Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 7 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE
II: *Budo* and *Bushido*, *Kami* and *Kokutai*:
Aikido, Religion & Nationalism

The last column presented a very general view of the impact of World War II on aikido, particularly as it affected the transition from Morihei Ueshiba to his son Kisshomaru. Some aspects of this transition are still unclear, but one major issue for aikido is the extent to which Japan's defeat in World War II caused a revolution in the teaching & learning of what was by then a distinct art, considered to be different from its antecedents. To understand the extent to which postwar aikido did mark a clear revolution, it is necessary to return to prewar Japan once again and examine more closely several ingredients or elements (for want of a better term) of these prewar conditions. We can understand these ingredients as a set of physical and spiritual influences on—even major determinants of—the general business of daily living for the Japanese at that time.

Among these components must be counted the following (at least):

1. The emperor system and the *kokutai*;
2. The Japanese obsession with foreigners;
3. The role of the military, considered as a distinct caste, in government and daily life;
4. Nativism and the mysticism of agriculture;
5. The economic and political context in which Omoto originated;
6. Omoto and ultra-nationalism.

There are probably several more—and several columns could be devoted to each, but the above will provide the main elements of a general picture and after some preliminary 'scene-setting', we will examine each item in turn and consider what these influences would have meant to a man like Morihei Ueshiba. I think it is essential for students of aikido, especially students of aikido who are not Japanese or have not lived in Japan for many years, to make a few mental leaps and try to understand the kind of things—the "mental software", to use Hofstede's term—that someone like O Sensei simply took for granted. It think this is especially necessary for those students of aikido who believe that contemporary problems in aikido can be solved only by going back to a study of Morihei Ueshiba as the 'Source'.

Like the last column, this one is an attempt to flesh out the intellectual and social milieu of the Japan in which Morihei Ueshiba lived. The main political issues here are: What did the Meiji Restoration actually restore? What was democratic about Taisho Democracy? To relate this issue to aikido: what influence, if any, did all the turbulence of the Meiji, Taisho and early Showa Eras have on Morihei Ueshiba's own thinking & training and on the development of aikido, both at the time and afterwards? In particular, how much was Morihei Ueshiba involved at the grassroots level? To what extent did the revolution that coincided with Meiji / Taisho have an effect on his vision of aikido, again, both at the time and afterwards? During the time that Ueshiba was a child and youth, there was a grassroots movement to force the government of politicians to give place to real popular participation in government and offer a better response to the wave of世直し（*yo-naoshi* = better world) movements, that had arisen from the late Tokugawa era onwards. In their own ways, Minakata Kumagusu and Onisaburo Deguchi were prominent members of these movements. Ueshiba was a friend of one and a disciple of the other, yet he seems to have remained completely unaffected by the government measures taken against the latter.

NOTE: This column is considerably longer and more diffuse than usual. In fact, each section is as long as a regular column. Since I do not want to spend too much time away from the main focus of these columns, which is 'Transmission, Inheritance and Emulation', I have put all the sections together into one long general column, rather than devote a separate column to each. I will, however, devote the next column to a more detailed discussion of Thomas Nadolski's doctoral thesis about Omoto.

Essential Background: The Legacy of Meiji and Taisho

The period from the Meiji Restoration till 1945 can be seen as one of increasing government interference in every aspect of the lives of ordinary Japanese. The interference took the form of creating an ideology, in which the latter were expected to participate. Of course, such interference also existed in the Tokugawa Era, but it was exercised in a different way. Perhaps there is some contemporary relevance here. Government inference has never been an issue for martial arts organizations in the US, but there are some countries where the martial arts are heavily regulated by the national government. In fact, I strongly suspect that some aikido federations now recognized by the Aikikai Hombu are expected to contribute actively to the 'ideology' fostered by the government of the country. Until the inclusion of *aikido* under the umbrella of the Dai Nippon Butokukai in 1942, there was very little overt regulation by the Japanese government. However, aikido was a Japanese *budo* and thus expected to contribute to the martial virtue of the Japanese. In 1942 this meant winning the war with the US and Britain and creating the new South-East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere abroad. Neither O Sensei nor the art he created existed in a social or political vacuum.

This section is not intended as a general historical sketch of Japan in this period. There are books that do this much better than I could (details at the end of this column). The period is, however, immensely complicated and it is difficult to keep all the various happenings in one general focus. I think that in order to place the origins and history of aikido fully in a proper historical context, we would need to study the period from 1868, when the Meiji Era began, until 1942, when the tide of the Pacific War was beginning to turn against Japan and Morihei Ueshiba retreated to Iwama. However, of particular interest is the period that more or less begins with Ueshiba's birth in 1883, when the hopes of the Meiji Restoration had already turned sour and the ideology was being fashioned that eventually led to World War II. Morihei Ueshiba reached maturity in this period and was 43 years old in 1926, when the Shouwa Era began (which was the year after the "Golden

(Continued on page 2)

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

Body" episode). Well before this, he had fought in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-5, had met and trained under Sokaku Takeda by 1914, and was training with Omoto in Ayabe from 1920 through the upheavals of the First Omoto Incident. To read historians like Daikichi Irokawa or Carol Gluck, one has the impression of an entire nation preoccupied at all levels during this period with a developing ideology, but this impression is curiously absent from any of the biographies of Ueshiba. (The only references in Kisshomaru's biography are Ueshiba's involvement in a protest against a new fisheries law and with Kumagusu Minakata against a decision to close some Shinto Shrines in Tanabe, after which he apologized for causing his father, who was a town councilor, to 'lose face').

Clearly, the Meiji Restoration marked a transfer of power from the Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu (previously known as Hitotsubashi Keiki), back to the Emperor Mutsuhito. The central role of the Emperor in the Meiji Restoration is well summarized in the following paragraph by Marius Jansen in *The Making of Modern Japan* (I have altered the layout somewhat and numbered the sections):

> *No Meiji leader ever wrote or spoke of what had been accomplished* (by the Meiji Restoration) *without crediting it to the virtues of the sovereign. Mutsuhito was at the center of the plans as they developed; he was protected*
> *(1) from the future politics of the lower house of the Diet by the new peerage,*
> *(2) from the cabinet by the powers accorded by the Privy Council, lord privy seal and imperial household minister,*
> *(3) from civilian interference by the direct command he had over the armed forces,*
> *(4) from Diet squabbles by sweeping grants of land and securities that created immense wealth and independence,*
> *(5) from representative institutions by his prerogatives to appoint the cabinet,*
> *(6) from popular disorder by the ubiquitous presence of his police,*
> *(7) from disloyalty by rescripts that identified his rule with morality and justice, and, no less important,*
> *(8) from himself by a protective screen of officials who spoke and acted in his name and saw in him the ultimate justification for their role*. (Jansen, pp. 412-413).

Thus in one respect there was no restoration: before the transfer and afterwards the Emperor reigned as a deity. This is one of the mental leaps that non-Japanese, especially westerners used to a system of democratic rule, have to make. There were, however, major issues concerning what this divinity consisted in and how the divine power was exercised. The Emperor was always surrounded by advisers, who strove to "ease his mind" and "carry out his will", but the developments of an 'emperor system' later provided a role for people like Onisaburo Deguchi, who wanted to "purify" the "veil" protecting the Emperor, and also for the military, who wanted to do the same thing but by different methods.

Actually, there was a similar problem of transmission and inheritance facing the Meiji restorers to the issue being discussed in these columns: in particular, whether the son was capable of matching the pioneering work of his father. The problem became increasingly acute, as Mutsuhito grew older. It is generally received opinion that the Taishou Emperor was less able than expected to continue his father's role. So Yoshihito quietly sank without trace and Hirohito was appointed regent in his place.

On the other hand, in the towns and villages, Meiji people:

> "*still lived in a fantasy world inhabited by mysterious divine spirits and the coexistence of such fantasies with modern factories was one characteristic of the period. Strange hermits or gods lived deep in the mountains; the women and children were often spirited away from their homes. In old houses there were* kami *called* zashiki warashi *who carried children off to dark places. Everywhere there were woods inhabited by wolves (*oinomori*) or goblins (*tengu mori)."

The above quotation is from p. 20 of *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, by Daikichi Irokawa. This book is a translation of a work written by a Japanese historian. It is one of the few such works in English dealing with the transition of Japanese popular culture from Meiji to Shouwa. There is some relevance here to Morihei Ueshiba. Ueshiba was born in Tanabe, which is a sleepy country town situated on the coast of the Kii peninsula. Directly behind the town is a vast range of mountains, which was the end of an ancient pilgrim route from Kyoto, going back at least to the Heian period. There were two centers of popular devotion, each with a long history: the Kumano (Shinto) shrines and *Koyasan*, the center of Shingon Buddhism. Given Ueshiba's exploits after his return home from military service in 1905, it is highly likely not only that the local townsfolk believed he learned his martial skills from mountain *tengu*, but also that Ueshiba himself also believed this.

1. Revere the *Dead Weight on the Eyes*…
O Sensei in the 'Black Box'

The italicized phrase above was coined by Daikichi Irokawa, after a poem by Kotaro Takamura. Here is the relevant extract from the poem (quoted from p.12 of Irokawa's *The Culture of the Meiji Period*):

> *When my studio burned to the ground,*
> *I came to the Hananomaki in Ooshuu,*
> *There I heard that radio broadcast*
> *I trembled as I sat erect.*
> *Japan stood naked*
> *And men's spirits were in the abyss.*
> *The Occupation army saved us from starvation*

(Continued on page 3)

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

And we narrowly escaped destruction.
At that moment the Tenno came forward
And proclaimed "I am not a living god."
As day followed day
The weight was lifted from my eyes,
The burden of sixty years disappeared at once.
Grandfather, father, mother
Returned at once to their distant Nirvana, and
I breathed freely once again.
After this wondrous release,
There remains but human love.

Irokawa is somewhat biased. His description of the Emperor System shows this quite clearly (op.cit., pp.245-246):

> *The emperor system as a way of thinking was like an enormous black box into which the whole nation, intellectuals as well as commoners, unknowingly walked. Once within its confines, the corners of the box obscured in the darkness, the people were unable to see what it was that hemmed them in. To my mind their fate was more terrible than that of the dissenters who were hanged for treason in 1911; they at least knew the reason why. Like the farmers who starved to death in a Tohoku village in the same period, most Japanese lived and died without comprehending their fate. Their internal fetters prevented them from grasping the illusion that bound them, simply because they themselves had become part of it. The emperor system roused them not only to the murder of Chinese and Koreans in the name of war, but also to the acceptance of a different kind of destruction of their own countrymen—the nihilism responsible for the fate of Sunaga Renzou and Inoue Denzou during the popular rights struggles of the eighties.*

In subsequent pages Irokawa traces the evolution of this 'dead weight' from the myths of the *Kojiki* to the Meiji Restoration and focuses especially on how the Meiji government extended the system to permeate every aspect of Japanese life. The issue here is to what extent there was a real basis for the metaphors: to what extent there was really a black box (or an invisible net, or an all-enveloping gas: other metaphors actually used to describe the emperor system).

A crucial element in the emperor system is the *kokutai* and it is important to have some understanding of this concept. In the years up to 1945 "the eternal and immutable national polity (*kokutai*)", unlike the easily changeable political system (*seitai*), was "the concept of national morality grounded in the rational consciousness and religious psychology of the people", the "spiritual force behind the activities of the state and the principle of national unity". This spiritual force was derived from "the harmonious unity of the ruler and the people, the whole nation in one family under the rule of the emperor, his line unbroken for ages eternal". (Quoted in translation by Irokawa from Tasaburo Ito, *Kokutai kannen no shiteki kenkyu*.) The Catholic notion of a 'mystical body' (of Christ) can be traced to the writings of St Paul. The *kokutai* is somewhat similar, but rather more tangible: the Japanese people are one living body, with the emperor as the center, heart and soul.

The British historian E J Hobsbawm is famous for a book he edited. *The Invention of Tradition* explores examples of a process of invention of supposedly 'ancient' traditions: the creation of Welsh and Scottish 'national' cultures and the elaboration of British royal rituals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There was a counterpart to the last 'invention' in Meiji Japan, with the Meiji Emperor participating in fabricated coronation rituals, with a history supposedly going right back to the days recorded in the *Kojiki*. The early parts of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* record Japan's ancient myths. These texts, which are crucial for understanding the thinking of Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba, were officially believed in the 1930s to be historical fact. (Those interested in this issue should investigate the case of Tsuda Soukichi, a professor at Tokyo University who was convicted of lese-majeste in 1942, the year Morihei Ueshiba retired to Iwama. John S Brownlee is essential reading here: parts of his book read like a crime thriller.) The pre-Yamato myths were collected and written in Chinese, following Chinese literary protocols, by a certain Oho no Yasumaro, who was ordered to do so by the Empress Gemmei. The aim was to legitimate the claims of the Yamato clan to be the real successors of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu and thus to be the legitimate rulers of Japan.

I think it is not so difficult to see how attractive the idea of *kokutai* is here. You take a powerful all-enveloping concept like 'national essence' and then trace its supposed origins to an ancient shaman pre-Empress like Himiko (shamans being the conduits between the human and the divine—so the connection with the Sun Goddess Amaterasu is made immediately available). Then you plot the unbroken succession right down to the present, in this case Emperor Meiji, who spent his time behind the closed doors of the Imperial Palace compound (= shrine), planting & harvesting rice and performing supposedly ancient rituals. You can then argue that there really was an evolution of a central dominating concept that existed right from the earliest times. The unbroken line of emperors was really a central element in a Japanese version of a Jungian 'Collective Conscious'. It really is like Irokawa's 'black box', and attractive because it is full of eternal certainties.

Of course, the abolition of the Emperor's divinity was also a certainty, new and more problematic because it seemed less eternal than the others. Though ordained by MacArthur and the architects of the Occupation, the denial was all the more shattering to the Japanese in 1945 because it came from the Emperor himself, and in a direct but ephemeral way, via the radio. His voice had never been heard before and people sat in *seiza* to hear it. Even this was a major advance on what had gone before, for before the Meiji restoration no commoner was supposed to hear the Emperor or even see what he looked like.

I think that there is no doubt that Morihei Ueshiba entered the 'black box'. It would have been impossible for him not to do so. The issues

(Continued on page 4)

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

are to what extent he did so with his eyes open and what he thought of the size of the box. Ueshiba accepted an invitation to give a demonstration before the Emperor and his discourses are peppered with references to the virtues of *Yamato-damashii*. He taught at various military schools and participated in the teaching at Tenkoku University in the puppet state of Manchukuo. On the other hand, he retired from all these posts in 1942 (which was the year of the Battle of Midway) and retired to Iwama. It has been suggested (by Hiroshi Tada Shihan, in particular) that this retirement was a muffled protest about how the war was being conducted—and this, of course, can be taken in two ways. (I discuss this further in Section 3, below.)

Irokawa's arguments about the flexibility of the box actually tend to damage his own thesis (that there was an enormous and pernicious 'black box', which the entire Japanese population unknowingly entered). Irokawa arges that each of the different segments of Meiji and Taishou Japanese society were in the 'black box', but it is less obvious that they all thought they were in the same box. The 'emperor system' meant different things to different sectors of society and it is clear that the efforts of the late Meiji government to impose a uniform idea of the size and color met with limited success. Accordingly, the Popular Rights Movement invoked the emperor system in its revolt against the government and the government invoked the emperor system in putting down the revolts and hanging the ringleaders. Similarly the *genro* oligarchs invoked the emperor system in their battles with the politicians of the inaugural Diet in 1890 and the military also invoked the Emperor system in ignoring all of the above, as it worked to form a military government. Morihei Ueshiba also invoked the emperor system as the bedrock on which his budo rested. What were the consequences for the future of aikido? Do Ueshiba's expressions of faith in the emperor system, as the basis of his aikido, really matter to us, over seventy years later? For some, the real concerns are the sources of Ueshiba's training and *waza*. So the daily prayers to the *kami* and protestations of devotion to the emperor do not count for much. Others, however, might agree that Ueshiba reached right up to Heaven through his training and *waza*, but are also interested to see how deep his feet were in the muck. For these, I think it is of some significance that there are no traces of *yamato-damashii* or *yamato-kokoro* in Kisshomaru Ueshiba's writings. (I will return to this topic in future columns dealing with Kisshomaru Ueshiba's contribution to aikido.)

2. …Expel the Barbarians

A major slogan in late Tokugawa and early Meiji Japan was 尊王攘夷: *Son-no-jo-i* (*Revere the Emperor; Expel the Barbarians*). It takes a major mental leap to understand the complexities of the Japanese attitude to foreigners. I remember vividly when I first came to live in Hiroshima (and this was as late as 1980) that I was the only foreigner living in my area of the city. So my excursions to the shops were the object of great interest and my Japanese neighbors used to crane their necks to see what the foreign sensei was buying (for it was received wisdom that Japanese stomachs and foreign stomachs were different and that it was virtually impossible for foreigners to consume, much less appreciate, Japanese food). Excursions to the public bath were even more interesting and regularly reduced the male section of the bath to a reflective silence—rather like *mokuso* after aikido practice, broken only by the 'oohs' and 'aahs' of the small boys who came to inspect my nakedness and check out what their dads had told them.

After the Exclusion Policies were put into effect during the Tokugawa shogunate, the number of foreigners residing in Japan was very few. Members of the Dutch trading colony at Dejima were required to visit the Shogun at regular intervals, but they traveled in a convoy and were seen by relatively few Japanese. One of the members of the Dutch mission, Engelbert Kaempfer, wrote a book entitled *The History of Japan*. The title is a misnomer, for it is really a description of Tokugawa Japan, seen through the eyes of one making the 850-mile journey from Nagasaki to Edo. Kaempfer gives a vivid description of the audience with the shogun—and how the visitors were made to perform like zoo animals in front of his court. The American Commodore Perry, whose 'Black Ships' arrived in Japan in 1853, would not tolerate such nonsense and insisted on dealing with the Shogun, and eventually the Emperor, as an equal. Perry, also, wrote an illustrated narrative of his expedition. There is a heavily 'racist' dimension to these accounts. Both sides appear to think that they were dealing with beings at least from another planet, if not from another galaxy altogether.

The immense sensation caused by the arrival of Perry and other foreign representatives from the US, UK and France, is vividly described by Shimazaki Toson in his massive novel *Yoake-mae* (*Before the Dawn*). The Tokugawa shoguns had used the Exclusion Policies against foreigners as a way of keeping their vassals in order, but the samurai from Choshu, Tosa and Satsuma used the powerful threat presented by the foreigners as a way of hastening the collapse of the Shogunate and restoring the role of the Emperor, hence the slogan quoted at the beginning of this section. When the true extent of foreign power was actually realized, these same samurai began to negotiate secretly with these same foreigners to use this power to their advantage, but these secret negotiations never invalidated the second part of the slogan.

I think it hardly needs stating that there were no foreigners in the prewar Kobukan Dojo. Given the requirements necessary to enter the Kobukan and the fact that it opened in 1931, the only foreigners likely to be accepted would have been sponsored by the embassies of countries considered friendly to Japan—and there is no evidence of this ever having happened. Again, some background is needed here.

The prewar Kobukan Dojo was called the *Hell Dojo*. However, note the name: 皇武館 (the Chinese characters mean 'Emperor/Martial/Training place': a dojo dedicated to training under the tutelage of the Emperor). Other 'Hell Dojos' were the earlier Omoto Dojo at Takeda and the *Asahi-Shinbun* Dojo in Osaka. As a "hell dojo", the Kobukan became a Daito-ryu aiki-budo 'greenhouse', where exotic plants were cultivated under extreme conditions. Given the name, it is safe to conclude that this greenhouse was dedicated to the cultivation of *yamato-damashii* by an elite, who were among the most strenuous supporters of the *kokutai*. As such it was a major transit point into the 'black box' (and the fact that there were women members is irrelevant here). Ikkusai Iwata talked of young right-wing military officers meeting in the dojo. These members were in the furthest corners of the box and plotted assassinations of government leaders (see below). It would

(Continued on page 5)

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

have been unthinkable to have foreign members in such a situation.

Kisshomaru Ueshiba speaks at one point of a Korean being taught by Sokaku Takeda, but I think it is safe to state that the first foreign deshi to enter the postwar Kobukan Dojo (renamed the Aikikai Hombu) was Andre Nocquet, a judoka from France, who arrived soon after the war and one of whose main tasks was to give aikido demonstrations to foreign embassies, in an effort to drum up support for the barely functioning Tokyo dojo. However, this was after the war, when things were fairly desperate. Kisshomaru Ueshiba was the head of the Tokyo dojo, but when he was not working for a securities company as a サラリマン（*salaryman*: another major category of postwar Japanese society, along with 'office ladies'), he trained and taught in Iwama, where there were no foreign deshi.

I know from conversations with Kisshomaru Ueshiba himself that O Sensei had to be persuaded to open up aikido to foreign participation. Kisshomaru's thinking was more in tune with postwar Occupation attitudes, but he himself had no doubt that aikido had to spread among the victor nations, if only to convince himself that his dedication to aikido in Tokyo through the war was worthwhile. (Actually, the general question of the relations between the Tokyo Dojo and the other centers of aikido around Japan immediately after the war, especially Iwama, is of great interest and will be the subject of a future column.)

There was another famous foreign *deshi* in the early postwar Hombu, an ex-US marine named Terry Dobson. Terry was a deshi who lived in the dojo and there is a famous picture of this lumbering giant, sitting in *seiza* under the eye of a bespectacled O Sensei. (I gather that the picture was actually staged and that Terry had no idea of what he was reading.) He appears in demonstrations, seemingly intended to show that aikido also works on big Americans. After O Sensei died in 1969, Terry was 'frozen out' of the Hombu and returned to the United States.

Years later, I was forcibly reminded of Terry Dobson's predicament. Yamaguchi Seigo Sensei had finished a seminar in Hiroshima and we were having lunch. The conversation turned to O Sensei and my own teacher rather bluntly stated that, had we been living in prewar Japan, I would never have been able to go anywhere near the old Kobukan, for it was absolutely out of bounds to foreigners. There was a very awkward pause and everyone round the table wondered if I would take offence. The awkwardness was dissolved by Yamaguchi Sensei himself, who laughed and noted that I was really a 'Japanese' now, since I had lived there for so long. However, I have not forgotten the awkward pause, when I felt like a sole foreigner, surrounded by many 'hostile' Japanese.

There was also a very small group of foreigners who commuted to the Hombu Dojo from around 1960 onwards. This was a time when Morihei Ueshiba had begun to emerge from Iwama and make periodic visits to Tokyo and other places where his older deshi lived. Terry Dobson occasionally accompanied him on these visits. Thus, it would be too simple to state that O Sensei was 'anti-foreign'. He might have been when he was in the prewar Kobukan: the Koubukan in the 1930s was simply not a suitable place to make a practice of admitting foreigners. However, after the war, Kisshomaru Ueshiba was in charge of the Tokyo Hombu and was developing an effective postwar teaching system—of a martial art that was fundamentally Japanese, but also highly suitable for foreigners to practice. Note the nuance here. Since aikido was a Japanese martial art, there was an unspoken corollary that it was best taught by Japanese—and this has always been the case in Japan. I suspect that Terry Dobson was actually the last foreign deshi to have been accepted as a potential professional Hombu instructor and I know for a fact that there are very few general aikido dojos in Japan that are run by foreign instructors. The Hombu is not yet ready to share 'ownership' of aikido in this way.

3. The Long Arm of the Military Caste

When the Emperor Meiji bestowed the Constitution on his subjects in 1880, there was an important provision, unnoticed at the time, that had a major effect on Japan's subsequent militarization and slide to war. The military, by which I mean the higher-ranked career officer class, had direct access to the Emperor and came to play an increasing role in ensuring that he had the 'correct' advice, as the *Genro* oligarchs and successive prime ministers appeared increasingly less able to do so. Of course, the military were an essential part of the emperor system because, together with the police, they had the central role of protecting his person and maintaining his prestige at home and the separate role of extending his power overseas.

The military were, therefore, a distinct caste within Japanese society, generally set over and against the other centers of power. This was not so unusual, given their pedigree. As the inheritors of the samurai, they were also heirs to the samurai virtues, summed up in the word *bushido* (武士道： the way of the warrior). However, once again, some context is necessary.

A few years ago, a Dutch journalist wrote a seminal book about Japan. Karel van Wolferen's *The Enigma of Japanese Power* caused such controversy that a Japanese edition came out and was denounced by some of those at whom it was targeted. The book's subtitle, "People and Politics in a Stateless Nation", gives some indication of the overall message. The message was that no one basically governs Japan: it is a nation, but not a state. It is composed of separate, but connected, power centers, such that no single one is in overall charge. However, something similar was also true in the Meiji Era and as the Meiji Restoration progressed, several power centers were established, but only the military were eventually able to overcome the others and rule unopposed—with the disastrous consequences that are still felt today.

The *Genro*, oligarchs from the nobility and the samurai clans who had engineered the return to Imperial rule, were closest to the Meiji Emperor and ran the 'government'. The *genro* were assisted by a small army of 'career' bureaucrats, who were the actual heirs of the samurai class in the Tokugawa Era. Tokugawa samurai became no longer able to exercise their assumed military role and thus became officials, dedicated to combining an increasingly ossified 武（*Bu*) with an increasingly sterile 文（*bun*), while living and working under the eyes of the daimyo's senior officials. When the samurai class was abolished, some of the ex-samurai became bureaucrats in the Meiji government, but many others did not.

The life of Sakamoto Ryoma is of interest here. Sakamoto was a Sat-

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

suma *ronin* (master-less samurai) who left his domain and went to study *kenjutsu* in Edo/Tokyo. He became an expert swordsman and decided to assassinate a major political figure, named Katsu Kaishu (*kaishu* means something like 'navy boss'). Sakamoto went to his house with a colleague, but could not do the deed. He was overwhelmed by Katsu's persuasive rhetoric, and became his deshi. He then joined in plotting the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate, but was assassinated before he could see the fruits of his labors. One of my graduate students wrote his Master's thesis on Sakamoto. His actual thesis was that Sakamoto was the first samurai who was expert in *bujutsu* to use negotiation, and not force, as a new form of conflict resolution. He did this with both Saigo Takamori and also the western powers with which the Choshu/Satsuma clans came into contact. Sakamoto, like Morihei Ueshiba, was an unusual individual—a loner, who did not conform to the usual patterns. The fictional lives of other 'nonconformists', who did not make the same general waves as Sakamoto or Ueshiba, are well depicted in Yoji Yamada's three *jidai-geki* movies (details below).

Eventually, as a result of the Charter Oath, the Meiji Emperor bestowed a constitution on his subjects (mainly with an eye to maintaining Japan's 'face' as a developed nation, over and against the 'barbarian' western powers). This Meiji Constitution allowed voting by a very small proportion of the population—those who paid a required level of tax based on the land they owned, and led to the creation of a two-tier parliament. Thus was established the fundamental distinction between 'government' and 'politics'. 'Government' was the selfless business carried out in the name of the Emperor—the disinterested nourishment of the *kokutai*, whereas 'politics' was the much more sordid business carried on by 'politicians', who campaigned for election among the feckless 'masses', who, of course, could not be trusted with any responsibility whatsoever. Both groups were considered much of a much-ness, but the politicians elected to the lower chamber of the Diet were actually wealthy farmers and merchants—probably people like Koshiro Inoue and Zenzo Inoue, the latter being Morihei Ueshiba's brother-in-law. Yoroku Ueshiba, Morihei's father, was a member of the Tanabe town council for many years and, judging from Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography, seems not to have suffered much economically as the years went by and the economic problems facing the farming community multiplied. The historian Daikichi Irokawa has devoted much research to showing that they took the political responsibilities incurred by the Meiji Restoration much more seriously than is commonly supposed and were unusually distraught to find that these responsibilities were spurned by the government.

Nevertheless, it is possible to see the vacuum created in the 'government' by the feuding of the various power centers, who all professed to "ease" the Emperor's "mind" and "carry out" his "will". The military class saw itself as uniquely placed to do this most effectively. That it was able to do so is due to other factors: the existence of factionalism (派閥主義 = *habatsu-shugi*) in Japanese social culture, certainly since the Meiji Restoration, and, as a corollary, the large measure of freedom given to relatively young military officers who were in the same faction as their seniors. Thus, from around 1931 till 1942, a time exactly coterminous with the early history of the Koubukan up till Morihei Ueshiba's departure for Iwama, young officers from various *Sakurakai* (cherry blossom associations) plotted or actually carried out assassinations of political figures with relative impunity. They were punished, but also praised by their superiors for their 'spirit' and 'sincerity'. They were thought to have an unusually 'pure' idea of the kokutai and to be unusually 'selfless' in their defence of it. Like the radical *shishi* (Men of Honour = determined samurai) such as Sakamoto Ryoma, who had been committed to imperial restoration, using terror and murder if necessary against foreigners and their pro-foreigner allies, these radicals justified their acts by invoking the call to political action that the Ming dynasty scholar Wang Yangming had articulated. We have it from Ikkusai Iwata that some such 'cherry blossom' meetings were actually held in the Koubukan dojo, which, given the situation of the dojo, could not have been possible without Ueshiba's knowledge. What does this tell us about Ueshiba's attitude to the military and contemporary politics?

In an essay on the Kobukan period, Stanley Pranin notes that there is some "ambivalence" about O Sensei's actions—and that this is all we can state in the absence of further evidence. So the issue is going to turn on the balance of probabilities: what was most likely to have been the case, based on the kind of analysis that Bourdieu would make. Clearly, Ueshiba was sufficiently patriotic to join the army, but after he returned from the Russo-Japanese War, he rejected the suggestion that he should go to the war college and become a career officer. A couple of decades later, after he had met Onisaburo Deguchi and become his bodyguard and the teacher of his dojo in Ayabe, Ueshiba met Isamu Takeshita and other eminent naval officers. He moved to Tokyo at Takeshita's request and it is clear that, in Tokyo as in Ayabe, he ran a very elitist and exclusive dojo. In no way was he doing Daito-ryu for the masses. In one sense this is irrelevant, since one could argue that there was no way to practise Daito-ryu in any other fashion. It would be interesting to compare Ueshiba's criteria for accepting uchi-deshi with Sokaku Takeda's criteria for accepting his own students (most of whom were not uchi-deshi, at least in the sense understood in the Kobukan). The point I am making here is that Morihei Ueshiba was a very patriotic Japanese, but considerably to the right of the political spectrum: thus the "ambivalence" is skewed somewhat.

Nor did O Sensei have any qualms about teaching in the various military schools after the Second Omoto Incident. I mean by this not that he was a pacifist (which would have been unthinkable), but that there was no clash at all between whatever political views he might have had—and the contemporary evidence I have presented suggests that there was a vast range of political views that he could choose from—and his obvious support for the military caste. In fact, he appears not to have had any political views at all and the unease with the military that he expresses below springs from another source altogether.

With respect to Morihei Ueshiba's attitude to the military, we might profitably start to answer this question with a quotation from O Sensei himself. Kisshomaru Ueshiba gives a version of this in the first section of his biography (the section runs from p. 34 to 41 of the Japanese text and the quoted section is from Hideo Takahashi's *Takemusu Aiki*, pp. 125-128). Kisshomaru's version is shortened in the English summary to be found on the *Aikido Journal* website. The quotation is from a section entitled, "My Method of Aiki Training" (the kanji for *training* is 修業 and really means *full ascetic training*), and the quotation presents Morihei Ueshiba's own situation and feelings about the Japa-

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

nese military and World War II. It is not without problems.

The Takahashi extract begins with an experience had by Ueshiba at 2 am on December 14, 1940 (very rough translation my own). Up to this point,

> "*My body was full of power, versatile, free of any obstacles and innumerable* waza *arose as if naturally. If we were to count them, they would be in the tens of thousands. If I had a sword, I could also freely teach people this way of the sword. Why so many and so powerful* waza *arose was, I supposed, a mystery. However, I also had the feeling that continuing in this fashion was not right*."

Ueshiba had a vision of the guardian deities of aikido, which "entered and consumed" him and commanded him to do *misogi*.

> "*I wondered at the enormity of the experience and the doubt whether it was really true made me ill. I was sick to the verge of death for about one year. In the depths of this illness I was enlightened*."

Ueshiba goes on to note that his illness, which lasted for one year, did not prevent him from working for the Japanese military government.

> "*However, being ill did not mean that I was not doing anything. From before this experience I had to serve the army and navy. On occasion I had to serve at the War Office (陸軍省) at the request of the Office of Military Affairs (兵務局), the (Army) Minister (大臣). Furthermore, I gave service to men of high rank (高貴な方々), I was called to be an adviser (顧問) at universities here and there, and was appointed a member of a review committee (審議委員) for the Konoe Cabinet up until the Tojo Cabinet. I also served as an adviser (顧問) at various other locations.*" (The second & third Konoe Cabinets lasted from 1940 until 1941, to be replaced by the Tojo Cabinet, from 1941 until the fall of Saipan in 1944. In Kisshomaru's version of the quotation, the "review committee" is called the Budo Review Committee, but the reference to budo is missing from Takahashi's book.)

It is clear from this paragraph that Morihei Ueshiba was a pillar of the military establishment. However, he goes on to express some unease:

> "*However, the* keiko *of the army & navy generally had魄 as the nucleus. In other words, the nucleus was the material thing and the purpose was fighting on all fronts. With the slogan 'One cut, one death' they forged ahead in search of honor. It was regrettable, but there was something of a lack of true loyalty*"(which could be inferred from the passage to lie in Morihei Ueshiba himself, as well as in the military) "*and there seemed to be many people in the army who could not understand. Of course, there were distinguished military people, and many loyal and brave soldiers fought to a degree that induced tears. However it is not the goal of aikido to kill people. Its purpose is not fighting and quarreling. Aikido is not concerned with魄, but with 魂.*"
>
> (Both characters are read as *tamashii* = spirit, but my kanji dictionary explains that on death, 魂 goes to heaven, whereas 魄 goes to the earth. The translation in *Aikido Journal* gives *body* vs. *spirit*.)

Morihei Ueshiba then explains the goal of aikido training, in terms based on the earlier explanation of what he saw in his vision.

> "*The object of aikido is to give praise, in this world, to the complete excellence of the Great Universal Deity, from which the entire universe has originated. It is to serve the大道 (great way, or fundamental moral principle), with the responsibility of giving 愛育 (tender loving care) to the whole of creation. Put another way, aikido has the role/duty of preserving / maintaining / defending / carrying out, for all beings regardless, the manifestation of the working of the Great Universe, seen as one whole*."

As one can imagine, in 1940 Morihei Ueshiba did not exactly nail these colors to the mast and sing out this message from the rooftops. In any case, it is doubtful whether anyone would have understood it. Moreover, it would have been impossible for Ueshiba alone to achieve any major change in Japan's military activities, for the reasons given earlier in this section. There were factions and a dynamic to the flow of events, of which no one was in overall control. However, 1940 is the year in which Ueshiba himself indicates the major change and to me the extract shows a man who, like Hanzo Aoyama (see below, in the next section), was torn between his love of country & emperor and the vision he had of his fundamental duty.

This, at least, is how I see it. On the one hand, Ueshiba was a major figure in a military government that was in the middle of a major war in Asia, and was to bomb Pearl Harbor one year to the day, almost, after Ueshiba **had** the vision recounted above. Accordingly, this military machine had to be involved with killing, in as efficient as manner as possible, and Ueshiba was spending much time at various military schools teaching his pupils exactly how to do this. Ueshiba is full of praise for soldiers who were doing this in a brave manner. On the other hand, the statement that killing people is not the goal of aikido is expressed very starkly above and if Ueshiba really felt this as early as 1940, it must have been a very heavy burden for him.

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

The material that appears in Takahashi's book is actually a collection of talks that were published in the Byakko Shinko-kai magazine over a period of four years, from June 1957 till March 1961. In this respect they are similar to the other discourses of O Sensei, collected from the Aikikai's *Aikido Shimbun* and recently translated under the title of *The Secret Teachings of Aikido*. Thus there is no indication from the material quoted above whether O Sensei actually thought this in 1940 (before aikido actually received its official name), or whether his statements are reflections made afterwards, in view of what happened later in the war. This latter impression is strengthened somewhat, since later on in the very same discourse O Sensei mentions the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which had yet to happen. However, Ueshiba is keen to place the failings of military 稽古 (training) firmly in the context of his own very personal view of 終業 (training, but with a much more ascetic flavor than 稽古). It is clear that this view is extremely personal, but is expressed in terms of 'before' and 'after' his 1940 visionary experiences.

In Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography, on the other hand, the Takahashi extracts are in the chapter entitled 「技、神に達す」 (*Waza, kami ni tatsu = Waza, Reaching up to God*), in the last section entitled 「道統不変」 (*Doto fuhen = No Change of Direction*) and the chapter aims to show that O Sensei never deviated from his life's mission, which culminated in the building of the Aikikai Hombu Dojo. Kisshomaru prefaces the Takahashi extract with a discussion, also with quotes claimed to be from O Sensei himself, aiming to show that O Sensei was very concerned at the course of the war and that his dissatisfaction was the main cause of his withdrawal to Iwama. The metaphor that Kisshomaru uses for this withdrawal is 神隠れ (*kami-kakure*: deity in hiding) and the origin, of course, is the withdrawal of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu into the cave as a result of the antics of her brother Susa-no-o, recorded in the *Kojiki*.

4. *The Answer Lies in the Soil*:
Agricultural *Budo* and the Japanese Essence

Daikichi Irokawa, mentioned above, studied Meiji culture at grass-roots level. The focus of his research was the damaging effects of post-Meiji modernization on the poorer farms and on the farm workers displaced from these farms who found jobs in industry. The research is based on caches of documents found in abandoned farmhouses in mountain villages in the Musashi district (to the west of Tokyo). According to Irokawa, the farmers imagined that they were playing a central role in the process of *yo-naoshi* and held many meetings to thrash out their views on a proper constitution. Irokawa's wrath is directed at a government that sacrificed the farmers to the economic interests of the developing *zaibatsu* (industrial conglomerates) and was not afraid to murder the same farmers at the slightest hint of protest.

(NOTE: For those who wonder about the title of this section, it is taken from a famous BBC radio broadcast, popular when I was a boy. The programme was called *Round the Horne* and will be familiar to the more senior UK members of this discussion forum, who perhaps also used to listen to *Two-way Family Favourites* [with Jean Metcalfe, the wife of Cliff Michelmore] and *Take It from Here*, with Jimmy Edwards.)

In his book, Irokawa cites the case of Hanzo Aoyama, the central character in Shimazaki Toson's *Before the Dawn* (*Yoake-mae*). Hanzo took over from his father Kichizaemon the position of village headman (*honjin*) of Magome, a tiny village and a checkpoint on the Kiso Road, which is part of one of the routes between Edo / Tokyo and Kyoto. Hanzo also became the manager of the checkpoint. In the Tokugawa Era, the requirements of *sankin kotai* ensured that there was a constant succession of travelers along the post road, on their way to and from Edo, and if these travelers were feudal *daimyo*, they had to be correctly greeted and also looked after properly. So there was a constant need for porters and others, whose hiring would also mean that they had to interrupt their regular work in the fields.

Thus, Magome in Tokugawa times was a prosperous, paternalistic and peaceful community and Hanzo's father was the linchpin of this community. After the *sankin-kotai* system was abolished, however, there was less need for regulating travelers and so the fortunes of the old post house villages gradually declined. The abolition of the samurai class in the Meiji Restoration also entailed some form of economic compensation for their loss of status—and livelihood. This added to the cycle of economic depressions that had a major effect on those Magome farmers who were not able to survive on the small plots they owned, and so became tenant farmers, in constant dept to the wealthier farmers who had been able to buy up their land. For Irokawa, Hanzo Aoyama's village was a perfect fictional example of what had actually happened in real life.

I read Shimazaki's *Yoake-mae* (which is based on Shimazaki's own family experiences) after reading Irokawa's book and was struck by its general relevance to the cultural background of Morihei Ueshiba's own life and upbringing. Ueshiba's father Yoroku was a wealthy farmer, but his wealth does not seem to have diminished very much during the turbulent period discussed by Irokawa. Thus, when his 'rootless' son returned home from his military service, Yoroku was able to build a dojo for him and invite a renowned teacher to teach him martial skills. Later on, when his 'rootless' son went to Hokkaido in 1912, Yoroku is said to have given him 10,000 yen, which was equivalent to 20-30 million yen at the time Kisshomaru wrote his biography. (It should be noted here, however, that there is some dispute about who gave this money. Stanley Pranin has provided strong evidence that it was provided by Zenzo Inoue, who was actually living in Hokkaido with his wife Tane, who was Morihei Ueshiba's sister.) After Ueshiba returned home (Yoroku had already died), the 'rootless' son stayed in Tanabe, but, far from taking over the family business, he lived the strange life of a man who was thought to consort with mountain *tengu*. Kisshomaru Ueshiba says very little in his biography about the economic circumstances of the Ueshiba family at this time, except to mention that when they moved to Ayabe in 1920, Morihei Ueshiba purchased enough rice to last them for three years. Clearly, Yoroku Ueshiba left an inheritance (which, according to Kisshomaru, Morihei is supposed to have squandered, as a result of his martial arts activities) and the indication in Kisshomaru's biography is that this was in land. This land would need to be farmed by real people, but, again, there is no evidence whatever that Morihei put the skills that he had honed in Hokkaido to any practical use on the family landholdings. After leaving

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

Ayabe for Tokyo in 1927, the next occasion for Ueshiba to do some real farming was in Iwama in 1942.

Hanzo Aoyama is a follower of Hirata Atsutane, the *Kokugaku* (National Learning) scholar. As a disciple, Hanzo occupies himself with studying Hirata's writings concerning the need to purify Japan from Chinese influences and especially the need to safeguard Japan from the increasing numbers of foreign 'barbarians' demanding that the country open its ports to foreign trade. He also visits other Hirata disciples and contributes to maintaining the Hirata 'network'. The book contains lengthy discussions of Hirata's doctrines, but it is also clear that Hanzo does not understand these doctrines very well. He does his best, but the most important thing for him is his membership of the 'network' and the feeling that he really is doing something of value in the pursuit of *yo-naoshi*, as the Meiji Emperor and government envisaged this.

Hanzo's role as a disciple of Hirata, however, marks him out as eccentric in the eyes of his neighbors (since he also lacks the ability to function as effectively as his father) and he is eventually dismissed from his post as village headman. Just after this, Magome receives a visit from the new Meiji Emperor, who is on one of his visits around the country. There is a poignant episode in which Hanzo is prevented by his family from greeting the Emperor, for fear that he will do something unusual, as a result of his devotion to Hirata. (Immediately prior to the Emperor's visit, he had been found attempting to burn down the local Buddhist temple, run by a priest who was also an old family friend.) Hanzo ends his days in poverty, as a deranged prisoner in a shed just behind the family home, unable to accept the fact that the reforms embraced so much by Hirata have come to nothing.

Irokawa cites Hanzo because he is a follower of Hirata and is therefore untypical of the general popular sentiment concerning the Meiji Restoration. I mention Hanzo to raise the question: to what extent were the avowed followers of Hirata and members of 'new' religions like Omoto considered 'typical' of the general population. In some sense Kisaburo Ueda was just as unusual as Hanzo, and spent some of his life as an *inari-kyoshi*, before meeting Nao and becoming Onisaburo Deguchi. (An *inari-kyoshi* is someone popularly believed to be possessed by a fox and who could exorcize people from the neurotic spirits thought to have taken possession of them.)

At the outset, we need to make a distinction between nativists like the disciples of Hirata and members of Omoto, for the numbers and pedigree are somewhat different. However, one of the common features relating to O Sensei can be expressed as a question: to what extent was the lifestyle espoused by O Sensei, first in Ayabe and later in Iwama—farming and budo in a perfect mutually nurturing balance, typical of a pattern common to nativism and Omoto? Certainly, Hirata and the successors in his school stressed the great importance of farming as a way of ensuring that Japanese understood and valued their unique essence. (Some successors of Hirata adapted his message somewhat and stressed the importance of labor in general and also the conduct of ordinary affairs. Suzuki Shigetane, for example, taught that *kannagara no michi* implied living with nature in the simple performance of their daily activities. After all, since the *kami* were everywhere, even the most minute and insignificant activity was subject to their scrutiny. However, this would apply to mine workers as wall as farmers.)

Omoto, also, stressed the importance of farming in the Arcadian paradise, as a way of manifesting the perfect harmony between the visible world and the world of the *kami*, of course, always under the benevolent rule of the Emperor. Much of Ueshiba's life was devoted to farming, so it was quite natural that he would add to the mix another element of the Japanese national essence—budo.

Nevertheless, there is more than a touch of the romantic about this. Farming as a Japanese virtue was often extolled in campaigns by the government of the time. The Tokugawa shogunate bound the farming community to the soil, with no escape, since the rice produced by the farmers constituted the wealth that measured the power and ranking of the daimyo. Hirata's emphasis on the importance of going back to the soil and preserving Japan's unique essence has to be seen amid a general background of famines and peasant revolts, which disturbed the *Pax Tokugawa* as much as it upset the harmony of the Meiji *kokutai*.

There are still books in print claiming that Japanese have a unique view of nature (which nowadays their government strives to hem in with concrete), because they are a group-focused peasant culture based on the production of rice, whereas the vast undifferentiated category of non-Japanese (notably westerners and especially Americans) do not have any view of nature at all, because they are a individual-focused hunting culture. The 'peasant soul of Japan' is still a very powerful motif, but the great value of Irokawa's research is that he takes the motif and examines it for what it also was in the late Meiji period: a slogan for maintaining control over a dissatisfied and very vulnerable section of the population, at a time of severe economic depression. Irokawa documents the severe effects of this economic depression, as it affected Japan in the decades from the 1880s till the 1930s: decades that precisely span Morihei Ueshiba's life until he was 50. The Ueshiba family, however, seems to have been relatively insulated from such hardship, so much so that one wonders to what extent the famines and fall in prices were felt in Wakayama and Tanabe.

5. *Renewing the World*: The Phenomenon of New Religions

Biographies of Morihei Ueshiba tend to be episodic, rather like the scenes in a Kabuki play. The drama starts in Tanabe, with his education in a Shingon Buddhist *terakoya* & rootless life after his military service and then suddenly shifts to Hokkaido, where he is almost single-handedly forming a rugged farming community. The discovery of Sokaku Takeda follows, with the lengthy training sessions, and then he is off again, back to Tanabe, to see to his sick father's wellbeing. The plot veers off yet again here and Ueshiba goes miles out of his way, to Ayabe, to meet a certain Onisaburo Deguchi, who, it is supposed, will be able to do something about his father. The visit is fruitless in one sense, since his father is already dead before Ueshiba finally arrives back in Tanabe, but then the scene dramatically changes once more and off he goes again, this time with his family, to Ayabe, to be Deguchi's bodyguard—and the rest, as they say, is history.

Except that it is not history. It is biography—hagiography, really, and organized to expound a certain truth about the subject. Sunadomari's biography tails off after his main point has been made: that the most

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

central fact about aikido was Ueshiba's meeting and training with Onisaburo Deguchi. Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography, on the other hand, takes us right to the end of Ueshiba's life, but stops after a different point has been made: that the most central fact about aikido was Morihei Ueshiba's establishment of the Aikikai, run by his successors, 'his line unbroken for ages eternal'. What is less emphasized is the situation in late Tokugawa Japan, that gave rise to Deguchi and Omoto and many other 'new' religions, and also the common features shared by these new religions.

All were responses for a general felt need for *yo-naoshi* (rebuilding/changing the course of the world). Several were founded by illiterate women who were living in extreme poverty and who had visions, achieved 'enlightenment' and began to write prophecies threatening dire misfortune unless things changed for the better in some undefined way. A recent estimate suggested that ten-percent of the present-day population of Japan are 'believers' in new religions, like Omoto and Byakko Shinkokai. (I have put 'believers' in quotation marks because it is not quite clear what exactly is believed, for in most cases there are no 'creeds' or statements of doctrine, as in Christianity, and so it is difficult to distinguish believers from mere 'adherents' or 'fellow-travelers'.)

Yo-naoshi still has much contemporary relevance in Japan. A few months ago I was visited by a distant neighbor. She runs a Japanese inn and several aikido visitors to Hiroshima have stayed at this inn, on my recommendation. She was a member of a new religion, called the Tenseishinbikai (天聖真美会), and wanted me to join this religion. She gave me a glossy brochure, in English, and answered my questions. If my neighbor had been a member of Omoto, her answers would not have differed so much. Basically, the world was in a terrible state and someone in the human community needed to take drastic action. The Founder of the religion had had a vision and had achieved enlightenment. In the vision he saw the universe as one and also saw that his mission was to bring the world into unity. The glossy brochure had pictures of another person, the Foundress, clad in exotic robes, in the center of a vast concourse of people—all looking comfortably middle-class: just the type of people with the means and leisure to participate in a postwar Japanese 'new' religion. When I stated that I already had a religion that catered pretty well for all my spiritual needs, she answered that this new religion would actually enable me to practice my own—or any—religion much better. It actually 'perfected' traditional religions.

The explanations given in the brochure were eerily familiar, from the explanations I had previously read about Omoto. The object of worship was an all-inclusive god, named Miroku O Mikami-sama, who is Miroku-bosatsu in Buddhism and Jehovah/Our Lord in Christianity. There was the founder, named Meishu-sama, who is "the concrete object of our worship: God's pivot word, through which all miracles take place". From 1926 to 1955 this person was "in human form" and led an active life with all his thoughts and deeds in total conformity with God, so that he was able to see clearly the past, present and future. He had a revelation on June 15, 1931, "which was unknown in the history of mankind", according to which the Night civilization would be overthrown and the Day civilization created. However, there was also another person, the woman who actually started the Tensei-shinbikai, who was convinced that she had been "saved" by the miracles of Meishu-sama. This person, named Kyoshu-sama, did what she thought that anyone saved would do in the circumstances, namely, create a large religious organization, with the aim of establishing "a Paradise on Earth and the creation of a New Civilization". This implies "no sickness, poverty or conflict, a world of happy people" and a "perfect harmony between religion, art and science". What is the way to achieve this happy state? By joining this religion and "purifying physical and spiritual bodies, so that one achieves complete health with the disappearance of 'strife-consciousness' and the purification of all thoughts".

I was profoundly skeptical of my neighbor's explanation. As it happened, she could see that she was not talking to a potential convert and we amicably parted. In the same way I am profoundly skeptical of Omoto, for I personally do not believe that Omoto will ever bring about a Paradise on Earth and that if O Sensei ever embraced such a hope, it was a vain hope. I think it essential that such a religion is seen in its contemporary cultural context. Joseph Kitagawa summarizes this context on pp.214-225 of his book (cited below).

Briefly, according to Kitagawa, Omoto was a response to widely-felt popular dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the late-Tokugawa and early Meiji regimes. The architects of the Meiji Restoration envisaged a theocracy, in the form of State Shinto, but this did not take account of the religious aspirations of ordinary people and of the divisions within the Shinto tradition. (Those who wonder in astonishment that a martial art like aikido, dedicated to 'harmony', should be torn apart by politics and 'doctrinal' splits should look at Japanese religion, in the light of the remarks made above about Japanese factionalism. By comparison, aikido is a model of 'harmony', as the Japanese practice this.) In the Tokugawa era, all households in Japan were compelled to belong to a specific Buddhist temple. However, this, in turn, did not take into account the religious aspirations of the people, especially those in the lower strata of society, who went outside the 'official' channels of communication with the divine. Kitagawa makes a point that is worth quoting at length:

> *In a sense, spontaneous religious movements that erupted among the masses during the late Tokugawa period and early Meiji era were closely related in basic motivation to the phenomenon of peasant uprisings. Underlying both phenomena was the motif of* you-naoshi*, based on the realization that something had gone wrong in the order of society. Thus, for example, when injustice or too heavy taxation was imposed on the peasantry by the authorities, the peasants in desperation rose up in arms. But when they sensed the impossibility of rectifying the injustices by means of uprisings, the masses tended to look for solutions for their misfortunes in trance-inducing religious acts, such as the* yo-naoshi odori *(dancing to change the world).* (p. 215. Incidentally, Kitagawa adds a note, to the effect that the *yo-naoshi* dancers often invaded the homes of the wealthy and demanded food, drink, clothes and money.)

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

When the general population realized that the Meiji Restoration meant nothing more than the replacement of feudal absolutism by imperial absolutism, the new religious movements that promised a change in the course of the world (*yo-naoshi*) blossomed. The result was that, in addition to State Shinto, the Meiji government recognized no less than thirteen groups, called Sect Shinto. However, Omoto was outside these groups and was not recognized by the government. Omoto had to go under the umbrella of other, recognized, groups in order to function. Again, Kitagawa is worth quoting at length (p. 222)

> *We have noted earlier that the phenomenal growth of Japan after the turn of the century did not improve the lot of the masses. In desperation the peasants and workers resorted to "rice riots" in 1918 and labor strikes in 1919-20, but their efforts were in vain. Sensing that neither modern civilization nor an industrial economy would alleviate their distress, many people turned to messianic or healing cults. It was reported in 1924 that there were 98* ruiji-shukyo *(quasi religions). The number increased to 414 in 1930, and in 1935 there were over one thousand such quasi-religious cults practicing incantation, divination, fortune-telling and healing. Important among them were Omoto-kyou, Seicho-no-iye and Reiyu-kai.*

Omoto was created by a shamanistic peasant woman and built into an organization by Kisaburo Ueda, who married the Foundress's daughter and eventually became Onisaburo Deguchi. Nao Deguchi followed the *you-naoshi* tradition when she stated that, "this world is on the brink of collapsing into a muddy field and human beings are on the brink of total extinction. Let the people of the world repent! For there shall be a Change in the World for the ushering in of a New Age." Kitagawa then makes a comment that carries implications relating to Morihei Ueshiba. Whereas Nao considered that the divine mystery had been obscured by the ignorance and selfishness of the privileged classes, towards the end of World War I, the cult grew rapidly among peasants and people in small towns, but also among government officials and military officers (p. 222-223). Kitagawa sees no inconsistency here, but it suggests that the original rawness of Nao's message had been diluted somewhat. What was the attraction of Omoto for someone like the Asano brothers, or Morihei Ueshiba, for that matter? What did such people find attractive in a cult that increasingly fell out of favor with the government?

Part of the reason lies in the inadequacy of Kitagawa's analysis. The fact that my neighbor's Tenseishinbikai also firmly embraced the need for *yo-naoshi* shows that this yearning for a New Age is still alive and well over a century later, but also that the yearning need not be confined to the poor or underprivileged classes. Shimazaki Toson's Kanzo Aoyama was a wealthy farmer and village headman, but the whole point of his embrace of Hirata Atsutane's nativism was that this, too, answered to the generally felt need for *yo-naoshi*. Ueshiba's life was a similar response. However, Ueshiba's *yo-naoshi* was more firmly couched in Deguchi's own highly individualistic terms of reference and less as a political message addressed to the government. In fact, it is debatable whether Ueshiba's embrace of Omoto led to any political activity on his part whatsoever, the Mongolian expedition notwithstanding. Of course, the mere fact of Ueshiba's participation in this expedition might be taken as evidence of direct and active political involvement, but I think this would need to be corroborated by other evidence.

6. Omoto and the National Essence

In the previous column we discussed the question of O Sensei's supposed designation as a Class ‘G' War Criminal. The allegation was made by Gozo Shioda and strenuously denied by Kisshomaru Ueshiba. As we have seen, the reference in Stanley Pranin's *Aikido Journal* interview with Ikkusai Iwata to young officers of *Sakurakai* radical groups meeting in the Koubukan Dojo leads to the question of Morihei Ueshiba's involvement with radical groups, by virtue of his relations with the military and his membership of Omoto. The biographies of Ueshiba present him as a fanatically ‘pure' individual, possessed of immense charisma, but completely innocent of any involvement in the political turmoil that swirled around him, especially as Japan marched to war. In these biographies Onisaburo Deguchi, also, appears as ‘pure' and charismatic, but there is slightly more uncertainty about his political involvements. Reading Thomas Nadolski's doctoral thesis, therefore, is like entering a different world.

Nadolski presents a sustained analysis of the two suppressions of the Omoto organization, the first in 1921 and the second—much more devastating, in 1935. These two suppressions roughly mark the beginning and end of Ueshiba's close involvement with the Omoto organization. Nadolski's aim in examining Omoto is to study Irokawa's ‘black box': the revised emperor system, as it developed from the late Meiji period to the years of the Pacific War. Nadolski primarily focuses on the efforts of successive governments to impose their own narrow view of the emperor system on the various ‘power centers' including the Diet, the military, the radical elements of left and right, religious groups like Omoto, and an increasingly cowed and resentful general population.

The picture that Nadolski presents of Onisaburo Deguchi certainly includes the element of immense charisma, but also includes a fascinating blend of political astuteness and political naivety. Nadolski argues that Deguchi was neither a charlatan nor mad; he was a brilliant religious leader, firmly convinced of his mission to spread the enlightened rule of the Japanese Emperor throughout the world and especially in Asia. This enlightened rule would be based at the Omoto headquarters in Kameoka and would use as its main instrument Deguchi himself, who believed he was the reincarnation of the deity Susa-no-o no mikoto, and interpreter of the *Ofudesaki* of Nao Deguchi, the servant of another important deity, named Kuni-toko-tachi. The Emperor's rule would restore the balance in the universe between the visible world and the world of the *kami*, which (according to one reading of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*) had been disturbed when Susa-no-o had been expelled from Heaven and the Imperial Grandchild impeded from carrying out his sacred mission of ruling the "Central Land of the Reed Plains" (= Japan).

Omoto was suppressed in 1921 because the government felt threatened

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

by its growing size and its capable use of the mass media to influence the general population. Since Omoto presented an alternative view of the emperor system, the government could not ignore it. Not long after this suppression, Deguchi went on a mission to Mongolia in 1924, in the company of a Chinese warlord. The mission was a kind of crusade, complete with marching banner, dedicated to creating Omoto's version of the Japanese Imperial theocracy. The mission ran foul of local Chinese politics and Deguchi precipitately returned to Japan, having been rescued from a Chinese firing squad by the Japanese Consul in Mukden. The ensuing publicity attracted the attention of ultra-nationalists like Mitsuru Toyama and Ryohei Uchida, who wanted to use Omoto as a means of attracting collaborators with their own Imperialist aims in Asia.

After the first suppression, Deguchi changed Omoto doctrine in accordance with changing political circumstances. From 1921 till the second suppression in 1935, Deguchi dictated the massive *Reikai Monogatari*, which was based on the weeklong trances he experienced when on Mount Takanuma, many years before. Deguchi also made extensive use of the popular press to publicize Omoto's message. The *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun* was a mass-circulation newspaper, begun in 1925, which became increasingly strident in support of radicalism and the right wing. In 1935 Omoto fell foul of the government once again, basically because Deguchi had backed the wrong horse. His newspapers were strident in their support of the young radical officers who planned political assassinations and were backed by their seniors in the *Kodo* (Imperial Way) military faction (the same young officers who met in the Kobukan Dojo). However, Deguchi did not realize that the other faction, the *Tosei* (Control) faction, had gradually become more dominant within the military and found the radicals—and Omoto—a noisy irritant in their own plans for total war.

I had intended to examine Nadolski's thesis in some detail, but, because this column is already very long, I will postpone this discussion to a future column. It remains to consider Morihei Ueshiba's position in Omoto and, in particular, the extent to which Ueshiba was affected by the political leanings of Omoto, as argued by Nadolski.

As I have stated above, Morihei Ueshiba's active membership of Omoto more or less coincided with the period sketched above. Ueshiba first met Onisaburo Deguchi in 1919 and moved to Ayabe in 1920, not long before the first suppression. He was an active member up to the second suppression in 1935, but avoided arrest. In some respects Ueshiba appears to have been more politically astute than Deguchi, for he escaped relatively unscathed from the storms constantly breaking out over his teacher. Like Deguchi, Morihei Ueshiba was a man of immense charisma, possessed of a gift that made his words and acts "breathe with an intensity that many people found inspiring". Those are Nadoski's words, applied to Deguchi, but they apply equally well to Ueshiba However, it needs to be stated quite clearly that there is a major conflict between the biographies of Ueshiba and Nadolski's study.

Both Kisshomaru and Sunadomari strongly suggest that Ueshiba was a close personal friend and servant of Deguchi, intimately involved with all aspects of Omoto organization. Nadolski, on the other hand, mentions Ueshiba only once and includes in his thesis no reference whatever to the place of budo in the Omoto organization. It is clear that there was a gradual distancing between Ueshiba and Sokaku Takeda, as he developed his own views on budo. The distancing between Ueshiba and Deguchi is stated in the biographies to have taken place as a result of the second suppression in 1935. In my opinion it started earlier, but was a more gradual process. It was also a process of distancing in a different relationship. It is clear from works like *Reikai Monogatari* that Onisaburo Deguchi provided Morihei Ueshiba with the concepts he needed in order to explain to himself how he saw his budo training. Deguchi gave him an intellectual template, in which he was also able to include his earlier training in Shingon Buddhism. Ueshiba was indeed a disciple of Deguchi, but he was also his intellectual equal. In any case, the circumstances of both in the latter part of the period under discussion, from around 1927 to 1935, would have made it more difficult for the two men to have met on a daily basis. I will return to this topic once more in the next column, when I consider Nadolski's thesis in more detail.

Conclusion: From Ueshiba Father to Ueshiba Son

Daikichi Irokawa's book is a study of popular protest movements, particularly from the farmers in the countryside. In his thesis Nadolski raises the question of why ordinary people did not resist more strongly the move towards militarism—or fascism, as the Japanese interpreted this. Nadolski does not answer the question, except to note that intellectuals were attracted to Omoto in large numbers during the period from 1920 and 1921, but immediately left when Deguchi was arrested and began to compose *Reikai Monogatari*. I myself think the reasons for this are quite complex and arise from factors like: the vertical structure of Japanese society, which has never been conducive to coordinated popular protests on a large scale; the guild-like features of the Japanese educational system, with its emphasis on rote learning by the receivers of what is handed down by the donors—and on unsystematic ‘stealing' by the few who have the *nous* to do so; and the almost ‘genetic' tendency to form factions that define their existence by means of the perceived differences from other factions.

Thus, I think that a protest against a new fisheries law and the protest organized by Kumagusu Minakata against shrine consolidation (from 1906 till 1921) were the only popular protest movements that Morihei Ueshiba was ever involved in. When he met Onisaburo Deguchi and joined Omoto, such opportunities for protest were right there, in front of him, but he appears never to have joined in Deguchi's overtly political activities. Ueshiba conceived his mission in life in much more personal terms, appropriate only to himself, and, though he might well have retired to Iwama as a result of his unease with the policies of the Japanese military, this unease remained just that: unease, and it never affected his lofty vision of the emperor system and his role in realizing this system. To judge from the *Takemusu Aiki* discourses, Ueshiba conceived this vision in the same cosmic, but ethnocentric, terms as Deguchi. He firmly believed in the absolute superiority of the emperor system to all other forms of government and held this belief in common with many of his less-educated and less-traveled fellow countrymen, who indulged in the same cultural self-worship, through lack of any objective basis from which to judge their own circumstances. This unreflective ethnocentrism postulated the cultural superiority of the Empire, its people, its institutions, and its way of life, and expressed

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

itself in terms of sharing Japan's ancient and ageless spiritual treasures with the less fortunate people of the world. So Morihei Ueshiba was firmly and unashamedly in Irokawa's ‘black box'.

Daito-ryu, Aiki-budo and aikido were never really involved in any prewar popular protest movements and the same is true of postwar aikido in Japan. Aikido is regarded as a pillar of Japanese society and is in no sense ‘counter-cultural'. In some respects this is different from the impression I have of some aikido groups abroad. For example, a group like *Aiki Extensions* is actively involved in using principles it believes are intrinsic to aikido to achieve major political changes—rather like an aikido *Greenpeace*. In Japan aikido is nowhere to be seen in popular movements dealing with world issues and the martial arts are conspicuous by their silence with regard to peace issues here in Hiroshima. Two young Japanese who were kidnapped in Iraq a few years ago suffered strong popular condemnation on their release and return to Japan. The general attitude was that they were foolish for exposing themselves to unnecessary danger. Issues of idealism and the duty to help those in need simply did not arise.

I should state that this column has been more of a personal intellectual odyssey than the others, written for my own benefit as much for the benefit of Aikiweb members. I have tried to portray Morihei Ueshiba more firmly in a cultural context than his biographers have tended to do. The portrayal is of a very complex character, but still very firmly a man of his time. To see how the Pacific War was such a watershed for aikido, let us revisit the components listed in the first part of this column.

1. The emperor system and the *kokutai*

Morihei Ueshiba fully espoused the emperor system and the *kokutai*, believing that his country had to be in the vanguard of the civilizing mission of aikido to the world. There were two setbacks to his vision. One major setback was the Second Omoto Incident, but this did not affect Ueshiba's vision of aikido. The other, major, setback was the changing circumstances of the Pacific War, leading to Japan's defeat. After the war, however, all references to the ‘divine' Emperor and *kokutai* disappeared from postwar Japan and from postwar aikido also. Thus, when Ueshiba emerged from Iwama, aikido as he had known it had changed considerably—and there was nothing he could do about it. Even the training regimen had changed.

2. The obsession with foreigners

There is no trace of any anti-foreign sentiments in Morihei Ueshiba's published discourses, but the fact remains that no foreigners trained in the Ueshiba Dojo in Ayabe or in the Kobukan. There is no evidence that this was intentional; it was due more to the force of circumstances, especially political circumstances after 1931. After the war, Kisshomaru Ueshiba made the decision to spread aikido outside Japan, in order to show that there was still something of value in postwar Japanese culture. However, foreigners were—and still are—seen as a kind of international bonus, an ‘add-on' to a martial art that, in its spirit and binding concepts, is considered fundamentally and essentially Japanese.

3. The role of the military, considered as a distinct caste, in government and daily life

I have discussed Morihei Ueshiba's involvement with the Japanese military in some detail. Kisshomaru was rejected for military service and so this involvement, too, disappeared. In postwar Japan, great care is taken to ensure that one of the largest and best-equipped military forces in the postwar world is never called an army and there is much national angst when these Self-Defence Forces are called upon to support military missions overseas. However, the military itself is still considered something of a distinct caste and there is still a strong aikido presence. Aikido training tends generally to be tougher, rougher, ‘meaner' and more martially focused than in the typical general dojo in Japan.

4. Nativism and the mysticism of agriculture

Morihei Ueshiba always preferred to call Iwama his ‘home', rather than Tokyo, but the whole ethos of aikido and farming has been quietly abandoned. Some shihans have occasionally expressed a hankering for budo and farming, but the realities of budo in postwar Japan really make this an Arcadia. For modern Japanese, prewar nativist agriculturalism has been replaced by postwar *kokusaika* (= ‘internationalization'), as Japan struggles to be a respectable ‘postwar' nation, able to stand head & shoulders with the WWII victors and with China. For some, however (including older aikido practitioners), this ‘internationalization' is a veneer, covering the remains of the old prewar certainties.

5. The economic and political context in which Omoto originated

This, of course, has changed and postwar *you-noashi* movements in Japan nowadays focus on spiritual ‘impoverishment' in the face of rampant economic progress. Aikido is similar and in his speeches the present Doshu inevitably praises the ‘ever-growing' numbers practicing aikido (of course, in Japan, but—as an added bonus, also throughout the world), as certain evidence of the ‘good' that is being wrought by the art in some undefined way. *Nature* is a part of this work and also *ki*, but aikido no longer has the task of ordering the Universe. In addition, avatars are somewhat frowned upon: one was enough.

6. Omoto and ultra-nationalism

This, too, has all but disappeared. Omoto has reincarnated itself as a religion of world peace, as this is understood in Japan, and aikido has links with Omoto only because of the Ueshiba family. However, the martial arts in Japan still have a definite right-wing flavor and some aikido shihan still write about the mission of budo to return Japan to its spiritual essence under the rule of the Emperor.

Reading:

Some of the material given for the previous column is also relevant here. Marius Jansen's massive survey of Japan from the Tokugawa Era till the present is a good foundation on which to build (Marius Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan,* 2000, Harvard U P/ Belknap). Andrew Gordon's history covers the same ground, but on a smaller scale

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610

(Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 2003, Oxford U P). These two works can be supplemented by a vast number of more specialist works. Karel van Wolferen's book is a study of present-day Japanese politics, but the foundations were laid in the period covered by this column (Karel van Wolferen, *The Enigma of Japanese Power* (1988, 1993, Tuttle). The affair of Tsuda Soukichi is discussed by John S Brownlee, whose work is a sustained meditation on the effects of government interference in supposedly 'disinterested' historical scholarship (John S Brownlee, *Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945*, 1997, Tokyo U P). Carol Gluck's book is a study in the 'invention of tradition' in the Meiji period (Carol C Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*, 1985, Princeton U P. See also Eric Hobsbawn & Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1983, Cambridge U P). Jansen's book on Sakamoto Ryoma is a study of an important figure in the preceding period (Marius Jansen, *Sakamoto Ryoma and the Meiji Restoration* (1994, Columbia U P). Shoichi Watanabe, of Sophia University, was the doyen of believers in 'the peasant soul of Japan' (Shoichi Watanabe, *The Peasant Soul of Japan*, 1989, Macmillan). I have made extensive use of Daikichi Irokawa's study of the Popular Rights Movements and the consequences of the government suppression of this movement. This is the core of Irokawa's work, but he covers much more ground (Daikichi Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, 1985, Princeton U P). Irokawa's citations of Shimzaki Toson's works revealed further dimensions of a world I had entered only sporadically, namely, Japanese popular literature in the late Meiji / early Showa periods. Reading this literature in Japanese is not an easy task, but doing so is very good preparation for dealing with Morihei Ueshiba in his own language (島崎藤村, *夜明け前*, 1969, 岩波文庫; translated by William Haff as, *Before the Dawn*, 1987, Hawaii U P). In another way, equally good preparation for dealing with Morihei Ueshiba in his own language are the two biographies by Kisshomaru Ueshiba and Kanemoto Sunadomari (植芝吉祥丸, *合気道開祖植芝盛平伝*, 1998, 出版芸術社; 砂泊兼基, *合気道開祖植芝盛平伝「武の真人」*, 1981, 2007, たま出版). There is a vast literature covering Japanese religion. Joseph Kitagawa is uneven in quality, but gives an adequate survey. The works in English on the Omoto religion need to be supplemented by works in Japanese and this is the value of Nadolski's doctoral thesis (Joseph M Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 1966, Columbia U P; Thomas P Nadolski, *The Socio-political Background of the 1921 and 1935 Omoto Suppressions in Japan*, 1975, U of Pennsylvania PhD Dissertation, University Microfilms).

Finally, going off at a slight tangent here, I would like to recommend several films that depict Japanese life in the late Edo and mid-Showa periods. First, the *jidai-geki* films of Yoji Yamada (*Tasogare Seibei, Kakushiken: Oni no Tsume*; *Bushi no Ichibun*) are very good at depicting the wretched conditions of the lives of low-ranked samurai in the late Edo Era, conditions that fueled the Meiji Restoration, but which did not really improve with the abolition of the class after this restoration. However, it is important to realize that Morihei Ueshiba was not a samurai. He came from a family of wealthy farmers, who formed the second tier of the four-fold *shi-nou-kou-shou mibunsei* (status system) of the Tokugawa Era. He needed an introduction from ex-samurai Yoshida Kotaro, in order to meet Sokaku Takeda in Hokkaido. Nevertheless, the economic circumstances of the Ueshiba family were far superior to that of the low-class ex-samurai. Secondly, the conditions of the Japanese military in World War II are depicted in three recent films: *Otokotachi no Yamato*, *Letters from Iwojima* and *Kaabee*. The first depicts the lives of youths who were conscripted to serve on the famous battleship during its final voyage. The *Yamato* was built in Kure, near Hiroshima, and university colleagues of mine had fathers and uncles who went down with the ship. The second film depicts the lives of ordinary Japanese soldiers who fought in the famous battle. Incidentally, this battle, and also the sinking of the Yamato, took place quite some time after O Sensei had retreated from Tokyo and retired to Iwama. Closer to the time when O Sensei retired to Iwama is *Kaabee*, by Yoji Yamada. This film, less satisfactory than the three mentioned above, tells the story of a man who was arrested by the Thought Police and who died at their hands in 1940/1941.

=

Peter Goldsbury (b. 28 April 1944). Aikido 6th dan Aikikai, Professor at Hiroshima University, teaching philosophy and comparative culture. B. in UK. Began aikido as a student and practiced at various dojo. Became a student of Mitsunari Kanai at the New England Aikikai in 1973. After moving back to the UK in 1975, trained in the Ryushinkan Dojo under Minoru Kanetsuka. Also trained with K Chiba on his frequent visits to the UK. Moved to Hiroshima, Japan, in 1980 and continued training with the resident Shihan, Mazakazu Kitahira, 7th dan Also trained regularly with Seigo Yamaguchi, Hiroshi Tada, Sadateru Arikawa and Masatake Fujita, both in Hiroshima and at the Aikikai Hombu. Was elected Chairman of the IAF in 1998. With two German colleagues, opened a small dojo in Higashi-Hiroshima City in 2001. Instructed at Aiki Expo 2002 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Article available online at: http://www.aikiweb.com/forums/showthread.php?t=14610