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PALMER, Arthur Arvin, 1940-
BUDDHIST POLITICS: JAPAN'S CLEAN GOVERNMENT
PARTY.

Claremont Graduate School and University Center,
Ph.D., 1970
Political Science, general

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

BUDDHIST POLITICS: JAPAN'S

CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of
Claremont Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate Faculty of Government

Claremont
1969

Approved by:

M. R. Goodall

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In pursuing an education, more particularly in the
case of advanced degrees, one receives encouragement,
intellectual stimulation and financial assistance from
many persons and institutions. Each contribution deserves
recognition but a comprehensive list would be impossible
to compile. Therefore, while appreciating the friendship,
encouragement, assistance and advice of all, I will only
mention those who have been of particular importance in
enabling me to complete this project.

Professor Merrill Goodall has been most helpful and
thoughtful, as have my graduate committee at Claremont
Graduate School. My colleagues at Whittier College have
likewise been a source of considerable encouragement and I
owe a special debt of gratitude to Professor Ben Burnett
who read this manuscript and gave me many valuable suggestions.

The Overseas Bureau of Soka Gakkai, particularly
Bureau Chief Tomiya Akiyama, was very helpful and cooperative.
I must also express appreciation to several of my former
Japanese students who did considerable footwork, provided
specific information and advised me on some Japanese matters--
special thanks goes to Hiroaki Endo and Jon Yamashita.

Whittier College has kindly provided many facilities.

My greatest debt is to my wife, Jean. Her sacrifices, support, tolerance, and typing and editing skills--from 1963 continuously to the present--have permitted me to achieve a goal that might have been otherwise impossible. She has literally earned her PHT (Put Hubby Through) degree and must be considered a fellow recipient of the degree that will bear my name.

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INTRODUCTION

On November 17, 1964, a new and rather unique
political organization was inaugurated in Japan. This
organization was called Komeito or the Clean Government
Party.[1] The mother organization was the lay Buddhist
group, Soka Gakkai[2] or Value Creation Society. It had
previously been engaged in some political activities, but the
establishment of the party was an indication of serious intent
to become even more involved in Japanese political affairs.
The rather militant posture of Soka Gakkai and its phenomenal
success in converting literally millions of Japanese to the
Nichiren Buddhist religion was somewhat disconcerting for
observers, both Japanese and foreign. Because of its political
activism, many persons viewed the organization as similar to
the pre-World War II ultra-nationalist movement, while others

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[1]Hereafter the Japanese name, Komeito, will be used in
most cases when reference is made to the Clean Government Party.
Komei connotes "clean" or "fair" public authority or government
and to is the Japanese term for party.

[2]The spelling of Soka Gakkai differs in many books and
periodicals on the subject. The Soka Gakkai translators
usually write it as one word, i.e., Sokagakkai, but most
Western writers prefer to split the word since Gakkai is
frequently written as a separate word denoting an educational
association or academy. This writer prefers the second form
and will use it except in quotes and titles where it has been
spelled in a different manner. As in the case of the party,
the Japanese name will be used in the text.

applauded Soka Gakkai for giving new life and hope to a large
segment of Japanese society that was only receiving a marginal
share of Japan's increasing prosperity.

Any mass movement may appear rather ominous to some
people and a rapidly expanding and aggressive movement is
bound to be perceived as a threat to society. Soka Gakkai is
no exception, and therefore has been the subject of much debate
and controversy in both Japan and abroad. As is often the case
with controversial matters, a new perspective will help to
clarify some of the more contentious issues of this movement.

The writer first became aware of and interested in
Soka Gakkai while living in Japan from 1960 to 1963. Although
the Gakkai political orientation at that time was still
ambiguous, the group's interest in political affairs, its
budding political activism and its rapid growth rate harbingered
a significant future role in Japanese politics. In 1966, the
writer made his first serious appraisal of the movement's
political and social potential in a Master's thesis entitled
"Soka Gakkai: A Religious Sect or a Revolutionary Movement."
In that thesis it was concluded that Soka Gakkai was not a
revolutionary movement but that it was a broad social movement
which manifested definite revolutionary tendencies.

Since 1966, Soka Gakkai's political philosophy and
orientation has begun to crystallize into a more definite
configuration. For that reason, it is felt that a new, more

exclusively political study is timely. Therefore, at the outset, the writer postulated three propositions for study. The first was that Soka Gakkai and Komeito were intertwined in such a manner as to make them inseparable for analytical purposes. This is substantiated in Chapters 2, 3 and 5, wherein one finds that through the overlapping of leadership roles and a carefully controlled Soka Gakkai membership, Komeito is for all intents and purposes only a political arm of its religious mentor, Soka Gakkai.

The second proposition was that Komeito as a party is supported by a segment of Japanese society that had been either alienated by or at least had not been adequately represented by the other Japanese political parties. In Chapters 2, 3 and 6, this is substantiated wherein it is shown that the Soka Gakkai membership and Komeito leaders are of those types of people that are not commonly identified with the other Japanese parties. The Liberal Democrats are usually perceived as representing big business and rural interests, and the two Japanese socialist parties are affiliated with labor groups and those intellectuals with varying leftist orientations. Neither the Komeito leaders nor their supporters are generally representative of any of these groups. There is one notable exception and that is that one finds a rather sizable contingent of blue-collar workers within the Soka Gakkai membership. This seeming

contradiction is clarified by pointing out that the organized
labor groups that are affiliated with the socialist parties
represent less than one-half of Japan's working class.

A third proposition was that Soka Gakkai represented
an authoritarian alternative to the maturing Japanese
democratic political system, and as such, it was a threat to
that system. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, one finds that this view
is confirmed, but that it must be qualified to recognize that
Komeito is apparently adapting itself to the democratic
political process, despite Soka Gakkai's generally undemocratic
political philosophy and structure. This qualification led to
the development of a fourth proposition, i.e., that even though
the Soka Gakkai movement provides an alternative to democratic
institutions, Komeito, as an active political party, performs
many positive functions in the Japanese political system and
that the effect of this performance is to help sustain and
equilibrate the Japanese political system. In Chapters 5 and
6, this is verified by indicating that Komeito brings into the
Japanese political system a sizable minority of Japanese citizens
who might otherwise be a potential threat for the survival of
that system in its present form. For Japanese politics then,
Komeito is one instance where an authoritarian political
structure plays a positive role in a democratic system at the
same time that it represents a potential threat to the system.
In Chapter 6, the implications of these two rather contradictory

possibilities are evaluated.

Before concentrating on the political dimension of this movement, it will be useful to present a brief summary of Soka Gakkai's history, growth, scope and initial political involvement.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF SOKA GAKKAI AND KOMEITO

Soka Gakkai first appeared prior to World War II, but it had barely started to function when the Japanese military regime successfully proscribed it. After the war the organization was resurrected, though fundamentally changed, and it thrived in the post-war political and social climate. For conceptual purposes the pre-war efforts and the post-war rebirth and expansion will be considered as phases one and two, and a third phase can be dated from 1960 when Daisaku Ikeda, now president, assumed leadership.

Soka Gakkai: Phase I

The original founders of the Gakkai movement were Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and his disciple and successor, Josei Toda. Makiguchi was a schoolteacher and administrator who graduated from Sapporo Normal School in Hokkaido and in 1901 moved to Tokyo. After a relatively short career as a writer, editor and publisher, he returned to his first career, teaching, and in 1921, while principal of Nishimachi Elementary School in Tokyo, he became acquainted with Josei Toda. Toda, at the age of twenty-one, had sought and procured a teaching position at Makiguchi's school that year.

Although Toda eventually left the teaching profession,

his ties with Makiguchi remained every close. In 1928, Makiguchi and Toda, with the apparent encouragement of another school principal, were converted to Nichiren Shoshu (the Orthodox Sect of Nichiren), a Buddhist sect noted for its militance.[1] After their conversion, the two undertook the effort of relating the teachings and beliefs of Nichiren Buddhism to an educational theory that Makiguchi had been developing since his graduation from Sapporo Normal School.

Makiguchi's foremost concern seems to have been with what he perceived as the stultifying approach to education in Meiji and pre-World War II Japan. As the tenor of education in Japan became more Shinto and nationalist oriented during the immediate pre-war years, he, along with Toda and others, sought to bring forth a more meaningful theory as to the purpose and goals of education. Makiguchi himself had been influenced by Western teachers, philosophers and early social scientists and his orientation was socio-philosophical. In his "theory," Makiguchi held that the purpose of education was not so much to seek out "truth" as a value per se, but rather that education should help the individual seek out, create and accrue "values" that would lead to personal happiness.

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[1]Noah Brannen, Soka Gakkai (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1968), p. 74.

"Value" for Makiguchi was the product of a subjective evaluation of objective phenomena by human beings. He therefore felt compelled to reject the traditional classification of value as truth, good and beauty, because truth did not adequately fit his definition. Truth to Makiguchi was something that had an independent existence, apart from its possible effect on man. As such, it was in a different realm from that of value. In place of truth, Makiguchi inserted "gain" or "benefit," creating a new classification of value, viz., gain, good and beauty. "Beauty" is construed as a sensory value that affects man in a limited or temporary sense. "Good" is a social value in that it is a relative force that bears on the life of society or the collective existence of individuals. "Gain" is that value that pertains to the "whole life" of an individual and is therefore a personal value. "Gain" takes into account the effect of objective things on the person in a utilitarian sense, i.e., those things that have the effect of promoting the person's health, wealth and livelihood have value for that person. All three of these values have as their common denominator the benefit of man. To Makiguchi, therefore, the pursuit of these values was the means for the realization of happiness.[2]

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[2]Brannen, Soka Gakkai, p. 174. Also see Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Philosophy of Value (Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1964), pp. 80-100.

Makiguchi's argument was that man not only can realize, but also can create values by discovering relationships between man and nature and then making them meaningful. The Japanese educational system did not encourage or aid this process, and was therefore an inferior system which stifled individuals and condemned them to misery. The awareness of this was the motivating force for his own limited "value-creation educational" programs.

The above summary does not do adequate justice to Makiguchi's full theory, but it does indicate the relativist nature of the theory. It is ironic, therefore, that he and Toda attempted to integrate this "utilitarian" theory of value with the teachings of Nichiren as interpreted by the Orthodox Sect. Nichiren Shoshu, unlike most Buddhist sects, claims to be the one and only true religion and therefore, the doctrines and tenets of Nichiren must be construed as absolutes. The values one is to seek or to create in the Makiguchi theory are provided a priori in Nichiren's teachings. The integration of two such contradictory sets of ideas has not been, nor could not be, intellectually satisfactory for any but the members of Soka Gakkai themselves. In fact, one can probably say, despite continued reference to Makiguchi's Philosophy of Value (an essay that is published as one of Gakkai's theological references), that the Nichiren side of the Soka Gakkai doctrinal equation has been by far the most significant in the

post-war life of the movement.[3]

To better conceptualize the nature of Nichiren Buddhism one need only observe briefly the character and style of Nichiren himself. Nichiren perceived himself as a fulfillment of a prophecy attributed to Sakyamuni or Gautama Buddha, which said that in the latter day of the law (mappo) or after a long period in which the true teachings of Buddha would be distorted and lost, there would appear another being, greater than Sakyamuni, who would restore the true Buddhism and provide the keys and the means for the attainment of enlightenment for all men here on earth. Since Nichiren believed himself to be that being, his teachings were ipso facto correct and all others false. Furthermore, only through his teachings could all men realize self-fulfillment and happiness here on earth, i.e., enlightenment.

Nichiren's conclusion that the Buddha's teachings had been distorted came about after many years of careful study and research into the various teachings of Buddha and the various Buddhist sects in Japan at that time. After his "enlightenment," he felt that it was his obligation to save the Japanese people from those evil teachings and philosophies, rampant in Japan, that were destroying that which would now be

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[3] Josei Toda later edited this essay, and took some liberties with it in the process. It seems he was trying to make it more compatible with Nichiren's doctrines.

referred to as the nation.

In many ways, Nichiren appears to have been a nationalist, and he was certainly conscious of a broad group identity in a more modern sense than were many who lived in the thirteenth century. Since national salvation depended upon him and his teachings, Nichiren and his followers embarked on a proselyting and conversion campaign that was extremely aggressive. In fact, on several occasions he demanded that the shogunate or military government accept his teachings as the basis for ruling the state since that was the only way the nation could be purified and saved. For his labors he received imprisonment, nearly lost his head and was ultimately exiled to a desolate island for several years. None of this daunted his will and to the end he was as militant and self-righteous as ever. He predicted that eventually the nation as a whole would accept his teachings and that it would achieve the highest civilization ever known to mankind. His teachings and religious style have had some impact on Japanese society since his death, and certainly Soka Gakkai is the modern spiritual successor of Nichiren's earlier movement. Its members have seen it as their duty to bring about the fulfillment of Nichiren's prophecy.

Before his death, Nichiren inscribed an invocation to the Lotus Sutra on a piece of camphor wood. He considered the Lotus Sutra to be the ultimate and most important scripture of

Buddha and the inscribed object became the Gohonzon or
Worship Object (the go is honorific).[4] This "worship object"
was to be the source of salvation from daily problems as well
as the key to enlightenment on earth after Nichiren passed
away. The believer is obligated to chant the Daimoku (ritual
invocation), Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, at prescribed times and
under prescribed conditions. Through this act, the believer
can realize relief from suffering, enjoy good fortune, and
ultimately receive salvation. Since Nichiren had provided
the keys, the believers were obligated to convince others of
the truth and efficacy of the Gohonzon. Through the efforts
of the believers and during the latter period of the law
(mappo), Kosen-rufu or peace and happiness for all mankind
would be realized.

Nichiren died in 1282, and after a squabble among his
followers, a disciple by the name of Nikko Shonin left
Nichiren's temple at Mount Minobu and established a new center

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[4]This mandala is inscribed in Chinese characters
(not Sanskrit as is more common) and includes the names of
all important Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in Buddhist lore.
Theoretically, therefore, it has the combined power of all
Buddhas--or universal power. Both Nichiren Shoshu and a rival
sect located at Mt. Minobu in Japan claim to have the original
mandala.
        At the rites of affiliation with Nichiren Shoshu,
each convert is given a facsimile of the Gohonzon that is kept
in one's home for worship purposes. Therefore, when referring
to the object at Taisekiji, members usually call it the
Dai-Gohonzon, or Great Worship Object.

and home—at Taisekiji. The line of authority has not been broken since Nikko Shonin, and today, Nittatsu, the sixty-sixth High Priest, is the keeper of the head temple near Mt. Fuji. The name, however, has been changed since that beginning, and the present name, Orthodox Sect of Nichiren, was assumed in 1912.

Although, as should be apparent by now, the "philosophy" of Makiguchi and the religious doctrines of Nichiren do not meld well in the eyes of the "uninitiated," this combination has become the philosophical underpinning of Soka Gakkai. Perhaps the basic problem is that the "philosopher" Makiguchi died before the effort of integration was completed, and it was up to the evangelist and organizer, Toda, to expound the group's views and to make this combination into a viable philosophy.

In 1937, Makiguchi, Toda and sixty followers met in a restaurant in Tokyo and formally established the Soka Kyoiku Gakkai (Value Creating Educational Society). Today Soka Gakkai dates its beginning from 1930, or that time when Makiguchi began devoting full time to this work, but in 1937 a formal structure was established with Makiguchi as president and Toda as vice president and general director. Brannen speculates that perhaps this early organization's open affiliation with Nichiren Shoshu may have been little more than an attempt to

avoid public prosecution.[5] If so, it was to no avail, for all Nichiren sects were felt by the authorities to be in opposition to the emperor--because the followers worshipped the mandala (or the Gohonzon), and also because certain royal names that had been inscribed on the mandala were considered to be placed in a degrading position.

An attempt by Makiguchi to publish a magazine entitled Kachi Sozo (Creation of Value) was suppressed in May, 1942, after nine issues had been completed. Then, in July, 1943, Makiguchi and several followers were arrested and put into prison on a charge of lèse-majesté. They had refused to be consolidated with other Nichiren sects as the government had ordered, and were openly defying National Shinto rules regarding religious behavior.[6] This could only be construed as open defiance of the emperor.

Soka Gakkai had expanded to a membership of about 3,000 in those days of strict national regimentation, but the arrest and consequent imprisonment of Makiguchi, Toda and twenty-one other leading members effectively ended Soka Gakkai for the time being. On November 18, 1944, at the age of seventy-three, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi died of malnutrition in

[5]Brannen, Soka Gakkai, pp. 74-75.

[6]H. Neill McFarland, The Rush Hour of the Gods (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967), p. 197, (Hereinafter referred to as Rush Hour of the Gods).

Sugamo Prison. Due to his advanced years, he could not withstand the severe conditions of prison, which were much worse than the nearly intolerable conditions on the outside. Toda and a few other followers stayed in prison until 1945 rather than renounce their beliefs.

Soka Gakkai: Phase II

On July 3, 1945, Josei Toda was released from prison after serving two years of his five-year sentence. Toda's experience in prison had also been one of much suffering, including (it is reported) malnutrition, tuberculosis, asthma, heart trouble, diabetes, hemorrhoids and rheumatism.[7] Besides breaking him physically, his imprisonment and the war had destroyed him financially. Yet, Toda, perhaps because of his religious convictions, seems to have been one of those rare individuals who can prevail over adversity. Immediately after his release, he set to work resurrecting the Gakkai movement, having apparently made a vow to do so upon hearing of the death of Makiguchi, and perhaps sensing that the end of a demoralizing war was a most opportune time. By 1951, the Soka Gakkai movement had been reborn; numerous new members had been recruited, and Josei Toda had overcome most of the difficulties that had beset him in his effort to make Nichiren

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[7]Daisaku Ikeda, The Human Revolution, 4 Vols. (Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1968), I,25.

Buddhism a viable religion.

Makiguchi seems to have been primarily interested in educational theories and the learning experience, but his ties with Nichiren Shoshu gave his study group, and later the organization, a definitely religious cast. Even in the first attempt at organization, the organizational drive per se seems to have come from Toda. Toda, the rather evangelical organizing genius, was to Makiguchi, the rather speculative scholar, as the political organizer Stalin was to the more philosophical and cosmopolitan Lenin, and as the politician-general Chiang Kai-shek was to the more philosophical and cosmopolitan Sun Yat-sen. He was the successor who, though somewhat stilted in outlook, tied the loose ends together and developed a functioning organization. Herein one can probably find the clue as to the difference in character of the pre-war and post-war organizations.

Josei Toda was a master at the manipulation of symbols, at timing his actions and sensing the right approach to take when dealing with each individual or group. Take, for example, his given name. As a child his name had been Jinichi.[8] Before the war, for whatever reason, it was changed to Jogai but after Makiguchi died and Toda had been released from

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[8]Clark B. Offner and Henry Van Straelen, _Modern Japanese Religions_ (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1963), p. 101.

prison, he changed it to Josei.[9] Jo means castle in Japanese,

but sei means sage or holy man. It is the same character that

is used to refer to "Saint" Nichiren, the "Holy" Bible and,

interestingly enough, also the character used in Seikyo

Shimbun [Seikyo Newspaper] which became the official organ

of the organization. Seikyo might mean the "holy teachings"

or it might mean the teachings of the "holy one" or the

"wise one." For the establishment of legitimacy and for

effective association, such a name could be very convenient.

Since Japan had suffered defeat, Toda could also point

to Makiguchi as a martyr who had died in prison for opposing

the war. The idea of a martyr was very appealing to some

people who by that time had come to believe that the nation

had been mislead by "evil" military men and "evil" philosophies.

Josei Toda could effectively use the symbols of hope

provided by Nichiren to make appeals to people in a war-torn

and demoralized society, and as a leader he was oriented

toward the evangelical approach as opposed to a logic and

persuasion approach that a democratic-socialist might pursue.

It is not the intention to imply that Toda was not a believer

or that he consciously manipulated people for his whole later

life is a testament of his belief. Any manipulation seems to

have come about through a sixth sense or uncanny talent for

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[9]Ikeda, The Human Revolution, I, 95.

charismatic leadership and skillful organization. Josei Toda
laid the groundwork for an extremely tight-knit organizational
structure that is apparently the envy of many groups in Japan
today. He also initiated Soka Gakkai's basic thrust toward
the goal of total involvement for the individual. Finally,
in Toda, Makiguchi's views and Nichiren Buddhism were fused
in the manner that has become the basic philosophy of the
Gakkai membership.

Under Toda, Makiguchi's ideas were subordinated to
Nichiren's teachings. The creation of value and the search
for happiness were still the objectives, but the means had
changed. Worship of the <u>Gohonzon</u> and active service for the
movement automatically created values and brought a realization
of happiness for the individual.

The formal reorganization of Soka Gakkai took place on
May 3, 1951, with Toda named the second president of the
group. At that time there were already approximately 5,000
members of Soka Gakkai, and Toda vowed that there would be a
membership of 750,000 family units (households rather than
individuals being the common unit of measurement in Japan)
before his death.

Toda's leadership style and demeanor seem to have been
patterned somewhat after Nichiren himself. Rather authoritarian
and aggressive, Toda nonetheless had a sense of compassion
combined with a determined spirit that found its way into the

minds and hearts of others and motivated them to greater
heights. The small membership expanded geometrically and
with this expansion flowered Toda's impressive organizational
structure. In March, 1958, at the dedication of Soka Gakkai's
first major construction project, the Great Lecture Hall at
Taisekiji, it was announced that indeed there were now
750,000 households (approximately one and one-half million
persons) having membership in Soka Gakkai. Most of the people
had been made aware of and converted to Soka Gakkai through a
high-pressure technique called shakubuku, literally "subdue
the will." First introduced by Saint Nichiren, who held that
each believer must go out and convince others, Toda's stress
on this process had been extremely successful--with the help,
of course, of the post-war Japanese economic and social
problems. Shortly thereafter, on April 1, 1958, Toda passed
away and was mourned by hundreds of thousands, including a
few politicians seeking the votes of Toda's followers.

After Toda's death there was speculation that the
charismatic leadership of Toda had been the key to the Gakkai
organization, and that the movement would soon begin to crumble.
The speculators were to have second thoughts, for Soka Gakkai
not only did not fall apart, but it nearly doubled its member-
ship in the next two years despite the fact that it had no
formal leader. The Gakkai organization and the beliefs seemed
to be self-perpetuating.

One writer, McFarland, feels that the "authoritarian"
character of [Toda's] leadership" precipitated a temporary
crisis among the remaining leaders.[10]   Perhaps there was a
minor power struggle, but, with the exception of the
appearance of a few minor factions and splinter groups, the
organization prospered, and in 1960, thirty-two year old
Daisaku Ikeda was appointed president by the executive board
of Soka Gakkai. As Toda had been Makiguchi's closest disciple,
Ikeda had been Toda's close disciple and right-arm man. Ikeda
had been particularly important as director of Toda's much-
favored Seinenbu or youth group.

Soka Gakkai: Phase III

Daisaku Ikeda brought to Soka Gakkai a new type of
leadership. Contrary to the prevalent leadership pattern in
Japan, based on age or seniority, Ikeda gives to the group a
sense of youthful dynamism and energy. Whereas Toda was
rather stern and authoritarian, Ikeda appears more as the
personable businessman, with a deep concern that the image of
Soka Gakkai be progressive but not overbearing and fanatical.
Although held in awe by many Gakkai members, Ikeda discourages
the use of the honorific term Sensei (teacher) and asks that
the term be applied only to Makiguchi and Toda. Apparently,
Ikeda wants to be considered as a regular member who just

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[10]McFarland, Rush Hour of the Gods, p. 200.

happens to have been given a major leadership role in
Soka Gakkai, but is not necessarily superior to any other
member.

As spokesman for Soka Gakkai, Ikeda is in a tremend-
ously influential position, of which he is well aware, but he
seems to use tact and discretion in his statements and
actions. As a philosopher, he lacks a certain depth of logic
and, like Toda, tends toward over-simplification of highly
complex philosophical and doctrinal issues. Yet, his word is
unquestioned by the membership.

Ikeda has been the leader during the group's greatest
period of expansion. Although many questions are raised as
to the accuracy of the figures, by 1968, Soka Gakkai was
claiming fifteen million members or somewhat over six million
family units in Japan. Not only has the group been aggressive
in Japan, but after Ikeda took over, Soka Gakkai carried its
proselyting activities abroad. By 1969 it was reported that
Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai was claiming 175,000 members in
the United States alone.[11] Probably another 100,000 to
150,000 members are scattered throughout Southeast Asia,
Latin America and Europe. The foreign proselyting effort
usually begins among the Japanese living in each country, often
having the appeal of direct ties to the homeland; but there is

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[11]Time, January 17, 1969, p. 51.

an increasingly large number of nationals in each country
that are affiliating with Soka Gakkai.

Not only has Soka Gakkai expanded in terms of numbers,
but it has also expanded in its scope of involvement. For
example, the basic Gakkai education and study program involves
nearly every member in a graduated process of learning the
various works of Nichiren and other religious authorities,
including the "correct" meaning of each tenet of doctrine.
Aiding this educational process is a large number of official
publications to which each member has access.

There is also a stress on physical fitness and
athletic prowess, and the Gakkai program encourages the
participation of the membership at many levels. The most
spectacular Gakkai sports production was held in Tokyo in
1964 and was referred to as the "Soka Gakkai Olympics" since
it was staged immediately after the Tokyo Olympics. Approxi-
mately 15,000 members participated before an audience of over
100,000 persons, which included national political leaders
and foreign dignitaries. Each year there are several regional
and national festivals that stress athletic skills and
cultural activities.

In the realm of cultural activities Soka Gakkai has
been very active. For example, it has created the Democratic
Music Association (Min-On) that sponsors musical training
and membership participation events as well as national

cultural exhibitions such as the Glen Miller Orchestra,
Arthur Fiedler, Mitch Miller and his band and numerous other
Japanese and foreign artists and groups. The group has
established a Fine Arts Department which encourages and promotes
training in the fine arts, including both Western and Eastern
schools. One association, the Asian Peoples' Association,
arranges for cultural exchanges between Japan and other Asian
countries, and the Gakkai Institute of Asian Culture is
designed to encourage research into all phases of Asian culture
and civilization. There is also a Democratic Drama Association
(Min-En) and the Fuji Symphonic Orchestra, both of which
present regular public entertainment.

Besides the above there are numerous less spectacular
group activities oriented toward local membership, such as
sewing societies, singing clubs and judo clubs, that may or
may not be affiliated with the central cultural bureau or one
of the cultural associations. One can readily see that Soka
Gakkai places great stress on the development of the individual
in a cultural and educational sense, and perhaps it is within
this dimension of the movement that one can best detect the
influence or vestiges of Makiguchi's philosophy.

The Gakkai stress on research and cultural institutes
and associations, coupled with their belief that the major
philosophies and religions are barren because they are not
based on True Buddhism, makes it seem almost inevitable that

they would want to establish their own school system. Although their efforts in this direction are still somewhat limited, they have taken steps that indicate a future trend. On April 8, 1968, Soka Gakkai founded Soka Junior High School and Soka Senior High School at Kodaira in Tokyo.[12] Furthermore, on April 2, 1969, construction began on Soka University which will open its doors in 1971.[13] It is intended that this school will be a fully functioning and complete university by 1979, rivalling the major universities of the world.[14]

Another significant area of expansion has been in the construction of new buildings. Perhaps this is because buildings are highly visible and make an immediate and powerful impression on both members and outside observers. Whatever the reasons may have been, starting with the Grand Lecture Hall in 1958, Soka Gakkai has constructed numerous temples, local cultural centers and halls, a new headquarters building in 1963, the multi-million dollar Grand Reception Hall in 1964, and many other buildings. In 1972, Soka Gakkai intends to complete the Main Temple at Taisekiji (in preparation for the day when Japan becomes a Nichiren Buddhist nation) at the

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[12]Daisaku Ikeda, Youth, Let's Advance Towards a New Day [Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1968], p. 6.

[13]Ibid.

[14]The Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai (Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1966), p. 155.

expense of seven billion yen or approximately nineteen million
dollars.[15]   As in the case of the Grand Reception Hall, which
cost approximately three million dollars to erect, Soka Gakkai
sponsored a four-day fund raising drive for the Main Temple.
In both cases the subscriptions exceeded the projected costs
by several times.   In fact, in the case of the Main Temple,
the four-day campaign was held in the fall of 1965 and
approximately one hundred-million dollars were subscribed.[16]
It should also be pointed out that, besides purchasing property
in other countries, Soka Gakkai has also constructed at least
one temple abroad, located at Etiwanda, California.   All of
these buildings seem to combine various Oriental architectural
themes with modern functional materials and structural plans.
They are at once both aesthetic and practical.

Given the Gakkai preoccupation with the totality of
society and more particularly their stated ends of realizing
a state operating on Buddhist principles, it was inevitable
that Soka Gakkai should become involved in politics.   At a
time in history when many philosophies advocating radical
change are in vogue, many philosophers and psuedo-philosophers
see the necessary change as possible only through some form

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[15]Jon Yamashita, "Some Notes on Komeito," (Some statistics
and information provided for the writer) p. 3 (Hereinafter referred
to as "Notes").

[16]McFarland, Rush Hour of the Gods, p. 24.

of revolution, usually violent. Although Nichiren's doctrines
and admonitions advocate radical change, Soka Gakkai has
repudiated violent social revolution and, by implication of
their political activities so far, they appear to believe that
the change they desire can be brought about through established
political channels supported by their own "apolitical"
proselyting and educational efforts.

Their first political venture was in 1955, when a
limited number of Soka Gakkai members, running on independent
tickets, entered into prefectural and local elections. The
next year three Gakkai members ran as independents and were
elected to the House of Councillors, the upper house of
Japan's two-house parliament. From that time until the
present, as the membership has grown, Soka Gakkai has spon-
sored more and more candidates and most of these candidates
have been elected.

The initial political activities were coordinated by
Soka Gakkai's Cultural Bureau, but in 1960 a political
organization called the Komei Seiji Renmei (League for Clean
and Fair Politics) and shortened to Koseiren, was organized.
Koseiren took over the political activities and coordinated
election activities and policy.

In the 1959 national election for the House of
Councillors, six additional Gakkai members were elected,
making a total of nine in that house. These nine Councillors

called themselves the Komeikai (Clean Government Association),
which meant in practice that nine independent Councillors
had formed a committee for bargaining and negotiating with
other parties and factions in the upper house.

In the 1962 House of Councillors elections, nine
Gakkai councillors were elected, including the re-election
of Gakkai personnel to the three seats first secured in 1956.
By March, 1964, Soka Gakkai could claim 15 seats in the House
of Councillors, 55 in metropolitan and prefectural seats, 913
representatives in city and ward assemblies and 188 members
holding town and village assembly seats. This made a total
of 1,171 elected Soka Gakkai representatives at all levels
in Japan. On this basis, Soka Gakkai claimed to be the
third largest "party" in Japan, though still much smaller
in terms of total support than the Liberal Democratic Party
and the Japan Socialist Party. However, Koseiren was not
technically a party.[17]

Since Soka Gakkai was a religious movement, there
was also the peculiar problem that their political activities
might be in conflict with the Constitution of Japan. Although
by no means the only person raising the question, Kiyoaki Murata,
Editor of the Japan Times and personally acquainted with many

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[17]Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai: '64 Shashinshu [1964
Pictorial] (Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1964), p. 80.

Gakkai leaders and politicians, noted and pointed out in 1964
that Article 20 of the Constitution states that "Freedom of
religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization
shall receive any privileges from the State nor exercise any
political authority."[18] The Article was originally intended
as a measure against the resurgence of State Shintoism, but
as Murata pointed out, the phrase, "No religious organization
shall...exercise any political authority...." raised at least
an academic question as to whether or not this applied to a
lay religious organization such as Soka Gakkai.[19] Given its
goals, it is quite probable that the implication of the
Constitutional prohibition must have been rather uncomfortable
for Soka Gakkai. It seems conceivable that the Gakkai leader-
ship believed that they could observe the letter of the law
by establishing an "autonomous" political party. It is also
quite probable that there was some hope that an "independent"
party could draw voting support from a wider clientele than
the Gakkai membership. Furthermore, there appears to have
been some genuine sentiment and desire among the Gakkai
membership for a "Buddhist political party."

For whatever reasons, on November 17, 1964, the Clean

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[18]Post-war Constitution of Japan, Article 20, quoted
in Kiyoaki Murata, "Religion and Government," Japan Times,
June 6, 1964, p. 4.

[19]Ibid.

Government Party was inaugurated as a "separate" political

unit, but one that officially subscribed to the basic

philosophy of Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai. As this party is

observed in greater depth, one soon realizes that the separation

of Komeito from Soka Gakkai is merely a facade, and even today,

the Clean Government Party can hardly be called more than the

"political arm" of Soka Gakkai. President Ikeda does not

deny this fact and simply points out that political parties

are often tied to mother organizations. For example, he has

said that the Socialist Party of Japan is tied to Sohyo, a

major Japanese labor union federation, and that the Democratic

Socialist Party is associated with Domei, another labor union

federation. Even the Liberal Democratic Party is closely

affiliated with large business and commercial interests.[20]

As to the question of religion-oriented parties, he observes

that in Europe there are parties that are "apparently"

affiliated with religious groups, e.g., the Christian Democrats

in Germany and Italy.[21] Finally, Ikeda has declared that

Soka Gakkai's purposes are religious and oriented toward

individual happiness, whereas Komeito's purposes are political

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[20]For example see: Overseas Bureau, Sokagakkai, "Sokagakkai and Komeito" (This is the Sokagakkai, series 6, Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1964), pp. 4-6.

[21]Complete Works of Daisaku Ikeda (Tokyo:Seikyo Press, [1967]), p. 146 (Hereafter cited as Complete Works).

and concerned with the public welfare; hence, their interests

and orientations are not in conflict.[22]

The above summary of Soka Gakkai is limited and somewhat sketchy, but it should give the reader some idea of the scope, flavor and thrust of this movement. Since the major concern herein is with the political dimension of the movement, the following chapters will focus on the various components of this dimension. It is within the party leadership that one can best observe the nature of the ties between party and religious organization, and therefore it is the leadership that this writer proposes to analyze first.

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[22]Overseas Bureau, Sokagakkai, Sokagakkai and Komeito, p. 6.

CHAPTER II

PARTY ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

After the party was inaugurated in November, 1964, the first Komeito activity was to prepare for the 1965 House of Councillors election. Six of the fifteen incumbents in the upper house (House of Councillors) had to stand for re-election, and it was decided to increase the number of candidates to fourteen. Of these fourteen, eleven were subsequently elected, increasing Komeito's representation to twenty of the 250 seats.

In 1967 the party entered candidates in a House of Representatives election for the first time.[1] Twenty-five out of the thirty-two candidates won their seats, and each of the seven who failed had polled the highest number of votes of the losing candidates in his respective district.[2]

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[1] Japan's lower house, the House of Representatives, is made up of 467 representatives, elected from 117 electoral districts. Each district has from 3 to 5 representatives, but each voter can only vote for one candidate. The House of Councillors has 250 members, of which 100 are elected on a national slate, and 150 are elected in the prefecture--the number in each prefecture varying with the size of population. Half of this house is elected every three years and in each election a voter can vote for one national candidate and one prefectural candidate.

[2] Hisashi Nishijima, [J--will be used to denote Japanese language sources], Komeito (Tokyo: Sekkasha, 1968), p. 14.

In the 1968 upper house election, Komeito ran fourteen candidates, including nine incumbents, of which thirteen were elected, increasing Komeito's upper house representation to twenty-four.[3]   Therefore, at present Komeito holds a combined total of forty-nine seats in Japan's two house Diet, making them the number three party, just ahead of the Democratic Socialists who hold forty-one Diet seats.

The party has also been active in prefectural and local assembly elections. Since 1965, there has been an increasingly large number of Komeito candidates elected to office at these levels. As the party representation has increased, the party structure has been established, and although some of the specifics are subject to change, the major structural outlines will probably remain as they are today.

Party Organization

The theoretical source of Komeito's power and authority is the National Party Convention (see Figure 1, page 33). Starting with the Inaugural Convention in 1964, the party has met once or twice each year in convention, the seventh and most recent having been held on January 21 and 22, 1969.[4]   The

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[3]Japanese Consulate General of New York, Japan News, August, 1968, p. 7.

[4]Komeito, Main Program and Action Policy for 1969, Press release of January 22, 1969 (Hereinafter referred to as Main Program).

Fig. 1 - - Party Organization

Diplomacy Committee
— Diplomacy Subcommittee
— National Defense Subcommittee

Administration Committee
— Cabinet Subcommittee
— Local Administration Subcommittee
— Judicial Affairs Subcommittee

Economic Committee
— Small Medium Enterprises Subcommittee
— Financial Subcommittee
— Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Subcommittee
— Industrial Subcommittee

Education Committee
— Education Subcommittee
— Culture Subcommittee

Social Labor Committee
— Welfare Subcommittee
— Labor Subcommittee

Land Development Committee
— Traffic Subcommittee
— Construction Subcommittee
— Land Development Subcommittee
— Great-sphere Administrative Subcommittee

Policy Bureau

Party Organ Bureau

Public Relations Bureau

Organization Bureau —— Local Headquarters —— Prefectural Assembly League —— Chapters

General Affairs Bureau

Local Assembly Bureau —— Prefectural Assemblies —— Ward and City Assemblies —— Town and Village Assemblies

Diet Policy Committee
— International Affairs Bureau
— Youth Bureau
— Women's Bureau
— Students' Bureau
— Labor Bureau
— Social Welfare Bureau
— Education Bureau
— Small Medium Enterprises Bureau
— Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Bureau

General Convention for Both Houses of the Japanese Diet

Party Convention — Chairman — Central Steering Committee — Secretariat

Councilor

Control Committee

Election Committee

Auditors

Source: Policy Bureau, Komeito, The Komeito, (Tokyo: Komei Press, [1968]).

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party convention brings together the Komeito representatives at each level of government, the active staff, and some Soka Gakkai leaders not on the party roster, and any other persons that the party leaders may invite.

Once the convention is in session, it becomes quite clear that party authority does not come from the rank and file, but rather from the leaders. In the course of giving their convention speeches, party leaders present the new party policies and any new candidates that may have been selected. The rank and file serve merely as a sounding board and forum for official statements. Their role seems to be one of responding to their leaders' proposals with great enthusiasm, and if a vote is requested, the vote is usually taken orally and is always unanimous in the affirmative. There is no debate and only infrequently are questions received from the floor.

All Soka Gakkai meetings are carefully organized and controlled; the party convention is no exception. The policy-making and candidate selection processes are completed by the leaders before the convention, and there are no established channels for the rank and file to have any direct influence on these decisions. The party convention may function as a contributor to group or party solidarity but, despite its aura of legitimacy and the Komeito rhetoric and party charts, it is not the source of authority for the party.

Looking at the party leadership, one finds that Komeito has no party president per se although the chairman of the Party Central Staff Committee, Takeiri, assumes the role of party spokesman and convention leader. It is within the Central Staff Committee that most of the party policies are formulated, and this committee also plays a major role in the selection of party candidates. Party Secretary-General Jun'ya Yano has stated that since Komeito is a small party, there is no need for discussion and debate at the National Party Convention. He points out that discussion and mutual consultation take place daily between party leaders, and thereby implies that the major decision-making authority resides at the party's center, i.e., with the Party Central Staff Committee and the Komeito members holding seats in the National Diet.[5]

Before focusing on the Central Staff Committee, it should be pointed out that other major Japanese parties are also concentrated at the national level, with particularly close ties to their National Diet personnel. This phenomenon is not unusual in parliamentary political systems, since a party's most common raison d'être is to influence national political policy, and this can be done most effectively in the parliament by the party's representatives. Frequently the

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[5]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 155.

party head will also be a member of parliament and is

therefore in a position to coordinate his party's policies

and activities both within and without the parliament.

Contributing to the tendency for parties in Japan

to be rather top heavy and centrally controlled is the fact

that party affiliation and registration are not prerequisites

for voting. This results in a situation where parties are

rather ineffectual in establishing "grass roots" organ-

izations.

The difference between a Komeito party convention

and the party conventions for the other major parties is that

the Liberal Democratic Party, the Japan Socialist Party and

the Democratic Socialist Party all permit both debate on

policy and the election of party leaders. Occasionally,

many of the disagreements and organizational problems can be

worked out before their party convention, so that even the

Liberal Democrats may infrequently appear to have a closed

convention; but this is still quite different from the system

of rule-from-the-top that prevails in Komeito.

Looking at the structure of the Komeito Central Staff

Committee, one finds that it is composed of thirty members,

of which the most important are the committee chairman, the

two vice-chairmen, the secretary-general, the four vice

secretary-generals and the party councillor, who act

collectively as the permanent executive for the party.

Stemming from the Central Staff Committee is the largest

Komeito bureau,[6] the Policy Bureau, which is in turn sub-

divided into six standing committees, including diplomacy

(foreign affairs), administration, economic affairs, education,

social-labor (social is used to mean public welfare) and land

development (which is a catchall committee). Under each

committee there are from two to four related subcommittees.

The Bureau director and all but one of the committee chairmen

are members of the Central Staff Committee, and virtually all

of the subcommittee chairmen are members of the Diet. The

function of this Bureau is to investigate problems within the

realm of each committee or subcommittee and make reports and

policy recommendations to the Central Staff Committee. The

Central Staff Committee then makes the final policy decisions.

Below the Central Staff Committee is the General

Convention for Both Houses. This is simply a formal meeting

of the entire Komeito Diet representation that takes place at

specified times, but has no formal powers. Since approximately

half of the Komeito councillors and representatives are also

members of the Central Staff Committee, the General Convention

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[6]There seems to be a conflict between two "official"
party organization charts. One indicates that the Policy Bureau
is under the office of the Secretary-General and the other ties
this bureau to the Central Staff Committee. The bureau's nature
and function seem to indicate that the second chart (Figure 1,
page 33) is closer to reality.

for Both Houses is rather meaningless at this time in
history.

The party Secretariat is the administrative unit
which has the responsibility for seeing that party policy is
carried out, and for coordinating party activities at all
levels. It is directly responsible to the Central Staff
Committee, and is in charge of the party membership organ-
ization, the party activities and affairs at the regional
and local assembly levels, and the various party bureaus that
serve as public relations, public information, and party
research units.[7] The regular party membership structure, the
regional and local assembly party structure, and the party
bureaus are all interrelated; but, as can be seen on Figure 1,
page 33, each is nonetheless directly under the authority of
the Secretariat.

Most of the party bureaus are categorized into
specific areas of concern which correlate with the party
Policy Bureau committees, or in some cases, subcommittees.[8]
Nearly all bureau directors are also Diet members and in some
cases they may serve simultaneously as chairman of the related
Policy Bureau committee or subcommittee. Apparently, all

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[7]Policy Bureau, Komeito, The Komeito: Clean Government
Party (Tokyo: Komei Press, n.d.), pp. 12-14 (Hereinafter referred
to as The Komeito).

[8]This can be seen by the similarity of committee and
bureau titles in Figure 1, p. 33.

bureau directors and vice-directors are at least members of
the related Policy Bureau committees. This relationship permits
the Policy Bureau to use a party bureau as a sounding board
and enables a committee to direct the staff of the related
bureau to investigate specific problems or areas of interest
and provide data for future committee recommendations.

Three party bureaus do not fit the above pattern and
are designated specifically as Youth Bureau, Women's Bureau
and Students' Bureau. Their exact functions are not clear,
but in addition to being concerned with the problems and
interests of youth, women and students, they seem to be
important for linking the Youth Division, Students' Division
and Women's Division of Soka Gakkai to Komeito activities.
For example, Yasu Kashiwabara, the only Komeito female member
of the Diet, is the director of the party's Women's Bureau.
It so happens that she is also president of the Women's Division
in Soka Gakkai. Similar ties exist between the party's Youth
and Students' Bureaus and Soka Gakkai's Youth and Students'
Divisions. Soka Gakkai, and hence Komeito, has long realized
the vitality and energy of youth, particularly students, and
has therefore sought to harness this energy and make it a
propelling force in the movement.[9] The Students' Bureau in

[9]For examples see Josei Toda, Lectures on Buddhism,
(Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1961), p. 152, and Daisaku Ikeda, "A Pro-
posal on the China Issue," Economic Salon, January, 1969, p. 32.

particular seems designed to serve that purpose.

One final point should be noted about the bureaus.
Although there is a Policy Bureau subcommittee which is
apparently oriented toward "big" business and industry
(called the Industrial Subcommittee), there is no party
bureau set up to operate in this area. There is, however,
a Small-Medium Enterprises Bureau. This seems to indicate
two things. First, that one of the major bureau functions
is to work with and elicit support from those groups in
society most likely to affiliate with Soka Gakkai and
Komeito, and second, that there is very little support from
the big business and managerial class in general. Business
seems to believe that its interests are best furthered through
the Liberal Democratic Party, and Komeito apparently does not
expect this to change in the immediate future.

In summing up, it is quite apparent that Komeito is
highly centralized and that nearly all aspects of party
policy, organization and leadership are determined by the
Central Staff Committee. The most important members of this
committee, the permanent executives, are the chairman, vice-
chairmen, secretary-general, vice secretary-generals and the
party councillor. This executive meets frequently on an
informal basis, and together they coordinate party activities
and give leadership to the Central Staff Committee and the
party as a whole. Therefore, even though it can be said that

party authority emanates from the Central Staff Committee,
this must be qualified to recognize the predominant position
of the permanent executive.

The Party Leadership

The party leaders, members of the Central Staff
Committee and other National Diet members, represent a rather
broad sweep of Japanese society. In fact, at first glance,
about the only thing they seem to have in common is member-
ship and a background of rather extensive service in the
Soka Gakkai organization. Before looking at their Gakkai
positions, a consideration of the other, more varied features,
will be informative.[10]

Looking first at age, in 1968 one finds that the average
age of the twenty-five lower house Diet members was 42, the
oldest being 63, the youngest 33, and only two over 50. This
would seem to indicate a stress on youthful leaders, and that
perhaps Gakkai members as a whole are relatively younger
persons. The selection of youthful leaders is somewhat contrary
to the traditional Japanese value system, which generally

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[10] This biographical data has been taken primarily from
biographical sketches in Nishijima, Komeito; Hiroi Takase, [J],
Daisan Bummei No Shukyo [Religion of the Third Civilization],
(Tokyo: Kobundo, 1962), (Hereinafter referred to as Shukyo);
and Yamashita, "Notes." The statistics and the interpretations
are this writer's. Most of the statistics are based on all
45 Diet members, even though only 24 of them are members of the
Central Staff Committee.

associates wisdom and influence with age. Japanese political parties usually have a much higher age average than is the case in Komeito. In the upper house, as of June, 1968, the average age of the twenty Diet members was 49, or slightly higher than was true of the lower house. The youngest councillor was 35 (there were four) and the oldest was 78.[11] The average may be lower now since three of the older councillors did not run for re-election in 1968, but even 49 is a relatively youthful age when it comes to Japanese politicians.

In considering the past political experience of the party leadership, one finds that there is only one man who served in a pre-war Diet. Shunpachi Hojo (retired in 1968) was a member of Japan's pre-World War II House of Peers. The rest date their experience from some time since Soka Gakkai first began to participate in Japanese politics. In the lower house, only 28% had no political experience before running for seats in the House of Representatives. Another 32% had experience in city or ward assemblies, 20% had served in prefectural assemblies and 20% had served in assemblies at both levels. In the upper house one finds that 20% of the councillors had not had any previous legislative experience; 15% had served in

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[11]The House of Councillors data is based on the pre-July, 1968 contingent. Seven new councillors were elected in 1968, four additional councillors and three replacing former councillors. Biographical data was not immediately available for the new personnel.

city or ward assemblies, 5% in a prefectural assembly, and
5% had served at both levels.

This apparent lack of stress on previous service
as a prerequisite for upper house candidacy has to be
qualified by two factors: (1) several of the councillors
were elected to the upper house in the late 50's and early
60's, or right after Soka Gakkai became active in politics,
and thereby started out at the top; and (2) Soka Gakkai
initially viewed the upper house as less political in nature
and therefore felt that previous experience was not essential.
As the number of successful candidates at lower levels continues
to grow, previous experience will probably become a prerequisite
for nomination to either house.

Although the information is sketchy, another interest-
ing statistic is the educational backgrounds of the party
leaders. Of the Diet members in the lower house, at least 32%
graduated from universities (including the top public schools,
Tokyo and Kyoto Universities, and such leading private uni-
versities as Keio and Waseda), 12% received training in military
schools, 12% in vocational schools, and 44% either had no
special schooling or the information was not available. Among
the upper house members, however, at least 55% were university
graduates, 5% military academy graduates, 20% vocational school
graduates and 20% either had no special schooling or the
information was not available. Probably the interesting factor

here is the high number of university graduates. Since the
Gakkai movement is at least stereotyped as appealing to lower
economic and social levels, one might expect to find fewer
university graduates in the leadership. There is still a
smaller percentage of university graduates in Komeito than
one would find among the Liberal Democratic Diet members,
but there seems to be a growing stress on formal education
as a background for political service.

It was found that of the total Komeito Diet member-
ship, 38% were born in urban areas and 62% in what might be
classified as rural areas. Rural was interpreted as including
"rural" cities such as Okayama and Sapporo in the late 1920's
and early 1930's (or the time when most of these men were
born). A few were still residing in the place of their birth,
but most had moved at some time in their life. Their apparent
early transience, contributed to by the war, may have been one
indirect factor in their affiliation with a movement such as
Soka Gakkai, since rootlessness seems to be a characteristic
of those who identify with mass movements. Furthermore, of
the forty-five members of the Diet, six were pre-war converts
to Soka Gakkai and virtually all of the remainder had been
converted between 1947 and 1955, or during a period of extreme
demoralization and chaos in Japan. These two factors combined
may provide some indication as to why some of the Diet members
joined Soka Gakkai in the first place.

Looking at the career and occupational backgrounds of Komeito leaders, one finds that their careers and occupations are generally among those associated with the middle classes. The most common backgrounds were small businesses (24%); this was followed closely by those having petty bureaucratic careers and white-collar office positions in Japanese companies (18% respectively). Approximately 16% were professionals (4 of 7 were dentists), 11% had started their careers with Soka Gakkai (usually at the Seikyo Publishing Company), 7% did not fit in the above categories (a professional athlete, a composer and a journalist) and 7% were not recorded in the data. Many of these men subsequently transferred to a Soka Gakkai position, either in the Seikyo Publishing Company or some affiliated business interest.

Although the number of people considered here is rather limited, there are a few generalizations that can be made. The most salient characteristic of the Komeito leaders is their petty bourgeois backgrounds. Small businessmen, local bureaucrats, low and intermediate level white-collar office positions in large businesses--these are typical petty bourgeois occupations. The implication of this is that Soka Gakkai may well be a lower-middle class and middle-class movement, at least if their leaders are representative of most members. There seems to be a significant number of blue-collar families in Soka Gakkai and some businessmen of the large industrial and

commercial class are reportedly members. These two groups,
however, are not represented among the party leaders. One
conclusion to be drawn from this is that Komeito has not as
yet become a serious challenge to the other Japanese parties;
rather it seems to be oriented toward a segment of the
population that does not really fit into the groups most
commonly identified with these parties.

There are not many identifiable intellectuals among
the leaders, nor are there really many professional men.
Japanese intellectuals are, of course, often either strongly
pro-government or leftist and pro-Socialist, but one wonders
about the intellectual attraction of a movement like Soka Gakkai.
No conclusions can be drawn from this small sample, and it is
true that some college professors and writers are known to
have joined Soka Gakkai, but very few have apparently come
to play any major political roles.

Taking into consideration all of the above data, it
can be said that Komeito leaders are relatively young and
their educational backgrounds are rather limited, though a
growing percentage have university degrees. One can also say
that the majority have rural or semi-rural backgrounds and a
history of transience. All have been long-time Soka Gakkai
members, and although their past occupational experiences vary,
they seem to be from the middle classes, with few representatives
of those groups normally associated with the Japan Socialist

and the Liberal Democratic parties.

Links to Soka Gakkai

The fact that all Komeito Diet members are also Gakkai members and that part of the candidate selection actually takes place within the Soka Gakkai framework indicates that there are close ties between the two structures. Actually, though, this tells one little about the nature of the ties. The manner in which Komeito is bound to Soka Gakkai is similar to the situation one finds in a cartel, i.e., the top leaders control several organizations by sitting on the board of directors of each. This phenomenon, usually called an "interlocking directorate," enables the leadership to manipulate the affairs of each structure in such a manner as to realize their overall goals.

In Soka Gakkai and Komeito there are several levels on which this overlapping takes place. For example, virtually every Komeito holder of a Diet seat is simultaneously a member of the executive board of Soka Gakkai, and a survey by the writer revealed that at least eighteen members of Komeito's thirty-man Central Staff Committee had held positions on the Gakkai executive board prior to 1962.

To better understand these rather intimate ties, a careful look at the present Gakkai executive board structure will be helpful. The board is made up of one general-director, 25 general-administrators, 57 vice general-directors and

558 directors in a category called the board of directors.[12]
The general-director's position is different from that of
the general-administrators in that he is the chief administrator
of the organization, a role akin to a secretary-general in the
United Nations. In the remaining three categories--i.e.,
general-administrators, vice general-directors and the board
of directors--each member has executive responsibilities in
the Soka Gakkai hierarchy and each category, as a group, has
a descending order of importance as a deliberative body.
Therefore, the general-administrators are the most important
formal deliberative body within Soka Gakkai, and the members,
individually, are closest to Daisaku Ikeda. Occasionally, all
three of these categories of leaders meet as the executive
board; but such a meeting is similar to a Komeito party
convention in that it has little formal authority.

Of the 45 Komeito leaders in 1968, one was the general-
director, 16 were general-administrators, 11 were vice general-
directors and 17 were members of the board of directors. Out
of the 30 on the Party Central Staff Committee, 15 were
general administrators, 9 were vice general-directors, 3 were
directors, and 3, though highly placed, were not recorded in

[12] The Gakkai use of the term "board of directors" is not
the same as is common in most situations. This category
simply means that this is a group of lower-level directors
in the Soka Gakkai organization, not having final authority as
a board.

the data. This means that 15 of the top 30 men in Komeito, or, if one includes the vice general-directors, 24 of the top 82 Gakkai leaders were also on the 30-man Central Staff Committee. The implication should be obvious. The party, given its present relationship with Soka Gakkai, could not conceivably act as an independent unit.

There is one tie that is even more important than the above. In 1966, the Gakkai president, Ikeda, created a six man special board of general administrators (all are included in the above 25 man general-administrator category) that would have special powers and were to work personally with Ikeda.[13] These six men, next to the president, are in the most influential positions in Soka Gakkai and act as personal advisors to Ikeda. Five of these six men, Takeiri, Hojo, Tsuji, Shiraki and Kodaira are also members of the Diet, but even more important, four are on the permanent executive of the Central Staff Committee.[14] Takeiri is chairman of the Central Staff Committee, Hojo is first vice-chairman, Shiraki is second vice-chairman and Tsuji is the party councillor. It is at this point that the interlocking nature of the directorship and Ikeda's ties to Komeito become most apparent.

[13]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 63.

[14]Hojo was named the head of this six man "informal" board and before that he was the general director of Soka Gakkai as well as the chairman of the Central Staff Committee of Komeito.

Even though Ikeda is not formally listed as a member of
Komeito, given the role relationship of Takeiri, Shiraki,
Hojo and Tsuji to the Gakkai president, one must conclude
that Daisaku Ikeda is the de facto president of Komeito.'
This would account for the lack of a formal party president.

The Position of Daisaku Ikeda

Daisaku Ikeda, as has been indicated above, became
president of Soka Gakkai in 1960 at the age of thirty-two. He
joined Soka Gakkai in 1947 and shortly thereafter developed
a very close master-disciple relationship with Josei Toda.
He became the director of the Young Men's Division in 1952
at about twenty-two years of age, and organized the first
Soka Gakkai election campaign in 1955. Since becoming
president, his image among the Gakkai members has evolved into
one of being an earthly representative of Saint Nichiren,
incapable of error.[15] He is the supreme authority in all
Soka Gakkai matters.[16]

Ikeda does not, however, make policy decisions on
a unilateral basis. Decision-making in Soka Gakkai and
Komeito usually involves a process of mutual consultation
among the leaders on the top levels. The objective seems to
be one of trying to achieve a consensus among the leadership

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[15]Hiroi Takase, Shukyo, p. 131.

[16]Ibid., p. 132.

by way of discussions in which each participant is permitted
and even encouraged to express his personal views. This
often means that for political policy, although Ikeda is
consulted, the actual formulation can take place at some
level in the hierarchy below him--usually in the party
Central Staff Committee.[17] Ikeda's role relationship with
his subordinates in the party has one special attribute for
the party decision-making process in that, by deferring to
Ikeda in cases of disagreement, party factionalism can be
avoided.[18] Factionalism is perceived by Komeito as one of
the greatest evils besetting the Japanese political system
since they construe this phenomenon to be a product of selfish
personal interests which ignore the public good. The practical
advantage of Ikeda's position in Komeito is that the party
can present a public image of cohesion and solidarity by
avoiding serious internal disputes.

One of Ikeda's functions as party leader is to announce
many of the major party policies. New policies and programs
are often presented by Ikeda in his public speeches, in
articles written by him for the party newspaper, at press
conferences and at the party convention. Party policy announce-
ments by Ikeda have the added effect of giving legitimacy to

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[17]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 158.

[18]Ibid.

Komeito policies and activities in the eyes of the
Soka Gakkai membership.[19]

Komeito Candidate Selection

To date all national candidates have been chosen by
the Soka Gakkai leadership.[20] Candidates at prefectural and
local levels are also picked by Gakkai leaders. Although the
authority to select officers below the national level some-
times resides lower in the hierarchy, it nonetheless is subject
to approval from Gakkai headquarters.

In choosing its candidates Soka Gakkai applies three
main criteria.[21] First, insofar as possible, the candidate is
selected from the region that he will represent.[22] He is
usually selected from among the Gakkai leaders living in that
area and is therefore known and trusted by local members as
well as by the Gakkai authorities. There have been a couple
of cases where candidates have been moved so they could run
in another district; but this is unusual.[23] The second
criterion is past political experience, or perhaps expertise

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[19]For examples; see Daisaku Ikeda, "A Proposal on the
China Issue," _Economic Salon_, January 1969, p. 30, and
Komei Shimbun, January 1, 1967, p. 1.

[20]Nishijima, _Komeito_, p. 24.

[21]_Ibid._

[22]_Ibid._, p. 25.

[23]_Ibid._

in some special area that might be useful for the party.
The third standard for selection is the availability of a
potential candidate. Sometimes a Gakkai member indicates
a desire to run for office, but this is not by any means a
key to candidacy. If for some reason the leaders feel that
a person is unqualified or undesirable as a representative,
they refuse permission for candidacy.

After potential candidates have been nominated, each
nominee's background, character, ability and qualifications,
including religious service and faith, are carefully examined
by the Gakkai board of directors, the vice general-directors,
the general administrators and the Central Staff Committee
of the party.[24] After the examination, Ikeda is consulted
and, if permission is given, the nominee is formally asked
whether he will consent to run as a candidate. Normally the
nominee consents since candidacy is tantamount to a religious
assignment. Occasionally personal circumstances prohibit
the nominee's accepting the assignment, in which case an
alternate is selected.

Soka Gakkai has stated publicly that a qualified person
not in Soka Gakkai might be accepted as a candidate and given

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[24]The examination process is not as complicated as it
appears, due to the interlocking-directorate aspect of the
executive and the fact that personnel committees do most of
the evaluation.

Gakkai support.[25] This, however, seems unlikely since
qualifications for candidacy include acceptance of the
Gakkai program and the philosophical underpinnings of that
program--i.e., the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism from which
stem the Gakkai interpretation of the nature of politics
and society. If a non-Gakkai candidate had these qualifi-
cations, there would be no reason for him not to affiliate with
Soka Gakkai. Therefore, at least for the immediate future, it
is unlikely that there will be Komeito candidates that are
not Soka Gakkai members.

In summary it can be said that the Komeito leadership
is a tightly-knit and centrally organized group with inter-
locking ties to the mother organization, Soka Gakkai. The
real source of authority for the party emanates from the
vicinity of the Soka Gakkai president and those few main
religious and political leaders who immediately surround him.
The party leadership in the broader sense have in common their
affiliation with Soka Gakkai and high-level Gakkai leadership
positions. They are also relatively young for Japanese
political leaders, come generally from the middle class, and
only have a moderate level of educational achievement. Finally,
they seem to represent proportionately fewer of the business
community, rural interests, the intellectual community and the

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[25]Nishijima, _Komeito_, pp. 26-27.

laboring class, than do other major Japanese parties.
However, these leaders and their party have made a definite
impression on the Japanese people. This impact, which will
be discussed later, can be attributed to their political
abilities and their indefatigable zeal. It must not be
forgotten, however, that it was the large membership of
Soka Gakkai, and hence the party supporters, that put these
leaders into office. Therefore, the next area of focus will
be the composition and structure of the Gakkai membership.

CHAPTER III

PARTY ELECTORAL SUPPORT: COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE

Formal Party Membership

As a rule Japanese parties do not have large popular memberships. Voter/registration is automatic through residential registration in the city or town of residence. This registration must precede an election by at least three months if one desires to vote, but party identification per se is not a part of the process.[1] Therefore, political parties have to recruit members on a club-like basis, and the usual criterion of membership is the payment of a few yen in the form of party dues. There is no built-in inducement for party affiliation except possible personal interest. As of 1965, Japanese parties had memberships amounting to: Liberal Democrats - 1,700,000 (of which less than 300,000 were really hard core); Japan Socialist Party - 60,000; Democratic-Socialists - 60,000; and Communist Party - 150,000.[2]

Following the established pattern, Komeito formed a political support unit in October, 1965. It was called the

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[1] Ardath W. Burks, The Government of Japan (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1964), p. 95.

[2] Frank Langdon, Politics in Japan (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), pp. 155, 137, 138 & 141.

Zaidan Hojin Komei Kyokai (Komei Association Corporate
Foundation), and the party intended that 50,000 persons
would be enrolled therein, each paying a monthly fee of
100 yen.[3] Although the actual requirements seem to have been
adjusted,[4] the party now claims a formal membership of 100,000
persons. These members are registered in chapters, one
established in each prefecture.

The party chapters are closely tied to the elected
representatives at the prefectural and city assembly levels,
but are administered by the party Organization Bureau, which
is immediately under the office of the secretary general. The
party research and information bureaus also have representatives
in each chapter, which enables these bureaus to have contact
at the grass-roots level for both propaganda and research
purposes.[5]

The prefectural and local assembly members usually
become the executives for the chapters, and their working
staff comes from the registered party members as well as any
interested Gakkai members that may not be formally registered.
There is some evidence that formal party membership is not
stressed extensively at this time, and one might conclude

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[3]Yamashita, "Notes," p. 4.

[4]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 233.

[5]Figure 1 on page 33 indicates this relationship.

that party staff work and research is considered to be an

assignment and duty of Gakkai membership. In a press

release of January 22, 1969, however, Komeito officials

indicated an intention to increase the stress on formal party

organization activities, implying that formal membership may

become more important. They said:

> The Komeito will steadily carry out regional
> and daily activities in the cities and rural
> areas. It will adapt and promote, and steadily
> accumulate accomplishments through deeds and acts.
>
> . . .various activities have [already] been
> carried out through prefectural chapters, such
> as the overall survey of military bases, [and the]
> establishment in all cities, towns and villages
> of a mutual relief system of [sic] traffic
> disasters . . ..
>
> Regional activities and citizens consultations
> should be directly linked to party headquarters,
> and conducted to improve the lot of the people
> whom the government have ignored. Such activities
> should be conducted with heartfelt devotion and
> without regard to party interest.[6]

One should note in the above statement that two of the main

functions of local membership are indicated. The first,

a research function, is the allusion to a survey in 1968

of all American military bases and the attitudes of the

people living in the areas surrounding them. For that study,

797 assemblymen and 1,000 party members were mobilized from

the twenty-one chapters in those prefectures where American

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[6]Komeito, Main Program, pp. 23-24.

military bases were located.[7] The second major function,

a propaganda, research and public service function, is indicated

by the reference to the relief system for traffic disasters

and by the statement about citizens' consultations. The relief

system is apparently a group insurance-type approach that is

operated in conjunction with the citizens' consultation centers.

The centers, over 7,000 of them scattered throughout Japan,

will be discussed in another context, but it is important to

note that they are manned entirely by local members of the

party in conjunction with regional and local assemblymen.

The formal party membership, it seems then, serves

more as a party staff and a source of manpower for party

activities rather than as the core of the campaign and

electoral rank and file. These members may become more

important in the future in the policy-making sense if Chairman

Takeiri's announcement of August 19, 1968 can be taken at

face value. At that time he said that the "policy discussion

at the [next] party convention . . . will be held in full view

of the public."[8] Since a number of non-assemblymen members

also participate, the implication of the announcement was

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[7]Komeito, Evaluations by Various Newspapers: Tribute
Paid to Initiative Displayed in [Military Base] Survey,
Press release, [December, 1968].

[8]Emerson Chapin, " A Buddhist Party is Force in Japan,"
New York Times, August 22, 1968, p. 3 (Hereinafter referred to
as "Buddhist Party").

that more debate would be permitted by the members, but the convention referred to was held January 20-21, 1969 and in practice it was little different from previous conventions.

Although the formal membership have a relatively more important role than do the grass-roots supporters of Komeito, it is the Soka Gakkai organization that is far more important as a source of electoral supporters and campaign workers. The regular members of the Gakkai organization can be called the supporting membership (see Figure 4, page 130).

Supporting Membership

Soka Gakkai claims a total membership of over 12 million, or as they calculate membership, something over 6 million family units. The fact that Komeito's nine successful candidates[9] on the national slate (out of a total of 50 elected on the national slate for all parties) polled an aggregate of 6,656,771 votes (one vote per person), or 15.4% of the total votes cast, is a rough indication that they could have over 12 million followers in a country of about 100 million people.[10]

Before looking at the organizational structure of Soka Gakkai, it is appropriate that something be said about its members; who they are and why they are so zealous in their beliefs. Although there have been few detailed socio-

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[9]Japanese Consulate General of New York, Japan Today, p. 7.

[10]Yamashita, "Notes," p. 6.

economic surveys taken of the Gakkai membership, there are several key indications as to the general composition of the group.

First of all, the nature of the appeals of Soka Gakkai are generally those stressing relief from misery, a sense of belonging and economic prosperity. These indicate an appeal to the down and out, the economically deprived and the socially disoriented. Secondly, one finds that the strongest voting support comes from the urban areas and primarily from the less wealthy (but not always the poorest) sections. These people are often inclined to be rather marginal in income, the recent transplants from the country-side, and occupationally, they are laborers, small shopkeepers, small businessmen and petty bureaucrats in government and business. Thirdly, the testimonials (used abundantly in most Gakkai publications as documentary evidence of cases where dreams, wealth and health have been realized and problems solved) listed in the various media are often (but by no means always) testimonials from the above-indicated groups. Fourth, the leaders themselves do not seem to have come from the more prosperous elements of Japanese society, but rather from what might be called the Japanese lower-middle class. That these indicators are fairly reliable is verified by the statements of nearly every person who has observed and reported on the Gakkai movement. Finally, of the hundreds of Gakkai members

throughout Japan that the writer observed and conversed with,

most would fit the pattern indicated above.

Recently, more substantial research into the composition

of the Gakkai membership has been undertaken and perhaps the

study by Dator is the most significant.[11] Dator and his

associates conducted a survey in Tokyo in 1965 and then com-

pared and contrasted their findings with three Japanese studies

(two in 1962 and one in 1965) of the Gakkai membership.[12]

Although each study had its unique features and its definite

limitations, there were many areas in which comparisons were

possible. Furthermore, on three of the four studies, the

Gakkai characteristics were compared with the attributes of

their non-Gakkai neighbors. Each survey considered educational

background, income and age; three studies surveyed occupation;

and two attempted to categorize their respondents into social

classes. Dator also contrasted Gakkai members with the affil-

iates of other religious groups (and those claiming no religious

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[11]James Allen Dator, Soka Gakkai, Builders of the
Third Civilization (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington
Press, 1969), (Hereafter referred to as Third Civilization).

[12]The other studies that were considered were: Hiroshi
Suzuki, "Toshi Kaso no Shukyo Shudan," Shakaigaku Kenkyu,
No. 22 (1963), pp. 81-102, No. 23/24 (1964), pp. 50-90;
Tokyo Daigaku Shakai Gakka and Tokyo Joshi Daigaku Shakai
Gakka, Soka Gakkai (Tokyo: Mimeographed, 1963); Tajiro Hayasaka,
Shinko Shukyo ni Kansuru Shinrigakuteki Kenkyu (Tokyo:
Mimeographed, 1965).

affiliation), in terms of demographic and social characteristics
as well as regarding their respective attitudes. After the
research and comparisons were completed, Dator concluded that:

> . . .the Soka Gakkai members are in the lower,
> but not the lowest, socioeconomic strata of
> Japanese society; that they are a somewhat less
> satisfied and more 'friendless' group; that they
> generally had no religious affiliation before
> joining the Soka Gakkai, and joined to relieve
> a physical, mental or sociological distress. . ..[13]

It was found in each study that by far the most common occupations
of Gakkai members were office work, shop work, skilled labor,
and artisans, although one study that was conducted in a poorer
section of Tokyo found a large percentage (36%) of unskilled
laborers.[14] Regarding attitudes and values, Dator also found
that Gakkai members were only slightly more alienated than the
average non-members, but that they trusted public authority much
less than did most other Japanese citizens. Soka Gakkai
members generally fell somewhere between the average non-
religion-oriented person and the average member of a new religious
sect--hence, they manifested more negative attitudes than did
many, but they did not constitute the most alienated element
in Japanese society.[15]

Further research may provide a more precise picture of

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[13]Dator, Third Civilization, p. 93.

[14]Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[15]Ibid., p. 105.

the Gakkai membership, but all of the above evidence suggests
that Soka Gakkai members generally come from the lower-middle
and lower classes. Therefore, one can conclude that these
people are probably very sensitive to the economic and social
changes in society and that they are types of persons who are
seeking novel means for increasing their security and status
in Japanese society.

What has been suggested is true of the large bulk of
the membership. There are, however, thousands of exceptions
and it is these exceptions that are often played up in Soka
Gakkai publications in an apparent effort to broaden Gakkai
appeal. Almost any issue of the <u>Seikyo</u> <u>Shimbun</u>, and more
particularly the <u>Seikyo</u> <u>Graphic</u>, contains numerous testimonials
of movie stars, popular singers, businessmen, college professors,
students, artists, professionals and famous athletes. It
cannot be denied that there are significant numbers of these
people. By publicly stressing that famous persons and
"respectable types" of people affiliate with Soka Gakkai, the
organization can improve its public image.[16] Youth also seem
to be attracted to Soka Gakkai, perhaps because of its youthful

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[16]Dator also found this to be the case when he
systematically studied testimonials of members found in the
<u>Seikyo</u> <u>Graphic</u> over a period of approximately two years.
Those offering testimonials usually formed a profile almost
exactly opposite to the membership profile he found in his
survey research. See Dator, <u>Third</u> <u>Civilization</u>, p. 60.

leadership and activism. The University Student Division

of Soka Gakkai, for example, claims 230,000 members, or

approximately one in seven of the total university population.[17]

One can only speculate as to why these various types

of people have affiliated themselves with Soka Gakkai. The

reasons probably vary with the individual, but from the

above information one can make some psychological and socio-

economic generalizations. First of all, the defeat of Japan

and the chaos that followed World War II were tremendously

demoralizing for many Japanese, as has been attested to by

the rise of numerous new and rather diverse religious move-

ments in Japan as well as by the proliferation of such

Marxist-oriented groups as the socialist parties, the Communist

party and the radical element of the student organization,

Zengakuren.[18] The appearance of these various movements

indicates that numerous people were seeking new answers to

their perplexing problems. Such an explanation is somewhat

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[17]Brannen, Soka Gakkai, p. 81. Also see, Ikeda, "A
Proposal on China Issue," p. 30.

[18]For expositions on these religions see for examples:
Brannen, Soka Gakkai; Harry Thomsen, The New Religions of
Japan (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1963); McFarland, Rush
Hour of the Gods; and Offner and Straelen, Modern Japanese
Religions. For political movements, see Evelyn S. Colbert,
The Left Wing in Japanese Politics (New York: Institute of
Pacific Politics, 1952); and Cecil H. Uyehara, Leftwing Social
Movements in Japan: An Annotated Bibliography (Tokyo: Charles E.
Tuttle Co., 1959).

inadequate today, however, because Japanese society appears
to be much more stable and prosperous. Although it is true
that there are many in Japan who do not share this new pros-
perity in any significant way (and they might be logical
recruits for Gakkai membership), one must seek other reasons
for Gakkai affiliation. One factor helping to explain the
affiliation of large numbers of people with Soka Gakkai is
the rapidly changing society itself, with its rapid urban-
ization and growing complexity, compounded by essentially
alien political institutions to which many Japanese have had
difficulty adjusting.[19] This argument has some credibility
due to the fact that the Gakkai movement is strongest in the
cities (the rural membership is relatively negligible) and
among elements that the present Japanese government has
apparently been unable to represent effectively.

It seems that most Western scholars who study Japan
tend to dwell on the tremendous economic, cultural and
social progress in Japan or they focus on the apparent
strength of the underlying Japanese social fabric. Although
Japanese progress in many areas has been phenomenal and the

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[19] For a discussion of these problems see: Tadashi
Fukutake, Man and Society in Japan (Tokyo: University of
Tokyo Press, 1962), pp. 36-51; also see, John W. Bennett,
"Japanese Economic Growth: Background for Social Change," in
R. P. Dore, ed., Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan
(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 411-53.

societal fabric appears remarkably durable, many commentators
fail to detect or at least consider the deleterious effect
that industrialization and urbanization have had on that
fabric. Japan suffers from the same social problems and ills
that have aggravated Western cities since the beginning of the
Industrial Revolution; but the long range effect for Japan
may be worse than was the case for the West, precisely because
the older social structure and culture is strong and resists
those changes that would enhance life in an urban environment.
When it does begin to break down, the consequences are often
far-reaching. Therefore, one can probably argue that the
single-most important factor in Japanese society that lends
itself to Gakkai exploitation is the basic breakdown of the
traditional social structure and value system.

Although some people are affected more than others,
the war, urbanization, alien institutions and a more complex
society have all contributed to this breakdown, and have
caused alienation, anomie and a loss of personal identity.[20]
Those on the lower levels of the socio-economic ladder are
particularly affected, but any Japanese citizen can sense loss
of self in the maze of urban society and culture. For sheer
self-survival--more in the spiritual or psychological sense
than the material, though the two may be intertwined--the

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[20]Fukutake, Man and Society in Japan, pp. 36-40.

individual seeks some purpose, identity and sense of belonging.
The traditional social structure and culture provided these
things, but it is being undermined by a rapidly changing
environment. In this "social chaos" a dynamic organization
with simple answers for complex problems and patent panaceas
for all problems would appeal to many. Soka Gakkai is that
type of organization and furthermore it is of definite
Japanese vintage. As Dator has put it, Soka Gakkai "appeals
to and rallies around it persons who perhaps feel more acutely
the dissatisfactions that are prevalent in most of Japanese
society."[21] In fact, a rather complimentary commentary on
Soka Gakkai is that, as an organization and belief system, it
has been able to appeal successfully to such large numbers
and apparently retain the loyalty of most--although some do
leave or become inactive.[22]

Although the religious beliefs of Nichiren Shoshu
may in fact be a part of the attraction of the Soka Gakkai
movement, there are probably other aspects that are just as
important for many and, if the above analysis is correct, the
organizational structure, activities, zeal and spirit of the
members would be the keys to the recruitment and retention

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[21]Dator, Third Civilization, p. 102.

[22]Some instances of revolt or apostasy have been noted,
for example, see Brannen, Soka Gakkai, pp. 83-86, and
Takase, Shukyo, pp. 197-201.

of new converts.

Most persons do not actively go out in pursuit of a religious group membership, and the Gakkai group does not wait for an applicant, but takes the message "to the people." Nichiren first introduced the conversion tactic, shakubuku, to Japanese Buddhism, and Josei Toda made it a key feature of his program in the 1950's. The practice is essentially a high-pressure approach for convincing the potential convert of the truthfulness of Nichiren Buddhism and the importance of immediate affiliation with Soka Gakkai.[23] Using induce-ments ranging from threats to logical argument, the member seeks to persuade the nonmember. Probably the most effective conversion situation is where a small group of Gakkai members can work together to convert their colleagues in their office, at their factory, or at some other place of work or play. The group pressure that is brought to bear is often such as to put the potential convert in a position of either capitulating or breaking off a close relationship. Since the conversion of others is one of the most important acts of faith and service in Soka Gakkai, and a prerequisite for the realization

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[23]It is conceivable that in many cases pressure is not essential for recruitment. Simple exposure of the nonmember to Soka Gakkai is sufficient for someone seeking novel answers to personal problems. The important thing is that the Gakkai members be sufficiently zealous in their activities to keep up their recruitment pace.

of the person's desires (health, wealth or happiness), the member is often very aggressive in this practice. Under Toda there were extreme cases of harassment and high-pressuring, but with Ikeda's concern for a better image, today's practitioners of shakubuku seem to be relatively more respectful of a nonmember's rights and privacy (and possibly less effective). Those persons who are persuaded, for one reason or another, are conducted into Nichiren Shoshu by way of a short ritual and become laymen in the Gakkai society. The zealous shakubuku activities have provided the numbers for Soka Gakkai, but it is the organization and its activities that keep them there.

The basic Soka Gakkai structure is composed of two hierarchies. Although a member may also participate in other divisions or activity groups (such as the elaborately structured Youth Division), every member of Soka Gakkai is included in both of these fundamental structural hierarchies (see Figure 2, page 71). Therefore, these two hierarchies combined form the backbone of the Gakkai organization.

The first hierarchy, called the vertical line, is the religious guidance and membership indoctrination structure.[24] Every new member is automatically assigned to the lowest unit of this structure, the unit or cell, by virtue of the fact that

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[24]Takase, Shukyo, p. 97.

Fig. 2 - - Soka Gakkai Organization

Fig. 2 - - Soka Gakkai Organization
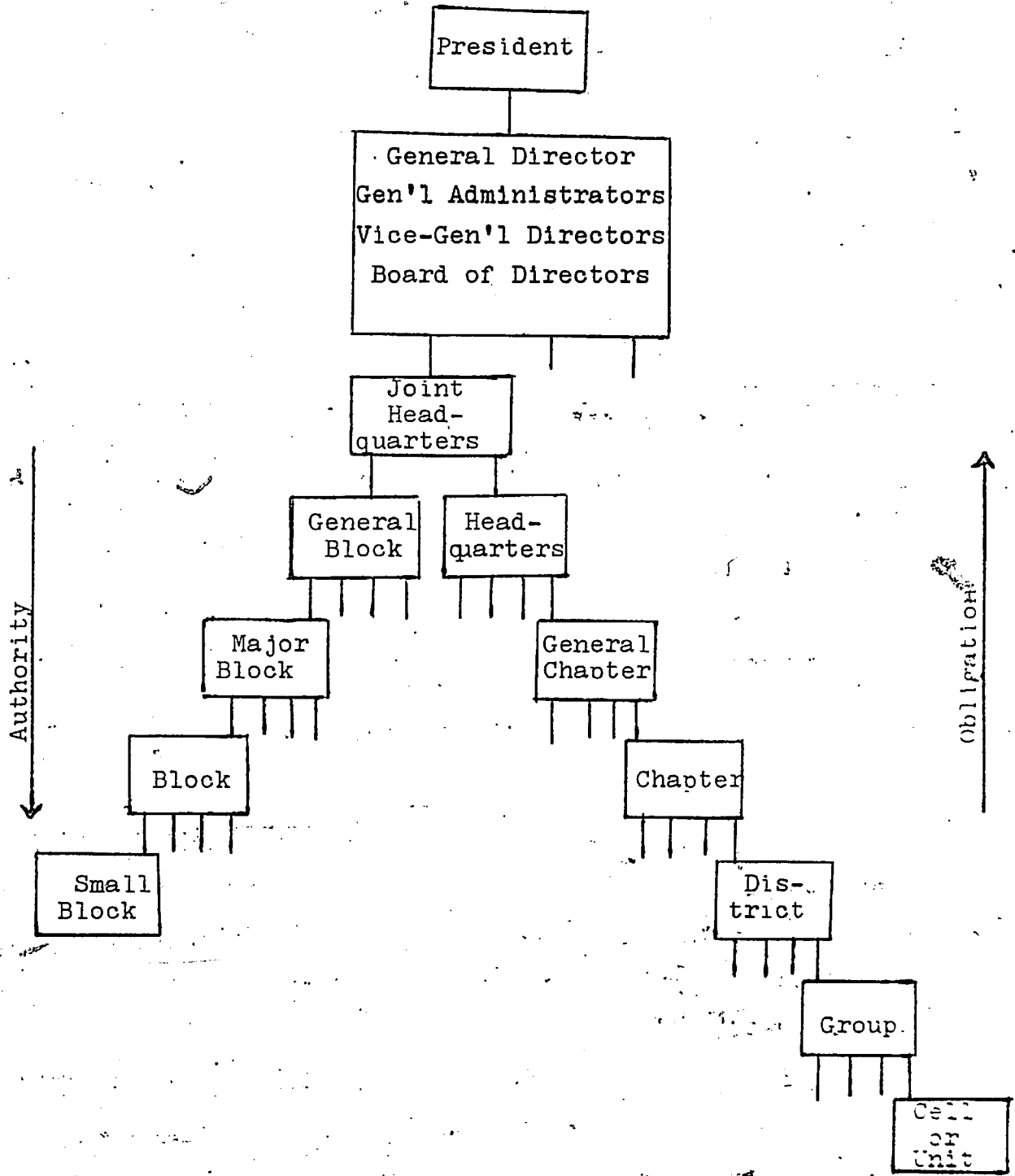
he is tied to the cell of the member who played the most

important role in his conversion to Soka Gakkai. Using one

of the most significant traditional social values, the convert

becomes the "disciple" or ko (child) of the one who converted

him. The one doing the proselyting assumes the role of "master"

or oya (parent) of that person, and oya and ko become irrevocably

tied together.[25] The basic social ethic of giri (wherein the

superior takes a personal responsibility for the converted,

while the convert assumes certain obligations to his superior)

is then activated.[26] The novice will later contract obligations

of the same nature with those that he converts. Through this

system, which is based essentially on the traditional Japanese

social structure, the individual is tied to a network of

relationships as expansive as Soka Gakkai is large. Because

of the absolute demands of Soka Gakkai's religious beliefs,

the convert is now enabled to sever any other conflicting

social obligations he may have had outside the group. As a

Gakkai member, the convert is not supposed to discuss the

merits of any philosophy other than his own, and often his

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[25]For a rather sophisticated explanation of this
phenomenon, see Ruth Benedict, Chrysanthemum and the Sword
(Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1946); Also see Langdon,
Politics in Japan, pp. 72-95.

[26]Harry K. Nishio, "Comparative Analysis of the Rissho
Koseikai and the Soka Gakkai," Asian Survey, VII, (November,
1969), 783, (Hereinafter referred to as "Rissho Koseikai and
Soka Gakkai").

knowledge of Nichiren Buddhism will be little more than a simplistic explanation such as is characteristic of memorized material.

Although this inter-personal relationship is expected to be permanent, it is worked into the formal vertical structure by including the new member in the basic unit or cell of the old member. The cell is composed of approximately ten families.[27] When the cell expands, it is divided, giving special consideration to these inter-personal relationship factors, and stressing the importance of the traditional Japanese social ties.

The cell is also the locus of the _zadankai_ or discussion group. The _zadankai_ meetings occur daily and are the lowest group meetings where the basic doctrines are taught and discussed. It is also a meeting where the individual can speak about his experiences and testify to the efficacy of faithful worship. Finally, in the _zadankai_ an individual's personal problems are brought out and advice is given to him by the group in a group-therapy type situation. This, then, is the level where the individual is socialized, adopts new

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[27]The family unit, _setai_ in Japanese, is the basic membership unit in Soka Gakkai. However, were only one member of a particular family converted, he is still counted as a family unit. This accounts for the difficulty of precise measurement of the Gakkai membership, but is justified on the grounds that it is that one member's obligation to convert his family, and that eventually the full family will be affiliated with Soka Gakkai.

values, and gets the sense of being a part of the Gakkai
system. Every man, no matter what his social status might
be outside the group, is considered an equal within this
group. A shopkeeper may teach and advise a professor or
a young man might teach an elderly gentleman.

The cells are combined into groups (sometimes called
teams) of 50 to 100 households, and the groups combine into
districts comprising from 500 to 1,000 households. Districts
are combined to form a chapter and several chapters form a
general chapter. General chapters are grouped into a local
headquarters, and local headquarters are combined to form
a general or joint headquarters, which is in turn linked with
the headquarters of Soka Gakkai in Tokyo.[28] As of January 1,
1968, there were 57 general headquarters, 195 local headquarters,
718 general chapters, 3,818 chapters, 17,453 districts, tens
of thousands of groups and hundreds of thousands of cells in
the Gakkai organization.[29]

An executive body presides at each level and it is
in charge of the frequent meetings of its respective office.
On the district and group levels, these meetings are usually
education- and doctrine-oriented, and the basic educational
program is tied to the structure by a hierarchy of educators

[28]Nishio, "Rissho Koseikai and Soka Gakkai," pp. 783-84.

[29]Yamashita, "Notes," p. 2.

with titles of assistant lecturer, lecturer, sub-assistant professor, assistant professor, associate professor and professor.[30] One qualifies for each title by studying and memorizing the basic tenets of faith and then taking a written examination. Having passed an examination, one assumes his title and has a license for lecturing on that body of dogma and doctrine that is associated with that degree of achievement. Anyone is permitted to study and qualify for a new lecture title, and it is usually expected of all.

The importance of this educational program and of the vertical hierarchy for politics is that the religious symbols and beliefs that are communicated herein are closely associated with Gakkai political beliefs and practices. Another important factor, as will be discussed later, is that the leaders of this hierarchy are usually the Komeito candidates. Soka Gakkai stresses frequent contact between these leaders and the general membership, so members are usually well-acquainted with the persons who will be their political representatives.

Turning now to the second hierarchy, it should be recalled that each Gakkai member is also included in its structure. The unique feature of this "horizontal" line or regional structure is that it is based entirely on geography.

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[30]Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai: '64 Shashinshu, p. 58.

In 1955, when Soka Gakkai first decided to enter into politics, the leadership realized that although their basic organizational structure was very good for socializing converts and teaching the religious doctrines to members, it was nonetheless awkward for mobilizing support at election time, since inter-personal relationships do not follow geographical lines. Therefore, a new structure called a "block" system was instituted. This structure has as its smallest unit the "small block," which is often synonymous with a city block or a part of a city block (probably the origin of the block concept). Using the English word for block, pronounced buroku in Japanese, this structure progresses (as can be seen in Figure 2, page 71) to the regular block, major block, general block and joint block--each successively larger unit being a combination of smaller units and carefully correlated to existing political boundaries.[31] Some of the persons in a small block may also be in the same cell, but not necessarily. This block structure has obvious advantages for politics and other activities, since all Gakkai members in one area can be mobilized for the support of a local Gakkai candidate, and because activities such as sports events, musical clubs and youth group activities can be convened more easily at the local level for those people in close geographical

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[31]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 65.

proximity to each other.

Using what might be called a synthesis of traditional and modern structures, Soka Gakkai can get the best of both worlds, i.e., it can simultaneously socialize and mobilize its adherents. Since group solidarity is an essential contributing factor to both their electoral successes and their proselyting zeal, brief mention need be made of various factors that contribute to the building of solidarity, or a sense of belonging and a sense of personal and group power.

Daily religious practices are stressed;[32] group activities of various sorts are encouraged; and frequent trips to the head temple, Taisekiji, are expected.[33] All these keep the member preoccupied with his faith and his peer group. The individual not only develops a sense of belonging but also a sense of personal achievement and fulfillment through the educational program and the opportunities for leadership at all levels in the various activity groups. Particularly important for the process are the mass meetings, large assemblies and festivals, where group singing of spirited songs and the oratory of self-confident and dynamic leaders gives one a sense of personal and group power. In conversations

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[32] See Overseas Bureau, Sokagakkai, How to Practice Gongyo (This is the Sokagakkai, series 12, Tokyo: Seikyo Press, n.d.).

[33] Takase, Shukyo, pp. 202-20.

that the writer has had with Gakkai members, one common means of explaining why the member believed the religion was true was to say that "he could feel it through his skin." One has no doubt that such a feeling prevails when 100,000 members sing a rousing Gakkai song, or President Ikeda speaks to a large body. Soka Gakkai has also used its building program and expansion into cultural activities as visible symbols of progress and growth, and these are bound to convince the member that the movement is really going places. Flags and other symbols are used to give identity to the small group at large gatherings, and all events and activities are organized with a precision that astounds the outsider and must inspire the participant.[34] These as well as other possible factors contribute to group cohesion and identity, and a sense of personal and group power.

When one reflects on the nature of the organization, the stress on total involvement for the individual, and the belief that they are the propagators of "True Buddhism" which in turn will be the salvation of Japan, one better understands why the Soka Gakkai membership is such a reliable electoral support group. Both structures in the organization, as described above, contribute to this process and it therefore

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[34]For examples see Takase, Shukyo, pp. 7-20, 51-60, 202-20, and Brannen, Soka Gakkai, pp. 155-56.

should be no surprise that one would find most Komeito

candidates holding positions of leadership in Soka Gakkai

at some point where the two structures tie together. In

describing the first hierarchy, it was pointed out that the

top level next to the Gakkai headquarters was the general

headquarters. As is seen in Figure 2, page 71, the joint

headquarters is also the point where the block hierarchy

joins with the vertical structure.[35] The leaders of these

joint headquarters are automatically members of the central

authority, and since they are selected from above, they are

considered to be very reliable in the faith and, hence,

reliable as political representatives. These same leaders

have numerous opportunities for contacts with the members

in their particular districts and can be easily identified

when the Gakkai member casts his vote. It is not surprising

to find, therefore, that as of 1968, twenty-six Komeito

Diet members (22 of whom were also on the party Central Staff

Committee) were also presidents of joint headquarters and

eight were vice presidents. The remaining eleven held

important posts at the Gakkai headquarters or were in

regional posts just subordinate to the joint headquarters,

but in easily identified positions of leadership. Im most

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[35]The Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai, (Tokyo: Seikyo Press,
1966), p. 14.

cases, there would be little need for specific voting

instructions to the voters since they would vote for that

person who was from their particular area and who was their

closest religious leader. This pattern holds true for local

assembly elections as well. Therefore, it matters little

whether the local leader wears his political hat or his

religious hat when campaigning or organizing his followers

for a campaign among local non-Gakkai members. The two

roles are completely intertwined at this point. Since it is

a religious duty to follow the directives of the religious

leader, it becomes a religious duty to vote for him when he

runs for political office. However, this is a fact that is

not necessarily articulated.

When there is no Komeito candidate running in the

district, apparently there are no specific guidelines given

to the member in voting for non-Gakkai candidates. According

to one survey, Gakkai members in this situation seemed to

split, voting about equally for conservative and socialist

candidates.[36]

From the above one can clearly see the intertwined

nature of the religious and political activities of Soka Gakkai

and Komeito. Since the Gakkai membership is regimented and

controlled by the nature of the structure, the manipulation

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[36]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 123.

of religious and political symbols and the requirements of
religious service, the original thesis that Soka Gakkai
members are supporting members of Komeito becomes self-
evident. There must, however, be a peculiarly political
element (at least for analytical purposes) in the above-
described phenomena; therefore the nature and process of
political communication needs to be studied in greater detail.

Political Communication

Political communication can be defined as the symbols,
language and processes which are used to communicate demands
to political representatives, and which the representatives
use to respond to those demands.[37] One finds that the nature
of Soka Gakkai and Komeito is similar to that of an independent
society and therefore much easier to generalize about than
would be the case for a less insular group. Since members are
encouraged to ignore the teachings, ideas and values of other
religions, philosophies and non-Gakkai persons, it is inevitable
(to the extent that they observe this admonition) that their
sources of political information come from Soka Gakkai or
Komeito. To supply this need Soka Gakkai has created a publishing
empire that provides every conceivable type of publication.

The non-political publications are important for

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[37]Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., _Comparative
Politics: A Developmental Approach_ (Boston: Little, Brown and
Co., 1966), pp. 164-71.

communication since some political news and information is included amid the regular news, testimonials, injunctions and religious propaganda. Furthermore, the columnists, editorialists and feature writers are often Komeito leaders.

The most important newspaper is the _Seikyo Shimbun_ which had, as of December 1, 1968, a circulation of 3,580,000 or approximately one copy for every four members.[38] Besides the _Seikyo Shimbun_, there is the _Seikyo Graphic_ (a weekly with 1,080,000 circulation), the _Daibyoku-Renge_ (monthly with 2,000,000 circulation), the _Ushio_ (monthly, 350,000) and _Weekly Genron_ (570,000). The last two are relatively more intellectual in style, and contain articles of a more sophisticated nature written by members and non-members (though carefully selected to achieve the desired Gakkai posture).

The party organ is the daily _Komei Shimbun_, which had, as of December, 1968, a circulation of 800,000. This is the main medium used by the party leadership for communicating policies, statistics, and political news to the followers. All Gakkai leaders and members involved in the party activities, as well as other interested persons, are subscribers. The important thing is that the correct interpretations of

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[38] These statistics were provided by the Foreign Affairs Bureau of Soka Gakkai.

party policies, party values and party goals are spelled
out therein and that this information can be communicated to
all Gakkai members either by personal subscription or by way
of the leaders of its various groups. This organ also serves
as a means for reconciling Gakkai political values and goals
with the phenomena that exist beyond the Gakkai framework.
For example, the newspaper may have an article written by a
party leader in which he explains the existence of poverty in
a certain area as the consequence of the improper leadership
of the Japanese government, which has as its philosophical
base an evil or incorrect philosophy. However, if the govern-
ment would base its governmental philosophy on the teachings
of True Buddhism, it could easily solve the problem of poverty.
From such an article, the member is helped to understand why
poverty exists (i.e., a government based on an incorrect
philosophy), and that it is essential for him to work toward
solving this gross social problem by supporting Komeito
candidates and by converting more individuals to Nichiren
Buddhism. Also, Komeito policies and new slates of candidates
are usually first announced to the rank and file in this
paper, often by Ikeda himself.

Since the fusion of Buddhism and politics is the
ultimate goal of Soka Gakkai, all religious teachings have
some political significance, and the Gakkai educational
process essentially performs a process of political indoctrin-

ation. This is particularly true in that the religious teachings, concepts and symbols that the leadership use to explain political phenomena, are learned in the educational program. One is able to develop a world view that neatly packages all observable phenomena into the Nichiren Buddhist context. Therefore, the symbols, when used by a leader or read in a newspaper, immediately conjure up an interpretation of the world in the mind of the follower.

Another sense of communication, alluded to earlier, is communicating to the Gakkai member the information concerning those for whom he should cast his vote. In most cases this would be the   leader running for office who is in closest proximity to a member in the Gakkai structure. As indicated earlier, this will usually be a person who has been seen and heard often by the member. In some cases, as in elections to the upper house where there is a national slate, it may not be clear for whom one should vote. Although there is ample opportunity for specific voting instructions, due to the frequent meetings at the various levels and because of the careful and precise structuring of the membership, there are other ways to communicate this information. For example, at a religious rally of 100,000 people held in Osaka in June, 1959, just prior to the official opening of the campaign, the local candidate was introduced as the principal "lecturer." He did not speak of the election, but

everyone knew that this man was their candidate.[39] Speeches

at rallies and meetings are filled with injunctions to keep

the faith, to bring about the "human revolution," to carry

the word to others and to save the nation and all mankind.

These injunctions, though not expressly political, certainly

have political implications.

Political communication from the party to the world

beyond is often in the form of indirect appeals for support,

based on its proposed programs (which will be covered in

Chapters 4 and 5), such as social welfare for the lower

classes, tax breaks for small enterprises, better working

conditions for labor, a new China policy for some businessmen

and Sinophiles, and limitations on armaments and nuclear

weapons for the pacifists. By scrutinizing its programs, it

can be rather accurately assumed to which segments of society

Komeito is appealing as well as the nature and composition

of its present following.

The second major type of appeal and communication

to those beyond Soka Gakkai is through the use of slogans

and symbols. The very name "Clean Government Party" is a

symbol of major significance, intended to appeal to those

Japanese who are shocked by bribery scandals, politicians

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[39]This rally was described in <u>Shukan Asahi</u>, June 6, 1959.
See Brannen, <u>Soka Gakkai</u>, pp. 121-22.

collecting contributions and using them for personal use, the
out-of-proportion influence of big business in the Liberal
Democratic party and the occasional "un-Japaneselike" behavior,
such as the fights, yelling and demonstrations of some
politicians in the Diet. A more recent slogan, "Middle-of-the-
Road-Politics," is apparently intended to appeal to those who
are disgusted with the perceived lackey-like ties of the
Japanese government to United States policy, as well as to
those who feel uncomfortable about the Socialist and Communist
parties with their apparent ties to and orientations toward
Moscow and Red China.[40]

The Komeito and Gakkai leadership use the regular
Japanese media as much as possible. News releases are fre-
quent and extensive, and any Komeito or Gakkai activity of
public service, or a new political proposal, is immediately
released to the regular press service. In 1968, Komeito
started a weekly radio program called "The Komeito Hour."
On this program they broadcast policy and program proposals
and their commentaries on current affairs.[41]

Another Komeito-sponsored activity that serves as

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[40]Joji Watanuki, [J], "Chudoseiji to Daisan Seiryoku;
Sono Kotoba to Genjitsu," [Middle of the Road Politics and the
Number Three Power; What is Said and What is Realistic] ,
Asahi Jyanaru, February 19, 1967, p. 18.

[41]Nishijima, Komeito, p. 228.

a means of communication is the Komeito Consulting Center.

Started in Tokyo in April, 1963, this public service

institution has expanded to 7,300 units scattered virtually

throughout Japan.[42] These centers are open to anyone with

problems of any kind and are located so as to be within the

reach of any Japanese citizen. They serve to communicate

Komeito policies to the public, and to gather information

and statistics about the needs of Japanese citizens, which

will become the basis for future Komeito proposals. About

fifty percent of the complaints received have to do with

housing, welfare, education and sanitation, and much of

their work is merely to dispense practical information about

public housing, government loans and national laws. In the

following paragraph, from a brochure put out by the party,

the basic purposes of the centers are spelled out:

> Most citizens are not well informed of
> National, prefectural or municipal laws
> and, therefore, have no recourse to them
> even when they are caught in hardships.
> The Komeito's public counselling centers
> offer assistance to those who cannot afford
> to pay taxes, medium-small enterprises with
> insufficient loans, widows who have to
> raise children, patients who cannot afford
> to pay medical fees, expectant mothers
> who want to have delivery fees paid,
> parents who cannot pay for compulsory
> education, physically handicapped or weak-

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[42]Letter dated May 12, 1969 from Tomiya Akiyama, Chief,
Foreign Affairs Bureau, Sokagakkai.

> minded people who want livelihood protection,
> old people above 65 and those who cannot
> afford to live a minimum standard of life.
> The Komeito assists all these people under
> existing laws.
>
> Recently, more and more people not related
> to the Komeito have come to visit the public
> counselling centers asking for assistance.[43]

These units serve a very effective two-way communication
purpose and certainly give the Japanese citizens who take
advantage of them a sense of closeness to the governmental
processes. The party staff members operate these centers, but
are under the direct supervision of the regional and local
Komeito political representatives, who are frequently available
in person. In 1968, more than 200,000 consultations took
place and it was announced in a recent press release that
350,000 consultations are expected during the year 1969.[44]
Both the problems of specific individuals and those of specific
categories of people are brought to the attention of the
Komeito representatives. They in turn, within the limitations
of the Komeito political influence, apparently make every
effort to solve both types of problems.

Political demands can be made by individuals through
the centers, by way of their religious authorities or directly
to the political representatives themselves. Many of the

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[43]Policy Bureau, Komeito, The Komeito.

[44]Komeito, Main Program, p. 23.

services that are associated with the old political boss machines in the United States are taken care of within the framework of the Gakkai organization. Due to its tightly-knit structure and stress on face-to-face relationships, persons needing jobs or financial assistance, or even bigger markets for goods, can usually get these needs satisfied within the Gakkai organization. Still, one suspects that the counselling centers, as a specialized brokerage, have taken over much of this work.

One final means of communicating claims is the implicit communication of the group demands of the various types of people found within the Gakkai membership. As indicated earlier, it is probably no accident, nor is it entirely a factor of seeking new areas of support, that many of the Komeito legislative proposals are oriented toward those specific types of people affiliated with Soka Gakkai, and often found among the leaders. Although proposals for public housing might appeal to most people in Japanese society, specific proposals that the government create better loan conditions for small enterprises or better safety regulations for miners are probably due to the fact that, explicitly or by implication of their membership in Soka Gakkai, these groups are making demands that have not been satisfied by other political groups. Although Komeito's ability to satisfy these demands with concrete legislation is still limited, at least the demands

are being channeled by that party to the center of government, and in the give-and-take of politics, some of the demands may well be responded to in a favorable manner. A more concrete response is contingent on future Gakkai growth.

Finally, although political communication in the Komeito and Soka Gakkai system is stultified somewhat by virtue of the fact that the center has the sole prerogative of interpreting what is good, bad or indifferent as political policy or political behavior, it is quite apparent that there is a basic functioning two-way communication system. In terms of matters other than rank-and-file choices of political candidates and political policies, it seems rather effective. One cannot help but be impressed that on basic bread-and-butter issues, the party policy proposals do represent the basic demands of their supporters.

After having looked at the leadership, the membership and the nature of their relationships and communication, it is appropriate to analyze the doctrines, values and ideological ideas of this movement. After all, these beliefs and ideas, presented as the one true philosophy, must have served as a key impetus for this movement and its successes to date.

CHAPTER IV

WORLD VIEW, IDEOLOGY AND TACTICAL PROGRAMS

There is a phrase in the _Lotus Sutra_ that reads
Nange nan'nyu, which supposedly means, "The _Lotus Sutra_ is
'difficult to understand,' and the gate of enlightenment is
'difficult to enter.'"[1] For the non-Gakkai-educated person
to attempt to give even a reasonably accurate interpretation
of the basic Gakkai beliefs, many of which stem from the
Lotus Sutra, is a most difficult proposition. The writer
once read a response by a Gakkai leader to a Western-educated
person investigating Soka Gakkai. The leader said that since
the investigator was trained in Western ways of thinking,
it would be impossible for him to understand the _Lotus Sutra_
and basic Nichiren beliefs without dedicated study. Toda
is also quoted as saying to a believer:

> Mr. Iwamori, don't worry. Because we cannot
> completely believe in what Nichiren Daishonin
> teaches us, we are _Bompu_, average common
> mortals. But, if we _Bompu_ continue earnestly
> in the faith, we will not fail to attain
> Buddhahood. There is no doubt. When we devote
> ourselves to faith, practice and study, with
> strong belief in the _Gohonzon_, we will no more
> be in the troubled state of _Bompu_ . . .. In
> science, without making research and experiment,

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[1] Ikeda, _The Human Revolution_, I, 206.

you cannot understand the philosophy and
achievements of Einstein.[2]

The Gakkai leader's response and this quotation intimate the
rather obscure nature of Gakkai beliefs as well as an a priori
judgment that a Westerner cannot do justice to Gakkai beliefs
as they would interpret them. Nonetheless, there are certain
beliefs that stand out as sources of much of the social and
political thought and activity of Soka Gakkai today, and in
a manner that a non-believer can attempt explanation, even
though he may be unwilling to accept them as "truth."

World View

As a young man, Nichiren (1222-1282) spent approximately
twenty years studying in various Japanese Buddhist monasteries.
Coming to the conclusion that the factionalism of medieval
Japanese Buddhism and the competing interpretations of Buddhist
doctrines were due to the loss or distortion of Sakyamuni's
teachings, he sought to find that scripture which would contain
the essence of true Buddhism and thereby permit a restoration
of truth as a means for the salvation of all people.[3] Nichiren
ultimately decided that the Lotus Sutra was the recorded truth,
and that it was "a scripture composed of Shakyamuni's own
words, that both comprehended the partiality of all other

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[2]Ibid., p. 203.

[3]McFarland, Rush Hour of the Gods, pp. 180-81.

teachings and promised salvation to all--even those of meager capacity and simple faith."[4] This scripture became the foundation on which Saint Nichiren built his messianic religious sect.

The origin of the <u>Lotus Sutra</u> is still questioned by religious scholars, and it is believed to have appeared long after the death of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. Nonetheless, it has been one of the most important and influential of all Buddhist scriptures and writings.[5] McFarland evaluates this scripture in the following manner:

> Doctrinally, this scripture presents a message radically different from the pragmatic humanism and monasticism of the earlier so-called Hinayana (Small Vehicle) Buddhism. In what is purported to be his final and authoritative discourse, the Buddha rescinds his previous teachings, in which he had urged each individual to seek Nirvana by self-cultivation and merit. Such teachings, he explains, had constituted only an interim doctrine, and expedient means by which he had begun to prepare the totally ignorant to receive his full revelation. In this climactic teaching, the transfigured Shakyamuni promises that by grace through faith and invocation, all mankind--not simply the diligent few--shall be saved.[6]

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[4] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 181. Shakyamuni is the Japanese spelling for the Sanskrit name, Sakyamuni.

[5] <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 177-78.

[6] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 178.

Salvation is conceptualized as the achievement of enlighten-
ment, and enlightenment is said to be that state in which
the kharma or reincarnation cycle is broken. Enlightenment
is achieved primarily by invocation to the sutra (but to
defame the sutra will bring punishment) through prayer and
chanting. The rewards of diligence and faith are salvation
and happiness.[7]

The Lotus Sutra came to Japan from India, by way of
China. Before Nichiren, its greatest Japanese protagonist
had been a priest, Dengyo Daishi (767-822), who had studied
and traveled in China. It was at the headquarters of the
sect founded by that priest, Mt. Hiei, near Kyoto, that
Nichiren was first exposed to the scripture.[8]

The sect that Nichiren founded, like other sects that
espoused the Lotus Sutra, was oriented primarily toward the
common man. Nichiren went further than most and condemned all
other religions for heresy and for distorting Buddhism. He
also accused the Japanese government of being in collusion with
the "heretical sects," and therefore the direct cause of the
great hardships that the common people were suffering.[9] In

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[7]Ibid., pp. 179-80.

[8]Ibid.

[9]G. B. Sansom, Japan: A Short Cultural History
(New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1962), p. 332.

his essay, <u>Rissho Ankoku Ron</u> [A Treatise on the Establishment

of Righteousness and the Safety of the Country, or as Soka

Gakkai interprets it, Book on the Pacification of the Land

through the Establishment of the Supreme Religion],[10] he

systematically attacked both the erring Buddhist sects and the

feudal government. This essay was one of the chief factors

contributing to his imprisonment and ultimate exile,[11] but

the interesting thing about the essay is his constant use of

phrases such as "the prosperity of the nation." In a similar

essay he says, "I will be the pillar of Japan. I will be the

eyes of Japan. I will be the great vessel of Japan."[12] He

seems to have been stressing a primitive form of nationalism

as well as his own importance as a religious leader.

While in exile, he worked out the basic tenets of

his sect. McFarland sees these as being in the form of

five theses:

> 1. The doctrine that he preached was that of
> the <u>Lotus Sutra</u>, the consummate teachings of
> the Buddha Shakyamuni;
>
> 2. because the degeneracy of the "latter
> days of the law (<u>mappo</u>) was upon them, the
> people had no capacity for complicated
> doctrines but could be trained only by the
> simplest form of Buddhist teaching;

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[10]Daisaku Ikeda, <u>Lectures on Buddhism</u>, 4 Vols. (Tokyo: Seikyo Press, 1962-65), II,261.

[11]McFarland, <u>Rush Hour of the Gods</u>, p. 181.

[12]Sansom, <u>Short History</u>, p. 332.

3. since the time of _mappo_ had come, only the _Lotus Sutra_ retained the power to save all mankind;

4. according to the prophecy of the _Lotus Sutra_, Japan was the country in which true Buddhism should prevail and from which it should be propagated world wide; and

5. other forms of Buddhism had completed their missions and awaited fulfillment in the universal acceptance of the perfect truth.

Later, Nichiren was to add a sixth thesis to these five, namely, that he himself was the person whose coming had been foretold as the one who should accomplish this mission.[13]

This became the body of dogma and Nichiren's own role in fulfilling these theses was based on his interpretation of a prophecy by Sakyamuni. Sakyamuni contended that history was divided into three parts and that Hinayana Buddhism would prevail in the first; Mahayana Buddhism would prevail in the second; and that ". . .after 2,000 years have elapsed, unceasing struggles among society and within the various Buddhist sects will take place. My Buddhism will lose its power and only my scriptures will be retained."[14] This final period, the latter day of the law, or _mappo_, was to be a time when ". . .another Buddha called _Jōgyō Bosatsu_

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[13]McFarland, _Rush Hour of the Gods_, p. 182.

[14]Overseas Bureau, Sokagakkai, _Sokagakkai and Nichiren Shoshu_ (This is the Sokagakkai, series 1, Tokyo: Seikyo Press, n.d.), pp. 11-12.

[Bosatsu is the Japanese for Bodhisattva] will make his advent. He will save the people by advancing . . . more powerful teachings and doctrines more applicable to that time."[15] Nichiren viewed himself as the fulfillment of this prophecy, and the Soka Gakkai belief today that Nichiren was the "True Buddha," superior to the original in India, stems from their acceptance of this belief.[16]

Before Nichiren's death, he inscribed an invocation to the Lotus Sutra along with the names of all important Buddhas and Bodhisattvas on a piece of camphor wood. Theoretically, this object, the Gohonzon or Worship Object, has the full powers of Nichiren himself. Hence, it is to this Gohonzon that the Daimoku, Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, is to be directed. The Daimoku is translated roughly as "hail to the Lotus Sutra," but is supposed to have a much deeper meaning than these simple words would indicate. The twenty-sixth High Priest, Nikkan Shonin, is supposed to have said of the Gohonzon's power:

> No prayer unanswered;
>   No sin unforgiven;
> All good fortune will be bestowed;
>   All righteousness will be proven.[17]

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[15]Ibid., p. 12.

[16]Tsuguo Ishida and Yoshikatsu Takeiri, The Teachings of Nichiren Daishonin and What is the Gohonzon? (This is the Sokagakkai, series 13, Tokyo: Seikyo Press, n.d.), pp. 4-5.

[17]Ibid., p. 17

Since Nichiren was all-powerful and had "deduced"[18] the "truth" through enlightenment, all ideas or religious teachings not premised on this truth were by definition jakyo or false and evil teachings. To obey the laws and practice of Nichiren Buddhism was to ensure enlightenment, salvation and happiness; but the reverse was to seek misery. Therefore, any misery that one experienced was automatically diagnosed as due to the "incorrect" beliefs of one's past (either this life or some former life).

The above teachings point out one of the most basic elements of Nichiren's Buddhism, i.e., that all precepts are absolute. In perusing the writings of Nichiren, one is constantly faced with categorizations such as five laws, seven evils, six sins or seven punishments. This practice, often found in Eastern writings, is uncomfortable for the Western-educated "relativist," but points toward the absolutistic nature of Nichiren's beliefs. By the same token, the basic value system becomes apparent inasmuch as good and evil (or right and wrong) are determined by whether or not one's acts or beliefs conform to the teachings and practices of Nichiren. Today, the arbiters of this standard are Soka Gakkai and Nichiren Shoshu. By definition, then, an act or an idea is right only if it is based on the teachings

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[18] Ikeda, The Human Revolution, I, 238-39.

and practices of Nichiren and his "legitimate" descendants--
the Orthodox Sect of Nichiren and its lay body, Soka Gakkai.

Another implication of the above ideas, at least for
philosophical purposes, is the notion that actions and
conditions stem from ideas. If evil acts or unsavory social
conditions are a product of "false" teachings, and good acts
and happiness stem from "true" teachings, one must assume that
there is a crude Kantian-like notion basic to this belief
system. This would explain why Makiguchi's rather relativistic
"theory of value" has little meaning in the present Nichiren
Buddhist context.[19] The view that a person is a product of
his environment is not unique, but both the sense of inevita-
bility and the notion of one truth that will ultimately prevail
are unusual for Japanese Buddhism and rather contrary to most
contemporary non-Marxist and non-fundamentalist Christian
scholarship in the West. However, by making these qualifications,
it is apparent that there are those who do believe in the
inevitability of events and change and in an ultimate or
supreme truth.

Complementing this idea of absolute truth is the
concept Shiki-shin Funi, or the inseparability of spirit and
matter. Although Soka Gakkai, in its present teaching practice,

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[19]Josei Toda himself stated this fact: "The philosophy
of value is only a preliminary theory which leads to True
Buddhism." Ikeda, The Human Revolution, I,247.

does not spend much time explaining their interpretation
of the very complex Buddhist beliefs about the existence
of life and matter, the concept of Shiki-shin Funi seems to
be considered as a key for explaining the superiority of
Nichiren's teachings. According to this doctrine, matter
and spirit are one. As the chief spokesman for doctrinal
affairs, Ikeda has said:

> Democratic revolutions aim at the people
> gaining freedom and equality. Communist
> revolutions are fought to realize peoples
> liberation. However, basic faults are to
> be found in their fundamental ideas. They
> are one-sided; either too materialistic or
> too spiritualistic.
>
> . . . .
>
> Real existence is neither material nor
> spiritual. It is the life of Shiki-shin
> Funi (the inseparability of matter and
> mind). Here, Shiki means matter or body,
> and shin, spirit or mind. The two are one
> and inseparable. They can be observed from
> either of two sides, but in actuality, they
> are one and inseparable. Modern philosophy
> should discard both spiritualism and
> materialism and start from life-philosophy.[20]

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[20]Complete Works, pp. 125-26. "Life philosophy" is
Toda's interpretation of a rather obscure part of the Lotus
Sutra that he feels is the key to understanding all animate
things. Also, see Ikeda, The Human Revolution, IV,1-23.
Life has past, present and future existence and is forever;
hence, Nichiren Buddhism is called the "philosophy of life"
since it purports to explain this notion. This is also a good
example of the role that the Soka Gakkai leader plays in the
interpretation of doctrine, and it is particularly this inter-
pretation of Toda's that is supposed to have prompted him to
"put away Makiguchi's 'philosophy of value' . . ." and begin
lecturing on the Lotus Sutra. Ibid., I,17.

It is because of this "truth" that Soka Gakkai claims that

Nichiren Buddhism is the superior philosophy on which

political institutions should be based:

> Religion is the basis for all phenomena in
> life. It clarifies the activities of man's
> life. When it is viewed from a theoretical
> viewpoint, it is a philosophy or idea, and when
> it is practiced in actual life, it becomes
> religion or faith. The true religion practices
> the life-philosophy of Shiki-shin Funi in Man's
> actual life. The true religion can lead us to
> the supreme political idea.[21]

In a rather simplistic manner, Soka Gakkai proceeds to divide

the world in the mid-twentieth century into two basic

philosophically-based systems. They point out that "the

current crisis of the world cannot be solved by today's two

major political thoughts; capitalism and socialism."[22] At

another point they indicate that "there are two philosophical

trends holding sway in the present world: Materialism and

Spiritualism."[23] The world is split between the materialists

and the spiritualists. Without specifying why, they conclude

that capitalism exists as the leading economic system in

"Christian" countries. Nichiren's philosophy reconciles these

two "incomplete and partial" and hence erring philosophies,

and produces a superior system based on the doctrine of

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[21]Complete Works, pp. 126-27.

[22]Overseas Bureau, Sokagakkai, Sokagakkai and Komeito, p. 16.

[23]Nichiren Shoshu Sokagakkai, p. 112.

Shiki-shin Funi. Just how Shiki-shin Funi carries this

out is not quite explained, but when one reads that

"Nichiren Daishonin embodied the real aspect of life or the

law of the universe in the form of the Dai-Gohonzon or

Nam-myoho-renge-kyo," it seems as if Nichiren, as the

Jogyo Bosatsu, is the fountainhead of all life.[24] This is

further indicated by the statement,

> Nichiren Daishonin, bestowed the Gohonzon
> upon mankind as the source of absolute
> happiness, with the promise that if only
> man comes in contact with the Gohonzon, he
> will not fail to attain Buddhahood. Thus,
> man can attain the state of Enlightenment
> by worshipping the Gohonzon, he will not
> only understand this great living energy
> but also will receive good fortune.[25]

The implication would seem to be that life is eternal

and although appearances might change, mind, matter and life

are irretrievably intertwined, constant, indestructible and

at one with the universe.[26] Buddhahood would be the

realization of this, and the True Religion is the means for

this realization. Finally, Buddhahood or enlightenment is

something that man can attain in this world during this

lifetime. Worshipping the Gohonzon puts man in harmony with

the rhythm of the "universal life force." Quoting Toda

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[24] Ibid., p. 95. Dai means great or powerful.

[25] Ibid., p. 25. (Italics are this writer's).

[26] Ikeda, The Human Revolution, IV, 38.

again:

> In our life there exists the two laws of
> Sen-jo.[27] As pure life moves in harmony
> with the rhythm of the universe, accepting
> all external conditions as they are, it does
> not have any unnatural element within its
> movement. When people give full play to
> this rhythmical vital life-force, they can
> enjoy their life.

He goes on to point out the reverse--suffering, misery,
disease, bad fortune,etc.--are due to one's being out of
harmony with the vital life-force, i.e., not worshipping the
Gohonzon.[28]

The Shiki-shin Funi doctrine purports to explain the
nature of society--i.e., that all social conditions are a
product of ideas, and the lack of a correct understanding and
philosophy leads to "bad" social conditions. As far as a
view of man is concerned, the doctrine only implies that man
suffers for not worshipping the Gohonzon (or prospers because
he does so worship), and may suffer in a society not established
on Buddhist principles. The implication would appear to be
that man is totally incapable of controlling his environment

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[27]Complete Works, p. 547. "Senjo: the two laws of
Sen-po and Jo-ho. Sen-po, which indicates the poisonous
effects received from false religions, causes a wrong
illusion of life. Jo-ho, which indicates a life harmonized
with the rhythm of the universe, is the cause of enlighten-
ment.

[28]Ibid.

and that his only need for rational faculties is for choosing
that which is good for him--i.e., accepting True Buddhism,
and after that he need only commit himself to the care of
the _Gohonzon_. Yet, Soka Gakkai claims to have great respect
for humanity and to be working for the realization of human
welfare.[29] Of men, Ikeda says:

> Many may seem ignorant, lazy, passive or
> irrational. These comprise merely one
> extreme phase of human quality. Man has
> wisdom that puts him above other animals.
> He has ability to produce great civilizations.
> He creates value incessantly, and advances
> himself toward the unknown future.
>
> Therefore, none can deny that man may be
> irrational sometimes, but he is still en-
> dowed with a plentitude of reason.
> . . . .
> . . .Man's evil or good nature, his
> rationality or irrationality are something
> like two sides of [sic] coin. To view only
> one side of man and to consider it the truth
> is erroneous. There should be above all a
> permanent true recognition of the human
> life and respect for humanity.[30]

Nichiren Daishonin is supposed to have said that, "Because the
law is supreme, Man is worthy of respect.. Because man is
worthy of respect, the land is sacred."[31] The implication
is that the measure of man is not so much according to ability
or intelligence, but rather by how well he obeys the laws

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[29]_Ibid._, p. 121.

[30]_Ibid._

[31]_Ibid._, p. 123.

of Buddhism. Man's rational powers are important only

insofar as he needs them to comprehend True Buddhism.

Another aspect of the nature of man can be concluded

from the implications of the Nichiren stress on shakubuku.

By emphasizing the conversion of others and the development

of social structures that have their origin in True Buddhism,

the Gakkai organization seems to be saying that man's talents,

rational faculties and abilities are important and only have

meaning to the degree that they are used to serve the require-

ments of the faith. In so using one's talent and intellect,

one achieves enlightenment and is worthy of respect; but not

otherwise. This interpretation, however, seems to conflict

with the stress on social welfare measures found in Komeito

policies. To overcome this conflict there is one further

concept that must be reviewed.

Since political ideas are construed to be a product

of religion, and all religions, except Nichiren Buddhism, are

by definition false, this next tenet is a foregone conclusion.

Good political institutions can only be based on True Buddhism.

Soka Gakkai has from the beginning, however, claimed that this

was not intended to mean saisei-itchi or the unification of

church and state (literally religion and state), at least not

in its traditional sense. Rather, they hold that "Obutsu

Myogo is the correct relationship between politics and

religion."[32]

In making their argument for _Obutsu Myogo_, they
point out that political institutions today are "naturally
separated" from religion,[33] and that political institutions
that could truly serve the welfare of mankind need only have
True Buddhism as their source of value. The political
structures can be separated from the religious structures
physically, and if so separated, this would constitute the
separation of church and state.

The most often expressed fear by critics of Soka
Gakkai is that were they to come to power, they would impose
their religion on non-believers, i.e., the religious authorities
would use the state police powers to realize their religious
goals. The Gakkai leaders deny this, and furthermore, deny
that they will use violence of any sort in bringing about a
revolution in society, As Ikeda suggested:

> This is why the individual human revolution
> through the true religion should first
> penetrate into all classes in society,
> followed by revolutions in politics,
> education, economics and culture.[34]

In other words, it is on the personal level that the revolution,
a religious one, will first take place. The individual will

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[32]_Ibid._, p. 137. (Italics are the writer's).

[33]_Ibid._

[34]_Ibid._, p. 127.

realize the truth of Nichiren Buddhism, and then will support
leaders who observe the precepts of the faith as the basis
for their policies and behavior. Eventually the believers
will be numerous enough to elect a majority of Buddhist
leaders, and these leaders will be able to legislate policies
that will truly be in the interest of the public welfare and
not of just a few private interests. What about those stubborn
individuals who refuse to be converted? Apparently, they will
be tolerated; but the assumption is that once an individual
realizes that the politics of True Buddhism are really in his
own interest, he will no longer oppose the government and its
policies, and presumably, will be converted himself. The
important thing is that the government structure and other
structures will be physically separated, just as the governments
in Western democracies are physically separated from the churches,
even though the politics in each of those countries do in fact
have a religious basis.

Related to Obutsu Myogo, which is sometimes called
"Buddhist democracy,"[35] is the concept of democracy put forward
by Soka Gakkai. Whereas the Western connotation of democracy
tends more to stress processes, the Gakkai position is to
interpret democracy as a "set of attitudes."[36] For example,

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[35]Ibid., p. 175.

[36]James W. White, "Mass Movement and Democracy: Soka-gakkai in Japanese Politics," American Political Science Review, LXI (September, 1967), 744, (Hereinafter referred to as "Mass Movement and Democracy").

Ikeda has said:

> As a rule, the word 'democracy' reflects
> a thought or philosophic ideology and
> democratic government means political or
> social systems. Democracy, as an idea, is
> centered around liberty, equality and dignity.
> The democratic government, basing itself on
> these principles, is, as Lincoln puts it,
> 'government of the people, by the people,
> for the people.' Government for the people
> is an especially conspicuous feature of
> democratic government.[37]

At another time Ikeda says:

> Politics should play its active role in
> making the people happy. Political leaders
> should respect the will of the people but
> should go further by leading them towards
> greater happiness.
>
> . . . .
>
> The ultimate ideal of democracy is found
> in the close relations between leaders who
> sincerely thirst for the people's happiness
> and the people who place whole-hearted trust
> in their leaders. The discovery of such
> leaders is the key to democracy.[38]

and finally:

> Democracy can be achieved by its underlying
> philosophy. What, then, is this philosophy?
> In the end, it is one which attaches importance
> to human life.
>
> . . . .
>
> His [Nichiren Daishonin's] great philosophy of
> life explains to the fullest the fundamentals
> of humanism, which should be made the basis of
> democracy. Only Buddhist democracy, which is
> based on such a philosophy, is capable of
> establishing true democracy that will lead to

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[37]Complete Works, p. 119. (Italics are this writer's).

[38]Ibid., p. 176.

> realizing the happiness and peace desired by
> all humanity.[39]

Democracy, then, in the Gakkai sense is a social condition in which all individuals are equal before the Dai-Gohonzon and all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. The sect professes to respect the British parliamentary system as an ideal to be emulated; but they are not clear as to how such a parliamentary system would function under a Buddhist democracy. They also speak of the need for such civil rights as freedom of speech, press, and religion. A clue indicating that it would not be democracy as perceived in Western political theory is noted in the following:

> Modern democracy is often known as the
> democracy of the masses. However, one cannot
> always trust the masses, because the
> intellectual or educational level of the
> masses, as a whole, is not very high and
> the masses are liable to act with emotions
> or impulse. It is very difficult for them
> to be rational.[40]

Is one left to conclude that "Buddhist democracy," although benevolent, is a form of "tutelary" democracy? This is not answered adequately; but Ikeda notes that in the past, a failing of most political systems has been the inability to reconcile individual desires with the need for social order.

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[39]Ibid., pp. 264-65.

[40]Ibid., pp. 182-83.

He "testifies" that "the ideology for achieving two contradictory goals at once--the ensuring of 'freedom' and 'equality' for all and the establishment of ideal relations between individuals and society--is Obutsu Myogo or . . . Buddhist democracy."[41]

Obutsu Myogo is therefore the creation of those social conditions in which social welfare and individual happiness are both realized, and this is possible only by choosing leaders who know and obey the practices of the "philosophy of life" or True Buddhism. If the above is construed as a process, then the effect of that process is also Obutsu Myogo (or Buddhist democracy), namely, that society where the ideal conditions persist and are perpetuated. Presumably then, in such a society there would be no dissenters so there would be none to oppose the structural arrangements of a Buddhist democratic system.

Ideology

Carl Friedrich has said that "ideologies are action-related systems of ideas," and that:

> They contain a program and a strategy for its realization, and their essential function is to unite the organizations

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[41]Ibid., p. 176. The use of the word 'testify' is intended to denote a common practice in Ikeda's writings, which is to end most references to Nichiren's Buddhism with a brief "testimony" of conviction.

which are built around them.[42]

For Soka Gakkai, and therefore for Komeito as well, the program is to realize Rissho Ankoku [the Pacification of the Land through True Buddhism] and Obutsu Myogo--i.e., the welfare of society and the happiness of the individual. Although Japan is the immediate focus, even in Nichiren's time it was assumed that the "truth" of Buddhism would eventually be known throughout the world, and today Soka Gakkai often speaks of a goal of "one worldism."[43] The nature and philosophy of True Buddhism and the process of pacification involves the destroying of all heretical religions and replacing the institutions derived from such religions with new institutions that will have True Buddhism as their foundation. The ultimate objective of this program is also called Kosen-rufu (wide propagation), or "the achievement of the state in which all people accept and believe in the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin . . .."[44] In the Rissho Ankoku Ron, Nichiren is supposed to have prophesied that within 700 years, during mappo, this objective would be realized. Ikeda recently scaled down the number of converts necessary to constitute

[42]Carl J. Friedrich, Man and His Government (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 89.

[43]Complete Works, p. 267.

[44]Ikeda, Lectures on Buddhism, II,4.

Kosen-rufu when he said:

> . . . Kosen-rufu will virtually be achieved
> when the total membership of Soka Gakkai
> reaches one third of Japan's population
> and another one third will become supporters
> of the Komeito even though they do not accept
> the faith and the rest of the population are
> opposed to the religion.[45]

Nonetheless, this would theoretically mean political control

of the Japanese government, and hence, theoretically, the

ability to realize Obutsu Myogo.

The strategy for realizing their program is to bring

about the "human revolution" through shakubuku, i.e., the

conversion of every person to Nichiren Shoshu. Shakubuku

is considered to be jihi, or an act of mercy. By "subduing

the will" of a potential convert, that person is enabled to

realize the truth and ultimate happiness. Happiness, however,

can only be realized through zealous shakubuku efforts by

every believer. Through shakubuku, the "human revolution"

takes place, and the more persons who undergo this revolution,

the sooner Obutsu Myogo and Kosen-rufu will be realized. The

closer Obutsu Myogo is approached, the more can individuals

realize happiness. Through Obutsu Myogo, the nation and the

world will be saved--all due to each person's role in this

process.

At the same time that the "human revolution" is taking

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[45] Complete Works, pp. 197-98.

place, the groundwork for <u>Obutsu Myogo</u> can also be laid.
This involves preparing the members for their roles in the
politics of the future system and setting up those institutions
and policies, at least on the party level, that will prevail
when <u>Kosen-rufu</u> arrives. There is also the obligation to
point out, by "rewriting" history, the errors in other
political practices and ideas, and to inform the non-converted
of the benefits of the ideal system based on True Buddhism.
For this purpose the Komeito was established by leaders
guided by True Buddhism as a "true" mass party, supported by
"a mass organization," free from corruption, and the only
party that is really a "Japanese party for the Japanese."[46]

To refuse to carry out one's duties, whether by not
worshipping the <u>Gohonzon</u> properly, not carrying out the
prescribed <u>shakubuku</u> practices, or by not fulfilling any
other assignments or obligations, one is damned to misery
and scorn. If one believes in the rewards of faithful service,
one will probably believe in the punishments for not serving
faithfully.

The program is to realize <u>Kosen-rufu</u> and <u>Obutsu Myogo</u>;
the organization is Soka Gakkai with its political arm, Komeito;
and the strategy is to carry out a "human revolution." Not
a revolution in the Marxist sense, but a revolution at the

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[46]<u>Complete Works</u>, pp. 188-89.

individual level, that, when compounded by millions of such
revolutions, will lead to the realization of broader social
and political revolutions. The use of pressure is a
characteristic of this revolution, but violent force seems to
be more the exception than the rule. Despite the "revolutionary"
fervor and the apparent ideological drive, there is a dimension
of Komeito that appears to be much more subdued and practical.

Tactical Programs

Until they are able to realize Kosen-rufu, Komeito
appears willing to work within the context of the present
Japanese political system. They are content to use the
established political institutions, function as a bargaining
unit in the Diet and compete on much the same level as the
other Japanese political parties. The Gakkai and Komeito
leaders have admonished their colleagues and supporters to
study politics, and at times the party leaders manifest
considerable political sophistication.

At one time there seems to have been some violations
of the rather strict Japanese electoral laws, but in practice
Komeito appears to be very concerned about obeying the
established laws. They have sometimes cooperated openly with
groups of whom they have been very critical in their writings.
Nevertheless, it almost seems that Komeito has more closely
approximated the stated ideals of the other Japanese parties
than have those parties themselves.

It may be true that all of Komeito's political

policies are based on the ideals of True Buddhism, but it

can also be argued that their policies have relevance to the

immediate future, are often pragmatic, and seem calculated

to appeal to specific Japanese social groups. Perhaps

Komeito policy and program proposals can best be construed as

tactical programs that will serve as building blocks for the

future ideal society. Any implementation of its present

policies would mean that the goal was nearer to realization.

A look at the development of the basic party platform will

indicate the "here-and-now" orientation of the party.

When the party was first inaugurated in 1964, its

platform was very general. Internationally, it came out for

peace and disarmament, the abolition of nuclear weapons,

retention of the "no war" clause in the Japanese Constitution,

a more independent attitude toward the United States, and

recognition of Red China. Domestically, it stressed the

people's welfare, halting inflation, social services,

modernization of the farm structure, aid to medium and small

industries and an end to corruption in government.[47] Critics

said the program was unrealistic and too vague to be meaningful.

Komeito had not really had time to work out the details as to

[47]Emerson Chapin, "Japanese Buddhist Sect Forms Political
Party," New York Times, May 18, 1964, p. 4, (Hereinafter referred
to as "Japanese Buddhist Sect").

how these planks might be implemented, but it has worked

continuously since 1964 to spell out each point and to show

how each can be implemented into today's political context.

The program that was announced at the January, 1969,

party convention is comprehensive and, though permeated with

a mixture of ideals and a promotion of special interests,

it is oriented toward Japan today.[48]   The party makes

innumerable proposals dealing with nearly every phase of

Japanese life, many of them so specific as even to name, for

example, the exact amount of welfare assistance a child should

receive. The party argues for clean elections, neutrality

in international politics, recognition of Red China, revision

and eventual elimination of the U.S.-Japanese security pact,

strengthening of the United Nations, a regional U.N. head-

quarters in Tokyo, basic tax exemptions and reductions for

all lower income peoples (below $3,000) and special aid to

smaller businesses. They advocate price controls, stronger

control of big business, public housing on a large scale,

better labor conditions and a thorough revamping of the

educational system to make it more personalized and more

accessible at all levels for all people. They also make

specific proposals for aid for specific segments of the

economy, viz., small-medium industries, agriculture, forestry

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[48]Komeito, _Main Program_.

and fishing, and mining. The party platform implies that
the culprit perpetuating endemic societal problems is Japan's
large business enterprises with the special advantages they
enjoy as a consequence of their close ties with the party
in power.

Specifically for 1969, Komeito pledged to work toward
the gradual elimination of the Japanese-American security
arrangement, to effectuate as much of their social welfare
program as possible, and to continue to press for better
government at all levels. Party proposals on such things as
the revision of ties with U.S., recognition of Red China,
the modernization of Tokyo as a city and the implementation
of their announced basic political philosophy, "the-middle-of-
the-road principle of government," are correlated with a care-
fully prepared timetable.[49]

The implication of Komeito proposals is a form of
socialism (they call it neo-socialism), possibly similar to
Fabian Socialism, with a large role for government. For the
most part, the Japanese (unlike many Americans) are not
opposed to an important role for government in the economy

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[49]For examples, see Komeito Press releases of 1968 and
1969 (many releases are fully written programs); Ikeda on
China in Economic Salon, January 1, 1969, p. 30; Ikeda, Complete
Works, pp. 193-254; and The Komeito series, 1, 2 & 3, The
Vision of Komeito, On Middle of the Road Government, and
The Vision of a New Tokyo, all written by Daisaku Ikeda,
(Tokyo: Komei Press, n.d.).

or in society generally. The Komeito would further point
out that "good leaders," following the path of True Buddhism,
would always have the welfare of the whole society at heart
and that there would be nothing to fear from government.

As a party not in power, Komeito is in a good
position to propose legislation which has appeal to all groups
or any specific group. As one reads their various proposals,
the nagging question is how they would reconcile their
proposals with the economic realities if they were in power.
Assuming that the party leaders pursued their goals, it is
still unclear as to where the money would come from for the
implementation of such things as welfare measures and public
housing projects, since at the same time they would exempt
the incomes of large numbers of people from taxes, and would
refuse to levy taxes on those things that the "masses" would
need. Presumably the wealthier classes and big business would
pick up the tab, but one is inclined to feel that Komeito
leaders do not fully comprehend the political and economic
implications of their proposals. Even if they were capable
of succeeding with their domestic program, Japan is tied to
an international economic and political system on which Komeito
will not likely have any major influence for a long time.
The questions are then: What would happen to Japan if China
refused to cooperate with Komeito proposals, or the United States
refused to go along with them, or the nations of the U.N.

refused to agree to their collective security proposal?
The answers, of course, are unknown; but despite the
idealism, which one can easily admire, there remains a
disquieting feeling that, along with economics, the realities
of international politics are not fully understood. The
ultimate test as to whether Komeito could square its ideals
with the unidealistic realities, would come when it was able
to assume political control of Japan. Despite its remarkable
electoral advances to date, Komeito still has a long way to
go before it can reasonably expect to exercise national
political leadership.

Summarizing, it can be said that the Komeito world
view is based on a Buddhist philosophy that stresses individual
happiness and a harmonious society, with each individual in
harmony with all individuals, and the whole society, therefore,
in harmony with the "rhythm of life." From this world view
Soka Gakkai has developed an ideology that stresses early
realization of these Buddhist ideals through a "human
revolution," or the conversion, on a one-by-one basis, of all
men to Nichiren Shoshu. The ultimate goal is Kosen-rufu and
Obutsu Myogo, or an ideal society wherein universal happiness
and prosperity prevail. Finally, despite this ideology, Komeito
has apparently been able to work within the established system,
and has proposed innumerable specific policies that, while
being rather idealistic and presumably based on "Buddhist"

ideals, are nonetheless oriented toward the problems and

conditions in Japan and the world today. Komeito, therefore,

seems to display a certain pragmatic flair that does not

appear characteristic of its ideological predispositions and

its philosophical background. The next area that needs to

be considered is the party's role in the Japanese political

system.

CHAPTER V

THE PARTY AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Soka Gakkai has been called a "multiphasic mass movement."[1] Its expansion, while being phenomenal in terms of numbers, has been just as remarkable in terms of its areas of involvement. As has been indicated, the goal seems to be one of creating a "total involvement society" wherein continual active participation of the individual is not the only consideration, but wherein every phase of the individual's life is satisfied within the Gakkai framework. The ultimate goal of this organization is nothing less than a "revolution" (using non-violent tactics) at every level of society. Regarding the "levels of sociopolitical organization" at which efforts for change may be directed—i.e., government, regime and community—the Gakkai aspirations would be to change not only the existing government and the regime (i.e., "fundamental rules of the political game in society"), but the community as well.[2] This means that they seek to change the basic Japanese social organization and

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[1] McFarland, Rush Hour of the Gods, p. 194.

[2] Chalmers Johnson, Revolutionary Change. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), pp. 140-141.

structure, including the fundamental values of society, and replace them with a new system based on those "Buddhist" values inherent in Nichiren Buddhism.

As has been pointed out, this "revolutionary" effort is not aimed toward the disruption and violent overthrow of the Japanese political system, but is being carried out by working from within or permeating society at every level through the shakubuku process. Even though their ideology and beliefs stress urgency in their revolutionary efforts, the Soka Gakkai organization has nonetheless implied a willingness to work within the established system and institutions (even though shakubuku may infringe at times on the "spirit of the law" by invading the privacy of nonbelievers).

From the above one can see that the nature of Soka Gakkai is generally aggressive but cautious, and that while in rhetoric they condemn the existing system as inherently evil due to "heretical" religious and philosophical ideas and values, they nonetheless are willing to work within the established framework as a sub-system. Perhaps the trends of development and the nature of this sub-system can better be conceptualized by using a model for system development.

Soka Gakkai as a "System"

In their Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach, Gabriel Almond and G. Bingham Powell have presented a limited framework for the analysis of developing political

systems.[3] Soka Gakkai, of course, cannot be construed as a political system per se, even though one might argue that it is a prototype or microcosm of their "ideal" system. The applicability of this framework lies in the fact that the criteria used seem relevant to any social system or sub-system.

A "system" is conceptualized as having an "inter-dependence of parts, and a boundary of some kind between it and its environment."[4] System development is perceived as the increase within the system of (1) cultural secularization (or increasing reliance within the system on the use of reason and rational analysis for problem solving); (2) structural differentiation (or increasing stress on role specialization); and (3) sub-system autonomy (or increasing autonomy of roles and structures within the system).[5] Within their framework Almond and Powell see developing systems as moving up a vertical continuum (Y axis) from primitive through traditional to modern, depending on their secularization and structural differentiation, and moving along a horizontal line (X axis) from low to high sub-system autonomy. The

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[3]Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., _Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach_, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 308.

[4]_Ibid._, p. 29.

[5]_Ibid._, p. 308.

relative development of a system is determined by how far up the vertical scale and how far over on the horizontal scale it can be placed.

When placing Soka Gakkai in this framework, one can start with the first study group that Josei Toda formed after World War II. This was the beginning of Soka Gakkai and was characterized by the tradition master-disciple relationships, stressing face-to-face contact and reciprocal obligations. Any role differentiation at this point was intermittent; the culture was rather parochial; and there was no need for sub-systems. According to the analytical model, then, this initial system was a relatively "primitive" one.[6]

When Ikeda became Gakkai's president in 1960, the movement had expanded its area of involvement and had established a sophisticated organizational structure. This meant that new roles for Gakkai members had been created, that new structures were being utilized and that, in terms of leadership selection and the organization of both the structures and activities, a more secularized culture had been developed (or adapted from outside the system). However, since all activities were still carefully coordinated within the framework of the basic

[6]It must be remembered that Toda and his followers were still a part of a more advanced system, so the use of "primitive" is valid only in a relative or analogous sense.

structure, those sub-systems that had been created had very
little autonomy. In 1960, then, the system had moved up the
scale toward what can be termed a "traditional" system.

Looking at Soka Gakkai today, one finds over twelve
million members grouped into two basic organizational
structures, but each individual may simultaneously be a
member of one or more related structures and sub-systems.
There are educational structures, cultural structures, business
structures, group activity structures, and economic structures
of many and varied types. Komeito is, of course, one of these
affiliated structures and sub-systems, and like some of the
others, it is officially autonomous of the main Soka Gakkai
organization. This proliferation of structures means that
there has been an increasing structural differentiation
taking place in Soka Gakkai, and roles would appear to be
becoming more and more specialized. For these specialized
roles, leadership selection, after the basic requirement of
religious conviction is confirmed, seems to be based more and
more on ability and training. This indicates an element of
secularization. One can also point to the political proposals
made by Komeito as being based on reason and a careful analysis
of the present political system. Furthermore, the nature of
these new sub-systems seems to indicate that a very rational
decision-making process has been operative in determining
which kinds of activities might be most valuable for the

membership; all of this suggests that a secularization of the Gakkai culture has taken place.

Finally, looking at a Gakkai sub-system like Komeito, it is apparent that structural differentiation and secularization are taking place, and any of Soka Gakkai's organizational charts show Komeito to be autonomous. However, as has been brought out in earlier chapters, Komeito is not an autonomous sub-system, but is a sub-system that is integrated at every level with the main organization. It is through overlapping leadership roles particularly that any but the most limited autonomy is prevented. The inter-locking directorate keeps all of the sub-systems in check. Within the leadership, however, one finds many of the same characteristics that were found in the first stages of development--an elite functioning in a set of very traditional relationships, marked by face-to-face contact, and acting intermittently in their various roles. That is to say that during the day a leader may be a politician, a religious leader, a personnel director, an editor or something else within the Gakkai organization. One finds similar patterns at each level throughout this system. The above would indicate that Soka Gakkai has moved up the vertical scale but has not moved very far along the horizontal or sub-system autonomy scale.

When analyzing political systems, Almond and Powell characterized a traditional system with some structural

differentiation and cultural secularization but little sub-system autonomy as a "patrimonial" system (a term borrowed from Max Weber). They defined a patrimonial political system as one in which there were "specialized political elites such as kings, subchiefs, and a relatively specialized officialdom. They are called patrimonial because all, or most, of these offices are located in the ruler's household."[7] Soka Gakkai is analogous to the patrimonial political system in that Ikeda can be perceived as the "king;" the orthodox religious beliefs and practices constitute the "blood;" and those subordinates having the master-disciple relationship with Ikeda can be said to be within the "king's household."

The above analysis indicates two possible trends for Soka Gakkai. Were the system to continue to develop in terms of structural differentiation and secularization, though without relaxing controls on the sub-systems, Soka Gakkai could conceivably become a highly modern but rather authoritarian system. This accounts for the fears expressed in Japan that if Soka Gakkai did in fact grow to encompass the entire Japanese political system it might well be authoritarian or even totalitarian. At the same time, one can detect the possibility of the emergence of a problem similar to the "red versus expert" problem in contemporary China, i.e., as

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[7]Ibid., p. 223.

specialization of roles is stressed there is a possibility

that those who have specialized roles may opt to stress their

expertise even if it means sacrificing to some extent their

religious orthodoxy. The effect of the latter possibility

would be either to cause greater sub-system autonomy or to

have a heavier hand applied from the top.

It is at this point that Komeito, as a specialized

agency of Soka Gakkai, takes on added significance. As will

be shown, the adaptation of Soka Gakkai to the present

Japanese system may well be the singlemost important factor

of integrating the large membership of the organization into

the Japanese political system, in which case the exclusiveness

of the Soka Gakkai system could well be undermined. With this

in mind, it is useful to look at Soka Gakkai as a sub-system

within the larger Japanese political system.

<u>As a Political Sub-System</u>

In the chapters on leadership and membership, it has

been pointed out that Komeito is very carefully intertwined

with its mother organization, Soka Gakkai. In fact, at times

the whole Gakkai movement acts as a political party, although

it is Komeito that actually bears the title and functions

as a "special" party organization. This points up the con-

fusion that exists around the term "party," for it is a term

that is applied to many different groups in many different

contexts. To best understand the Soka Gakkai situation, the

term "party" can be applied in two different senses.

V. O. Key, in Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups, points out that the concept "party" can be used in several senses. One possibility is to identify a party as the "party-in-the-electorate," or conceptualizing as the party all those people who may identify with or vote for a particular party. A party may also be construed as the "party-in-the-government," or that party which is in control of a government, but primarily focusing on the elite of the party. A party might also be perceived as the "party-in-the-legislature," wherein the focus is on a parliament-based or -oriented party.[8] Since the members of Soka Gakkai identify Komeito as "their" party, and since nearly every member is sometimes actively involved in working for the party (such as campaigning or engaging in other political activities at election), the whole Gakkai membership might be called a party-in-the-electorate. In Figure 3, page 130, this is portrayed by the large broken-line circle and includes all levels of the party. In this sense, Komeito is conceptualized as being a party synonymous with the entire Gakkai organization, as well as any who vote for Komeito candidates though not affiliated with Soka Gakkai. In this larger sense, Komeito functions as a sub-system within the

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[8] V. O. Key, Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), pp. 181-82.
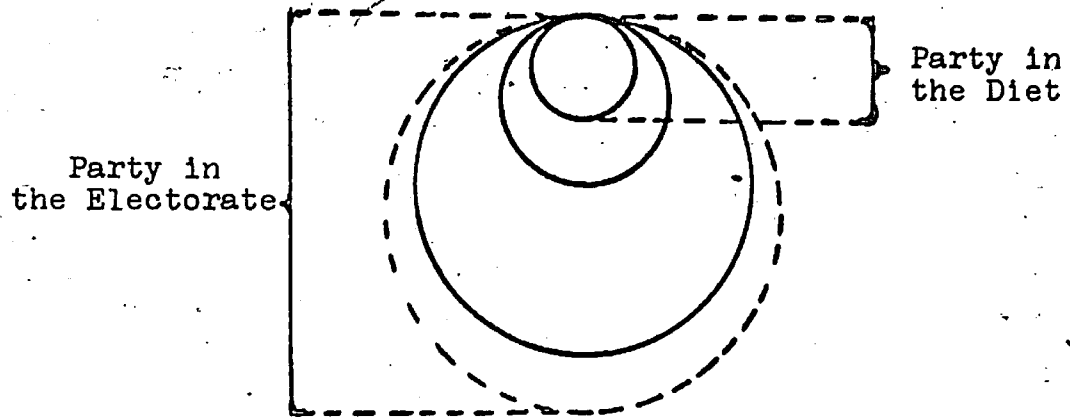
Fig. 3 - - Komeito in the Political System

Party in
the Diet

Party in
the Electorate

Fig. 4 - - Membership: Relative Participation

Soka Gakkai
Membership

1

2

3

4

Elite

Activists

Supporters

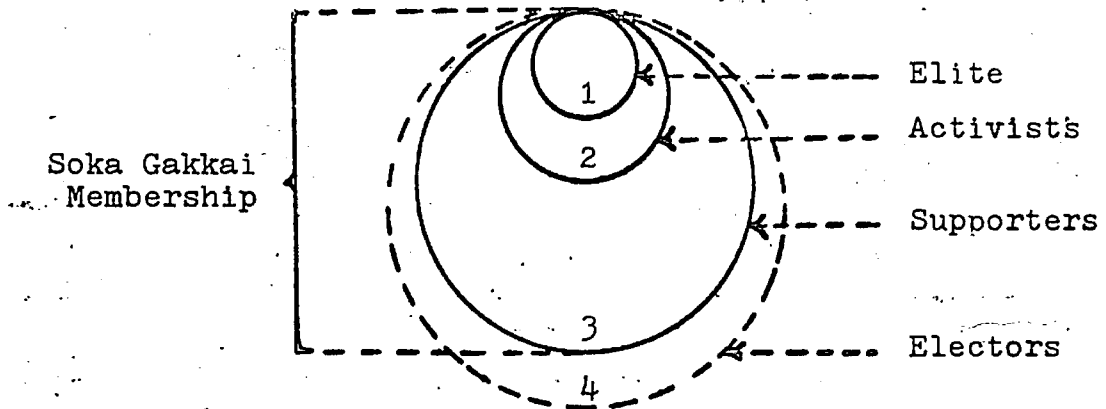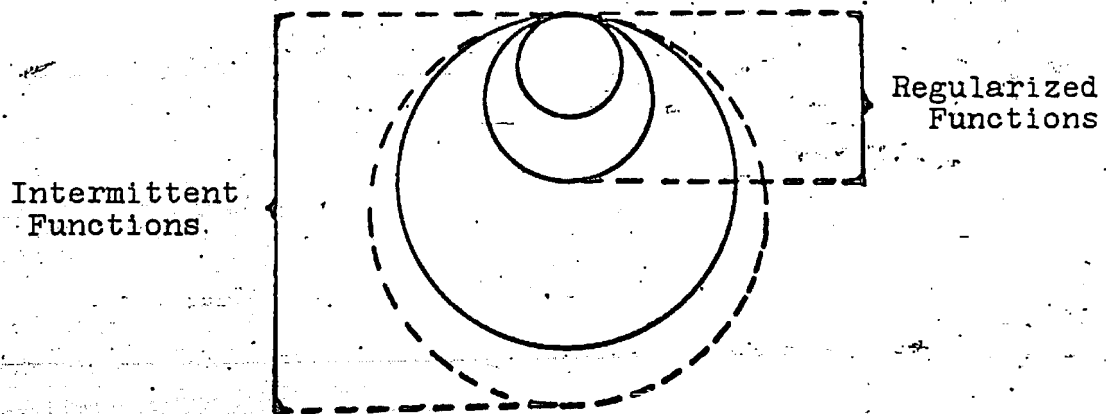Electors

Fig. 5 - - Party Roles

Intermittent
Functions

Regularized
Functions

Japanese political system.

On the other hand, in the Japanese political system,
which will be discussed below, most parties are based in and
built around Diet politics, and Komeito appears within that
context as a Diet party. This being the case, the elite of
Komeito (Figure 4, page 130) can by themselves be perceived
as a party-in-the-Diet. It is in this latter sense that
Komeito is most often identified. A third possibility would
be a party-in-the-membership that would include all having
formal Komeito membership, but this seems less applicable
than the first two.

To further clarify the sub-system structure, the
membership can be classified according to degree of participation
and role differentiation. In Figure 4 the circles represent
(1) the elite, (2) the activists, (3) the supporters, and
(4) the electorate.[9] The elite, which must be construed as
including top Soka Gakkai leaders such as Ikeda as well as
the elected Diet members, has the obvious functions of leader-
ship and decision-making. The second level, the activists,
encompasses all those who staff the party and have formal
membership in Komeito. They have more or less regularized

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[9]These categories are based on degrees of participation
in the party. For a somewhat similar typology, see Maurice
Duverger, Political Parties (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.,
1951), pp. 90-91.

party functions (as indicated in Figure 5, page 130) and serve as middlemen between the party-in-the-Diet and the party-in-the-electorate. As such, they function as communication links, as primary fund raisers, and have responsibilities for mobilizing the larger membership at election time.

Level three, the supporters, includes virtually all Soka Gakkai members (as is seen in Figure 4). They are, for the most part, non-activists and generally have intermittent party functions and only participate in party activities during elections, or indirectly in the sense that they are recruiting and socializing new party members through their shakubuku efforts. Level four, the electorate, is drawn on Figure 4 with a broken line to indicate that the limit of the Komeito electorate, beyond Soka Gakkai, is amorphous and fluctuating since it includes those Japanese citizens that may at certain times vote for Komeito candidates even though they are not members of Soka Gakkai. When they do vote, they are identifying with Komeito in that instance.

Having looked at the structure of the Gakkai movement as a sub-system, the next area of concern is to see how it functions in the political system. The Soka Gakkai movement, or that which has been defined as the "party-in-the-electorate," is an "interest structure" in the political system.[10] Soka

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[10]Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics, pp. 74-75.

Gakkai's areas of interest comprise two major, but inter-
related, types. The first might be called "bread and butter"
interests, or those basic needs of individual members and
groups within the organization that have to do with living
conditions, environment, life-style and opportunity. The
second class of Gakkai interests might be called "tactical,"
or the desires of Soka Gakkai to use the existing political
system as a means for realizing their basic goals of changing
and restructuring Japanese society.

Although there is a certain aggregative function
inherent in the Soka Gakkai organization, as far as the
political system as a whole is concerned, it is Komeito, as
the party-in-the-Diet, which aggregates and articulates the
interests of the larger party. Through their "consultation
centers," their contacts with Gakkai members and their aware-
ness of the needs of the groups within Soka Gakkai, Komeito
aggregates interests and articulates them to the political
system in the form of Diet proposals and communication to
the Japanese public.

Komeito can also be perceived as performing one other
political function for the sub-system, if not at all times
for the larger political system. In propagandizing and
communicating in the political system, they execute a recruit-
ment function for Soka Gakkai. Some people argue that the
latter function is perceived by Komeito as the most important.

Later it will be shown that there are a number of important
functions performed by Komeito in the Japanese political
system, which can best be understood by a brief explanation
of the political system itself.

In the Political System

The Japanese political system is a developing
political system with a mixed political culture deriving from
two sources. The first source is Japan's historical social
and political development or those values, concepts and
social structures that have evolved in Japan from its beginning
as a nation. This internally developed culture might be called
a traditional culture that is paternalistic, rigidly class-
structured and permeated with a traditional value system
sometimes called the "Confucian ethic." The stress is on rule
from the top and social harmony based on everyone having and
knowing his place in society relative to everyone else. The
basic social unit is the family, and the social structure
consists of a network of individual and family relations from
the top to the bottom of society. Historically, the theoretical
source of authority was the emperor; a citizen's obligation was
to do the bidding of the emperor. Practically, even today the
citizen's political activity is dictated in large measure by
the obligations he has to his superiors in the social network.
This means that in voting, for example, the citizen will vote
in much the same way as his social superiors, who, often because

of their reciprocal obligations, can better satisfy an individual's needs than can the established institutions in the political system. The closest American parallel might be the old city political machines. Nevertheless, it differs in that the Japanese system is not based on satisfying material needs, but rather in sustaining the prevailing social and ethical code.

A second body of political values and culture was brought to Japan by the American occupation forces after Japan's defeat in World War II. Through an American-inspired constitution, and many social and political reforms, the Japanese were pressed into a political structure that was awkward and strange, but one to which they have been adapting. These Western values stressed the individual's political and social rights and responsibilities. Government deriving its authority from the citizenry and responsible to the public replaced the concept of government authority emanating from the emperor. Finally, the American reforms encouraged the establishment of formal and informal institutions and structures for communicating and articulating the political demands of the citizen.

Looking at Japan today, one finds that the political culture is essentially a synthesis of these two sources. There is much that is still very traditional, but the consciousness of new rights and responsibilities, coupled

with the need to create new structures for the making of
demands in the present parliamentary system, has had the
effect of causing considerable adjustment and adaptation.
Sometimes this process has been one of adapting traditional
structures to modern functions.

On the whole, the Japanese system can be viewed as
a modernizing political system with a limited but developing
sub-system autonomy. In form it has all the requisite
institutions for a democratic system, but in practice, it
does not perform as smoothly as an "ideal" democracy. This
lack of smoothness would seem to be due primarily to the still
limited development of sub-systems based on interest instead
of social relationship, and the difficulty of synthesizing
these rather conflicting values.

In terms of input structures, or those structures for
articulating and aggregating public and private interests,
there are innumerable types in Japan. These include such
varied structures as the personal support groups of individual
politicians, student demonstrations, single-interest pressure
groups and the established political parties. The parties
are the most effective aggregators and articulators since
it is these parties that also function at the center of the
decision-making process.

Japanese parties are generally rather small in formal
membership (as was indicated earlier), and are generally

characterized as being closely affiliated with specific
groups in Japanese society. The Socialists and Democratic
Socialists are closely tied to and dependent on support from
various labor groups and intellectuals of varying degrees
of Marxist outlook. The Liberal Democrats are aligned with
big business but draw considerable support from rural
interests and other groups that are generally conservative.
The Communists alone seem to rely primarily on persons whom
they recruit directly into full membership; but to date the
Japanese Communist party has had only a very limited impact
in the Japanese political process.

The parties are rather ideologically-oriented and on
some issues find no room for mutual cooperation and agreement.
This may well explain why Komeito is serving a somewhat
important role in the system. Although ostensibly an
ideological party, they also claim to be a "middle way" or
"middle-of-the-road" party. Their doctrine would seem to
preclude such a role in part, given the usual connotation of
this concept, i.e., a party of mediation and moderation.
However, in the sense that they supply representation for a
segment of the population that cannot find satisfaction within
the existing parties, and considering the fact that their
policy proposals often lie in a moderate position between the
Socialists and the Liberal Democrats, one might conclude that
Komeito is a middle-of-the-road party.

The Japanese party system cannot be called a two-party system because of the ability of the Liberal Democratic party to consistently corner a sizable majority of the seats in the Diet, whereas the opposition is confined to three smaller parties. The Socialist voting support is somewhere between Komeito and the Liberal Democrats, while the Democratic Socialists and Komeito are approximately the same size.

The Japanese electoral system is a crude form of proportional representation since the districts are multi-member electoral districts and each voter gets only one vote. The size of the districts, the number of seats on the national slate of the upper house, and the number of total seats in each house have been presented in another context, but there are two things that remain to be said of this system. The first is that famous persons or renowned family names obviously have an advantage in this type of system (as they do somewhat in all systems). Secondly, since it is a multi-member district system, smaller groups can more easily get direct representation than they could in a single-member district system. This is compounded by the fact that well-known persons tend to accumulate large numbers of votes while lesser-known nominees in the same party may divide the party's vote, permitting an opposition candidate to sneak into office. The electoral system is important for this study in that it is through concentrating on a limited number of candidates (often only one) in each

district that Komeito has succeeded in having a rather sizable number of candidates elected. If the Liberal Democrats had their way, they would create single-member districts in which they could ensure a higher percentage of electoral successes at the expense of smaller groups like the Democratic Socialists and Komeito. These latter parties would be limited since they often could not mobilize enough support in a smaller district to out-poll a Liberal Democratic candidate. For this reason, Komeito has vociferously opposed all redistricting proposals; but the Liberal Democrats may be forced to change the present policy if they want to get a two-thirds majority seated for purposes of amending the present Constitution.[11]

The Japanese government is a parliamentary system with two houses, of which the House of Representatives (lower house) provides most of the cabinet officers and has final authority on appropriation matters. Clearly, it constitutes the most important legislative chamber.[12] The prime minister and the cabinet, as the executive, are responsible for the

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[11]Komeito, Main Program, p. 23.

[12]It should be pointed out that although the focus here is on the national level, each prefectural or city assembly functions in a similar manner. The executive of these local governments, however, is elected outright and the relative power of the local assembly is somewhat limited due to its dependence on the central government for funds since it has largely pre-empted the tax bases.

government ministries and agencies. Both houses are sub-
divided into standing committees in a manner that correlates
fairly well with the concerns of the ministries. Committees
of an ad hoc nature may also be created at varying times, but
usually they have a limited life. Membership in the committees
is proportioned according to the relative size of a party's
representation in the Diet.

Opposition parties can, with twenty signatures, propose
legislation, or, with fifty signatures, propose budget measures.
Still, their ability to push bills into enactment is severely
limited. Since by definition the opposition parties do not
control the legislative process, their hope is that through
some form of compromise or cooperation, the majority party will
adopt their proposals. In Japan this does happen quite often
on social welfare legislation. Moreover, at any time the
opposition can publicly question or criticize the majority
party's legislation, policies and practices. These parties can
also provide information or make requests that may lead to
future policies.

Since 1955, the Liberal Democratic party has controlled
the Japanese national government without having to form a
coalition with other parties. The party has been able to stay
together even though it is itself a coalition of personalized
factions. In the competition for followers, the faction heads
often get entangled in conflict of interest problems, such as

offering favors to a special interest group in return for
which money is received as a campaign contribution. In turn,
these funds are passed along to loyal supporters or used to
attract new followers. It is precisely this type of situation
that Komeito finds most abhorrent, and constantly brings to
the public attention through their calls for cleaner government.

As the party-in-the-government, the Liberal Democrats
have been able to keep the Japanese economy growing at the
fastest rate in the world. At the same time, they have gone
a long way toward taking care of many of the basic social needs
of Japanese citizens, and despite their internal party prob-
lems, the Liberal Democrats have provided fairly efficient
government for the Japanese. At the same time, there are
certain problems that have not been overcome; some of which are
due to the awkwardness of the system, and some due to the pre-
disposition of the party factions toward ties with special
interests. The more apparent of these problems are the inability
to reach certain segments of the population and integrate them
into the system, to solve the internal difficulties of the
party so as to be able better to consider "public" interests,
and to reconcile the perceived need for ties with the United
States for trade and security reasons with the growing demands
for a lessening dependency on the United States. One could
list other problems and specific difficulties faced by the
Liberal Democrats; but all parties have some problems, and the

fact that the Liberal Democrats have retained power indicates

that most Japanese are not seriously disaffected.

On the other hand, one can argue that the very

existence of Komeito is due to the inability of the govern-

ment party to resolve some of these problems. Furthermore,

since Komeito has appeared in Japanese politics and has been

able to function in that political system, one must conclude

that Komeito must be performing some functions in the system.

Before evaluating these systemic functions, however, it is

important to recapitulate the means by which Komeito penetrates

the system.

As explained earlier, new members are recruited into

Soka Gakkai through a conversion process called shakubuku.

Once recruited, they then are socialized into the movement

and as bonafide members of Soka Gakkai they simultaneously

become supporting members of Komeito. As the supporting

membership has grown, it has been possible to nominate an

increasing number of carefully selected candidates for the

Diet. By taking advantage of the multi-member electoral

districts and the upper house national slate, and by carefully

calculating its support and then mobilizing it during the

campaign and on election day, Komeito has increased its

number of representatives in each succeeding election. In

recent times, there seems to have been some support coming

from nonmembers of the movement as well.[13]

Komeito conveys an image of confidence about its future growth; indeed, the party has even gone so far as to announce that it will launch a slate of seventy-five candidates for the next election to the lower house.[14] Assuming that even if all seventy-five were to win, they would still constitute a definite minority of the total 467 members of the Diet's lower chamber. Be that as it may, any increase in Diet representation can only augment Komeito's already sizable bargaining influence.

As a Diet party, Komeito has been relatively consistent in its stand on most major issues--including its combating political corruption, encouraging social welfare measures, opposing constitutional change, and favoring disarmament. As is common among Japanese parliamentary parties, it votes as a bloc and it is very active in such Diet activities as proposing legislation; questioning and criticizing government policies and practices, and continually pressing for reform measures. At the beginning of their involvement in national politics, the Gakkai Diet members voted almost exclusively with the Liberal Democrats, even though they were often very critical of that party in public. In 1965, a few months after

[13] Chapin, "Buddhist Party," p. 3.

[14] Komeito, Main Program, p. 28.

Komeito was inaugurated, the Liberal Democrats sought to include Komeito in some form of united front.[15] Even though the offer was rejected, Komeito still did not move immediately away from the Liberal Democrats on most issues. This may well have been due to a realization that only through cooperation with the Liberal Democrats could Komeito realize any of its own desired legislation. Ironically, then, a few months after its first candidates had been elected to the lower house, Komeito suddenly had a falling out with the Liberal Democrats. The issue was a public health insurance program on which even the Socialist party finally compromised with the Liberal Democrats--making Komeito appear to be tackling both giants.[16] From that time to the present, Komeito has openly identified itself as an opposition party and has publicly been much more aggressive on those issues where it finds itself closer to the position of the leftist parties. This switch is bound to have increased its difficulties in finding areas for agreement or compromise with the government party, suggesting a certain ambivalence that on the surface may not have served Komeito's best interests.[17] In spite of this maneuvering, on certain issues it would appear that

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[15]*Japan Times Weekly*, July 17, 1965, p. 1.

[16]Nishijima, *Komeito*, pp. 128-34.

[17]*Ibid.*, p. 130.

Komeito is in a better position to work with the Liberal Democrats than would be the Socialist parties.

As an opposition party, Komeito has become increasingly more outspoken in its attacks on the Liberal Democrats. While being critical of some aspects of the Democratic Socialists, Socialists and Communists, it has cooperated somewhat with these leftist parties in its public and Diet efforts. Thus, Komeito stands shoulder to shoulder with the left in seeking to prevent constitutional change (especially Article 9, which constitutionally prohibits rearmament); to hasten Japan's recognition of Red China; to bring about the early removal of American military bases from Japanese soil as well as to reconstitute Okinawa within the Japanese nation; and to re-define the nature of Japan's ties with the United States.

At the party's National Convention in January, 1969, Komeito issued the warning that it "may stage a joint struggle with the Opposition forces on such issues as opposition to nuclear weapons, reversion of Okinawa to Japan, [and] oppo-sition to automatic extension of the treaty . . .."[18] At that time it failed to reveal either the exact moment or the kind of situation which would propel them into a "joint struggle;" but it did specify that "the Party may stage a mass struggle outside the Diet." This threat indicates that

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[18]Komeito, _Main Program_, pp. 14-15.

the party may even be willing to use mass demonstrations and the boycott as political weapons regarding certain matters, although it has eschewed such tactics in the past. Still and all, Komeito's markedly independent posture in most situations and its indignation at chaos and disorder-- often natural outgrowth of mass demonstrations--raises a likelihood that political tactics which may induce anomie will probably be used only sparingly.

The public's political image of Soka Gakkai has altered measurably since its early political ventures during 1955- 1956. At first the public scoffed at the new group; this attitude soon changed to fear of its seeming extremism. Finally, a certain respect grew for Soka Gakkai once Komeito was launched and its position began to solidify. Komeito's professionalism and zeal undoubtedly improved the party image and dissipated some of the worst fears that Soka Gakkai was some resurrected version of pre-war ultranationalism. Despite this improved image, many Japanese citizens express a certain discomfiture with Komeito, for they see the party as using the political system for ends other than what those particular persons would construe as the public good. This may well be true, but it is the contention of this study that Komeito has and is performing many functions in the Japanese political system and that the effect of this performance is to help sustain the Japanese political system. Therefore,

it can be said that one of Komeito's most important functions
is to act as an equilibrator for the Japanese political
system.

Systemic Functions

Komeito as an Articulator and Broker: For some
twelve to fifteen million Japanese citizens, Komeito can
and does articulate demands to the government and seeks to
satisfy their political, social and economic needs. Before
the appearance of Komeito, many of these people lacked effective
articulation channels. These disaffected or potentially
disaffected persons appear, therefore, to have been ripe for
manipulation by elements endeavoring to destroy or radically
alter the political system. In addition to channeling such
claims through orderly procedures into the political system,
Komeito serves as a bargaining agent for the demands of its
larger constituency.

Komeito as a Communicator: As a political party
Komeito is equipped to communicate information from the
environment into the political system and from that system
into the environment. Communication from the environment to
the system may be in the form of articulation as above, or
it may take the form of supplying information about the
environment to the system that will be useful for future
policies (although specific demands may not be articulated).
The statistics gleaned through the Komeito consultation

centers, for example, might be one type of information that is communicated to the system.

The reverse of this process is to provide information on laws, programs and policies to Komeito constituents. This takes place through information dispersed at the consultation centers and in the reports and editorials in the party or Soka Gakkai media. This communication process impinges upon the next function.

Komeito as a Socializer: One of the most important functions that Komeito performs is to socialize its constituents into the political system. Almond and Powell define political socialization as the "process by which political cultures are maintained and changed," and that "through the performance of this function individuals are inducted into the political culture . . .[and] their opinions toward political objects are formed."[19] If the bulk of the Gakkai membership can be construed as a large group that was formerly disenfranchised, and that the members of which were essentially anti-democratic or alienated by the nature of the urbanized, impersonal democratic system, then Komeito brings these people into the political system.[20] Government is brought to the people in the form of

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[19]Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics, p. 64.

[20]Dator seems to substantiate this when he says that "Soka Gakkai socializes marginal persons into dominant values." Dator, Third Civilization, p. 134.

the consultation centers and by way of political representatives with whom a member of Soka Gakkai has had personal contact in another context. Accordingly, it can be argued that, although Komeito may criticize the system, Komeito as a part of that system cannot help but make it more attractive in the eyes of the party supporter. It is also quite possible that even though the acts of voting and campaigning may at first be perceived as religious duties, over time such acts may take on expressly political meanings. When this is coupled with the stress on human dignity and equality in the Komeito literature, the supporter may well be socialized into a democratic system--or the opposite of the internal thrust of the Gakkai movement. How far this process has progressed at this point undoubtedly is difficult to measure, but it would seem inevitable that some alteration of attitudes and values has taken place.[21]

Another dimension of the socialization process is an increase in the supporter's perception about the relationship between making demands and having influence enough to get a response. Today, any small success made by Komeito is heralded as a major victory. In time, many supporters may not be satisfied with Komeito's ability to satisfy their needs

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[21]White also suggests this possibility. See White, "Mass Movement and Democracy," p. 749.

and hence might turn to some other party or channel for increased political competence. This too would be an act of Komeito socialization--socializing the supporter into an awareness that the political system can be influenced by the actors in that system.

A third form of socialization takes place among those who are elected to the various assemblies. By learning how to work within an assembly and by becoming committed to the idea that one can be effective within a democratic framework, assemblymen and Diet members themselves are socialized into the political system as they develop certain vested interests in the system itself.

The process of socialization takes place over a period of time and is difficult to measure with precision, but the apparent willingness on the part of the Komeito leaders to work within the system is a factor that cannot be overlooked. It is almost certain to have an increasing influence on the Komeito supporting members as well. This is why the writer holds that through socializing their members into the Japanese political system Komeito also is performing an equilibrating function for that system.

Komeito as an Innovator: Another function that Komeito is engaged in might be called an "innovative" function. This is the role that Komeito performs when it brings into the Japanese political system a new set of ideas, based on a rather

unorthodox world view, and new personnel with different

viewpoints. Although many of the Komeito proposals may at

times seem rather crude or unrealistic, it is nonetheless

true that Komeito is offering suggestions and proposals

that are alternatives to existing policies, and that some

of these merit serious consideration. The notion of the

consultation center, although not a new idea, has been put

into operation and expanded by Komeito on a very professional

basis. Even though it has its propaganda purposes, it also

serves to link government representatives with constituents

and has caused the other parties to cast around for means

to secure closer contacts with their constituents.

Moreover, Komeito's proposal to establish a regional

United Nations center in Tokyo, its projected alternatives

to the existing Japanese-United States security agreement,

and other policy suggestions mark it as a distinctive inno-

vator in the Japanese political system.

Komeito as a Muckraker: Although muckraking might

seem to be a somewhat unusual function for a Japanese political

party, it can be said that Komeito has served this function

in a more precise manner than any of those functions suggested

above. The pre-party Soka Gakkai political groups and later

the party itself used the concept of clean and fair government

as part of their names. Even though they did not attack

specific people in their first years of political activity,

even the earliest Soka Gakkai candidates were generally
clear as to what they considered to be corrupt government.
They pointed out that such things as factionalism, large
contributions from special interest groups, bribery, and
outside groups having special influence in the ministries
constituted elements of corruption. Like many rather
militant sects, Soka Gakkai is somewhat puritanical and in
politics they have felt it their duty to expose and eliminate
corrupt practices. In the Diet, Komeito has investigated
numerous rumors of improprieties and has exposed any
situations in which they have found a politician involved
in some conflict of interest or bribery scandal.[22] Although
Komeito often defines certain acts as corrupt which other
politicians and political commentators construe to be simply
good political bargaining, the effect of Komeito's "watchdog"
role clearly serves to restrain the untoward tendencies of
some Japanese politicians. The majority party has been
embarrassed numerous times by Komeito's questioning and public
exposure of some of their more questionable practices. In
at least one instance, in 1965, the Liberal Democrats suffered
a major political defeat due to untimely exposure of a bribery
scandal. On that occasion, the Liberal Democrats were reduced
from 69 to 38 out of 120 members of the Tokyo Metropolitan.

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[22]Nishijima, Komeito, pp. 143-52.

Assembly, whereas the Socialist party won 45 seats and
Komeito obtained 23. In more meaningful terms, as a result
of the scandal, Komeito assumed a balance-of-power role
in the Tokyo Assembly.[23]

While exposing corruption in other parties, Komeito
has been extremely circumspect about holding to generally
high standards in its own political actions. True, there
were instances of election fraud in the movement's early
political history, but in recent years this has been
virtually eliminated. In fact, in the last four years there
have been no significant accusations of misconduct directed
at Komeito. Their own example and their alertness for
ferreting out the misconduct of others probably conduces to
the development of a less corrupt political system. In a
sense, they might be construed as having become a "public
conscience" agent.

Although Komeito may perform additional functions,
the above seem to be the most significant at this time. In
the preceding chapters Komeito has been analyzed from the
standpoint of its leadership, membership, beliefs and value
system, and from the point of view of its inter-relationship
with the Japanese political system. Some final comments are
now in order respecting the impact of Komeito and Soka Gakkai

[23]New York Times, July 25, 1965, p. 3.

on Japanese society and the prospects for this mass move-
ment in the future.

CHAPTER VI

IMPACT AND PROSPECTS

The Impact

It is very difficult to measure with any precision
the impact of a political party or social movement on a
society. The best that can be hoped for, in most cases,
is that indicators can be found that will provide some clues
as to the extent of that impact.

As far as Komeito is concerned, it is unlikely that
there are any Japanese citizens who do not know of Komeito
and its relationship with Soka Gakkai. One suspects that
nearly every Japanese citizen has, at some time or another,
been the object of shakubuku, and has seen or read about
Gakkai cultural, social and political activities.

The crusade-like approach to both religion and
politics has carried this movement to the forefront of
public attention and, therefore, it has received considerable
press coverage and some scholarly attention. The effect of
this process seems to have been to crystallize the attitudes
of large numbers of Japanese citizens--many millions openly
affiliating with the movement or at least voting for Komeito
candidates, while others have opposed Soka Gakkai or Komeito,
or both. Further, still another large group of citizens

hold somewhat mixed emotions about Soka Gakkai because they admire some aspects of the movement, but fear or detest others.

At the more exclusively political level, it is apparent that Komeito has had a definite impact on the Diet. One can be certain that some Liberal Democrats squirm at the thought that some of their more questionable activities might be uncovered. At the same time, it is incontrovertible that some of the legislation enacted by the Diet in the last few years was directly influenced by Komeito ideas, information and demands. The 7,300 consultation centers have also had some influence, as have the various statistical reports that Komeito has compiled from these centers. Just the fact that Komeito participates so actively at all levels of government and politics is bound to have had its effect.

Other indicators of Soka Gakkai's effect on the Japanese political process also exist. For example, Soka Gakkai claims a membership of twelve to fifteen million, or approximately 12% to 15% of the total population. In 1968, 6,656,771 people, or about 15.4% of the total number voting, cast their votes for Komeito candidates.[1] This should indicate that a sizable minority, for one reason or another, supports Komeito policies, or at the very least they support Komeito as a symbol of opposition to the other Japanese political parties. There

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[1]Yamashita, "Notes," p. 6.

is also some indication that Komeito appeal has attracted

support beyond Gakkai membership. One reporter has stated

that: "Careful analysis of the results in local constituencies

showed that Komeito attracted sizable blocks of votes from

outside the membership of Soka Gakkai."[2] Although incon-

clusive, this may account for a part of the 1,500,000 vote

increase since the 1965 upper house election.

Examining the overall position of Komeito, one finds

that as of January 1, 1969, Komeito held 2,041 seats in

assemblies at every level in the Japanese political system.[3]

At the national level the party held 9.6% of the upper house

seats, and 5.3% of the lower house seats. Part of this

difference is due to the different bases of election for the

two houses, but Komeito apparently believes that it has

enough support to substantially increase its influence in

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[2]Chapin, "Buddhist Party," p. 3.

[3]These statistics were compiled from several sources.
See primarily: Party Organ Bureau, Komeito, [J] Komeito no
Juten Seisaku [Komeito's Major Policies], [Tokyo: Komei Press,
1968]; Nishijima, Komeito, p. 32 and p. 270; and Asian Scene,
June, 1963, p. 12.
    The hierarchy of political subdivisions in Japan is
central government, prefectures and municipalities (cities,
towns and villages). Municipalities of over 50,000 population
are construed as cities and smaller units are called towns or
villages (usually a town serves as the trade center for many
villages). The one exception to this pattern is the ward
system of Tokyo. The twenty-three Tokyo wards are special
political subdivisions (each having its own government
structure) of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

the lower house since it is tripling its number of candidacies
for the next election. At the prefectural level the party
controlled 4% (107 of 2,688) of the assembly seats, and it
held 10.4% (1,328 of 12,716) of the total city and ward seats.

Probably one of the most important things that can
be deduced from a breakdown of electoral statistics is that
Komeito successes have been primarily in urban areas. Thus,
whereas Komeito holds only 4% of the prefectural seats, which
are overwhelmingly rural, its share of city and ward seats
rises to 10.4%. An even more revealing indicator is that
Komeito has won only 557 out of the thousands of town and
village assembly seats. It may be that the party does not
actively seek seats in rural assemblies, but Komeito's concern
with statistics belies this possibility. On the other hand,
Komeito holds 15.6% of the assembly seats in the five major
cities outside of Tokyo--i.e., Yokohama, Nagoya, Osaka, Kyoto
and Kobe. Finally, the greatest concentration of Gakkai
membership is in Tokyo and Osaka. The party has 19% of the
seats in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly, and, as the second
largest party, it holds 22.3% of the Osaka City Assembly seats.[4]

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[4]On July 14, 1969, the most recent Tokyo Metropolitan
Assembly election was held and all 25 of Komeito's candidates
were elected, giving them approximately 20% of the 126 Assembly
seats. The Socialist party was reduced from 42 to 24 seats,
making Komeito the second largest party in that Assembly. The
Liberal Democrats increased their holdings from 38 to 56 seats,
but were 10 seats short of a majority.

As of 1969 no single party/controlled a majority of the
seats in any of the six urban assemblies just listed. There-
fore, Komeito has a very good bargaining position in each
of them.

Obviously, Komeito remains a minority party in Japan.
Still, its rather consistent electoral growth and its especial
strength in the large urban centers provides it with impress-
ive credentials for bargaining purposes. A somewhat more
subtle indication of Komeito as a force in Japanese politics
can be discerned in the proliferation of organized opposition
to its presence. The appearance of such opposition is the
natural outgrowth of a general rule of social and political
behavior,[5] and it applies in Komeito's case to a myriad of
antagonistic groups and actions. The older political parties
regularly rail against Komeito through verbal diatribes and
printed propaganda. Commonly, they single out Komeito's
undemocratic tendencies and sometimes even go so far as to
label it a fascist political party.

Union hostility to Komeito and Soka Gakkai dates from
a period in the late 1950's and early 1960's when Soka Gakkai

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[5]The view that the rise and political effectiveness
of one group motivates the rise of groups in opposition to it
is the theme of Madison in Federalist Paper No. 10. An
application of this theme to social and revolutionary move-
ments can be found in Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian,
Collective Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-
Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 328.

moved into the Kyushu and Hokkaido coal fields and was
somewhat successful in undermining the influence and hold
that Tanro, a large coal-miners union, had on the coal-miners.[6]
Beyond this, the unions worry about the sizable proportion of
the Gakkai membership that comes from the blue-collar class--
a matter of grave concern to the unions inasmuch as Soka Gakkai
exercises a far greater control over its followers than the
unions exert over their members. Japanese union leaders
fear that the Tanro incident may be repeated on a wider scale.
Union opposition has so far been local in nature, pressure
sometimes being applied to individual Gakkai members; but
most higher level opposition has been channeled through their
respective political representatives.

   Several religious organizations have also expressed
hostility to Komeito. Zen-nichi-butsu (Japan Buddhist
Federation) has waged active political campaigns against
Komeito by supporting Liberal Democratic candidates. They
have also processed and dispersed a great deal of anti-Gakkai
literature as has Shin-shu-ren (Union of New Religious
Organizations in Japan).[7] Both of these groups represent
religious sects that feel slandered by Gakkai attacks,
threatened by the apparent ability of Soka Gakkai to take

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[6]Thomsen, The New Religions of Japan, p. 96.

[7]Ikeda, Lectures on Buddhism, II, 86.

away some of their followers, and frightened by the prospect

of a politically potent Komeito. Christian groups have also

openly opposed Komeito candidates for similar reasons.[8]

The most common form of opposition has been in the

press. Individuals on their own accord or representing

groups, scholars for their various personal and professional

reasons, and reporters out for news stories, have all con-

tributed their share to the growing volume of literature on

Soka Gakkai and Komeito. Some of this printed matter is

sensational and violently anti-Komeito. Some, however, is

written with the intent to objectively appraise Komeito.

In that regard, it probably has had a healthy influence on

the party itself, since Komeito leaders, particularly Ikeda,

seem rather sensitive to responsible criticism.[9]

Summing up, then, although the extent of Komeito's

impact is difficult to assess, it is apparent that a sizable

minority of Japanese citizens have been affected either

positively or negatively by its existence. The movement is

still relatively young and small, and it still has not caused

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[8]*Arizona Republic*, February 5, 1966, p. 31.

[9]For examples of this latter type of reporting, see:
An open letter to Daisaku Ikeda by Mamoru Sakamoto in
Chuo Koron, March, 1967; Akio Saki, "Komeito no Seisaku wo
Hihan suru" [Komeito's Policies Criticized], *Zenei*, July, 1965;
and Michio Takeyama, "Soka Gakkai wa Fassho ka" [Is Soka Gakkai
Fascist?] , *Jiyu*, August, 1965.

a perceptible shift either in the Japanese political system
or in society generally. Nevertheless, more time and a
better perspective may reveal a greater impact than is now
apparent.

Prospects

From the time that Soka Gakkai first appeared,
observers and critics of the movement have spoken of its
imminent demise. Particularly at the time of Toda's death
in 1958, prophets of Gakkai doom believed that without its
charismatic leader, the organization would fall apart.
Later, as analysts realized more fully that there were socio-
political and economic dimensions to the movement, critics
felt that in time Japan's growing prosperity would undermine
Soka Gakkai's potential drawing power. They contended that
as more of the economic and political needs of these people
were satisfied in the regular economic and political systems,
a movement such as Soka Gakkai would become less attractive.
Despite these predictions and the continuing improvement of
Japan's economic conditions, Soka Gakkai has continued to
flourish.

In the preceding chapter, reference was made to two
apparent but contradictory trends in the Soka Gakkai movement.
First, it was indicated that if Soka Gakkai continued to
expand and it failed to experience any significant structural
alterations in its makeup, it could develop into a mass,

totalitarian movement that would have serious consequences for Japan's developing democratic system. The second suggestion was that, if Komeito is functioning effectively as a socializing agent in the Japanese political system, it might well infuse its supporters with democratic values and these supporters would in turn refuse to continue to affiliate with a non-democratic sub-system. These trends, and other less extreme alternatives, need to be evaluated more carefully.

Taking the first possibility--i.e., that the Gakkai movement will continue to expand and become a major alternative to a democratically functioning system--one notes that the focus is on the psychological and social gratification that a supporter finds in identifying with the movement. Soka Gakkai in this context provides a politico-religious escape from the complexity of modern, urbanized and increasingly impersonal Japanese society. Paul Tillich has said:

> There is a tendency in the average citizen,
> even if he has a high standing in his profession,
> to consider the decisions relating to the life
> of the society to which he belongs as a matter of
> fate on which he has no influence . . ., a mood
> favorable for the resurgence of religion but
> unfavorable for the preservation of a living
> democracy.[9]

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[9]Paul Tillich, The Future of Religions, edited by Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 50.

Tillich was speaking of a Western society where democratic values and practices supposedly had long since become the political culture of that society. How much more relevant, then, are these words to a Japanese society where there has not yet developed such a strong democratic political culture, and where religious-like nationalism and social mores have been and still may be a powerful underlying force.

Erich Fromm in Escape From Freedom has also taken a similar line of thought in which he stresses the psychological needs of individuals that are not fulfilled in a rapidly changing and impersonal urban society.[11] Fromm was studying the causes of fascism and Naziism during the 1930's, and stressed the relationship of environmental conditions to individual psychology. His basic thesis is that many human beings in impersonal urban societies may be inclined to cling to powerful mass and authoritarian movements that fulfill basic identity needs and power drives. These needs and urges are magnified by the loss of personal identity in a highly conformist mass culture and by the breakdown of the traditional primary bonds that, while giving an individual a sense of belonging, also hold him in check. The relevance of Fromm to the Gakkai movement can be seen in that most of

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[11]Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1941).

the Gakkai members, recent transplants from the country-side and long-time urban residents alike, are among those Japanese citizens that are more keenly affected by a rapidly changing environment which is breaking down social bonds and lessening personal security and status. Compounding the problem is the fact that these same people are often in a rather tenuous economic status which is threatened by inflation and the hazards of an unpredictable capitalist labor or business market. Other factors that contribute to individual anomie or powerlessness are such things as the perceived (in the eyes of many Japanese citizens) low status of Japan as a nation, and the rigorous and almost inhumane competition that prevails in Japanese schools, and beyond, for achievement in Japanese society.

The implication for this study that can be drawn from Tillich and Fromm is that even if economic and social conditions improve, large numbers of Japanese citizens might still be inclined to affiliate with a powerful movement such as Soka Gakkai as long as it could provide the security and psychological gratifications that they are seeking. As has been pointed out, the Soka Gakkai structure is designed to replace former traditional bonds with new face-to-face relationships and primary bonds. It also provides simple answers to complex problems, a simple ethical code, and a sense of power and accomplishment for the individual and group. After all, they

are not only going to save Japan, through Nichiren Buddhism,
but the rest of the world as well. The implication for
nationalism in this concept is subtle but very powerful.

An opposite interpretation is that provided by those
social scientists who hold that as societies mature and basic
individual economic and psychological needs are satisfied,
new information and new experiences will tend to break down
older bonds.[12] Individuals and groups will then tend to
become more "liberal" in their attitudes and less bound by
the demands of their peer groups and primary bonds. Applying
this kind of thinking to an authoritarian movement, the
implication would be that a growing number of individuals
would react to the stifling nature of participation require-
ments in their movement and would begin to break away. Pre-
sumably, this is the process that is taking place in the
contemporary totalitarian political systems.

Looking at the Gakkai movement, the conclusion to be
drawn from the latter thesis is that as Gakkai members begin
to have new experiences and new contacts and have some of their

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[12]This is the viewpoint often expressed by those
scholars that are concerned with national development and
change. Almond and Powell, in their Comparative Politics:
A Developmental Approach, are typical examples of this class
of scholars. Another example is Fred W. Riggs, "The Theory
of Political Development" in James C. Charlesworth, ed.,
Contemporary Political Analysis (New York: Free Press, 1967)
pp. 350-65.

more primitive needs satisfied, they will be less inclined
to remain affiliated with the movement unless the organization
itself adjusts to a more acceptable posture. The argument
boils down to one of competing and conflicting personal
desires and social demands. On the one hand, the Gakkai
membership and peer group demands will indicate one type of
response for an individual, whereas other experiences may
dictate another type of response. In terms of Japanese
politics, assuming that Komeito is socializing its supporters
into the Japanese system, it can be said that Komeito is, on
the one hand, demanding certain attitudes and behavioral
responses that reflect an authoritarian political culture,
while on the other hand it is providing specific experiences
and articulating ideas (and perhaps in some senses practicing
them) that reflect a different type of political culture. The
argument, therefore, is that over time these new experiences
and ideas will not be lost on the practitioners and that they
will be socialized into that political system with the more
democratic political culture.

The more probable political prospects for the Gakkai
movement would seem to lie somewhere between these two extremes.
The nature of personal vested interests, whether in the party,
the religion, the athletic or music programs, the new temples
or perhaps a job in a Gakkai enterprise, all make it unlikely
that there will be a mass defection from Soka Gakkai. At

the same time, the ostensible aversion to terror tactics, the apparent quest for respectability and the incipient willingness to work within the political system would seem to make it unlikely that Komeito could come to power in any but a democratic manner. This in turn is contingent upon continued zeal in Gakkai _shakubuku_ activities and an increasing attraction of non-Gakkai electoral support. Both of these are possible, but both would seem to have certain limitations.

It seems that all messianic religious movements in history have reached points where the only way they could expand further was by their own use of force or by using political authority to impose themselves on others. Furthermore, before movements reach the full extent of their expansion, "heretics" or those who question or oppose from within the structure appear, and the effect of their appearance is often to cause confusion within the ranks, a struggle among leaders, factionalism and, unless there is a political authority to impose the "proper" orthodoxy, the movement begins to break into sects. The zeal of the faithful supporters may also lessen in time. Any of the above possibilities would be harmful for Soka Gakkai's recruitment program--i.e., their expansion through the conversion of new members.

Whether or not Komeito will continue to attract non-Gakkai electoral support depends a great deal on their programs, their public performance and their ability to attract this

support despite adjustments made by other parties who also intend to appeal to the same groups of people. There would appear, therefore, to be certain limitations to the Soka Gakkai and Komeito expansion.

It is because of these potential limitations that one concludes that it is unlikely that Komeito will become the major political force in Japan. It is just as unlikely, however, that Komeito will disappear overnight. There is a good possibility that Komeito may even enlarge its representation, and may be even become a challenge to the Socialist party as the second major party, or at least be in a good position to form a coalition with a splinter party should the Liberal Democratic party break up. There is also the possibility that as the party expands its political role, it may be able to loosen somewhat its ties to Soka Gakkai. The nature of the present links between the two organizations would appear to make this rather difficult, but greater autonomy might be an attractive alternative for some Komeito political leaders.

There are some relatively concrete indications of a slowdown in Gakkai expansion. One finds that although Soka Gakkai has increased its membership and Komeito its voting strength, the rate of increase has slowed down (meaning that fewer members are successfully fulfilling their shakubuku duties). From 1962 to 1965 Soka Gakkai expanded by 2,850,000 families, or about 95%, but from 1965 to 1968, the expansion

was only 768,000 families or an increase of 12.9%.[13] Further-more, the voting percentage per family unit of claimed member-ship has decreased with each election. In 1962, Soka Gakkai received 1.32 votes per claimed family unit; but in 1965, the rate was only .87 votes per _setai_ or family unit.[14] The ratio was slightly less in 1968, despite an apparent in-crease in non-Gakkai support.[15] One must conclude that for some reason or other, the ability of Soka Gakkai to attract new members is decreasing at the same time as Komeito is better able to attract non-Gakkai votes. This, of course, does not mean that Soka Gakkai will not continue to expand, only that the rate of expansion is slowing down and that once the movement begins to lose some of its momentum, the loss will probably be difficult to overcome. Komeito, therefore, may be motivated to shift more toward being a semi-pragmatic bargaining party and thereby garner a larger percentage of the popular vote.

Another interesting recent development was an announcement by Komeito that it was studying the possibilities

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[13]The statistics are based on household memberships claimed by Soka Gakkai in a letter sent to the writer dated July 2, 1969.

[14]Nishijima, _Komeito_, pp. 273-74.

[15]Chapin, "Buddhist Party," p. 3.

of forming a new labor union federation.[16] With only about

one-third of Japan's labor represented by major unions, and

since a sizable percentage of the Gakkai membership comes

from labor, this is an enticing prospect for additional

electoral support. How this project would be integrated with

Soka Gakkai is not clear, though it is unlikely that a union

dominated by the Gakkai organization would carry a very

wide appeal. One suspects that if such a proposal is carried

out, the union will have to be much more autonomous than are

the present Gakkai sub-structures or risk not appealing much

beyond the present Gakkai membership. Needless to say, the

Socialists, Democratic Socialists and existing unions are not

pleased by this prospect, and can be expected to oppose it

with every means possible. What is most intriguing about the

idea is the possible implication for certain vested political

interests among the party politicians. It is quite possible

that the leadership will find that if they are going to be

increasingly effective in the political system, they are going

to have to be less bound to Soka Gakkai. Were they to

realize a greater measure of autonomy, they might become more

attractive politically. The union concept just might be a

move toward autonomy, or a union, once established, might

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[16]Nishijima, Komeito, pp. 281-84.

pull the party toward a more autonomous position.

It is this writer's opinion that Soka Gakkai will
continue to grow, but at an increasingly slower rate. Most
of the members will probably continue to identify with Soka.
Gakkai, but over time the intensity of their loyalty may
lessen. This possibly could bring about a more moderate
political posture within the Soka Gakkai movement. Further-
more, it is felt that Komeito will probably become better
integrated into the Japanese political system and that there
will be some relaxation of the ties between Soka Gakkai and
Komeito. As Komeito continues to gain respectability there
will be some increase of support for Komeito among Japanese
citizens who are not presently interested in Soka Gakkai.
If opportunity to participate in a coalition government
presented itself, Komeito would probably take advantage of
it and thereby have influence out of proportion to its
relative size. Of course, it is always possible that Komeito
could suffer a demise, but the skillful combination of social
welfare policies with nationalism and the rather good political
intuition of its present leadership would seem to ensure its
viability in the foreseeable future.

Some Final Observations

It can be concluded that although the source of
inspiration for the religious movement came from Nichiren
Buddhism, and even though their political values supposedly

find their origin there as well, Komeito's political behavior

and policies can be related to the prevailing Japanese social

and political conditions. "Buddhist politics," as presented

in the title of this paper, therefore, has more significance

as a means for identification and as a rationale for Komeito's

political involvement than it does as a definition of observ-

able political phenomena. One must not, however, under-

estimate the poignancy of such a concept for people in a

nation that has a history of politically-involved religious

movements.

That Soka Gakkai is a movement with serious political

implications has been demonstrated. Whether Komeito repre-

sents a new thrust of the upper-lower and lower-middle

sectors of Japanese society into politics, or whether it is

simply a manifestation of disaffection by a relative minority

of Japanese urban citizens cannot yet be fully ascertained.

Evidence has been presented that suggests either possibility,

and perhaps a combination of both. There are some aspects

of the movement that may strike an observer as remarkable

or even admirable; but at the same time one cannot help but

be aware of the destructive potential for democratic insti-

tutions inherent in this movement. Although it has been so

accused, Soka Gakkai is not a fascist movement; but it has

the institutional and doctrinal qualities for developing into

such a movement. As it stands today, Gakkai doctrines would

sanction a change in the leadership toward a more aggressive

posture and such a shift could be initiated by a few men at

the center, in the name of Nichiren. Although this does not

seem likely given the present leadership, it does remain one

of the conceivable directions which the movement could

ultimately take. Whatever the case, in the final analysis,

Soka Gakkai's and Komeito's main role in the Japanese political

system basically depends on whether or not all the operative

political forces can make that system function more effectively

in satisfying the social needs of the Japanese community.

Toward this end Komeito can, as a political party in that

system, play a positive role; but if the system does not

function in an effective manner, Soka Gakkai might become a

vehicle through which some "higher order" is sought, and one

can almost be certain that in the process of seeking such

a "higher order" much of Japan's post-war economic and

political development would be undermined and possibly even

eliminated. Most students of the Japanese political system

would not find this prospect a favorable alternative.

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