

研究論文

近年の新宗教の精神医学的一側面

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A psychiatric aspect of recent new religious movements

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[Abstract]

Religious issues are an important theme of psychiatry. In daily practice, psychiatrists do not directly confront these problems so often. However they do recognize a wide variety of influential factors of religion in psychiatry.

The author considers this to be the current situation not only in Japan but also all over the world. This becomes clear at once by looking at the religious terrorism displayed by groups such as Aum-Shinri-Kyou or The Solar Temple. One of the common aspects of these new religious movements is an emphasis on ascetic practice.

In this article the author would like to talk about some characteristic features of new religious movements and their "belief systems", the set of beliefs accepted by the group members, from the standpoint of psychiatry including a comparison between groups in the East and the West.

Key words : new religion, Aum Shinrikyo, The Solar Temple, ascetic practices

1. Introduction

During recent 20 years there have been a number of extraordinary social phenomena which cannot be over-looked by the researcher to study the relation between psychiatry and religion. What I mean is organized crimes by religious groups. Japan has known cases of fraud by the Unification Church in the past. But here, author presents the case of a new religious group called Aum Shinrikyo, which committed a series of crimes.

2. The events

The most striking among their crimes is known as the "subway sarin gas case" which occurred in March of 1995. A group of Aum Shinrikyo members released lethal sarin gas in subways in Tokyo, the capital of Japan. At the time of the first reports 13 people had died and 3,800 people were affected by the gas. The lingering effects of the gas still torment those victims even though 20 years have passed.

In addition to the sarin gas murder, this group kidnapped members who wanted to leave the group and killed a lawyer who had criticized them and his family, including his infant. Similar incidents have been reported from around the world. It could be said that religion-related crimes are causing problems on the world level.

Another example of mass murder conducted by a new religious group, there is the case of the Temple of the Sun¹⁾. Fig-1 shows the ruins of a burnt mountain villa owned by the founder in France. Here 25 burnt dead bodies of followers were found²⁾.

The main differences between the two cases are : 1. While those killed in the Aum Shinrikyo case were almost non-group general public, group members were killed in the case of the The Solar Temple. 2. While leading members of Aum Shinrikyo consisted of young engineers, those in the The Solar Temple were middle-aged people who had a successful social career. 3. While each of the crimes by Aum Shinrikyo was indefinite and had no common characteristics, the The Solar Temple repeated mass murder in much the same form

several times.

In contrast, similarities between the crimes by the two groups are: 1. Mass murder was performed in a short period. 2. Main incidents occurred between 1993 and 1995. 3. The founder of the group had a tendency of delusion. 4. Eschatological dogmas were advocated. 5. Physical training was emphasized (Table-1). In this presentation, the role and significance of the training is to be considered among these similarities.

3 . Ascetic practices

Table-2 shows the daily schedule as spent by members of the The Solar Temple. Although not as much as in Aum Shinrikyo, which you will see next, physical training is remarkably abundant. In addition to the training, strong spiritual subordination to the group and extremely short sleeping times are common with Aum Shinrikyo. These factors are enough to deprive the members of their capacity for autonomy.

Table-3 is a typical training schedule of Aum Shinrikyo followers. Examples of the training were; a compulsive breathing with both nasal cavities opened as shown in the Fig.-2. And Fig.-3 shows other yoga-like training. Besides these forms of training, occult religious ceremonies existed. In Fig.-4 a ceremony at the The Solar Temple is shown.

In the case of Aum Shinrikyo, in the early days of their activities, the occult ceremony combined with training was defined as a technique in which the founder himself puts his hand on the forehead of followers and infuses the energy of the Guru, a religious leader, into them so that their divine nature would be heightened. In later years, however, physically painful methods, such as the use of hallucinogenic drugs for inducing hallucination experience and massive infusion of saline, were also introduced.

4 . Discussion

Physical training or exercise has long been one of the important factors of religion. Both in the East and the West, religious training have given devotees diversified and fertile religious experience.

It is apparently because of this tradition that the followers of both groups pursued physical training. In case of Aum Shinrikyo, their practice could be called religious training, however it would be better to call it asceticism in the case of the The Solar Temple. The author believes that their activity was also associated with an inclination observed in contemporary people for supremacy of body, in German "Leiblichkeit", rather than reason-centered ideologies as the background for emphasis of physical training by religious group.

In general, both religious training and asceticism gives followers new religious horizon, by the refinement and concentration of the mind as mediated by the voluntary physical training on the one hand, however on the other hand, it promotes a tight connection of control/subordination relation between the founder and followers. In the above mentioned two religious groups, their religious training and asceticism combined with the strong controlling relationship with the founder bring followers, to not a new religious horizon, but to eschatological delusional idea which in turn makes followers capable of being involved in many crimes. The author supposes that this result was generated by intentionally nullifying the role of the body as a means to produce and support communications with others while cultivating exclusively the physical sense in order to strengthen the founder-follower relation (Table-4).

Aum Shinrikyo had appealed to the public by emphasizing that the supernatural power of extrasensory perception could be acquired through training. But more importantly, in the author's opinion, strengthening the role of the physical senses is crucial to achieving their aim, namely the reinforcement of the leader/follower relationship. In their later days, Aum Shinrikyo attached more importance to esotericism than training, supposedly because they had found that identical results could be obtained more easily.

The above mentioned issue is, of course, a part of the problems between religion and psychiatry. In situations involving religious movements, careful observation is required in order to study what influence they may have on other new religions in the 21st century.

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(Appendix) This article was presented in XI World Congress of Psychiatry (Hamburg)

Table- 1 Aum Shinrikyo and The Solar Temple

	Aum Shinrikyo	the Temple of the Sun
differences	1. those killed in the incident 2. leading members 3. the crimes non-group general public young engineers undefined and had no common characteristics	group members middle-aged people who had a successful social career. repeated mass murder in much the same form
similarities	1. Mass murder was performed in a short period. 2. Main incidents occurred between 1993 and 1995. 3. The founder of the cult had a tendency of delusion. 4. Eschatological dogmas were advocated. 5. Physical training was emphasized.	



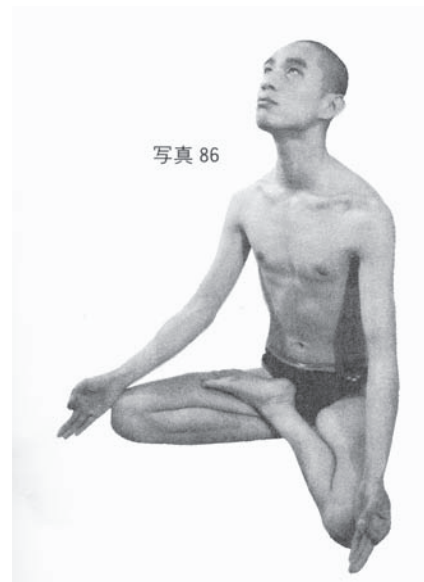
1. The ruins of a burnt mountain villa owned by the founder of the The Solar Temple

Table-3 A typical daily schedule of members of Aum Shinrikyo

6:00	wake up call cleaning up
6:30	physical training
8:00	chanting
10:00	worship (standing)
10:30	study
12:30	chanting
14:30	study
15:30	physical training
16:30	chanting
20:30	supper
21:00	study
0:30	worship (standing)
2:30	physical training
3:00	light out

Table-2 A typical daily schedule of members of The Solar Temple

4:45	wake up call training(Yoga exercise)
6:30	meditation, breakfast daily work in each office
evening	working at the farm of the group
7:15	supper
8:45	meditation
9:15	chorus, lecture
10:30	return home review of lectures
	housework
late night	light out



2. An ascetic practice in Aum Shinrikyo- 1

Table-4 conclusion

new religious horizon (Erschlossenheit)	⇨ eschatological delusional idea
control/subordination relation between the founder and followers	⇨ organized crimes



3. An ascetic practice in Aum Shinrikyo-2



4. A ceremony of The Solar Temple

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抄 録

宗教に関する問題は精神医学の重要な主題である。日常診療において精神科医はそうしばしばこの問題に遭遇することはない。しかし、彼らは精神医学における宗教の影響の重要性を認識している。

著者はこの現状は、日本だけでなく、全世界的と考える。この点はオウム真理教や太陽寺院のような団体が引き起こした宗教的テロをみれば明らかである。これらの新宗教運動の共通点の一つは修行の強調である。本論文において著者は新宗教のいくつかの特徴とその「信念体系」、すなわち東洋と西洋の比較を含む信徒によって受容される一連の信念について記述する。

キーワード：新宗教，オウム真理教，太陽寺院，修行