

Daesoon Jinrihoe in Perspective: New Religions and their Development over Time

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Abstract

In this study, Daeseon Jinrihoe is compared with five international new religious movements (The Church of Scientology, The Family International, The Hare Krishna Movement, The Family Federation, and the Osho Movement) concerning the development of charisma and institutionalization, as well as organizational changes and relationship to society. The material consists of previous research about Daeseon Jinrihoe and two interviews with representatives for the group. In many respects the development of Daeseon Jinrihoe has similarities to the international groups. Since its inception, it has changed from a group with charismatic authority to a rational-legal authority, through a development of organizational complexity, initiated by the three consecutive charismatic leaders. Today there is no charismatic leader, but a president who has an administrative function. Similar to several of the international groups, there have been charismatic challenges in Daeseon Jinrihoe on several occasions. Differences to the international groups are mainly related to macrosociological factors in the shape of the occupation of Japan. Daeseon Jinrihoe was against the occupation, but in spite of that worked to keep the tensions with society low, even though the organization at times was forbidden. In the international groups, the tensions to society were generally high, and had different reasons. In several of the international groups the final arrival of children influenced organizational changes: this was not the case with Daeseon Jinrihoe as there had always been children in the group. As in the Church of Scientology, the children are not much engaged in the religious life of Daeseon Jinrihoe, but can join as adults. Today, Daeseon Jinrihoe works as a denomination, with a positive relationship to society partly due to many welfare projects.

Keywords: charisma; institutionalization; organizational changes;
tension with society

Introduction

All religious groups change over time. In new religious movements, the changes are often quite fast. In a project funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond between 2004-2007, I investigated five of the new religious movements with origins between the 1950s and 1970s, and what happened to them over time. These groups were all international groups with centers in, among many other countries, Sweden: The Church of Scientology, The Family International (The Children of God), The Hare Krishna Movement, The Family Federation (The Unification Church), and the Osho Movement (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh). Two areas of change, discussed in the project, will be discussed in this article in relation to Daesoon Jinrihoe. These areas are: charisma and institutionalization; and organizational changes and relationship to society.

Daesoon Jinrihoe¹ is a native Korean movement and is so far not much spread in other countries. An interesting question which will be discussed in this paper is if Daesoon Jinrihoe shows similar sociological patterns as the five international movements previously investigated, or if there are other patterns concerning Daesoon Jinrihoe due to national or other circumstances. Material used is previous research about this group, as well as two interviews with representatives. The interviews were planned to take place in Korea in May 2020, but were instead conducted via Skype due to the Covid-19 pandemic.²

The interviews concerned the historical development in Daesoon Jinrihoe, and did not concern individuals' beliefs. Thus, no ethical permission was needed for the study. As usual, however, the ethical principles of the information requirement, the consent requirement, the confidentiality requirement and the utility requirement were followed. The informants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could terminate participation at any time without explanation. They were also informed that the interviews would be used for research purposes only. The material was treated confidentially, and audio files and transcripts are archived and stored at Dalarna University. All information about identifiable persons was recorded, stored and reported in such a way that individuals cannot be identified. According to the Archiving Act, it will be decided after ten years if the material is to be destroyed.

Daesoon Jinrihoe – a very short introduction³

Daesoon Jinrihoe, founded in 1968, derives, as several other Korean new religious movements, from the charismatic leader Kang Jeungsan (1871-1909). Daesoon Jinrihoe includes, like several other Korean new religions, the basic teachings of the traditional religions (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism). Also, sources of Christianity and Korean shamanism are sometimes used (Kim 2014, 177). Korea's new religions are

typically faith-based communities, which differ from other religions mainly by the unique god they worship, distinctive doctrines and special sacred texts (Baker 2008, 79).

An important doctrine in Daeseon Jinrihoe is the one about an earthly paradise through the renewal of human beings and the transformation of their spirits (Kim 2014, 174). Some important principles are that the member should spiritually pursue the harmonious reunion of human beings with divine beings (Kim 2014, 188), and that the practitioners should solve previous grievances and not cause any harm to other people, in order to perform the mutual beneficence in life (Kim 2014, 182). Thus, ethical perspectives are emphasized (Baker 2008, 87). While there are no rules telling members that they should not smoke, drink, or eat meat, they are, however, taught to act in accordance with traditional Confucian moral principles, like being filial to their parents and loyal to their country (Baker 2008, 88).

Charisma and institutionalization in a theoretical perspective

The majority of new religious movements are initiated around a person who expresses a new teaching, a new interpretation of an older teaching, or a mixture of older teachings. This person normally occupies a special position in the group. He/she is believed to have a special relationship to the divine, which legitimates his special authority and position. The term “charisma” is often used about this person. The well-known sociologist Max Weber defined the concept “charisma” as a special quality in a person, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers of qualities. The focus is on how the charismatic person is regarded by his followers or disciples (Weber 1964, 358-9).

In different religious groups, the charismatic leader’s position and role look different, due to different ideologies legitimating the leader’s position in various ways. Because the leader occupies such a special position in the group, there is often a critical period after his/her death. New forms for leadership and authority have to be developed. As change is most of the time based on the leader’s revelations, the possibilities for ideological change decrease. Additionally, a structured organization usually becomes more important than before, which means that the movement is “institutionalized”. The development of institutionalization, however, often starts already during the life time of the charismatic leader.

According to Max Weber, charisma and institutionalization are opposites to each other. He saw charisma as a challenge to all institutions as charisma tends to change, undermine and destroy them (1968, 51-52). Charismatic authority, however, can only be upheld during a relatively short period, as it is unstable (1968, 22). The process when charisma is transformed to a permanent organization, Weber called the routinization of

charisma. The charismatic character is, to a certain extent, transmitted from the unique person to the structured institution (1964, 363-73). This process usually happens when interests in social and economic security become predominate among the followers, and is often strengthened when the charismatic leader dies (1968, 54-55). According to Weber, who wrote about charisma of the office and hereditary charisma, these are examples of how charisma to a certain extent may stay in the organization (1964, 369-70). Weber further differentiates between three ideal types of authority and how authority is legitimated. First, the charismatic authority which is discussed above, second the rational-legal authority, when the order is legitimated through a system of rules, and third the traditional authority, when the order is legitimated through traditions and habits (1968, 46).

In the beginning of the 1980s, the sociologist of religion Roy Wallis investigated the processes of charisma and institutionalization, based on empirical material from The Children of God (The Family International). His findings were that it is common that new religious movements oscillate between charisma and institutionalization, and that the process of institutionalization is initiated already during the charismatic leader's life time. Wallis suggested that there are four possibilities for the leader to respond to the institutionalization process: 1. *acquiescence* (in spite of the limitations the institutionalization process causes), 2. *encouragement* (developing and actively controlling the process), 3. *displacement* (the leader does not understand that his authority is undermined and that the control of the movement is moved to the administrative leaders), and 4. *resistance* (actively trying to stop the institutionalization process by continually changing the teaching, practice and administrative leaders) (Wallis 1982).

Charisma and institutionalization in some new religious groups

Starting with the Church of Scientology, the founder L. Ron Hubbard is by his followers conceived of as a liberated thetan, and thus is definitely considered a person with exceptional qualities. An interesting fact with the Church of Scientology is that Hubbard actively encouraged institutionalization of his religion very early, probably because a rational and effective organization is inherent in the teaching. Although Hubbard withdrew early from the organization, charisma was to a great extent routinized in his teachings, techniques, and organization. Long before Hubbard's death, in Weber's terms, authority in the church moved from charismatic to rational-legal. Because of that, his death did not affect the church much (Frisk 2007, 182-183).

The leader of the Family International/The Children of God, David Berg, is by the members considered a prophet, and his teaching is conceived of as revealed by God. However, the teaching may be changed by new revelations, and Berg's teaching has

in some parts been modified after his death. When Berg was still alive, the group was oscillating between charisma and institutionalization. Berg sometimes encouraged charismatic renewal and sometimes encouraged institutionalization. In 1978 he, as an example of charismatic renewal, almost dissolved the organization. After his death the movement became more institutionalized and different parts of the movement were led by different boards. The charismatic leadership was partly transmitted to his wife Maria, but she never achieved the same status as Berg had. Thus, the authority in the movement is a mixture: partly the charismatic authority is routinized in an office, and partly there is a rational-legal authority (Frisk 2007, 183-184). Since a few years back, the Family International has reorganized to be only an on-line community (Borowik 2018, 59-86).

Bhaktivedanta Swami, the founder of ISKCON, had a very strong charismatic position. The guru should, according to the vaishnavic tradition, be viewed as God by the disciples (Sardella 2005). A Hindu guru should, traditionally, appoint a successor during his life time, thus transmitting charisma to an office. However, Bhaktivedanta Swami attempted to apply a mixture of a rational-legal and a charismatic structure in his appointment of the administrative GBC (Governing Body Commission) and eleven spiritual gurus. This could maybe also be called a traditional authority as the guru office is legitimated by a succession for generations back. ISKCON was, however, challenged by both internal and external charismatic gurus. After the guru reform (1984-1987) (Frisk 2007, 71) there are several gurus in the movement, but with less power and status than before, and Bhaktivedanta Swami's position as well as the position of GBC has been strengthened (Frisk 2007, 184-185).

In the Unification Church, there was until a few years ago two historical persons who were considered to have a unique spiritual position: Jesus and Reverend Moon. The position of Reverend Moon was, and still is, very strong. Reverend Moon died in 2012, but already before his death his wife and some of his children were engaged in the leadership of the movement. The tendency at that time was that the group might adopt a kind of hereditary charisma, which would make sense with the group's emphasis on the family. Over time, the group has undergone several big changes, initiated by Reverend Moon. These changes could, possibly, be seen as attempts of charismatic renewal. The majority of the changes have been orientated towards institutionalization and encouragement of part time engagement, at the same time as the number of children and family life increased in the group (Frisk 2007, 185-186). After the death of Reverend Moon, the movement has divided into three main fractions. The two smaller groups are led by two of Reverend Moon's sons, while the biggest group is led by Mrs Moon, who has arisen as a charismatic leader on a par with or even being more important than her deceased husband (Barker 2018, 51-52).

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho) had a unique position in the Osho movement.

He had no successor after him, and no guru succession behind him as for example Bhaktivedanta Swami had. His position has, however, varied over time, and has been partly deemphasized after 1985. The movement had two communes, in Pune and Oregon respectively, and in these communes the institutionalization process was encouraged, as no communes could be built without it. But Osho also used several methods for charismatic renewal as he often changed his teaching and positions of the members. In the middle of the 1980s, the institutionalization process reached a peak in Oregon, and the tension with society increased to the extent that criminal acts were carried out. After Osho's death in 1990 the group is led by a board, thus making the authority structure rational-legal. The group was challenged by external charisma in the 1990s and early 2000s, as some of Osho's disciples claimed that they were enlightened, and gathered people around them. On one level the Osho movement is today quite institutionalized, as the same rules apply to all Osho centers around the world, but on another level there is a resistance towards institutionalization which is also seen in the developments outside the movement with the challenge of external charismatic leaders (Frisk 2007, 186-187).

In Daesoon Jinrihoe, there has been three successive charismatic leaders. The first one, Kang Jeungsan (1871-1909) has definitely a very special status, not only in Daesoon Jinrihoe. He is considered to be an incarnation of the supreme god Sangje (Kim 2014, 168), who lives in the ninth heaven, and descended to earth to save every divine being and humankind by taking a human body in 1871 (DIRC 2016, 201). He is also considered to be Maitreya (Kim 2014, 188). According to Daesoon beliefs, he became spiritually enlightened in 1901, and started an organization in 1902. He practiced healing and is said to have performed all kinds of miracles (Chong 2016, 30). He is said to have opened the Great Dao of Heaven and Earth through a 49 days retreat (Introvigne 2017a), and established the earthly paradise by reordering the Universal (Kim 2014, 175). After his death, Jeungsanism was divided into more than 120 organizations (Introvigne 2017a). There were several charismatic leaders in these organizations, but the one interesting to us is Jo Jeongsan (1895-1958), who in 1917 claimed to have received a revelation from Kang Jeungsan, had awakened to the Great Daesoon Truth, and thereby had succeeded him (Introvigne 2017b). Allegedly, this should have been after he entered a mountain to cultivate himself in the hope of saving the world with Dao. After several years, it is told, he finally realized Daesoon Truth through a revelation of Sangje (DIRC 2016, 204).

Jo Jeongsan had never met Kang Jeungsan, but according to the Daesoon history, in 1903 Kang Jeungsan had told his disciples that divine spirits had sought for his successor, but that the successor at that time turned out to be only nine years old, a description which fit Jo Jeongsan who was nine years at the time (DIRC 2016, 203). In 1909, Kang Jeungsan saw a train passing, which had Jo Jeongsan, then aged fifteen,

aboard, and stated “A man can do anything at the age of 15 if he is able to take his identification tag with him.” This statement was interpreted by the disciples of Jeongsan to mean that Kang Jeungsan recognized him as his successor (Introvigne 2017b).

In 1919, Jo Jeongsan searched for Kang Jeungsan’s family, and found his younger sister, who Kang Jeungsan had told ten years earlier that his successor would visit her on that specific day, and she handed over a sealed envelope which Kang Jeungsan had told her to give his successor. From that time on, Jo Jeongsan began to establish Sangje’s teachings and perform the true dharma. He founded a temple in 1925, and also a religious order (DIRC 2016, 204). He formulated a doctrinal system of tenets, creeds, aims, various methods of cultivation, and ceremonial procedures, which continue to guide the members also today (<http://eng.daesoon.org/app/en/introduction/aboutus>, April 27 2020). Between 1919 and 1925, Jo Jeongsan’s claim to be the successor of Kang Jeungsan was disputed by other followers of Kang Jeungsan, who established other branches of Jeungsanism (Introvigne 2017b).

The Japanese authorities at that time oppressed all activities related to Korean religions, and this religious order was also stricken (DIRC 2016, 204-5). Japan started to suppress the order in 1936, and banned its religious activities in 1941, and finally the order was dissolved. In 1945, when Korea was liberated, Jo Jeongsan resumed his religious activities. He established the headquarters of another religious order in 1948. He also made rules for training and cultivation for followers, a work which was finished in 1957. After expressing that Park Wudang would be his successor, he died in 1958 (DIRC 2016, 205).

Park Wudang (1917-1995) joined the religious order of Jo Jeongsan in 1946 (DIRC 2016, 205). Around 1954, he began to closely serve Jo Jeongsan. In 1958, just before his death, Jo Jeongsan appointed him to be in charge of managing the religious order. Park Wudang is known for founding a lot of organizations, as schools and hospitals, and running them for free (DIRC 2016, 206). According to DIRC, there was some kind of conflict in 1967, where some people began to follow one of Jo Jeongsan’s sons, instead of Park Wudang (Introvigne 2017a). Park Wudang left the temple in Gamcheon in 1968, and built a new temple complex in 1969, changing the title of the religious order to Daesoon Jinrihoe, and also reorganized the internal structure. In 1995 he passed on to Heaven, and since then there has been no living charismatic leader in the group (DIRC 2016, 206). The lineage is seen as concluded with these three leaders. Noone had the perfect knowledge after Park Wudang (interview with Mr. Oh, April 27 2020). After Park passing away in 1995, a conflict developed between minority advocating and majority rejecting his deification. The majority won this conflict (Introvigne 2017a).

Kang Jeungsan definitely had a very special position in Daesoo Jinrihoe, as he declared the Great Dao of mutual beneficence and is conceived of as having reordered the universe. On the website, it says that members of Daesoon Jinrihoe worship Sangje,

the highest celestial deity and supreme God of the ninth heaven who exercises absolute authority over the universe (<http://eng.daesoon.org/app/en/introduction/worship>, April 27 2020). As we remember Sangje was born as a human being in the shape of Kang Jeungsan. This makes his position unique.

The other two charismatic leaders are, however, also considered important. The second leader is said to have solidified the religious orthodoxy and created the principles of Dao to open the Later World, and the third one propagated the principles that the second leader had built. Based on this, Daesoon Jinrihoe calls Kang Jeungsan's teaching as the Will, the second leader's teaching as the Principles, and the third leader's teaching and activities as the Instruction and Mission respectively (Daesoon Institute 2016, 201). The third leader, Park Wudang, created the organizational structure as it looks like today (interview with Mr. Oh, April 27 2020).

Kang Jeungsan is not only considered a representative of the divine, but as an incarnation of God himself, Sangje. In the five comparison groups, the charismatic leaders played a bit of different roles and had different kinds of authority. In Daesoon Jinrihoe, Kang Jeungsan, as the incarnated God, is occupying the highest possible position. He is also said to have performed miracles, a criteria of Max Weber for a charismatic leader. His death caused charismatic challengers to arise, and a conflict about who was the right leader resulting in several different organizations. This pattern we recognize from some of the five comparison groups. The death of the first leader often causes turbulence, and an insecurity about who will take over the leadership. In the case of (the future) Daesoon Jinrihoe, Jo Jeongsan became the successor. Both Jo Jeongsan, and the next leader, Park Wudang, were considered special in the group; however, not to be compared with Kang Jeungsan. Jo Jeongsan appointed his own successor in 1958 when he also died, Park Wudang. As he appointed his successor there seems to have been no conflicts about that choice at the time; however, in 1968 arose again challenging charismatic leaders, and in that situation Park Wudang started Daesoon Jinrihoe. In 1995, when he died, there was a last conflict in the group concerning Wudang's divinization. It ended with that in Daesoon Jinrihoe, he is not considered divine. After him, there is no charismatic leader.

Regarding institutionalization, already Kang Jeungsan started an organization in 1902, thus starting the institutionalization process. Jo Jeongsan continued to encourage the institutionalization process, as he founded a temple in 1925, as well as a religious order. He also formulated a doctrinal system of creeds, practices, and ceremonies. Park Wudang then followed this up, and created the institutional organization that is still in Daesoon Jinrihoe today. Thus we can see a relatively constant process of institutionalization, which is also what we typically find in the five comparison groups. A rational-legal authority has replaced the charismatic authority. This development is even more evident as there is no charismatic leader in the movement today.

What differs for Daeseon Jinrihoe, is the occupational power of Japan, which forced the organization to close several times. None of the comparison groups experienced something similar. The relationship to society was often characterized by high tension also in the comparison groups, but the reasons were, however, totally different. In the case of Daeseon Jinrihoe, the tension with society disappeared as Japan left the country. It is also important that Daeseon Jinrihoe has built different welfare institutions like schools and hospitals, which has greatly increased the group's public image (Introvigne 2017b).

Organizational changes and relationship to society

In sociology of religion, the classification of religious organizations in the categories cult, sect, denomination, and church is basic. The discussion in this article will be based on the representation of these categories by Meredith B. McGuire (2002). For a deeper discussion, see Frisk (2007).

For McGuire, two criteria, which have also historically been key themes in classification of religious organizations, were important. These criteria are *degree of tension with society* and *degree of self-conceived legitimacy*. McGuire represents churches as considering themselves uniquely legitimate as well as existing in a positive relationship with society, while sectarian groups are represented as also considering themselves to be uniquely legitimate, but to be in a relatively negative relationship with the dominant society. Typically, sects also emphasize high levels of commitment. According to McGuire's approach, denominations have a positive relationship with society and they also have a pluralistic perspective, accepting the legitimacy claims of other religious groups. The fourth organizational type, cults, is characterized by acceptance of the legitimacy claims of other groups and they also have a relatively negative tension with the larger society. As they have a pluralistic stance, their social dissent is, however, likely to be less extreme (McGuire 2002, 155-158).

Over time, religious organizations change. Often, they change in standard directions, although there are other possibilities as well. Cults are in general more unstable than other types of religious organizations, because of their lack of authority, the individualistic and segmental mode of commitment, and their indistinct and pluralistic doctrine. Typically, the transformation for a cult is to develop towards a sect. The key feature in this transformation is the change of authority. The leader clarifies the boundaries of the belief system and membership, and also claims strong authority. Sects, however, mostly change towards denomination through routinization of charisma. Sects give up their claim to exclusive legitimacy and reduce their tension with society. Often cultic groups first become more sectarian, and later move towards denominations (McGuire 2002, 177-181). In some cases, as we see in some of the groups below, this

development coincides with the addition of children in the groups, which changes parents' attitudes and possibilities to engage fulltime in the religious organization.

A typical example of change from cult to sect is The Church of Scientology. The founder, L. Ron Hubbard, created a foundation for Dianetics in 1950. Simultaneously there existed other practitioners of Dianetics. Some of these wanted to change parts of the practice and combine it with other teachings. This displays the pluralistic legitimacy and the unclear authority connected with a cult. However, the Church of Scientology, founded in 1954, was more authoritarian and controlled by Hubbard, and also demanded higher degrees of engagement. Dianetics had already at that time a certain tension with the society, but this tension increased immensely during the following decades, because of the Church of Scientology challenging the mainstream culture in different ways. The ideology of Scientology has also partly encouraged increased tension with society, as their strategy has rather been to attack enemies than a willingness to compromise. Because of this, the high tension with society was maintained for several decades. However, since the 1990s the group has developed towards a denomination. As the tensions with society have diminished, the church has been acknowledged as a religion in several countries. In contrary to some other new religions, the arrival of children does not seem to have influenced the church much, probably because the main part of it always has been part time engagement (Frisk 2007, 197-198).

The Children of God/Family International started as a cult as well, but after a short period of time the tension towards society increased and the group developed towards the sect category. In the beginning of the 1970s the borders between the mainstream society and the group became sharper, and as the ideology was radicalized the tension with society increased even more. Later, from about the end of the 1980s, however, the group again approached society. My interpretation is that a reason for this change was that the tension with society had become too high, and the relationship to society was close to a collapse as the group had been accused of child abuse. The group was, in this situation, more or less forced to change. It was also during a time when the second generation numerically began to dominate the movement. It is clear that the demographic change of many children in the movement, in the case of The Family International, has been of great importance for the development of the movement towards a denomination. From 1995 there is also a possibility to be part time engaged. The recent changes toward an internet community, have further accentuated the interpretation of the group being a denomination. There is a membership fee, distinguishing members from nonmembers, and a few requirements related to sending in reports. The group is more and more being conceived of as a Christian group among other Christian groups and there is no visible tension with society. Thus the category denomination is more suitable than the category cult, which could have been another possibility (Frisk 2007, 198-199).

ISKCON was also during the first few years a loosely structured cult, formed around the leader Bhaktivedanta Swami. From the end of the 1960s, the group became a full time engaging sect with community living and a raising tension with society. However, from the middle or end of the 1980s the tension with society gradually diminished. In ISKCON, as in some other groups, did this change coincide with a changed demographic profile. From around 1990 nuclear families had replaced the communities as the base for ISKCON. Families had to live in society and support themselves for economic reasons. Therefore, part time engagement became common, which also decreased the tensions to society. During the latter years, this development has increased, making the group move towards a denominational status. ISKCON also deliberately tried to decrease the tensions to society through, for example, engaging Hindu migrants (Frisk 2007, 199-200).

For a long time, the Unification Church was a small cult. In the 1970s it started to grow and changed towards a sectarian status. The tension with society increased because of the challenging ideology of Reverend Moon as the new Messiah and the controversial habit of arranged marriages. Children started to arrive during the 1980s, and there was a gradual development towards part time engagement. Reverend Moon encouraged members to live in nuclear families from 1991. There have been further changes towards a non-controversial movement working for family values, peace and interreligious work from 1996. Today the group works as a quite ordinary denomination. As other groups, it faces the challenge of getting the now adult children engaged in the group (Frisk 2007, 200-201).

The pattern of starting the movement as a cult is similar in the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho) group. It moved towards a sect status from 1974 when the ashram in Pune was initiated. At that time, the borders to society were sharpened, the charismatic authority increased and the tension towards society rose. One reason for that was the ideology of the movement, which challenged the norms and traditions of mainstream society, and the controversial habit of teaching through provocation. The group developed towards a denominational status with part time engagement and low degree of tension with society from 1985. In this group, the tension with society increased to the degree of a collapse. A difference towards the other groups investigated in this article is that, as the group did not encourage having children, there are few second generation members. Today, the group works as a low engagement denomination, parts of it more like a cult (Frisk 2007, 201-202).

Jeungsanism originated in a politically and socially troubled time in Korean society (Kim 2014, 173). The second half of the 19th century was marked by a gradual decline of the ruling dynasty, a loss of confidence in the Confucian value system because of incompetence and corruption in the government, oppression and exploitation of the common people, and political pressures by foreign powers. This was followed by

Japanese occupation for many years, with further suppression and exploitation of the Korean people (Prunner 1980, 4-5). Japanese colonialism lasted from 1910 to 1945 (Chong 2016, 21). Also, the Western encroachment in the East was a challenge. This resulted in Korean nationalism, which also influenced the new religious groups at the time (Chong 2016, 22). The Jeungsan movement was disbanded in 1941 due to Japanese policy (Chong 2016, 21). After the war Korea reached independence, although divided in two (Prunner 1980, 5).

The forerunners of Daesoon Jinrihoe, however, seem to have been careful to not increase the tensions with society more than necessary. They sought a religious solution to the societal problems. According to Daesoon Jinrihoe history, Sangje was urged by all the divine sages, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas to come down from the ninth heaven to earth to save the human world, earthly world, and spiritual world (Kim 2014, 173). There was a peasant rebellion in 1894, which was defeated by the government with the help of Japanese troops, after which a bloody repression followed with many deaths (Introvigne 2017a). Kang Jeungsan predicted that the rebellion would fail, and persuaded his followers not to participate in it (Introvigne 2017a). Jeungsan preached peace and prosperity to his followers who would live in the forthcoming paradise which would soon be realized on earth through his teachings and religion. The problems in this world would be solved by his “reordering of the universe”, not by violence and protests. (Chong 2016, 32-33). However, Kang Jeungsan also did protest in mild ways to the Japanese occupation, through for example wearing opposite colors than the Japanese in his dress (Chong 2016, 37-38). Kang Jeungsan is also described as a Korean nationalist. He believed that Korea would be the top world leader, and rule the other countries by means of persuasion and not coercion, taking advantage of Korea’s spiritual strength and superiority (Chong 2016, 48). He was mainly negative to Christianity (Chong 2016: 50), but believed that Western science and technology originated initially from the heavenly kingdom in the East, so Korean people could well use Western inventions (Chong 2016, 51).

Although Kang Jeungsan tried to avoid all troubles with the authorities, and proclaimed non-violence (Chong 2016, 32), at the end of 1907, Kang Jeungsan and his followers were arrested by the Japanese police on charges that they were raising an army of rebels against Japan. They were, however, later cleared of all charges and released from prison in February, 1908 (Introvigne 2017a).

During the last few decades, Daesoon Jinrihoe has been very active in promoting public service. Daesoon Jinrihoe has established Daejin University and six high schools, as well as a general hospital, founded in 1998 (Baker 2016, 1-2). Two other hospitals are under construction. In 2009, a senior medical center started to operate. Almost all social facilities of Daesoon Jinrihoe have been funded only by the members’ financial support. Every month the members make a monetary contribution, and more than 70

% of the money goes to relief and charity, social welfare, and education. More than 560 million USD was used between 1975 and 2013 (DIRC 2016, 199-200).

Today, the Daesoon Jinrihoe is organized in a complex organization. Above all parts of the organization is the “Holy leader” (<http://eng.daesoon.org/app/en/introduction/organization>, 27 April 2020). The position of Dojeon has been discontinued, and while there is a president, this position is more accurately understood as an administrative post. (interview with Jason Greenberger, 4 April 2020). Immediately below the Holy leader is the Central Council and the Central Council Steering Committee (<http://eng.daesoon.org/app/en/introduction/organization>, 27 April 2020). The Central Council consists of upper clergy members and has the authority to change the Dao Constitution. Some issues are decided by voting of registered members (Dao Constitution). Below these are six institutes – Educational Enterprises, Institute of Instruction in Daesoon Theology, Institute of Auditing and Inspection, Institute of Religious Services, Institute of Proper Guidance, and Institute of Propagation and Edification, which are further divided in several departments (<http://eng.daesoon.org/app/en/introduction/organization>, 27 April 2020). Members of these institutes normally receive a salary. New members of the institutes are elected by election committees within the institutes. Members of the institutes normally consist of clergy at a higher level (interview with Mr. Oh, 27 April 2020).

A comparison between Daesoon Jinrihoe and the five comparison groups displays both differences and similarities. A striking difference is the relationship to society. Basic conditions that are different are macrosocial circumstances, as Korea was occupied by Japan for a number of years. Striking is also Jeungsan’s attitude to the occupation, in spite of being a Korean nationalist he seems to have tried to diminish the tensions with society as much as possible. During the last few decades, Daesoon Jinrihoe established itself in Korean society, and among other things built important educational and medical institutions.

It is difficult to put Daesoon Jinrihoe into the scheme of cult, sect and denomination, due to the special circumstances of the Japanese occupation. During the first year of Jeungsan’s work, there was no organization, which might classify the group as close to a cult. After that there were many years when there was an organization, but the group does not seem to fulfill the criteria for a sect: high tension with society and high degree of commitment. I have not succeeded in getting any information about the legitimacy claims of the group at the time of its development. What is clear is that it today works as a denomination, with part time engagement and positive relationship to society, although there are people engaging more with the organization, as the people who work in the institutes. The organization seems to have become more complex over time. It is possible to get excluded from the organization due to nonethical behavior (Dao Constitution, <http://eng.daesoon.org/app/en/teachings/books>, 27 April 2020).

Another interesting feature which differs Daesoon Jinrihoe from the comparison groups is the attitude to children. All the comparison groups, except the Church of Scientology, had times in their history when children were not very welcome. Originating in Hinduism and Christianity, there were teachings of the importance of celibacy, or teachings about the high significance of the group, which made having children an unnecessary complication. In the Osho movement, the members hardly had children at all. In most of the other movements, however, the arrival of children was important for the development of the groups. In Unification Church, the Hare Krishna movement, and The Family, the arrival of children changed the basic conditions for the groups, making part time engagement and making the economy work important features. Daesoon Jinrihoe, on the other hand, had, as is common in Korean society, a positive attitude to children all the time. As the Church of Scientology, they do not seem to involve the children very much in the religion, except that they have voluntary Youth camps where they teach the children some basic things about the religion. Chanting and prayer seem to be activities only for the adults (interview with Mr Oh). As in many other religions today, some of the children leave the group, which is accepted by the parents (interview with Mr Oh).

Conclusion

In comparison with the other five groups, the first conclusion to draw is that the first charismatic leader had a very exceptional status as being God (Sangje) himself. Charismatic leaders can, as we have seen, have different kinds of status, but in the five groups none of the charismatic leaders had a similar status. Closest would be Bhaktivedanta Swami in the Hare Krishna movement, who according to tradition should be seen as God by the disciples.

As in the other five groups, institutionalization started to happen in Daesoon Jinrihoe quite early, as the organization started and developed over time. After three charismatic leaders, appointed by each other, there is no charismatic leader in the group any more, but the organizational power is completely rational-legal in Max Weber's terms. This development follows what could be expected in new religious movements. Similar to some of the other five groups, there were also charismatic challenges to the charismatic leader in Daesoon Jinrihoe at different times in the development of the group.

One of the biggest differences between Daesoon Jinrihoe and the five comparison groups is the relationship to society. In the case of Daesoon Jinrihoe, the macrosociological factors were completely different because of the Japanese occupation of Korea. In spite of the leaders and the group apparently being against the occupation, it seems that they tried to hold the tension with society as low as possible. The organization was at times forbidden, but resumed the activities as soon as it was possible.

This factor also makes it difficult to sort Daeseon Jinrihoe into the scheme of cult-sect-denomination. The tensions with society had completely other reasons than for the other five groups, and there were attempts to keep them down. I could not find anything about high levels of commitment, also characteristic of sects. What is clear is that the group has developed to a denomination during the last decades, with a positive relationship to society. A reason for this is that Daeseon Jinrihoe constructed several free welfare institutions like hospitals and universities, which were positively welcomed by society and the public.

Finally, the group also stands out in comparison to some of the other groups concerning the attitude to children. In for example the Hare Krishna movement and Unification Church, the attitude to children became more positive over time, which also changed the groups structurally into become part time engagement groups instead of fulltime. In Daeseon Jinrihoe children have always been welcome and part time engagement has been the normal all the time. This said, of course there are some members who are pastors and hold other important positions in the group, who are more engaged than the common member. The attitude to children's engagement in religious activities, however, is quite similar to the Church of Scientology. The children in Daeseon Jinrihoe are not involved in the adults' religious activities like prayers and incantations, as the children in the Church of Scientology are not as well. Some children, however, do become involved in the religion as adults. This is the case both for Daeseon Jinrihoe and the Church of Scientology.

Acknowledgement

Liselotte Frisk, Professor of Religious Studies (Dalarna University, Sweden), passed away in late October of 2020. Most recently, Professor Frisk served as co-editor of *Aura*, a Nordic journal dedicated to the study of new religious movements and also as the vice director of FINYAR, the Nordic society for the academic study of new religions. Upon its release, *Children in Minority Religions: Growing up in Controversial Religious Groups* (2018), which she co-authored with Sanja Nilsson and Peter Åkerbäck, received high praise from many scholars including Eileen Barker, Professor Emeritus of Sociology of Religion, London School of Economics. In her final year of life, Professor Frisk was said to be happy and deeply engaged in her work and her intellectual passions. *Journal of Daeseon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* is profoundly honored for her contributions to the study of Daeseon Thought and the academic study of Daeseon Jinrihoe as a new religious movement.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

Notes

- ¹ In this article, the development of Daesoon Jinrihoe will be followed from its precursors in the beginning of the 20th century, although Daesoon Jinrihoe, as a religion with that name, was not founded until 1968.
- ² Thanks to Jason Greenberger who arranged the interviews and also acted as a translator. Thanks to Susan Palmer for my being able to participate in the interviews, which mainly had the purpose of being a part of her Canadian research project “Children in sectarian religions and state control” (where I am one of the collaborators). With Susan Palmer’s agreement to the arrangement, I added a few questions to the interviews for my research project.
- ³ This summary of Daesoon Jinrihoe will be held very short, as many articles about Daesoon Jinrihoe will be published in the same journal. For a full description, see other articles in the journal.

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