose an inversion of hypergamy, which is normally observed in international, interclass, and interracial marriage. This epoch-making form of marriage contains difficulties.

(6) Statements by former members in two Yokohama District Court cases, 15 Sapporo District Court cases, 19 Niigata District Court cases, 13 Tokyo District Court cases, two Nara District Court cases, and two Fukuoka District Court cases will be used. By covering almost all the cases in which illegal missionary work was presented, the bias of the defectors’ testimony was minimized. To present those cases on a relative basis, after adding 13 trial cases of former members who were not the plaintiff which the author has studied, 66 case examples will be used as the basic data.

References

Barker, Eileen

1984 *The Making of a Moonie, Choice or Brainwashing?* Gregg Revivals, London.

2002 Watching for Violence: A Comparative Analysis of the Roles of Five Types of Cult-Watching Groups. In Bromley, David G. and Melton, J. Gordon, ed., *Cults, Religion & Violence*, pp.123-148, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beckford, James A.

1983 Some Questions about the Relationship between Scholars and the New Religious Movements, *Sociological Analysis*, 44/3: 189-196

Bromley, David G.,

- 1985 Financing the Millennium: The Economic Structure of the Unificationist Movement, JSSR 24/3:
- 1998 *The Politics of Religious Apostasy: The Role of Apostates in the Transformation of Religious Movements*, CA, Praeger Publications.
- 2002 Dramatic Denouement, In ed. Bromley, David G. and Melton, J Cordon, *Cults, Religion & Violence*, pp. 11-41, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bromley, David G. and. Shupe, Jr. Anson D.
- 1980 Financing the New Religions: A Resource Mobilization Approach, JSSR 19-3:227-239
- Nakanishi Hiroko
- 2004 Marriage for "Heaven on earth," *Religion and Society* 10: 47-70.
- Nishida Kimiaki
- 1995 『マインドコントロールとは何か』 *What is Mind Control?* Tokyo: Kinokuniya.
- Lawyers Liaison Meeting for the damages,
- 2008 The Activities of the Unification Churches in Japan URL: <http://www.1k.mesh.ne.jp/reikan/english/index-e.htm>
- Lofland, John and Stark, Rodney
- 1965 Becoming a World-Saver: a Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective, *American Sociological Review* 30:862-875.
- Lofland, John and Skonovd, Norman
- 1981 'Conversion Motifs, JSSR 20/4:375-385.
- Melton, J Cordon and Bromley, David G.
- 2002 Challenging Misconceptions about the New Religions-Violence Connection, In ed. Bromley, David G. and Melton, J Cordon, *Cults, Religion & Violence*, pp.42-56, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Public Security Investigation Agency
- 2008 『内外情勢の回顧と展望』 *Annual Report of the Situations Both at Home and Abroad*, 'Activities of Aum.' Tokyo: Public Security Intelligent Agency
- Robertson, Roland
- 1985 Scholarship, Partisanship, Sponsorship and "The Moonie Problem": A Comment, *Sociological Analysis* 46/2:179-184.
- Sakurai, Yoshihide
- 2010 『統一教会—日本宣教の戦略と韓日祝福』 *Unification Church: Mission Strategy and Blessing in Japan and Korea*, Sapporo, Hokkaido University Press
- Shupe, Anson and Bromley, David G.

1994 The Modern Anti-Cult Movement 1971-1991: A Twenty-Year Retrospective,'In ed. Anson Shupe and David G. Bromley, *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

Wright, Stuart A.

2002 Public Agency Involvement in Government-Religious Movement Confrontations, In ed. Anson Shupe and David G. Bromley, *Anti-Cult Movements in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, New York: Garland Publishing Inc.