Altruism and Charitable Activities of New Religions in Japan: Theoretical Perspectives

Inaba Keishin

Introduction

There has been much research into new religions since the 1970s. It has usually concerned the typology of new religions, the charismatic role of the founders, and the motivation of members for joining new religions. Neither social work nor altruism has been given heed in such research. Indeed it is often said that Japanese new religions emphasise the this-worldly benefits and the moral self-cultivation of the individual and are not concerned in the political and social movements about the improvement of society (cf., Hardacre, 1986: 23). Recently, however, numerous new religions in Japan have conducted charitable activities and a few researchers have focused on the social ethics in new religions.

Shimazono (1992) analyses altruism in Japanese new religions by two concepts, namely, 'harmony ethics' and 'vitalism', which are considered as common structures and world views of the beliefs and teachings of Japanese new religions. Kisala (1992) examines the social ethic of Japanese new religions, focusing on the social welfare activities of two new religions, namely, Tenrikyo and Rissho Kosei Kai. He presents the results of interviews undertaken with thirty members who are themselves active in social work, exploring their religious beliefs and the motivation for their involvement in welfare activities. Why do some members of new religions become involved in charitable activities? To say they do it for the sole purpose of recruiting new members does not do it justice. On the other hand, it is too simplistic to attribute it to genuine altruism. This paper will theoretically discuss why some members of new religions become involved in charitable activities and how altruism is nurtured.

Apart from my own research on altruism in some new religions (Inaba, 1998; 1999; 2000), I reviewed the studies by Shimazono (1992) and Kisala (1992). Although some of the theoretical points presented here are based on my Ph.D. thesis which focused on altruism and new religious movements in the U.K. [1], I assume that further research on altruism in Japanese new religions will verify the validity of the theoretical perspectives provided here.

Studies of Altruism

The term 'altruism' was coined by a French sociologist, August Comte (1798–1857) and joined the English language in 1853 in translation. The original French term 'altrusime' was suggested by the French legal phrase 'le bien d'autrui' (the good of others), and was formed from the Italian equivalent, 'altrui', itself a derivative of the Latin 'alter' or 'other'. Altruism is precisely 'other-ism': the effort or actual ability to

act in the interest of others (Novak, 1992: 2). Since then altruism has been an analytical concept in the social sciences. Comte (1875) considered that within the individual there were two distinct motives: one was egoism and the other was altruism. Comte acknowledged that human beings had self-serving motives even if they were helping others, and called the motivation to seek self-benefit 'egoism'. On the other hand, there are some kinds of social behaviour which comes from an unselfish desire to help others, and Comte called this type of motivation 'altruism'. Some discuss altruism in different terms, such as beneficence, benevolence, charity or compassion instead of altruism. Although the term 'altruism' is of only recent coinage, the behaviour to which the term refers has been examined since ancient times. Some have argued that mankind is innately good, and others have maintained that human beings are essentially selfish or even evil.

Rushton and Sorrentino (1981) provide an historical perspective on altruism. They argue that there have been three main views on altruism. The first is that humans are innately evil or bad (e.g. selfish, sinful, aggressive and non-social), and that socialisation is required to make them social and altruistic. According to Rushton and Sorrentiono (ibid.), many writers of the Bible, the Sophists (5th and 4th Century B.C.), Chinese Confucian philosopher Xun zi (3rd Century B.C.), Machiavelli (1469–1527), Hobbes (1588–1679) and Freud (1856–1939) held this first view. The second is that humans are basically good and that they can be enhanced or perverted by social conditions. Socrates (5th Century B.C.), Chinese Confucian philosopher Meng zi (4th century B.C.), Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), Rousseau (1712–1778), Maslow (1908–1970) and Rogers (1902–1987) held this view (ibid.). The third is that humans are neutral: basically neither good nor bad. Plato (427–374 B.C.), Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), Locke (1632–1704), Marx (1818–1883), Watson (1878–1958) and Skinner (1904–1990) held this third view (ibid.).

Whether altruism is innate or acquired is another issue. Allport (1897–1967), Kohlberg (1927–1987) and Rushton (1980: 10) provided abundant evidence in support of the theory that altruism was learned and was able to be improved by social learning. On the other hand, Novak (1992: 28–32) points out three obstacles to cultivate altruism. First, the neuronal obstacle is that significant moral progress is impossible because of the structure of our brains. The second obstacle to altruistic transformation is psychological. Each human being born into this world longs to be special; a unique centre of importance and value. The very behaviour, dispositions and attitudes that help people emerge from childhood as relatively autonomous individuals become to some extent psychological barriers to the emergence of altruism. Human being's natural quest for selfhood creates psychological habit patterns which are difficult to alter. The third obstacle is the sociological or social one. The social groupings to which people belong implicitly reinforce an ingrown and out-group mentality which at best sets limits on the growth of altruism and at worst is antithetical to it. However, Krebs and Hesteren (1992) contend that individuals normally acquire the capacity to perform increasingly adequate types of altruism as they develop, and that individual differences in altruism stem from the interaction between the stage of their development and the opportunities and demands of the social contexts they create and encounter.

In the early 20th century the social sciences cultivated disciplines for the study of

negative aspects of humanity such as crime and insanity. Sorokin (1889–1968) noticed this and observed that 'Western social science has paid scant attention to positive types of human beings' (1950: 4). Sorokin carried out sociological studies of good neighbours and Christian saints focusing on the characteristics of altruistic persons and how people became altruistic. He found that most professed to be religious in some sense; the majority were female, and there seemed to be no relationship between intelligence and altruism. Self reports concerning the motivation of altruism showed factors such as parental training, life experience, religion and education to be particularly relevant (Sorokin, 1950). Since his research, positive aspects of human nature, such as altruism, have been increasingly researched.

Research into altruism has usually considered questions such as 'why and under what conditions people sacrifice their lives for the sake of others', 'when and under what conditions people reach out to help somebody in need or distress', and 'under which conditions a person is more likely or less likely to help others'. Many research findings show that good mood and happiness can facilitate altruism. There is also abundant literature on 'the empathy-altruism hypothesis'. This hypothesis is that sympathy or empathy for the needy is the motive for altruistic activities. An extension of the hypothesis is that people feel more sympathy towards relatives and friends than towards strangers or enemies. Not all altruistic activity, however, is believed to be based on sympathy or empathy, since some activity is considered to be based on normative obligation. This assumption is not saying that altruistic activities in close relationships would be motivated by sympathy or empathy, and that altruistic activities towards strangers would be motivated by normative obligation. Altruistic activities in favour of strangers, such as rescuing persecuted people in a totalitarian state, might be motivated by empathy, and risky acts in close relationships, like donating a kidney to a close relative, might be motivated by feelings of normative obligation (cf., Montada & Bierhoff, 1991: 5).

Studies of Altruism and Religion

There has been a considerable volume of empirical research into the correlation between altruism and religion. Some researchers have found religion related to altruistic behaviour. In 1973, the American Institute of Public Opinion conducted a survey of 1502 respondents, which included the question, 'How often do you feel that you follow your religious beliefs and take concrete action on behalf of others?' This survey showed that church attenders perceived themselves as more helpful towards others than non-church attenders[2]. A study was conducted in the Southwest of the USA eight months after a city had been struck by a damaging tornado which produced extensive and varied helping behaviour, and the findings showed that independent variables were positively related to dependent variables[3]. On the other hand, some researchers showed that religiosity was unrelated to offering help to others[4]. One explanation for such disparity in the results of the studies in the 1960s and the 1970s is that altruistic attitude at that time might be so much a part of many organised religions that respondents failed to answer self-report inventories honestly. On the other hand, religious people might be more likely to answer questionnaires with honesty, because of their beliefs that a Supreme Being knows people's acts in all situations. Methodological problems such as

the measurement of altruism, the measurement of religiosity, the amount of respondent diversity, and the control of situational variables might contribute to the mixed results.

Since the 1980s, various studies have shown that religion promoted altruism [5]. By analysing various surveys such as British Social Attitudes, Gallup Poll and British Household Panel Survey, Gill concludes:

> there is a great deal of evidence showing that churchgoers are relatively, yet significantly, different from nonchurchgoers. On average they have higher levels of Christian belief (which is hardly surprising), but, in addition, they usually have a stronger sense of moral and civic order and tend to be significantly more altruistic than nonchurchgoers (1999: 261).

Many new religions emerged in the late 1960s. There has been much research into new religions since the 1970s, whilst empirical research has increasingly emerged concerning the relationship between Judeo-Christian religiosity and altruism since the same date. As mentioned previously, however, altruism has not been given heed in research on new religions. There must have been reasons for this. One possibility is that researchers on new religions may have been so much preoccupied by the typology of the movements, the charismatic role of the founder, and the motivation of members for joining new religions. Another possibility is that some researchers on new religions may have considered that new religions are a social problem or they do not contribute to society.

New religions have been pictured in the mass media as controversial and threatening. No matter what the different groups did, they were marked as basically all the same and all problematic. Beckford (1985: 6) lists two reasons for it: (1) lack of information; information about the movements is simply not available to the public and most people are ignorant about the history of minority religious groups; (2) the general public were indifferent to organised religion and did not make any independent assessment of the movements' religious merits or demerits. Robbins (1988: 166) points out another reason for it: new religions are particularly controversial because 'they tend to constitute highly diversified and multifunctional enclaves lying outside of the web of governmental supervision.' All of these factors may account for the fact that up until now little research concerning altruism in new religions has been carried out.

Defining Altruism and Measurements of Altruism

Originally, Comte used altruism to denote the unselfish regard for the welfare of others, or a devotion to the interests of others as an action-guiding principle. Apart from external forces such as increased status, social desirability or social approval, it has also been pointed out that feelings of guilt can motivate altruism and that feelings of guilt seek compensation that can be achieved through altruistic acts [6]. If altruism is, however, defined as the willingness to help others without normative obligation and without expecting benefits at a later time, we could rarely find actions altruistically motivated. Macaulay and Berkowitz (1970: 3) defined altruism as 'behavior carried out to benefit another without anticipation of rewards from external sources.' Regarding their definition, Rushton and Sorrentino noted:

[this definition] includes both the altruist's intentions and his or her behaviour. It does, however, exclude such rewards from internal sources as self esteem, self praise for one's action and relief from empathetic distress, alleviation of feelings of guilt. Such an exclusion has the practical advantage of avoiding both unobservable variables as well as the philosophical issue of whether there can ever be a truly unselfish act (1981: 426).

In this regard, Rushton's view is that 'the *primary* focus of research attention should be on altruistic *behavior*, and that postulated motivators such "empathy" and "norms of social responsibility" are hypothetical constructs, to be added only if they can account for the behavioral regularities more thoroughly' (Rushton & Sorrentino, 1981: 427). Moreover, Montada and Bierhoff (1991: 18) defined altruism as 'behaviour that aims at a termination or reduction of an emergency, a neediness, or disadvantage of others and that primarily does not aim at the fulfillment of own interests', adding that 'the behaviour has to be carried out voluntarily' (ibid.: 18). This behavioural definition by Montada and Bierhoff seems the most suitable one for a sociological study of altruism.

The situations in which altruistic behaviour is observed can be divided into two categories: disaster situations and ordinary situations. Practically speaking, it is difficult to investigate altruistic behaviour under disaster situations because such situations rarely occur. Theoretically speaking, altruistic behaviour under ordinary situations may be more meaningful for study of altruism in new religions than that under disaster situations. This is expressed best by Nelson and Dynes (1976: 49) when they say 'That social norms support emergency helping behavior more strongly than ordinary helping behavior implies that the reinforcement potential of religious reality construction may be most efficacious under ordinary circumstances.'

In order to measure altruism some researchers use experimental techniques. Typically, a situation is created by experimenters where the participant has a choice about helping another or is asked to donate blood. This approach is based on the assumption that there is a generalised tendency within a certain individual to behave altruistically and its tendency is stable over time and across different situations. However, people may express their altruism in various ways and the assumption of behavioural consistency is dubious. In this approach, researchers select measures of altruism primarily for their convenience in measurement and consequently the measures may exclude the altruistic behaviour which respondents display naturally. The second method to measure altruism is to use questionnaires with psychometric inventories which are composed of many items designed to measure altruism as 'traits'. This psychometric approach is based on the assumption that if altruism is a 'trait' of personality, a certain test should assess it. This approach is also based on the assumption of behavioural consistency. Participants are asked about their responses to imaginary situations such as giving directions to a stranger, donating money to a charity, and helping a disabled person across a street. Methodologically, this approach recognises the limitations of self-report measures as well as the problem concerning the assumption of behavioural consistency. The third technique to measure altruism is to wait for an altruistic act to occur spontaneously and then observe it, for example, to go to a place where a disastrous earthquake occurred. This technique, however, is almost impossible when one is researching a specific group.

The researcher may not be allowed to stay in a group for a long time. On the other hand, observation does not show the motivation to a certain act, and it does not reveal how altruism has been developed, either.

Although interviews seem to overcome all the limitations of the three approaches, there is a question of the reliability of the past of interviewees, because the memory is re-constructive under the new religious life and religious converts may exaggerate the benefits of transformations. In talking about their altruism and these transformations, they are reinterpreting and reconstructing the past in the present, and they sometimes speak about these in an idealistic way: how they want or ought to be rather than how they are . Even in cases such as this, however, their accounts provide some proof that new religions change members' attitudes positively towards altruism, because these ideals reflect the effects on their attitudes of some aspects of new religions, and hence their accounts can be a clue to the meanings and constructions of altruism in their religious context. On the other hand, I presume that research into altruism in new religions could influence members' attitudes and even make them more altruistic. Even if research into altruism in new religions does not make their members more altruistic, it could at least make them pretend to be more altruistic. Motives and normative orientations that are relevant to altruism can be aroused through interviews, and consequently they can be more altruistic. It is human nature to want to appear in a good light and if people are asked whether they are kind to others, they are unlikely to reply in the negative. What the sociology of religion can do in this area is to examine continuously the interpretations in the light of findings from participant observations and communications with members.

Motivation for Altruism

Although there seem to be no reasons for altruism which are common to all, three categories, namely, 'empathy', 'rational choice' and 'soteriology' seem to be useful in attempting to sketch out motivations for performing charitable activities of members in new religions. We shall now examine the motivations under the three headings, starting with empathy.

Empathy

Empathy means identifying and feeling sympathy for another person. Sympathy is a similar concept but carries connotations of being on someone's side. People can empathise with their enemies though people may not sympathise much. There is an abundant literature on 'the empathy-altruism hypothesis' emphasising that sympathy or empathy for the needy is the motive for altruistic activities. One feels sorry for homeless people or people in need and wishes to reduce their distress. Some members in new religions feel compassion for those people who are suffering and they reach out to those suffering people.

On the other hand, some members feel empathetic distress themselves when they feel sorry for those who are suffering. Their distress arises from the unpleasant emotions which they feel as a result of seeing the homeless people or people in need. Alternatively, their distress may arise from emotions of guilt or shame they anticipate if they do not help. In any case, they feel sorry for people in need and carry out acts to help them.

Their actual altruistic acts also relieve themselves from their own empathetic distress. I call these kinds of motivation for altruistic acts 'the empathetic distress motivation'. As members have been practising in new religions, the empathetic distress seems to be alleviated.

Rational choice

According to Schmidtz (1995), rational choice consists of maximising one's utility subject to a budget constraint, and in recent times theorists have taken the term 'utility' to mean something related to or identical to preference satisfaction. In some cases there are reasons to embrace and nurture one's concern for others, and the reasons have to do with what is conducive to one's utility. It is rational to be peaceful and productive in order to create a secure place for oneself in society, which requires one to have a regard for the interests of others. People have self-regarding reasons to internalise other-regarding concerns. On the other hand, one seeks not only to earn the respect and concern of others but also to earn one's own respect and concern. Moreover, it is a simple fact that a person of principles inspires more respect than a person driven by mere expedience (Schmidtz, 1995: 110).

Many research findings show that good mood and happiness can facilitate altruism[7], and Wuthnow (1995: 67) points out that individual happiness and the good of others are not incompatible but are in fact linked. In his own survey (Wuthnow, 1991), many people reported that helping others made them feel good and was a good way of gaining a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment for themselves. Gaining fulfilment for themselves and feeling good can be considered as compensation for the time and energy invested. This is also the case of rational choice.

Some members' motivations for altruism seem to be based on rational choice in the sense that they calculate the benefits they will receive later. However, this calculation of benefit of a this-worldly kind is not their primary objective of their altruism.

Soteriology

Religion has been always concerned with soteriology: 'what shall we do to be saved?' The meanings of salvation differ from one religion to another, and so do the ways of attaining it. Altruistic acts of the members of new religions may be also motivated by the quest for salvation, because the quest for salvation can produce certain consequences for practical behaviour in the world. Weber notes:

> a quest for salvation in any religious group had the strongest chance of exerting practical influences when there has arisen, out of religious motivations, a systematizaion of practical conduct resulting from an orientation to certain integral values (1978: 528).

In Japanese new religions, the doctrine of karma seems to influence members' attitudes. Perhaps the doctrine of karma[8], or the principle of cause and effect, can be briefly summarised in the old saying, 'You have made your bed and now you must lie on it.' A good cause will have a good effect and a bad cause will have a bad effect. All phenomena in the universe are the results of causes and circumstances that induce phenomena. All beings are linked to such interrelationships. This doctrine seems to be a basis of the

concept of 'vitalism', which has been suggested as a common structure and worldview as to the soteriological beliefs and teachings of Japanese new religions (cf., Tsushima et al. 1979; Kisara 1994). In a cosmology of vitalism the whole universe is regarded as one living body and it is believed that all things are interlinked, harmonious and sympathetic. Human beings are also considered as branch streams of one living body, and therefore salvation is attained by having harmony, clearing oneself of selfishness and feeling gratitude for the benefits received. Members have recourse to this doctrine to legitimatise their altruistic acts. Thus, I suggest, there is a strong link between the rational choice, the doctrine of karma and vitalism, providing rational choice is understood in the sense discussed previously. Although there is a utilitarian aspect in this teaching, there is a possibility that ethics based on vitalism facilitate altruism and charitable acts, since the pure heart itself is regarded as life's highest reward.

Development of Altruism

Altruism cannot be attributed solely to the effects on members' attitudes of the teachings and practices of new religions. Some members may have had a sense of altruism prior to joining new religions. However, they may have had the empathetic distress and there is a possibility that the symbolic religious reinforcement[9] through religious reality construction[10] will alleviate the empathetic distress they felt previously as non-members, and they now feel greater compassion but without distress. Other members may claim that they have cultivated altruism in new religions. Although we cannot point to one single factor on its own as the independent variable in every case, three factors, namely, 'teachings and practices', 'role models', and 'socialisation' in new religions seem to be significant factors in their development of altruism. We shall now examine the developments of altruism under the three headings.

Teachings and religious practices

Some members may mention religious practice such as prayer and meditation when they talk about the underlying reasons for development of their altruism. Others may claim that teachings promote their altruism. There seem to be some factors of teachings common to many Japanese new religions to support their members' charitable activities. 'Harmony ethics' coined by Shimazono (1992) seems to be one of the significant factors in new religions. The essence of harmony ethics is to value harmony highly in communities, and people formerly used to have this ethics before the bonds of local communities loosened because of urbanisation and privatisation. Many Japanese new religions retain this harmony ethics. Although there is a dangerous possibility in harmony ethics that people agree with unjust deeds by valuing harmony most, it is certain that there is a possibility that the moral sense in new religions based on harmony ethics leads to universal altruism and consequently members increasingly become involved in charitable activities.

Role model

Some members' altruism seems to be inspired by role models who are altruistic. For some of them, role models are Mother Teresa and founders of new religions, and for others role models are close at hand in new religions such as senior members. Moreover,

some of them hope that they are role models for new members.

Socialisation

Forming friendships is integrated to the process of socialisation, which itself is a gradual process. Acceptance of rules and participation in activities are just the first step to the challenge of new religious life. While some members experience tensions and anxieties, those members who are intensely involved in practices and activities of new religions have more chance to share their problems and interact with one another. Members may find the support, stability, confidence, and security in new religions. In such circumstances, relationship among members based on the same faith may make them more altruistic.

Conclusion

My research in England (Inaba, 2000) shows that altruism is developed not so much by reading about teachings or by listening to sermons that motivate members to carry out altruistic acts as it is by the relationships with other members who have the same faith and try to help each other. I assume that this conforms to the case of new religions in Japan. Relationships between members seem to be essential for transformation of members' attitudes towards altruism. Ethical teachings put emphasis on the values of kindness, compassion, and love. The combination of human contact in new religions and ethical teachings such as compassion and virtue develops altruism.

Although religion may still exercise influence over an individual's private life in contemporary society, it loses its traditional function of providing moral order for the society. Under such circumstances, there is a possibility that charitable activities of new religions creates conflicts with society, because altruism based on religious belief may be regarded as intrusive by a society which does not expect religion to play a major role in cultural integration or moral order. However, no serious conflicts seem to have been found between their charitable activities and society. One possibility would be to assume that the impact of their activities on society is too insignificant to cause major conflicts with it. Another possibility is that their charitable activities are well accepted by society. One of the future directions of research on altruism in new religions could be to encompass the examination of these possibilities.

As people become involved in charitable activities, their vision expands regardless of their motivations and they come to realise that each problem they are confronting is linked with larger social problems. In the massive political and economic system in modern society where individuals seem powerless and cannot feel a reality of doing something good for the world, some new religions help their believers do positive actions for the society and give them opportunities to acquire a sense of their own contributions to the world as well as this worldly benefits. To back up this statement, more case studies are required. I hope this theoretical paper will pave the way for a more detailed examination of various aspects and functions of new religions in the context of contemporary society in Japan.

Notes

Original paper was presented at Asian Studies Conference Japan, 24, 25 June 2000

1) Inaba Keishin (2000), *A Comparative Study of Altruism in New Religious Movements: with special reference to the Jesus Army and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order*, PhD thesis at King's College, University of London.

This is a sociological research on new religious movements (henceforth NRMs) in the UK. The thesis is about 90,000 words with 9,000 words bibliography, in total 99,100 words, which is based on a survey of literature, sixty in-depth interviews, numerous participant observations and a questionnaire survey in the two NRMs. These provided detailed description of them: their history, characteristics, social composition, attitudes and values of members. This research showed that altruism was developed not so much by studying teachings as by relationships between members in the two NRMs. They were found to have common structures which developed altruism, while this research also showed that altruism among the members of the two NRMs had some unique meanings and constructions as results of their involvement in these movements and the effect of their teachings and practices on their thinking and behaviour. There were unshared characteristics of the two movements which affected differently the members' attitudes towards altruism. The difference between Christianity and Buddhism from which they respectively derive seem to indicate the major difference of their interpretations of altruism.

2) B. Langford & C. Langford (1974) 'Review of the Polls: Church Attendance and Self-Perceived Altruism', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 13 (2), 221-222.

3) Independent variables were devotion such as the frequency of table prayers, church attendance and subjective religiosity. Dependent variables were contribution to funds, donation of goods and participation in formal voluntary social work.
L. Nelson & R. Dynes (1976) 'The Impact of Devotionalism and Attendance on Ordinary and Emergency Helping Behavior', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 15 (1), 47-59.

4) e.g., V. Cline & J. Richards Jr (1965) 'A factor-Analytic Study of Religious Belief and Behavior', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1 (6), 569-578.; J. Darley & C. Batson (1973) 'From Jerusalem to Jericho: A study of situational and dispositional variables in helping behavior', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27, 100-108.; L. V. Annis (1976) 'Emergency helping and religious behavior', *Psychological Reports*, 39, 151-158.

5) An analysis based on findings from a questionnaire survey of undergraduate students in the USA indicated that religious persons were more likely to carry out altruistic acts (A. Zook et al. (1982) 'Religion, Altruism, and Kinship: A Study of Sociobiological Theory', *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 1(3), 23-31.). Another study showed that those who did voluntary work in the UK gave religion as one of the main reasons for their participation(P. Lynn & H. Smith (1991) *Voluntary Action Research*, London: The Volunteer Centre.).

6) cf., J. Carlsmith & A. Gross (1968) 'Some effects of guilt on compliance', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 11, 232-239.; D. T. Regan et al. (1972) 'Voluntary expiation of guilt: A field study', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 24, 42-45.

7) e.g., D. Aderman (1972) 'Elation, depression, and helping behavior', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 24, 91-101.; J. Weyant (1978) 'Effects of mood states, costs, and benefits on helping', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 1169-1176.; M. Cunningham (1979) 'Weather, mood, and helping behavior', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1947-1956.; J. Rosenhan et al. (1981) 'The joys of helping: Focus of attention mediates the impact of positive affect on altruism', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40, 899-905.

8) Weber presents the doctrine of karma as follows:
This world is viewed as completely connected and self-contained cosmos of ethical retribution. Guilt and merit within this world are unfailingly compensated by fate in the successive lives of the soul, which may be reincarnated innumerable times in animal, human, or even divine forms. Ethical merits in this life can make possible rebirth into life in heaven, but that life can last only until one's credit balance of merits has been completely used up. The finiteness of earthly life is the consequence of the finiteness of good or evil deeds in the previous life of a particular soul. What may appear from the viewpoint of retribution as unjust suffering in the present life of a person should be regarded as

atonement for sin in a previous existence. Each individual forges his own destiny exclusively, and in the strictest sense of the world (Weber, 1978: 524, 525).

9) Regarding symbolic religious reinforcement, Durkheim (1995: 419) noted 'The believer who has communed with his god is not simply a man who sees new truths that the unbeliever knows not; he is a man who is stronger'. E. Durkheim (1995) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, London: The Free Press (trans. Karen E. Fields).

10) In contrast to secular reality construction, religious reality construction produces cosmic legitimation, by which people interpret experiences
(cf. P. Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*).

Bibliography

Beckford, James (1985) Cult Controversies: The Social Response to *New Religious Movements*, London: Tavistock Publications.

Comte, August. (1875) *System of Positive Polity* (Vol. 1), London: Longmans, Green & Co.

Gill, Robin (1999) *Churchgoing and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hardacre, Helen (1986) *Kurozumikyo and the New Religions of Japan*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Inaba Keishin (1998) 'Gendai Shukyo no Ritashugi to Ritagyo Network: Risshokoseikai wo Jirei toshite', *Shukyo to Shakai*, 4, 153-179 (Japanese).

Inaba Keishin (1999) 'Altruism, Voluntary Activities and Religion: Charities in the United Kingdom', *Annual Review of Religious Studies (Department of Religious Studies, The University of Tokyo*, 16(1998), 27-42 (Japanese).

Inaba Keishin (2000), *A Comparative Study of Altruism in New Religious Movements: with special reference to the Jesus Army and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order*, PhD thesis at King's College, University of London.

Kisala, Robert (1992) *Gendai Shukyo to Shakai Rinri: Tenrikyo to Rissho Kosei-kai no Fukushi-katsudo wo chushin ni*, Tokyo: Seikyusha (Japanese).

Kisala, Robert (1994) 'Contemporary Karma: Interpretations of Karma in Tenrikyo and Rissho Koseikai', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 21, 73-91.

Krebs, Dennis L. & Frank Van Hesteren (1992) 'The Development of Altruistic Personality', in Pearl M. Oliner & Samuel P. Oliner et al. (eds), *Embracing the Other: Philosophical, Psychological, and Historical Perspectives on Altruism*, New York: New York University Press, 142-169.

Macaulay, J. R. & L. Berkowitz (eds) (1970) *Altruism and Helping Behavior: Social Psychological Studies of some antecedents and consequences*, New York: Academic Press.

Montada, Leo & Hans Werner Bierhoff (1991) 'Studying Prosocial Behavior in Social Systems', in Leo Montada & Hans Werner Bierhoff (eds), *Altruism in Social Systems*, New York: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers, 1-26.

Novak, Philip (1992) *Religion and altruism*, California: Institute of Noetic Sciences.

Robbins, Thomas (1988) *Cults, Converts and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements*, London: SAGE Publications.

Rushton, J. Philippe (1980) *Altruism, Socialization, and Society*, New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs.

Rushton, J. Philippe & Richard M. Sorrentino (eds) (1981) *Altruism and Helping Behavior: Social, Personality, and Developmental Perspectives*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schmidtz, David (1995) *Rational Choice and Moral Agency*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Shimazono Susumu (1992) 'Suku to Toku: Wagorinri to sono kanata' in Susumu Shimazono (ed.) (1992) *Sukui to Toku: Wago Rinri to sono Kanata*, Tokyo: Kobundo (Japanese), 9-86.

Sorokin, Pitirim A. (1950) *Altruistic Love: A Study of American "Good Neighbors" and Christian Saints*, Boston: The Beacon Press.

Tsushima Michihito, et al. (1979) 'The vitalistic conception of salvation in Japanese New Religions: An aspect of modern religious consciousness', *Japanese Journal of religious Studies* 6: 139-161.

Weber, Max (1978) *Economy and Society*, California: University of California Press (Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich).

Wuthnow, Robert (1991) *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wuthnow, Robert (1995) *Learning to Care: Elementary Kindness in an Age of Indifference,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.