社会・心理
472 words

Chapter 8

九州大学

The concept of altruism is ready for retirement. 2-1

Not that the phenomenon of helping others and doing good to other people is about to go away — not at all. On the contrary, the appreciation of the importance of bonds between individuals is on the rise in the modern understanding of animal and human societies. What needs to go away is the basic idea behind the concept of altruism — that there is a conflict of interest between helping yourself and helping others.

The word "altruism" was coined in the 1850s by the great French sociologist Auguste Comte. 2-2 What it means is that you do something for other people (the Old French *altrui*, from the Latin *alter*), not just for yourself. Thus, it opposes egoism or selfishness. (1)This concept is rooted in the notion that human beings and animals are dominated by selfishness and egoism, so that you need a concept to explain why they sometimes behave unselfishly and kindly to others.

But the reality is different: Humans are deeply bound to other humans, and most 2-3 actions are reciprocal and in the interest of both (2)parties (or, in the case of hatred, in the disinterest of both). The starting point is neither selfishness nor altruism but the state of being bound together. It's an illusion to believe that you can be happy when no one else is. Or that other people will not be affected by your unhappiness.

Behavioral science and neurobiology have shown how intimately we're bound. 2-4 Phenomena like mimicry*, emotional contagion*, empathy, sympathy, compassion, and prosocial* behavior are evident in humans and animals alike. (3)We're influenced by the well-being of others in more ways than we normally care to think of. Therefore, a simple rule applies: *Everyone feels better when you're well, and you feel better when everyone is well.*

This correlated state is the real one. 2-5 Egoism and its opposite concept, altruism, are unsubstantial concepts — shadows or even illusions. This applies also to the immediate psychological level: If helping others fills you with satisfaction, is it not also in your own interest to help others? Are you not, then, helping yourself? Being kind to others means being (ア).

Likewise, if you feel better and make more money when you're generous and 2-6 contribute to the well-being and resources of other people — as in the welfare societies that, like Scandinavian countries, became rich through sharing and equality — then whoever wants to keep everything for himself or herself, with no gift-giving, no taxpaying, and no generosity, is just an amateur egoist. (4)Real egoists share.

2-7 It's not altruistic to be an altruist — just wise. Helping others is in your own interest. We don't need a concept to explain that behavior. Auguste Comte's concept is therefore ready for retirement. We can all just help each other, without wondering why.

* mimicry : the activity or art of copying the behavior or speech of other people
contagion : the spreading of something bad from person to person
prosocial : helpful and beneficial for other people and society

1 第２段落（Not that ...）では、消え去る必要があるのはどんな考えだと述べているか、40 字以内の日本語で書きなさい。

2 下線部（1）を、This concept の内容を具体的に明らかにしながら日本語に直しなさい。 (九州大・改)

3 下線部（2）の parties の単数形 party の意味の説明として、最も適切なものを１つ選びなさい。 (九州大)

① a social gathering of guests, usually involving eating, drinking, and entertainment
② a group that shares the same political views and participates in elections and government
③ a group of people who go somewhere together or do something together
④ a person or a group of people forming one side in an activity

4 文脈から判断して、空所（ア）に入る英語を３語で書きなさい。

5 下線部（3）を日本語に直しなさい。 (九州大)

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6 下線部（4）について、その理由を日本語で述べなさい。 （九州大）

7 本文の主旨と一致するものを１つ選びなさい。

① “Altruism” is much less appreciated today than in Auguste Comte’s age, so it is time to retire this concept.

② We behave selfishly and cannot help others because we are all born egoists, so the concept “altruism” is not necessary.

③ When he invented the word “altruism” in the 1850s, Auguste Comte knew that it would go away some day.

④ We need the concept “altruism” all the more because we are deeply bound to each other.

⑤ Helping others is in our own interest, so we don’t need the concept “altruism” to explain why we behave kindly to others.

Memo