

10 Alternative Knowledge

In what follows, I shall discuss a religiosity that does not belong to any specific world religion. It is a kind of religiosity that can be found in many parts of the world, especially where the world religions have not penetrated people's lives and thinking. This religiosity has a variety of names, such as folk religion, nature religion, and animistic mentality.

This naturalistic religiosity differs from major world religions in its way of regulating body and nature. Contrary to the rationalization and secularization theory derived from the Weberian sociological tradition, this naturalistic religiosity has not been excluded from the life of industrial society. Rather, it has been preserved through the process of modernization, and perhaps we are now witnessing a resurgence of this religiosity in advanced countries, in the form I like to call new spirituality movements and culture, or in the West is called the New Age movement.

I attempt in this paper to show how naturalistic religiosity has been preserved through modernization, by discussing a Japanese example of an alternative agricultural or farming movement. This example will help us to understand one way in which religions are concerned with food production and nourishment. It will also elucidate the complicated patterns in which religions function in regulating or coordinating body and nature.

Before describing in detail the alternative farming movement in Japan, the concept of an 'alternative knowledge movement' (AKM) will be proposed in order to locate this kind of religiosity in modern and contemporary religious and cultural history.

Formation of alternative knowledge movements and religion

Transformation of the knowledge system in modern times

When a society undergoes the process of modernization, great changes occur in the knowledge system of the people of that society. In place of the knowledge conveyed mainly orally through daily life, or that

accumulated by a literary tradition centering around sacred texts, modern scientific knowledge, and knowledge required for modern institutions such as law and bureaucracy, is accumulated and absorbed by the people. Modern knowledge becomes dominant over folk knowledge and knowledge carried over from previous civilizations. School education has played the greatest role in spreading this modern knowledge.

The knowledge system built up by the literary tradition was established long before modern times, and the school system as a channel for transmitting knowledge through the generations has a long history. However, until modern times, systematic knowledge based on literacy and the school system as an imparting channel was available only to a privileged minority. The majority of the population lived in a world of orally transmitted folk knowledge. Because of this, the range of influence of literacy-based systematic knowledge was limited within the day-to-day life of the general population. One of the differences between modern and traditional schools (the latter taught mainly writing and simple arithmetic) is that the former attempt to inculcate systematic written knowledge in the great majority of the population. As a consequence, systematic written knowledge in the form of modern knowledge rapidly penetrates the sphere of daily-life knowledge that had developed spontaneously among the people.

Reacting against this penetration, traditional religious organizations that maintained their own systematic doctrine and written traditions began to reorganize their structures so as to allow the general public to acquire their religious knowledge; in other words, the popularization of traditional, written religious knowledge began. Protestantism within Christianity and what is called Islamic fundamentalism can be seen as typical examples of such religious popularization. On the other hand, there were other attempts, from those who valued knowledge closely associated with daily life, to retain some aspects of daily-life knowledge and adapt them to the modern social system and knowledge system. These are defined here as 'alternative knowledge movements' (AKMs); or they could have been named 'alternative technique movements' because of the alternative knowledge in turn is used to adapt practical techniques.

Alternative medicine in the United States

A typical example of an AKM is found in the field of medicine in the United States.¹ From the late 18th century, orthodox medicine gradually

gained authority there. Medical doctors were considered to be those who had acquired systematic knowledge based on modern science with which they were able to cure diseases. They were awarded official qualifications upon completing medical school, which was considered to be the sole institution to impart accurate knowledge about the human body's structure and functions. They also formed a strong professional association with governmental authorization.

The view of the human body and health in modern science is based on a reductionist scientific methodology and a dualistic worldview of body and mind. It stresses analytical knowledge of various component organs and their functions, and has a high regard for surgical treatments and the administration of chemically synthesized drugs. A hospital combining modern medicine and a bureaucratic organization represents a social institution based on modern knowledge.

While orthodox medicine was taking the path of progress, various alternative medicines emerged seeking authority in knowledge other than modern medicine. Thomsonianism (using herbal medicine), hydropathy (employing the healing effects of water), Grahamism (maintaining health by regulating one's meat intake) and chiropractic medicine and osteopathy to reposition distorted bones and joints are some examples. The efficacy or the reason for these therapies cannot be verified fully by scientific methods. Therefore, the knowledge cherished by the users of these therapies has not yet been incorporated into modern science. Among the general public, however, many believe in their efficacy, and place great expectations on these therapies.

AKMs and religion

As seen in medicine, AKMs evolve in parallel to prevalent modern knowledge, as an antithesis or a supplement to modern knowledge.² There may be an underlying discontent with modern knowledge, or awareness of its faults. Those who are negatively affected by modernization often consider modern knowledge to be the source of a power that destroys the traditional order of life. Modern knowledge causes emotional anxiety and leads to fierce opposition. The discontented may insist on a return to tradition, or they may find their outlet in religious or spiritual movements that emphasize relief experiences. Another strategy to resist modern knowledge, or to supplement it on the practical level of daily life, is the AKM.

The religious movement and the AKM in modern or contemporary society can be classified into different categories. However, the border

between the two is ambiguous; there is a wide overlapping area. Some religious movements are found to have the nature of AKMs while some AKMs are seen to have the characteristics of religious movements, or some AKMs have philosophies with strong religious overtones. The 'religion' that overlaps with AKMs is more deeply associated with the religious concepts and practices of common people than with the orthodox doctrine and rituals of traditional religions. The AKM has much in common with popular religions such as syncretic folk cults and new religious movements. It is the world of culture and knowledge linked with practices in community living.³

Before modern times, such a world existed in relative stability, retaining a certain autonomy despite being affected by orthodox religions. It was the world of oral transmission termed 'small tradition' by Redfield (1956), and the world of folk knowledge and folk religion that folklore scholarship of Japan has been exploring. However, with the progress of modernization, the world of folk knowledge and folk religions has undergone an extensive interaction with written knowledge. The written knowledge of traditional and orthodox religions has also intervened in the world of folk knowledge and religions. Both AKMs and religious movements, including modern new religious movements and syncretic folk cults, appear to be developing from the interaction of three kinds of knowledge: (1) the folk tradition of community life practices; (2) orthodox religious knowledge; and (3) new written knowledge influenced by modern knowledge.

Alternative knowledge and modern knowledge

As previously stated, religions and AKMs in modern Japan share a feeling of discontent with modern society. But it is not sufficient to see in such emotional discontent the motivation behind AKMs. Alternative knowledge is based on an intuitive insight into misgivings regarding modern knowledge, resulting in strong popular support for alternative movements. Modern knowledge advocates universal reason that is free from context (knowledge applicable to any time, opportunity and person), and tends to emphasize systematization, certainty and rigidity. In order to ensure these elements, specialization tends to occur in modern knowledge. Although impartiality is the goal, in reality modern knowledge is often used to serve the needs of modern states and industries, and above all, economic efficiency. AKMs can also be defined as those movements that criticize the shortcomings of

modern knowledge, and that try to adapt intuitive knowledge developed through daily community life to a new modern living environment.

An important difference between modern knowledge and alternative knowledge is that the latter values usefulness in community life. For reasons of practicality and utility, perception of the delicate balance and harmony between objects, between humans and objects, and between humans is considered important. The total, sustained experiences of a person acquired through the activities of the whole body and mind are highly valued. Holistic perception achieved by contextual and participatory attitudes, by sense perception such as 'inspiration' and by cultivated skill, are preferred to non-contextual, universal rationality and the systematic and rigorous accumulation of segmented knowledge. As such, perception cannot be formulated clearly in written form, it is recommended that one should participate and learn it experientially. This concept of holistic knowledge that is acquired empirically and that is applicable to daily experiences in the community is often lacking in modern knowledge.

Certain common tendencies are to be noted in the worldviews of many AKMs. A noticeable feature is that they challenge both the modern dualistic view of seeing spirit and nature, and mind and body as separate entities, and the mechanistic view of nature and body. Against such a dualistic, mechanistic view of nature and body, AKMs present a worldview that stresses organic relations between various elements, and the harmony of all; in other words, a world view that leads to monism and holism. They consider human beings not as outside nature but as a part of nature that must live in harmony with it.

In the sphere of society and morality, AKMs are distinctive in highlighting utility, and the need for interdependence and mutual care as opposed to modern individualism and social and moral ideas that are based on a transcendental norm. They advocate a social and moral worldview with a high respect for harmony with others and the whole. In short, a tendency widely observed in the thought systems presented by AKMs in their views of nature and morality is the concept of interdependence, a holistic harmony among living things.

AKMs in modern Japan

In modern Japan, a number of AKMs have been initiated and receive popular support. In comparison with the United States and European countries, Japan has many more AKMs with large numbers of participants and sympathizers. Another distinct feature of Japanese

movements is that many of them have religious orientations. What explains these features?

One reason is that in Japan modern knowledge was seen as imported knowledge and, therefore, originally alien to the people. It was regarded as knowledge of Western origin, unfamiliar to the culture. Hence, from the early period of modernization, there was a strong tendency to foster knowledge suitable to Japanese tradition. The worldviews of Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto and folk religions incline to non-dualist and non-mechanical thinking. A great portion of the nation shared the idea that they should develop methodologies of medicine, health promotion, diet, farming, education, management and so on of their own that were to be different from Western knowledge, while maintaining the generally recognized 'Eastern' or 'Japanese' traditions.⁴ Although 'Western' knowledge was dominant in social life, there were times, such as during the Second World War, when 'overcoming modernity' was part of the mainstream thought of the nation.

The second reason is the characteristic of Japanese religious culture that admits pluralism in concept and practice, instead of one authorized religion prevailing among the population. This characteristic enables people-led religions and cultural organizations to be formed quite easily. In societies dominated by Catholicism and Islam, movements advocating folk knowledge that is different from the knowledge system of the traditional, organized religions are considered to be heterodox and dangerous. In such societies, folk religious groups can scarcely be formed outside the orthodox religions in the process of rationalization of society. People's knowledge movements, if any, are either incorporated into the orthodox system, or suppressed as being anti- or non-orthodox.

In contrast, there exists no dominant orthodox religious organization in Japan. Since early in Japan's history, diverse religions, sects and syncretic religious groups have coexisted. From this multi-religious climate, a number of religious groups founded and supported by common people, such as new religious movements, have emerged in modern times.⁵ These popular religions full of folk cultural elements share a monistic and holistic cosmic view closer to nature religion, rather than the dualistic view of the historic religions. The degree of interrelatedness between religious knowledge and daily-life knowledge is high. AKMs are likely to gain popular support in environments receptive to popular religions. As a syncretic culture closely related to day-to-day knowledge is dominant in such an

environment, AKMs could easily grow along with the development of new religious movements and other popular religions.

Alternative agriculture and its Japanese version

Alternative knowledge in production and nourishment

AKMs are often based on people's concern about the 'usefulness' of placing an importance on the mutual dependence of all living beings. The most familiar activity closest to each individual's consciousness is the working of one's own body. In this sense, it is natural that alternative knowledge has developed with the greatest diversity in the field of the human body, notably in medicine and health. Health, food and nourishment are closely related. Thus, AKMs have often shown an interest in food, and developed knowledge about what is good nourishment. Natural food movements and vegetarian movements occupy important positions in AKMs. Concerns about food and nourishment lead as a matter of course to concern about food production. Among food production industries, agriculture in a wider sense, including livestock breeding, is questioned. Hence, agriculture has been the focus of interest for many AKMs.

However, it is not only because agriculture is closely related to health that alternative movements have developed in the field of agriculture. Another important reason is that agriculture is an activity carried out upon animals and plants in the natural environment. In agriculture, human beings are required to nourish the life of animals and plants with their hands, and to intervene with and control their delicate life processes. Agriculture is an act of intervention into the interdependent life system of the earth, and for this reason, it is a sphere of production activity in which the limits of modern knowledge are revealed most distinctively.

Optimum nourishment is a requirement for the health of humans to grow and maintain their lives; on the other hand, it is a requirement for production to breed and maintain the life of animals and plants in order to have them serve the needs of humans. Furthermore, it is related to environmental conservation to sustain the ecology of the earth embracing humans, animals and plants. Agriculture as a nourishing activity involves nourishing the environment as a whole in addition to nourishing humans, animals and plants. Because it touches the life process at various phases, agriculture has become a proper arena for the development of alternative knowledge.

Development of alternative agriculture in the world

Alternative agriculture aims to produce good quality food with high productivity, yet without using agricultural chemicals and chemical fertilizers, which are the products of modern knowledge. This method has been advocated since the 1920s and 1930s when the use of chemical fertilizers and agricultural chemicals spread rapidly in Europe and North America after the First World War, and when soil erosion was recognized as a serious problem in the United States.⁶

An early example of alternative agriculture movements in Europe is the Bio-Dynamic Farming of Rudolf Steiner in the 1920s. Steiner's alternative agriculture movement is based on his mystical religious philosophy. In this sense, it has points in common with many Japanese alternative agriculture movements. There are a few more examples of alternative agriculture with religious inclinations in Europe. In Britain and France, however, alternative agriculture movements based on rational knowledge are dominant.

It was the educational activities of Albert Howard after the 1930s that strongly influenced the spread of alternative agriculture movements based on rational knowledge. Brought up in a farming family, Howard became a plant pathologist. While engaged in plant pathological research, he became skeptical of modern 'conventional agriculture' that used a great deal of chemical fertilizers and agricultural chemicals. He observed agricultural production in India and the Caribbean islands and recognized the importance of nourishing the soil. After his long-term field survey in Indore, India, he devised the 'Indore Process,' which aimed to raise productivity by maintaining the fertility of the soil using compost and barnyard manure and doing away with chemical fertilizers and agricultural chemicals. *Agricultural Testament*, which he published in 1940, exerted an impact on many people throughout the world. Inspired by this book, J. I. Rodale published his own work on organic agriculture in 1945, and since then, has been engaged in spreading this alternative agricultural process in the United States (Howard 1940, Rodale 1945).

Howard and other advocates of alternative agriculture have been critical of agricultural research based on modern science. According to them, modern scientific agricultural researchers are looking at agriculture from a narrow, specialized viewpoint without an eye to the whole picture, and their research has no relevance to actual farming practices. They see that such an agricultural process would result in damaging the health of both humans and the natural environment.

Howard gave the name 'natural agriculture' to the way wild animals and plants nourish each other in forests, and showed, in a practical manner, that his agricultural process to maintain soil fertility would do minimum damage to the 'wheel of life.' In his process, interdependence of life and holistic thinking are stressed, but there are no religious overtones. Howard is critical of Steiner who pushes forward religious thought and proposes an organic agricultural process on weak rational grounds.

Alternative agriculture in Japan

Alternative agriculture had already been attempted in the 1930s in Japan by some people, probably influenced by reports from Europe and the United States about alternative agriculture movements or criticisms of modern agriculture (Kume 1983, Fukuoka 1983). There were few examples of alternative agriculture movements such as that of Howard, based on academic, rational knowledge, but some movements with strong religious elements did develop. Since the early 1970s, when the issue of environmental conservation attracted public attention, rational alternative agriculture has been gaining strength, but religious agricultural movements still exert most influence. Before the 1970s, religiously oriented movements were in the mainstream of alternative agriculture in Japan.

Two major streams existed in the religious alternative agriculture movement in Japan before 1945. One is 'no-fertilizer agriculture,' later renamed 'natural agriculture,' advocated by Okada Mokichi, the founder of Sekai Kyūseikyō (the Church of World Messianity) (Sekai Kyūseikyō Inc., 1981). Sekai Kyūseikyō criticizes modern Western medicine, and medication in particular; healing by raising a hand above the affected parts of the body is the main pillar of belief. Therefore, this religious organization is also seen as an alternative medicine movement believing in the natural healing function of the body. In the same way as it vetoed the use of medication, this group began advocating and practicing farming methods that respect the function of the soil, nourishing life using only compost, and no agricultural chemicals or chemical fertilizers.

Another movement, 'enzymatic agriculture,' tries to fertilize soil by the action of enzymes secreted by germs under the ground (Shimamoto Kakuya 1984). This method was promoted during the Second World War by Shibata Kinshi, born of a brewer's family, who tried to apply the action of enzymes in food processing to farming. Shibata was a

religious person who saw divinity in enzymes and worshipped them, calling each 'My Venerable Enzyme.' But it was only after a follower of Ōmoto, a new religion, became fascinated with this process that enzymatic agriculture became a more sustainable process. This follower, Shimamoto Kakuya (1899–1974), called the enzymatic farming process by another name, 'microbiological agriculture,' and established it as an effective alternative agriculture after long years of research and practice. His work is now continued by his son, Shimamoto Kunihiko (1928–), who is energetically extending the method to wider areas both in Japan and elsewhere. In the following section we turn to a discussion of the microbiological agriculture promoted by Shimamoto Kakuya.

A case study of alternative agriculture in Japan: Shimamoto Kakuya and microbiological agriculture

Shimamoto Kakuya's grandfather, Benji, was a warrior (samurai) serving the Minakuchi Clan in Shiga prefecture. When the warriors' class was abolished at the time of the Meiji Restoration, Benji started as a malted rice supplier taking advantage of his wife Nui's knowledge of brewing, which as a daughter of a brewer she had learned at home.⁷ Malted rice is developed by propagating rice mould, which is then applied to rice, wheat and soya beans. It contains various enzymes and is used as a starter to brew Japanese rice wine, soya bean sauce, soya bean paste and many other food materials. In 1899, the Liquor Tax Law was enforced whereby private rice wine production was prohibited and the demand for malted rice dropped drastically, causing Benji to give up his business. The family moved to the large city of Nagoya, where they started a tofu (soya bean curd) shop. Kakuya himself grew up in Nagoya and worked for a while in a doll-making workshop, later becoming a successful confectionery company owner. In the process, he acquired artisan skills in tofu making, glasswork and confectionery. As a confectioner he developed his knowledge about the enzymes contained in saliva.

Kakuya developed a greater interest in religion after he suffered a major injury. He became affiliated to a Shintoist group, Dai Nippon Hokokai, led by Mizuno Mau'nen, and devoted himself to reading the *Kojiki*, the mythological story about the history of ancient Japan. In 1940, he converted to Shinto from Buddhism. In 1945, he met one of the founders of Ōmoto, Deguchi Onisaburō (1871–1948), the Sacred Master (*Seishi*). Fascinated by him, he became a member of the

organization. Onisaburō emphasized the importance of agriculture. Partially influenced by Onisaburō, Kakuya returned to the family home in Minakuchi in Shiga prefecture and began farming after the end of the Second World War. There, he developed an interest in Shibata's enzymatic agriculture, to which Onisaburō had referred many times, and attempted to put the process into practice.

Enzymatic agriculture involves the nurturing of rich compost and using the enzymes secreted by micro-organisms in the compost to fertilize the soil, and, whenever possible, avoiding the use of chemical fertilizers and other agricultural chemicals to grow crops. Advocates of this method consider the soil to be a living thing and believe that by enriching its fertility, they can harvest tasty products that are free from harmful materials. In order to nurture the soil and to give it vitality, farmers should learn both the theory and the practice of how to grow effective micro-organisms in the ground. In addition to scientific experiments and analyses, the accumulation of knowledge through on-the-farm experience is essential. For a long period of time, the Shimamoto father and son undertook research and trials to devise theories and techniques to fertilize soil until they established what is called Shimamoto Microbiologic Agriculture.

This farming method was developed and extended through Aizen Mizuhokai, a group of farmers organized by Ōmoto followers. Later, the group was separated from the parent religious body, and a corporate body, *Kōso no Sekaisha* (The World of Enzymes, Inc.) was founded with Shimamoto Kakuya himself as its president. The organization devotes itself to technical development and its dissemination. Many of the members from farmers' groups in their local areas are making concerted efforts to increase productivity under the leadership of Shimamoto Kakuya's son Kunihiko and other outreach workers. Seminars held at the headquarters in Minakuchi provide the members with the opportunity of learning newly developed knowledge and techniques. Its monthly journal *Kōso no Sekai* (The World of Enzymes) serves as an information and communication network uniting the 3500 members.

The knowledge and techniques of this farming method are quite complicated and require a lot of time to learn. As research is always progressing, it is not enough for a farmer to depend on any one technique once mastered. In order to adapt techniques properly to various soil conditions, climates and the marketing and distribution systems, mutual information exchanges and teaching and learning among farmers are necessary. This is one reason why this

microbiological agriculture movement is organized under a strong leadership.

Applications of microbiological agricultural techniques and food processing technologies

The main feature of Shimamoto Kakuya's microbiological agriculture is the development of nutrient-rich soil that fosters the growth of plants by activating the work of the micro-organisms in the soil, thereby ensuring that those nutrients that plants and animals take from the soil are effectively renewed. In other words, it tries to achieve a high yield of crops by making and applying fertile compost and barnyard manure from organic materials such as crop residue to farmland. The group excels in the technique of making compost by using sawdust, and is able to mass-produce compost at low cost.

The main points of the knowledge and techniques the group develops and adopts are how micro-organisms are cultivated, and to what and how they are applied. Members study soil chemistry and microbiology so as to apply their knowledge to practical farming. Therefore, scientific knowledge and techniques based on modern science are further important components of Shimamoto's agriculture. On the other hand, the knowledge and techniques of traditional processing techniques to make good food using micro-organisms such as rice mould and yeast as starters of fermentation are also valued.

Shimamoto considered the fact that techniques to process rice wine, soya bean paste, and soya bean sauce by applying rice mould and yeast to rice and soya beans and other raw materials were using the action of enzymes secreted by micro-organisms. Enzymes also play important roles in digesting food within the human body. Therefore, enzymes were considered to be key elements in the process of production and intake of food. Enzymes work when organic materials nourish other creatures and help them maintain and activate their life. In the early days of his movement, Shimamoto said 'Enzymes nurture the life of all living things in the universe. It is love that nurtures, and love leads to the good and truth. This is "the Way of enzyme" and not "a method of enzyme"' (Shimamoto Kakuya 1949: 5).

Shimamoto aimed to encourage enzymes to work in soil just as they act in food processing and in the human body. Just as rice mould is applied to rice and soya beans to cause fermentation in order to make food, he tried to activate the work of enzymes by applying mould to the organic residues of plants and animals and also to soil. He produced

a fermentation starter called an 'enzyme breeder' and applied this to sawdust to prepare compost. In addition, he processed many other materials and applied them to the soil and fallen leaves, believing that by so doing the fertility of the soil was maintained and even enhanced by preventing the increase of harmful insects and ensuring that good crops are harvested. He also made enzyme products to be eaten as food. According to his philosophy, micro-organisms and enzymes intervene at all stages to sustain and nourish life, and work as an important element in (food) production activities.

The Shimamoto worldview: Setting a high value on soil and agriculture

Many farmers maintain membership in Kōso no Sekai, Inc. partially for the purpose of learning complicated and elaborate knowledge and techniques. But it is not the only reason. Kōso no Sekai, Inc. has another side to it as a spiritual or religious movement. On the front page of *Kōso no Sekai*, slogans are printed under the heading 'The cause of true agriculture': 'If the root is not nourished well, the extremities will never prosper. Realize that it is soil preparation and root cultivation that constitute the basic foundation for plant growth'; 'Agriculture is the root of a nation, and the greatest authority for all humankind. When agriculture is controlled well, the nation prospers, and when food is properly given, people can live in peace.' This religiosity of the corporation is deeply related to the belief in Ōmoto of Shimamoto Kakuya and Kuniyuko. Ōmoto teaches people to see divinity in soil and to respect it as one of the three elements of the universe together with fire and water. Shimamoto Kakuya was taught by Deguchi Onisaburō's wife Sumi (1883–1952), the Second Matriarch of Ōmoto. Sumi insisted on the need to venerate the soil. In Kakuya's biography (Shimamoto Kuniyuko 1984), Sumi's poems are quoted: 'Even if you are grateful to heaven, if you fail to thank soil, it is as though you have forgotten your own mother'; 'All living things in the world are born from soil'; 'Every person is born from soil, lives on soil, receives benefits from soil, and hides themselves in soil.'

Shimamoto Kakuya placed a special emphasis on the veneration of soil in the faith of Ōmoto, and preached this in relation to the significance of agriculture:

Soil is the mother of the life of all. Soil is in possession of power to cause all things in the universe to live and grow. Soil is God, God is soil. Soil has

self-contained properties and ever-generating and developing properties. Soil has power to raise all things, and it is always active with minerals, organic matters, micro-organisms, and enzymes within. The elements for its activity are sunshine, carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen... In other words, sunshine, carbon, hydrogen and water nurture the mould that feeds micro-organisms in the soil, and they make soil foster the growth of all plants – soil helps all things to grow and it produces all things. That is, human beings are able to live, thanks to soil. Here, we may see the truth of the statement 'Thank the moon, the sun and soil; soil is the mother of all life.' Agriculture is respected because it has its base in soil. Agriculture is a vocation to harmonize with nature, to love soil, get friendly with soil, nourish soil and cultivate soil. This should be the aim of agriculture. Agriculture that goes against the law of generation and development of nature will, quite simply, perish. Prudent application of science to the law of generation and development of nature is the right course to follow. Observe this truth, follow this rule, and certain happiness awaits us. (Shimamoto Kakuya 1975: 161–63)

Shimamoto Kakuya's moral and religious thought

Ōmoto is a new religious movement founded in 1899, inheriting the traditions of Shinto and folk religion. Shimamoto joined the organization, studied the Ōmoto doctrine and was strongly influenced by it. However, in his books and writings in the magazine *Kōso no Sekai*, he states his own moral view and religious view in his own words, although they are not far from the Ōmoto doctrine. They describe the spiritual atmosphere in which his alternative agriculture has been extended. They can be summarized as follows:⁸

Good agriculture means to nourish the source of life, that is, soil; therefore, it should have its foundation in soil preparation. To prepare good soil, the development of good persons is essential. And to develop a good personality, a good spirit must be developed. To develop a good spirit in a person, morality and religious sentiments must be cultivated.

A person cannot live by him or herself. Everyone has a source of life and is able to live because of this. The source of life for all individuals is our parents and ancestors. If we trace our ancestors far back to their origins, we reach God, the origin of all beings. A person's daily life is also supported by the earth and other gifts of this great nature. It is the law of generation and development of the great universe that regulates

the life of nature and humankind. This is the very manifestation of God. We should revere God as the original source of our ancestors and great nature.

Humans must obey the law of nature; we must perform our missions, and endeavor to develop ourselves to be perfect persons. To live a better life according to the law of nature means to coexist with other living things, including other persons. We must not hate and have a grudge against each other, and we must not get angry. We must keep our minds peaceful and pure. If we carry such an attitude through our life, then we can live a happy life. This is not the teaching of a specific religion, but it is the common goal of all religions. Religious self-assertion in favor of one's own God is not desirable.

There is a nationalistic or ethnocentric element in his ideas. Again, the following is my summary of this element.

The above concept and the way of living is a long-cherished Japanese way of life carried over from ancient times. Japan is a country where belief and daily life are kept in harmony and where people live feeling the presence of God in their lives. Japan is a nation with a stronger peace-loving spirit than any other nation of the world. Such a spirit is clearly expressed in the family system respecting the head of the family, and in the ancestor-worship tradition. It has naturally developed through our practices. Being a grain-eating nation whose diet consists mainly of rice and little meat is an indication of peace-loving spirit.

Shimamoto's thought is shared not only by Ōmoto but by many other new religious movements, especially by syncretic Shintoist groups. Nonetheless, not all members of Kōso no Sekai, Inc. are in agreement with this religiosity. In fact, since Shimamoto Kakuya's death, the movement's religious and nationalist aspects have been reduced. But still, as of 1994, about ten percent of the members are estimated to have faith in Ōmoto and it retains a powerful influence within the movement.

AKMs and modern society

AKMs and their interrelations

In this paper, the new concept of 'alternative knowledge movement' has been proposed as a tool for understanding cultural and social

movements that aim to oppose modern knowledge or make up for its faults. AKMs cover many aspects of social life, such as productive, reproductive and other activities. Here, agriculture is taken as an example.

Shimamoto's alternative agriculture has points in common with new religious movements, and faith in Ōmoto by the Shimamoto father and son was the driving force that sustained their passionate activity. It must not be forgotten, however, that Shimamoto developed his movement in collaboration with other AKMs. He knew of a natural food movement that had been in existence since the turn of the century, and he was clearly influenced by it. As illustrated by producing and marketing products containing enzymes, his movement is also intended to be a natural food movement. While engaged in the propagation of microbiological agriculture, he co-organized seminars on health and agriculture with Shibata Sumihiro of Nippon Chōseikai (The Japanese Longevity Society), who advocated a spinal correction therapy. Both AKMs can be categorized as movements respecting a Japanese tradition based on a nature-revering religious concept.

Alternative movements are extremely diverse in kind, and some are even in conflict. They criticize and supplement the defects they find in modern knowledge, and develop their knowledge and techniques at the actual sites of practice, the fruits of which often turn out to have common points. In addition, not a few of the movements collaborated in their evolution, for they have some shared views of nature and the world. In Japan, the common ground for these AKMs was provided by traditional religions including Shinto, folk religions, and new religious movements based on the traditional religions.

AKMs and new spirituality movements

After the 1970s, imperfections in modern knowledge were widely recognized in academia and journalism in industrialized countries, and an interest in alternative knowledge grew. In various academic fields, efforts have been made to review the knowledge that was part of alternative knowledge or religious knowledge and to incorporate it into science. Transpersonal psychology and holistic medicine are typical examples. In Japan, the Society for Mind-Body Science was founded in 1991 and has been engaged in 'scientific research' into 'gi-vital energy' (omnipresent in the universe, including the human body, activated by the art of trained abdominal breathing). While asserting their activities to be scientific, a religious concept is also

included. Therefore, this society is also understood as a new religious movement, part of the religious culture.

These movements applying science to alternative knowledge can be seen as offshoots of new religious movements or new trends in religious culture. In Europe and the United States, they are known as New Age movement; in Japan, 'Spiritual World' (*Seishin Sekai*). It may be said that a new global religious culture has emerged, but in slightly different forms in different regions. The author has named this global trend the 'new spirituality movements and culture.'⁹ In this new religious culture, religious knowledge is not considered to belong to a transcendental dimension away from the perception of nature; rather, it is insisted that divinity can be found in nature, which is the object of scientific perception. It sounds like a revival of nature religion or nature theology.

New spirituality movements often insist that they seek a new kind of knowledge in which religion and science can be in accord with each other. What is called 'new science' or 'New Age science' is an attempt to prove these assertions as concrete scientific achievements. Such assertions and attempts bear similarities to those of AKMs in the recent past. A notable similarity is found in the attempts to seek a perception of nature beyond a modern dualistic and mechanistic view.

In spite of the aspirations of AKMs and New Age science, many of them (recall the example of healing techniques) find difficulty in incorporating alternative knowledge into science as it is. One reason might be that alternative knowledge has elements that do not go well with elements such as accuracy, rigidity and universal validity that modern knowledge aspires. Alternative knowledge tends to depend on a person's holistic intuition of the body and mind, or often it is linked with community life practices. It is difficult to adapt these factors to the rules of modern science. In addition, contemporary science as part of modern knowledge can hardly step outside the framework of the economic and social systems of contemporary society. In particular, knowledge and those techniques that do not respond to the demand for efficiency under a capitalist market economy will not be accepted as orthodox knowledge.

The future for AKMs

Nonetheless, the possibility of alternative knowledge being integrated with the orthodox knowledge system, or replacing modern knowledge, cannot be completely ruled out. Alternative agriculture drew public

attention afresh in the 1970s when concerns about environmental issues were heightened. In some European and North American countries, certain support systems for alternative agriculture (organic agriculture) are being created (Nakamura 1992, Fukushi et al. 1992). Agriculture using chemical fertilizers and agricultural chemicals still enjoys the advantage of supplying less expensive food. When problems such as soil erosion and the safety of food become a matter of grave concern, and when soil fertility and food safety are given priority over economic efficiency, then a greater portion of alternative agriculture techniques may be adopted as orthodox agricultural methods.

A similar indication can be found in the field of health. In Japan, for example, health promotion and medical treatment using acupuncture had long been considered incompatible with orthodox medicine and was practiced as a type of alternative medicine. But as its efficacy has been gradually recognized, a few medical institutions are applying it along with modern Western medicine. There may be other examples of alternative knowledge being incorporated into modern knowledge, hence, becoming part of the orthodox knowledge system.

On the other hand, the rise of something like alternative knowledge in contemporary society must also be viewed in terms of commercialization. Knowledge that has developed as alternative knowledge now has more of a chance of being sold as a commercial product. In such a case, alternative knowledge is separated from its source and is made an object of consumerism. A postmodernist view of the world in which science and religion are combined has much to do with the commercialization of new nature-controlling technologies, and mental and physical controlling technologies.

In this chapter, only one case in Japan was briefly examined. Comparative studies of alternative agriculture and other forms of AKMs in various parts of the world will reveal unknown aspects of the views of nature, life, body, morality, production and nourishment harbored by people in the modern and contemporary world.

later' and 'the people of the region where My teachings spread early.' Corresponding Japanese words are simply *kara* and *nihon*.

13. As to the relationship between *Ofudesaki* and *Kōki*, see Shimazono 1981 and 1982b.
14. In the summary of *An Announcement for the Patriots* there are eight items, the first of which – general remarks on God – is omitted here, for it has little to do with millennialism.
15. Mass pilgrimages to the Ise shrine occurred about every 60 years in the Tokugawa period, giving rise to a folk belief that God gives humanity abundant benefits at this interval. 1928 was the sixty-first year after 1867 when a big mass pilgrimage called *Eejanaika* had occurred.

Chapter 8

1. This chapter is an expanded version of a paper presented in June 1986 at the 34th Congress of the Kanto Association of the Sociology in Hitotsubashi University. It was translated from the Japanese by James W. Heisig.
2. Martin Buber's work is still worth reading in this context (Buber 1923).
3. See, for example, Hunter 1983 and Michaelson and Roof 1986.

Chapter 9

1. The present chapter is based on two previously written essays. See Shimazono and Inoue 1985, and Shimazono 1988b. Also Shimazono 1984 and 1986 deal with related problems. Since I do not treat the concrete types and contents of testimonies in the new religions in the present chapter, the reader is referred to these essays.
2. There may have been an opportunity for talking about conversion in the cult groups (*kō*) of the Pure Land Shin sects, but probably this was not a regular custom. According to Morioka Kiyomi, who made a comparative study of the *o-za* in the Pure Land Shin sect in Noto Peninsula and the *hōza* in Risshō Kōseikai, personal sufferings and troubles are not thematized in the dialogues of faith of the *o-za*, and even if the 'self-awareness of being wicked' is stressed, this remains limited to the conceptual level. Morioka explains: 'If what and who is evil would be concretely pointed out in front of neighbors and conclusions made about someone's ugliness and dreadfulness of heart, one could no longer feel at ease in that place. One might come to hate such people who expose evil and criticize their hypocrisy. The social organization of the village believers who sustain the *o-za* would face dissolution. Therefore, the stimulation of the awareness

of being wicked does not exceed the level of conceptual general theory' (Morioka 1975: 190).

3. See Shimada 1983, esp. pp. 47–50, for such a process as occurring in meetings of the Yamagishikai.

Chapter 10

1. For alternative medicine in the United States, see Andrew Wile 1983 and Robert C. Fuller 1989. For alternative medicine movements in Japan from the 1920s to the 1930s, see Tanabe Shintarō 1989.
2. The following books are recommended for their treatment of a phenomenon similar to AKMs: Roy Wallis 1979 and Kano Masanao 1983. 'Rejected knowledge' in the former and 'popular scholarship' in the latter have much in common with the 'alternative knowledge' mentioned in this chapter, despite some subtle differences.
3. The close relationship of NRMs in modern Japan with folk religions and syncretic religions are described in some detail in Shimazono 1992a.
4. New spirituality movements in contemporary society, closely related to AKMs, are recognized as being close to the orthodox knowledge system in Japan, and they sometimes work in collaboration with nationalism. See Shimazono 1995c and Chapters 15 and 16 in this volume.
5. Shimazono 1992a has presented a perspective for seeing the massive growth of new religious movements in Japan in terms of the multiplicity and popularity of religious groups and deep-rooted folk religions.
6. Reference books for alternative agriculture movements in the West and Japan include Kokumin Seikatsu Center 1981, Tamanoi Yoshiro et al. 1984, Kume Hayami 1984 and 1986, Yasuda Shigeru 1986, and Bruege 1984.
7. More information on Shimamoto Kakuya's life and his agricultural method can be found in the following books: for his life, Shimamoto Kakuya 1984; for his thought, Shimamoto Kakuya 1975; for his agricultural method in the early days, Shimamoto Kakuya 1949 and 1952. For the movement's present agricultural method, see Shimamoto Kunihiko 1987. The description in this chapter is based on these books and information obtained by interviewing Shimamoto Kunihiko.
8. This is a summary of Shimamoto 1975. Incidentally, the concept outlined here has something in common with the 'vitalistic conception of salvation' found in other new religious movements. See also Tsushima et al. 1979.
9. The main characteristics of new spirituality movements are outlined in Shimazono 1992a. For the revival of nature religion (nature theology), see Stephen Toulmin 1982. With regard to the connection between nature

religion and the New Age, an interesting description can be found in Albanese 1990.

Chapter 11

Translated from the Japanese by Jan Swyngedouw.

1. The other types are the conversionist, revolutionist, introversionist, reformist, and utopian sects.
2. My description of the concept of manipulationist sects is based on Wilson 1970 and 1973. An earlier work (Wilson 1967) lists only four types, among which the one then called 'gnostic' corresponds to the manipulationist type.
3. I have dealt with this point in two (Japanese-language) essays: Shimazono 1988a and 1989.
4. Before adopting the term 'therapeutic,' Rieff spoke of 'psychological man.' See Rieff 1959 and Homans 1979.
5. My main sources on Yoshimoto Ishin include Miki 1976, Yoshimoto 1977 and 1983, and Takemoto 1984. The contents of Yoshimoto 1977 are almost the same as those of Yoshimoto 1965.
6. Yoshimoto 1980 contains articles and descriptions taken from newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, and other general publications which speak positively about Yoshimoto Naikan.
7. Yoshimoto 1983 refers to Naikan as 'a way which corresponds to all religions.' Moreover, the idea that Seichō-no-Ie and Hito no Michi Kyōdan are not 'religions' or that they are 'ways corresponding to all religions' has been proposed from time to time.

Chapter 12

Translated from the Japanese by Mark Mullins and Paul Swanson.

1. On Japanese new religions abroad, see the following chapter.

Chapter 13

This article first appeared in the special issue on 'Japanese New Religions Abroad' edited by Mark R. Mulling and Richard F. Young, Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 18/2-3 (June-September 1991), pp. 105-32. It was translated from the Japanese by Edmund R. Skrzypczak.

1. The history of the overseas expansion of Japan's New Religions can be found in summary form in Inoue et al. 1990: 608-57.
2. One exception was Ōmoto. More will be said about this group in the sections below.

3. Most of what follows is based on information I received and materials presented to me when I visited, in summer and autumn 1990, the headquarters of Sōka Gakkai, Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō (Shinseiha), PL, Tenrikyō, and Sūkyō Mahikari.
4. Sōka Gakkai's overseas organizations are known by a variety of names. In this study I shall refer to them all simply as 'Sōka Gakkai,' except for the organization in the United States, which is widely known as NSA.
5. The following description is dependent on Williams 1989.
6. One can obtain some idea of conditions during this period from Yamamoto 1982 and Huang 1989.
7. For a consideration of these features of Brazilian culture and their relationship to features of the religious situation, with a comparison with the United States and Japan, see Nakamaki 1986: 204-28.
8. For a work that presents this point of view, see Shōji 1986.
9. See Seichō no Ie Honbu 1980, Maeyama 1983, and Matsuda 1988 and 1989. Stark and Roberts (1982) point out that sometimes a new religious movement that began in a large-scale society is forced to remain a minor movement there, and so early hopes wither and die, but when it shifts to a small-scale society it reaps unexpected success – that is, supported by many influential members at first, it develops into a powerful, prestigious religion in that small society. The assumption that another religion might have reaped the greatest success in Brazil if it had become the most influential in the Japanese community is not completely groundless.
10. The leader of Seichō no Ie's Brazilian propagation program, Matsuda Miyoshi, has written that 'another unique and absolutely decisive factor in Seichō no Ie's enlightening not only of Brazil but also of the whole world, is the new campaign method of propagation through the written word. There can be no denying that Seichō no Ie's spread to the most distant land from Japan, Brazil, in the very same year Seichō no Ie began in Japan (1930), its spread to the remotest corners of Brazil, and the fact that the Brazilian translation of *Seimei no jissō* was widely diffused and became a pillar of strength, are all due to the power of propagation through the written word' (Matsuda 1989: 331-32).
11. This also has a bearing on what I said earlier: Seichō no Ie, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and Sōka Gakkai have in common the fact that they were founded by men of intellectual ability familiar with history, religious doctrine, modern thought, and scientific statement. This sort of religious group forms a large type within the new religions, standing alongside the 'indigenous-emergent type' that a fairly unlettered founder began from a folk-religion background, and the 'moral-cultivation type' in which popular ideas of character building and virtue come to be linked to a salvation belief – a type that can be called