

Claims of Young Ivorian Followers through their Membership in a Japanese Religious Movement (Sukyo Mahikari)

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The study of the reasons for adherence of Ivorian followers to a Japanese "New Religious Movement" (Sukyo Mahikari) based in Ivory Coast, showed the claims and individual crises of young people belong to middle class, especially officials. Even if they are far away from the symbol of « left-behind », yet they have very specific needs, are in crisis and feel forsaken by the State. Indeed, because of the withdrawal of the State but also to the growth of privatization, they are involved in major economic problems despite their high social status. This crisis, related to therapeutic research, can be analyzed through fears of witchcraft attacks caused by their social status. Indeed, rapid social change, the crisis of the state, globalization, unemployment, etc. change the social relations. This paper aims to show why these "voiceless" adhere to this religious movement and how they intend to find solutions to turn the corner. We will see that they choose it precisely because it is more elitist than the many evangelical churches for example, and because they express a desire to escape with an ethics of elegance by a "distinction" in order to make a difference with the other social groups. Through its activities, the religious movement urges adherents in both purification of self through ritual purification (*okiyome*), and environmental and educational activities - that make its speciality - led by youth. All of these activities, as symbolic as they are, bring followers to conceive a new imaginary space developed through the teachings of the movement and based on the claim of a stronger State. Asia seems also to be the way of salvation.