

AUM SHINRIKYO AND THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN JAPAN

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1. Introduction

We are awash in information about Aum, and details concerning this group and its crimes continue to come to light as the court proceeding against its members progress. What is still lacking, however, is a credible interpretive framework to explain Aum's development and the motivation of its followers. The media and legal system in Japan seem to have fixed on two theories commonly applied to destructive religious groups in the West, namely social tension and mind control. These theories are attractive for their logic and simplicity. Clashes with society tend to increase the isolation and militancy of a counter-cultural group, and psychological manipulation provides a convenient explanation for criminal behavior. Nonetheless, they are inadequate in clarifying what happened in Aum. Questions concerning the mind control thesis have made it all but untenable legally and academically in the West. Logical inconsistencies regarding the activities of so-called deprogrammers—who try a kind of reverse mind control on their unwilling clients—and evidence of high defection rates among believers supposedly exposed to mind control undermine the arguments concerning the effectiveness of the psychological manipulation observed in some religious groups. While the social tension theory is more convincing, the facts show that there was a decisive turn towards apocalyptic and militant thought in Aum before any conspicuous clashes with society occurred. Therefore, to explain what happened in this group, I would maintain that it was ultimately the dynamics of religious faith, supported by elements within the religious and cultural heritage of Japan, that provided Aum's followers with a reason for their crimes.

2. The Promise of Psychic Powers

Aum Shinrikyo evolved out of a yoga school founded by Asahara Shōkō in Tokyo in February 1984. Asahara was born Matsumoto Chizuo, one of seven children of a struggling traditional artisan from a small town in the southern part of Japan. From his birth in 1955 he was completely blind in his left eye and had only limited vision in his right. At the age of six he was sent to a school for the blind, along with two of his brothers who were similarly impaired. At the school he gained the reputation of being something of a troublemaker and bully, someone who used the advantage his limited sight gave him among his more severely impaired peers. After graduation he apparently wanted to attend medical school, but was disappointed to find out that he did not qualify for admittance into the school because of his limited sight.

Having obtained a license as an acupuncturist and masseur, a traditional occupation for the blind in Japan, he found a job and set his sights on the law school of Tokyo University, the epitome of educational eliteness in Japan. Reportedly he took the exam for Tokyo University in 1977 and failed, after which he remained in Tokyo to prepare for the exam the following year. In the meantime, however, he married and a daughter was born the following summer, forcing Asahara to give up his plans for further education. In July 1978 he started his own acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine business in the city of

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Funabashi, a distant suburb of Tokyo, expanding it three years later to include the sale of health food. In June of 1982, however, he was convicted of manufacturing and selling his own medicine, an ineffective mixture of ginseng, snake skins, and ethanol that was advertised as a cure for rheumatism and various other ailments. In the wake of his conviction his business went bankrupt and he turned towards religion, joining Agonshō, another recent entry to the religious world in Japan. It was probably through his contact with Agonshō that he gained his knowledge of yoga, since the founder of this group combines the practice of Yoga with his own interpretation of early Buddhist doctrines.

Attention was first drawn to Asahara's yoga school by his appearance in the occult magazine *Twilight Zone* in October 1985, where he claimed to have achieved the ability to levitate. The magazine carried a now famous picture of him about a foot off the ground, sitting cross-legged with a pained look on his face. A book was published in March of the following year with the title *A Secret Method to the Development of Psychic Powers*, reproducing the picture of Asahara's 'levitation' on the cover. In the book he claims additional powers, such as the ability to prophesize, see and hear at great distances, bend the flame of a candle at will, transmit his emotions to others, change the weather, and heal sicknesses. The book describes at great length the yoga training leading to Kundalini Awakening, a release of latent energy that confers extraordinary psychic abilities on anyone willing to take up the practice.

His first book gives a telling description of his beliefs and the aims of the group gathering around him at this early stage. Although mention is made in the book of Asahara's study of early Buddhism, and the Buddhist concept of deliverance is presented as his final goal, there is little explanation of such doctrines. Instead the group seemed to be exclusively concerned with yoga training, and the attainment of psychic powers is presented as the purpose of that training. Only one passing reference to an apocalypse can be found in this earliest of Asahara's books, a reference to Nostradamus' prediction of a cataclysm in 1999, found in a short section dealing with prophecy as a psychic power.

3. Development of an Apocalyptic Religion

Sometime early in 1986, using money collected from members of his yoga classes, Asahara traveled to India. The purpose of this trip was to find a teacher who could lead him to 'final deliverance.' After failing to find such a teacher, he claims that with only two months of independent practice in the Himalayas he was able to attain his goal. This trip signaled a change in Asahara and his yoga group towards a more specifically religious teaching, one that was institutionalized in the founding of a religious group initially called *Aum Shinsen no Kai* in April 1986, and the establishment of a commune near Tokyo in August of the same year. Asahara, presenting himself as the only person in Japan who had achieved final deliverance, also started offering seminars on his teaching.

Initiation, a transcription of a seminar offered in May 1987 and published in August of the same year, reflects the changes in Asahara's teaching during this period. Written in the colloquial language presumably used by Asahara in his seminars, *Initiation* presents a mixture of Buddhist doctrines and yoga practices, with meditation on sundry Buddhist concepts now taking precedence over the practice of yoga. In a further refinement in Asahara's teaching, a distinction is drawn between enlightenment (*satori*) and liberation (*gedatsu*), with enlightenment being obtained through meditation and liberation through the physical training of yoga. This distinction is used to disabuse his disciples of the illusion that yoga training can lead to quick and easy results, a promise contained in Asahara's earlier books. In *Initiation* disciples are warned that they may go crazy or commit suicide if

they attempt Kundalini Awakening too soon, and are advised first to seek enlightenment through Jīna Yoga, described as meditation leading to self-awareness. This elaboration of the practice leading to liberation is one of the characteristics of the development of Aum's faith, and it bears some relationship with Asahara's turn towards apocalyptic ideas, as I will argue shortly.

We also see in Initiation an increased emphasis on Asahara's role in the process of liberation. This role is not limited to the teaching of what has become a rather elaborate set of practices, but includes the physical transference of psychic energy to the disciple. As the culmination of the seminar, a series of esoteric initiations are presented as steps along the road to liberation. Two final elements of the teaching presented in Initiation are important for our study. In Aum, memories, thoughts, and feelings are referred to as 'data,' and one of the goals of meditation is to replace the mistaken data of the subconscious, such as desires and attachments, with the correct data of the True Self, provided by Aum. The attempted manipulation of thoughts, feelings, and desires in this way is one of the characteristics of Aum, a characteristic that has contributed to the popularization of the mind control thesis in post-Aum Japan. Secondly, it is in Initiation that Asahara begins to develop the apocalyptic theme so important to Aum's later activities.

Compared to its later manifestations, the apocalyptic vision presented here is marked by its vagueness and comparative restraint. In a chapter titled 'Prophecy and Salvation,' Asahara predicts that Japan will begin to rearm by 1993 and that a nuclear war will occur sometime between 1999 and 2003. However, this prediction is dependent upon whether Aum is able to establish branches overseas by that date, for if there are enough people engaged in Aum's practice a war can still be avoided. The salvation indicated here does not necessarily depend on mystic or spiritual agencies, but rather on the fact that the world can yet be convinced of the truth and follow a path of nonviolence, led by Aum. Even if the predicted war cannot be avoided in this way, however, the followers of Aum's practice will be protected, for they will be able to leave their physical bodies behind and enter into the Astral World. Clearly this vision is still in its germinal stage. However, it does introduce one of the major themes elaborated upon in later developments—the survival of those who have attained supernatural powers through Aum's practice.

It was early in 1989 that a book devoted exclusively to the apocalypse was published. Asahara's interpretation of the New Testament book of Revelation, given the English title *Doomsday*, begins with the warning that the day of destruction is surely coming, that now is the time to awake. While much discussion is devoted to Armageddon (defined as humanity's final war), the book remains short on specifics, suggesting only that both China and the Soviet Union will be destroyed in 2004, and that 'the American president elected in 1995 (sic) and the Soviet party chief at that time will lead the world to Armageddon' (Asahara 1989a, p. 215).

In a companion volume published three months later, the timing of Armageddon is much more precise. On or about 1 August 1999 a war will begin over oil involving the United States, the Soviet Union, the Arab countries of the Middle East, and Japan. In a further detail, Asahara offers that atomic weapons will not be used at the outset of the war, but between 30 October and 29 November 2003 nuclear devices will be employed, the peak being 25 November. In an added touch, Asahara also predicts that 'powerful SDI weapons' will be used at this time (1989b, p. 52).

4. Prophecy and the Dynamics of Religious Faith

The question arises as to why Asahara should begin to emphasize an apocalyptic theme at this time, devoting two books in quick succession to the subject. As I have pointed out, a

vague concern with apocalyptic issues-based on the prophecies of Nostradamus popular among Japanese of Asahara's generation-was present from early in the development of the group. One wonders, however, at the increased emphasis at this time. Shortly after the *sarin* attack on the Tokyo subway it was widely reported that Aum became a 'doomsday cult' after suffering defeat in parliamentary elections in 1990-when it fielded a slate of twenty five candidates-and encountering other forms of opposition from society at about the same time. In the summer of 1989 Aum applied for recognition as a religious group under the Religious Corporations Law, and the application was held up because of opposition from families of some Aum members. These families were organized into a group in October of that year, followed shortly by the disappearance of their lawyer and his family. The election defeat mentioned earlier occurred in February 1990. Clashes with the neighbors of Aum facilities in rural areas west of Tokyo and on the southern island of Kyushu began in the summer of that year. What is important here is that all of these incidents took place after the 'doomsday' books were published. Shimazono Susumu (1995), a leading scholar of New Religions in Japan, suggests that it might have been the constraints of Aum's own doctrine that led Asahara to turn increasingly to this apocalyptic theme. Although Shimazono places the definitive turn to the apocalypse much later, identifying it with a series of lectures on the theme in the fall of 1992, I would argue that the internal problems to which he attributes this development were already present early in 1989.

The specific problem was the vagueness associated with the liberation promised by Aum. We have already seen a backtracking from the initial promises of quick achievement of this goal and the introduction of ever more complex steps needed for its attainment. Aum was growing at a rapid pace by this time. A large, new commune facility was opened at the foot of Mt. Fuji in August 1988, and the group had attained a membership of 4,000 by late 1989, with 380 of these living in communes. In the introduction to *Doomsday*, Asahara hints that these increasing numbers were becoming more and more a strain on him personally, saying that the performance of over eight thousand special initiations had drained him physically. On the part of the believers, the road to liberation continued to become increasingly complex, with various stages of accomplishment being established and sometimes long periods of 'service' being required of the commune members before they were allowed to fully undertake the practice leading to liberation. Although the acquisition of extraordinary powers continued to be stressed, these were no longer seen to be easily attainable, and they were taken more as proofs of the efficacy of Aum's training than as ends in themselves.

Consequently, a more encompassing motivation was needed to persevere in this ever-lengthening process of training. This motivation was now presented as participation in Asahara's 'plan for salvation,' a term introduced in the *Doomsday* volumes. The meaning of this participation in the plan of salvation seems to be multifaceted. At one point Asahara says that it is already certain that one-fourth of the population of the world will die in the coming destruction, and that the number of survivors among the remaining three-fourths depends on Aum's salvific activity. This activity presumably involves the provision of a means to attain personal liberation and thus avoid the cataclysm by moving to a higher realm, as alluded to already in Initiation. It also meant the provision of a place to carry out that training, which in essence meant the establishment of Aum communes in various locations. However, even at this stage Asahara hints at the fact that his plan of salvation includes the ushering in of Armageddon by a race of superior beings-the followers of Aum themselves.

In fact, from the results of the police investigation it appears that it was precisely at this time that Aum embarked on a course of murder. In February 1989 Taguchi Shōji, an Aum believer, was murdered by fellow members after he tried to defect. Furthermore, sometime during the night of 3-4 November 1989 Sakamoto Tsutsumi, the lawyer representing families of Aum members, was murdered along with his family by Aum believers in his home, and their bodies were buried in separate locations in western Japan.

5. Guru Worship and 'Mind Control'

As Aum's crimes have come to light, the media and legal profession in Japan have, in general, uncritically adopted the mind control thesis popularized by so-called anti-cult groups in the West. Much print has been spent fretting over whether Aum members still residing in their communes will be able to break their mind control and return to society. Aum members under arrest are judged as still under the sway of Asahara's control if they don't come clean, confessing their crimes and denouncing Aum and their former guru. In some ways the mind control thesis is tailor-made for the Japanese legal system, since the vast majority of criminal cases are resolved by the defendant 'reflecting' on his crimes and confessing, entrusting himself to the mercy of the court. When confronted with the evidence, anyone who would choose not to take this course is seen as being irrational, or controlled by outside forces.

Certainly many of the techniques identified with the mind control thesis were present in Aum. The members living in communes were cut off from outside sources of information and most forms of contact with society. If press reports are to be believed, many of them thought that the commune members themselves were under attack, victims of the *sarin* gas that was in fact being produced within the compound. Members were taught that as a result of their yoga training they could work long hours with little sleep, leading to sleep deprivation. Likewise they were told that the body needed less food as a result of training, and were fed two meals, with no variation in content from day to day. The Underground Samadhi—that is, meditating for days at a time in a small wooden room buried underground—was used as a form of intense training. Members were encouraged to spend long hours viewing tapes of Asahara's sermons, or to listen to the sermons on their Walkmans as they carried on their work. Or they were taught to repeat certain phrases thousands of times, pledging their loyalty to Asahara and encouraging themselves to persevere in the training. These were some of the expressions of the 'data replacement' that I mentioned previously.

All these are techniques of psychological manipulation. As is well known, however, they are not unique to destructive religious groups and have been found to be useful in other, presumably healthy, contexts. Traditional methods of meditation employed in mainline religious groups encourage periods of fasting, sleep deprivation, and isolation as means to enhance the experience. Athletes in Japan will make use of 'image training', a form of positive thinking involving the replacement of fears of failure with mental images of success.

Furthermore, it is doubtful that such methods can completely strip people of the ability to make independent decisions, as critics of the mind control thesis repeatedly point out. Indeed, as Asahara himself has argued, the believers freely choose to undertake these practices, with some knowledge of what their effects would be. While acknowledging the psychological manipulation that took place in Aum, the mind control thesis by itself is not adequate as an explanation of the believers' actions. Once again, the dynamics of faith, especially as expressed in the Japanese religious and cultural tradition, provide a more useful model for understanding Aum's crimes.

As I pointed out in a previous article, Japanese religiosity promotes belief in the easy deification of the human being. In modern times, the founders of certain Japanese new religious movements have been regarded by their followers in this way, and some of the leaders of the latest wave of these groups actively take this mantle upon themselves. Asahara's claims to be the only person to have attained 'final liberation' and his repeated demands for absolute faith in him as the 'guru' can be taken within this context.

Claims on the loyalty of followers by religious leaders such as Asahara are further reinforced by the emphasis placed on the master-disciple relationship in Japanese society as a whole. This is widely recognized as a traditional pattern of relationship in Japanese culture, and it remains a prevalent cultural form in contemporary Japan. While the importance placed on such a relationship is not necessarily absolute in Japan, nor is it unique to this country, as a cultural element of some continuing importance it should not be overlooked in trying to understand the motivation of Asahara's followers. At the very least the prevalence of this cultural form would make it easier for these followers to accept the constraints of such a relationship—even when it involved orders to commit murder.

It appears that this kind of relationship was reinforced structurally within Aum. Followers were moved frequently between the various communes and branches that Aum had established, discouraging the formation of relationships between members that might have served as checks on Asahara's power within the group. The members followed individual courses of training, even when gathered together in the same training halls. Rite of 'initiation' emphasized Asahara's role in the individual members' training. For example, the Blood Initiation involved the drinking of Asahara's blood—or a manufactured substance allegedly patterned after the DNA found in Asahara's blood—and the so-called Miracle Pond consisted in the drinking of Asahara's bath water. Incidentally, these practices are not unknown in Japanese religious history, as part of the tradition of veneration of mountain ascetics and living Buddhist saints. There are reports that question boxes were placed in the Aum communes, through which the members could address their questions concerning the faith or practice directly to Asahara. Former members have also apparently testified that Asahara would always have a phone nearby, which was used for one-on-one contact with the leaders of the movement, avoiding the need for meetings where several leaders might be present.

6. Aum Shinrikyō as Social Protest

When all is said and done, the analysis I have attempted here remains tentative and sketchy. It is perhaps better at pointing out the problems with the interpretative frameworks currently being employed than at presenting a comprehensive viewpoint of its own. However, by focusing on the internal dynamics of Aum as a religious group, including such processes as tensions involved in the development of doctrine and the presence of religious and cultural influences, it does provide promising areas for further inquiry. It also serves to refocus attention on the social context that gave rise to this group.

On one level Aum can be described as a social protest group. In joining Aum young people were rejecting a society characterized by corruption and malaise. Despite repeated promises to introduce transparency into public affairs, top political and administrative figures continue to make decisions privately, often over sake at the numerous Tokyo restaurants catering to politicians and bureaucrats. The lack of openness is reflected in the Aum investigation itself. The public must be content with reports leaked by the police to the press, or with prosecutors' statements filed in court, for there is no other avenue of

information available in Japan. We may never know why police investigations into earlier Aum crimes were not pursued—public inquiries into such incidents are rare in Japan.

Malaise is by its nature a less identifiable problem. Young people are perhaps increasingly dissatisfied with the rewards offered for long years of hard work in school: a drawn-out apprenticeship in the office with fewer opportunities for promotion than their fathers enjoyed. Perhaps this has contributed to the contemporary interest in mystic and psychic abilities, a form of empowerment that many might see as more readily available than traditional forms of advancement. For some it might also make apocalyptic ideas more appealing, offering a spectacular end to the status quo.

Although apocalyptic ideas are common to many of the latest wave of New Religions in Japan, it is significant, I think, that Asahara left himself no way out if the prophecy of a coming destruction should not be fulfilled. Other groups using the Nostradamus prophecies, for example, will point out that the world can yet be saved by converting to the true practice of their own particular faith. In Aum, however, not only do the prophecies become increasingly pessimistic, the day of destruction is continually brought forward, to 1997, or 1995 even. I would argue that this indicates the unique role these prophecies played in Aum, that of providing motivation to its talented followers to persevere in a faith that could not fulfill its initial promise of the quick attainment of extraordinary psychic powers.¹

What is truly tragic is that Aum repeats and intensifies many of the cultural forms that it criticizes. The promised empowerment is postponed, authority is made absolute, and believers are kept in the dark regarding their leaders' true plans. Comparisons have been made with the Japanese Red Army of the 1970's, another radical protest group that copied internally the patterns of power that it sought to destroy in society at large.² These groups then serve to reflect back at society its least appealing features—and it is no wonder that society wants to treat them as an aberration.

7. The Response to Aum

Understandably, society's response has been a somewhat frantic search for better means to identify and control potentially dangerous groups like Aum. Aum Shinrikyo itself was legally disbanded by the Tokyo District Court on 30 October 1995, a decision upheld by the Tokyo High Court on 19 December of the same year, and finally by the Supreme Court on 31 January 1996. The order of dissolution included provisions for the seizure of Aum's assets and the appointment by the court of a liquidator to settle claims against Aum, primarily those made by the victims of the *sarin* attack on the Tokyo subway and the other crimes with which Aum members have been charged. All of Aum's facilities have been taken over by the court, and its remaining members have taken up residence in small groups in rented apartments throughout the country. Changes have also been made in the Religious Corporations Law in Japan, tightening somewhat the control of the central government over religious groups. However, the relatively minor changes, pushed through parliament in a great deal of haste in 1995, reveal an ulterior political motive that emerged by chance in the wake of Aum.

In elections for the Upper House of Parliament in July 1995, the opposition Shinshintō, formed the previous year through the merging of the political party founded and backed by

1 I develop this argument through comparison of the use made of the Nostradamus prophecies in other Japanese New Religions in "Nostradamus and the Apocalypse in Japan," forthcoming in *Inter-religio and Japanese Religions*.

2 Ian Reader (1996), for example, makes this comparison in his analysis of Aum.

Sōka Gakkai-the Kōmeitō-with several other political parties, made significant gains, mainly at the expense of the Social Democratic Party of Japan, a leading member of the ruling coalition at that time. Post-election political analysis focused primarily on the role of Sōka Gakkai in supporting the Shinshintō's efforts, and attributed much of its success to the members of this New Religion. In this situation, the move to amend the Religious Corporations Law could serve a dual political purpose: to restrict Sōka Gakkai's activities as part of the effort to increase governmental control over religious bodies in general, as well as to further identify the Shinshintō with Sōka Gakkai in the public's mind. This was achieved principally by repeated calls for Ikeda Daisaku, the controversial honorary president of Sōka Gakkai, to appear as a witness before the Diet committee considering the revisions to the law. The latter effort was blocked, but at the expense of forcing the Shinshintō to appear as the defender of Ikeda and Sōka Gakkai.

These moves are effective because Sōka Gakkai's political activities-primarily through the sponsoring of its own political party-have long been the object of controversy in Japan. Although it enjoyed some initial success-becoming the third largest parliamentary party within five years of its founding in 1964-its vote gathering quickly reached a ceiling of between five and six million, a level that has not been breached for the last twenty-five years. Consequently, the Kōmeitō has been able to exert influence only by entering into coalitions with other parties: informally with the conservative party from 1989 and as a formal coalition member in the Hosokawa Cabinet that ended forty-three years of conservative rule in 1993. Its decision to join many of its coalition partners in founding a new party, the Shinshintō, in 1994 reflects these realities. While the large block of votes that it controls will be important to the new party, on the other hand there is the danger that the identification of the Shinshintō with Sōka Gakkai might limit its votes to the Kōmeitō's previous levels, and this provides us with one reason for the political jockeying over revisions in the Religious Corporations Law.

New religious movements' participation in Japanese politics has not been limited to Sōka Gakkai, however. In the immediate post-war years many other groups either sponsored their own candidates or offered official endorsement in elections. Part of the motivation behind this political activity was undoubtedly a desire to preserve the religious freedoms granted in the post-war period. As I argued in a previous article, at least since the seventeenth century the normal pattern of state-religion relations in Japan has been one of religious subservience to political power, or state control of religion. The control exercised from the immediate pre-war period until Japan's surrender in 1945 was perhaps especially acute, but it would not be unreasonable to identify the post-war period of relatively unbridled freedom for religious organizations as the true aberration within this long-standing cultural pattern of government control. This could help to explain the relative ease with which some restrictions have been imposed on religious groups in the past year.

Ironically, however, by trying to defend their freedoms through the use of political influence the new religious movements could, in fact, be contributing to their own control-albeit on a more subtle level. In his analysis of public perceptions of religion in the United States, Stephen Carter (1993) advocates that a greater role be allocated religion in public discourse. He points out, however, that there is a danger in religion 'drawing too close to the flame' of political power. In speaking of the recent tendency for some groups in the United States to identify themselves with a particular political party's platform, Carter argues that, 'If the religiously devout come to treat their faith communities as simple interest groups, involved in a general competition for secular power, it should come as no surprise if everybody else looks at them the same way' (p. 68). Carter's warning concerning public

perceptions of religions as simple interest groups should perhaps be a matter of more concern to Japanese New Religions as they contemplate their role in Japanese society, where religion as an institution has traditionally been regarded with distrust, and even scorn. The popularity of government efforts to increase control over these groups indicates that their efforts to regain public trust in the wake of Aum have born little fruit to date.

However, one must avoid being too pessimistic about the future of religion in Japan. Several harsher measures contemplated in the wake of Aum were, in the end, abandoned. Among these was an unprecedented attempt to apply to Aum a law originally targeting communist subversive activities during the Cold War, an attempt that was finally rejected in January of this year. There was also open speculation concerning the possible introduction into parliament of a so-called Fundamental Law on Religion, which would have severely restricted even normal religious activity such as the recruiting of new members by religious groups across the board.

Furthermore, religious creativity, as expressed in the vitality of new religious movements in Japan, indicates that in the longer processes of history religious expression ultimately cannot be controlled by government. Such control might, in the short run, succeed in channeling religious expression in ways to serve the State's purposes, but the periodic appearance of new religious movements in Japan indicates that in such a situation religious creativity will ultimately find other ways to emerge.

The Aum case illustrates the need to draw on specifically religious understandings in order to explain social phenomena as a means to enhancing policy formation. Social-psychological studies exploring issues such as the reality of mystic and psychic phenomena, culturally specific expressions of charisma and leader worship, and contemporary Japanese fascination with apocalyptic ideas are precisely the kind of tools needed to help evaluate groups emerging as a consequence of natural religious creativity in contemporary society. There is much that can still be learned from Aum believers and former believers, concerning personal motivations, relationships within the group, and the presence or absence of internal pressures that might have contributed to the doctrinal paths taken by the group. This kind of understanding is, in the final analysis, the only effective way to prevent a reoccurrence of these tragic events, in other societies as well.

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