Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 9 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE
III: Deguchi, Ueshiba and Omoto:
Part 2: The Second Suppression

This column continues discussion of Morihei Ueshiba and the Omoto organization, with the main focus on Thomas Nadolski's Ph.D thesis, submitted to the University of Pennsylvania in 1975. I will continue to discuss the thesis chapter by chapter (marked by the numbered sections below), with some general comments at the end. As I stated in the earlier column, the numbered chapter headings are a peg on which to hang a wider discussion. Much of this discussion will summarize, even quote, events as Nadolski recounts them, but where he gives his own views, or where I disagree, this will be made clear. As stated earlier, the main aim of this discussion is to consider Nadolski's research as a backdrop for Morihei Ueshiba's changing relationship with Onisaburo Deguchi and the Omoto religion.

4. The International Period: 1921-1927

Onisaburo Deguchi was arrested during the first suppression and released on bail on 17 June 1921, after serving 126 days in prison. After a brief discussion of the changing political scene from 1921 to 1927, Nadolski devotes the fourth chapter of his thesis to the Mongolian Adventure, Omoto's contacts with overseas religious movements, and then gives his own analysis of Deguchi's character. His analysis is of interest here because of the obvious similarities between Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba.

Mongolia

The background to Japan's uneasy friendship with the United States and Britain, cemented by the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921 and 1922, was the chaotic state of China, which was torn by civil war between rival warlords who controlled individual provinces. There was, however, a crude balance of power, with no warlord being able to build up sufficient strength to destroy his rivals (p. 121). Japan had special interests in Manchuria and thus had a special interest in keeping China as weak as possible.

Onisaburo Deguchi was convinced by his recent negative experiences with the Japanese government that Japan was not yet ready to be the foundation of Omoto as the world's new spiritual realm. An Omoto follower named Tsutomu Hino had previously traveled from Korea through Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, to India. Hino advised Deguchi that Omoto would have a better reception among people who had stronger shamanistic religious traditions. On February13, 1924, Deguchi secretly left Japan, with Morihei Ueshiba as one of his few companions (though this is not mentioned by Nadolski), and traveled to Mukden. Before he left, Deguchi explained that his purpose was to establish a Divine Kingdom that would extend the influence of the Emperor throughout Asia. Nadolski states that, "he sought to demonstrate by special action his allegiance to the restored emperor system and he also proposed to make himself the agent of its extension" in Asia (p. 128).

Kyotaro Deguchi states in his biography that Onisaburo had some 'omens', which led him to decide to make the journey. On February 12, 1921, Deguchi witnessed, "in one corner of the sky the crescent moon and Venus emitting a strange light". In December 1923, Deguchi saw the sun, moon, and stars shining in the sky. Finally, on February 12, 1924, the day before the party set out, Deguchi again saw the elliptical moon and Venus shining in the mid-day sky.

> "*Onisaburo sensed that the same extraordinary phenomenon appearing in the mid-day sky on the same date three years later was no trivial matter. The time had come for him to make up his mind and fulfill his great aspiration, and in order to urge him to action, Heaven had brought about these omens*." (*The Great Onisaburo Deguchi*, p. 126.)

So, with Venus as their guide, Deguchi and his companions set out. This is not the place for a discussion of internal politics of China or Manchuria, but the real reason for Deguchi's journey to Mukden was a meeting with Chang Tso-lin, a warlord who, with Japanese military and financial aid, had detached Manchuria from the Chinese government's control and was attempting to extend his power as far as possible. The reason for this expansion was to defeat a rival warlord, named Wu P'ei-fu, who was based in northern China. In Mongolia, the object of Chang's intentions, people were supposedly seeking a new charismatic, shamanistic, leader, who would develop a Mongolian theocracy. Chang had a trusted associate, named Lu Chan-k'ue, who was closely associated with the Japanese advisors who were providing funds for the undertaking. Lu met Deguchi and agreed to take the Omoto leader on the expedition to Mongolia. After a second meeting with Deguchi, Lu announced that he had become an Omoto 'believer' (his conversion possibly being eased by the 250,000 yen that Deguchi had brought with him) and that the "Northwest Autonomous Army", would be a "spiritual army". Thus, Deguchi left Mukden in March 1924 and marched towards Mongolia at the head of a "rough band of marauders" (Nadolski's term), but which Deguchi himself believed was a 'crusading army', marching behind a holy banner. Lu provided the banner, which displayed a sun, moon and star: symbols of a new cosmic order.

Deguchi actually believed that his crusade into Mongolia marked the beginning of the *parousia*, the second coming of Christ. In retrospect, perhaps he should have done his homework and read up on the history of the medieval Christian crusades in Palestine. If he had, he might have realized that things could well end in disaster, for he had not considered the practical implications of setting up such a theocracy. Even worse, he seems to have believed that merely having the lofty intention ("*God wills it!*") was sufficient to transform it into reality. Deguchi had the two titles of *Generalissimo* and *Dalai Lama* and Nadolski notes that the second title was totally inappropriate, the Dalai Lama being the deeply revered leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

We need not dwell long on the disaster that did indeed take place. At some point Lu decided to give the army a new name, the *Inner and*

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Outer Mongolia Independent Army (with Deguchi's approval) and this upset Chang Tso-lin very much. Chang refused to send any more supplies to the army and Lu had to return to Mukden. On their arrival, Chang arrested the Japanese leaders and had the Chinese leaders shot. Since he depended on the Japanese for supplies and money, however, Chang accepted the intervention of the Japanese Consul at Mukden and so Deguchi, Ueshiba and the others were summarily returned to Japan. They arrived amid a huge wave of publicity.

Onisaburo Deguchi's Character

At this point Nadolski considers Deguchi's character and motivation. He suggests that Deguchi can be seen as (a) a charlatan; (b) a madman; or (c) a "genuine religious leader, with an intense feeling of personal mission" (p. 131-132). It is curious that he does not seriously consider the possibility that Deguchi was really a combination of all three.

(a) Nadolski quickly dismisses the first possibility, basically on the (extremely dubious) grounds that so many obviously intelligent and educated people followed him. "One wonders," Nadolski asks, "whether it would have been possible for a charlatan to deeply inspire so many followers". I think that Nadolski puts the question in terms that are far too simplistic and that one needs to look more closely at the cultural background here—which Nadolski does elsewhere, but not here. Many educated and intelligent people also followed Shoko Asahara of Aum Shinrikyo, despite the overwhelming evidence that he was a charlatan. Aum Shinrikyo suffered a suppression that was similar in intensity and effectiveness to those of Omoto, but the organization still exists today (though with another name) and is led by one of Asahara's closest followers.

Even today, millions of Japanese people spend much money buying slimming 'aids' or even lucky charms, of completely unproven value. They accept much the same logic as that of the '*Ten thousand dogs can't be wrong!*' pet food adverts, because the dogs all 'choose' the same dog food. I have been a member of my local police *kyogikai* (advisory committee) for some years and get to hear all the latest crime statistics. One scam is very popular. The fraudster telephones a family, claiming to be a son in trouble with the police, or a local tax official alleging tax evasion, or a husband who has just had an 'serious' accident, and demands that the family pay a large sum of money, in order to prevent the situation becoming much worse. The family member, usually the panic-stricken wife or mother, then goes to the bank and makes a large cash transfer and the fraudsters are laughing all the way to the (usually different) bank. My question, how it is possible for someone to be married long enough to have a teenage son, yet be unable to recognize the voice of this same son, or his father, was regarded as irrelevant—and indeed it is, in some sense, for the large cash transfers are incontrovertible evidence that people still believe that the fraudsters are telling the truth. The scam is so widespread that the law has now been changed and it is no longer possible to make large cash transfers to another party by cash machine.

Nadolski cites Deguchi's ostentatious lifestyle, and the fact that he enriched himself and his family in the process of building his organization, as plausible grounds that he was a charlatan. He also cites a contemporary source as evidence, one Nakamura Kokyo, who wrote a study of Omoto and concluded that Deguchi was a fake, but Nadolski quickly dismisses this, on the grounds that the source was unreliable, since Nakamura was paid by the government to justify the actions taken to suppress the organization.

Nadolski states that, "the testimony of those who lived closest to Onisaburo is the greatest evidence of the sincerity of his motives". Nadolski acknowledges the support received from Omoto in researching his thesis, but it is odd that he never made any contact with the family of one of Deguchi's strongest supporters. He seems not to have included the Ueshiba family among these (or made any contact with Kisshomaru)—not that this would have changed his opinion. Nadolski accepted that Deguchi was not a charlatan, meaning someone who was a fake and knew that he was a fake, on the strength of those close to him who believed he was not.

(b) Nadolski considers the second possibility, that Deguchi was "mentally deranged, affected with schizophrenic notions and delusions of grandeur." He admits that the descriptions of his visions, and delineations of his background and destiny, are strong evidence to support this proposition, but dismisses these on the (similarly dubious) grounds that Deguchi had a "genuine" charisma (Nadolski does not, unfortunately, pause to consider how the genuine product differs from the counterfeit variety):

> "*He exhibited a genuine charismatic gift which made his words and acts and even the organizations he created breathe with a religious intensity that large numbers of people in modern Japan found comforting and inspiring.*" (p. 133.)

Presumably, Nadolski means that the huge effects on many people are what made the charisma genuine. However, the last part of the sentence has an importance that Nadolski does not seem to see, at least in this context. It can be argued that Deguchi answered to a particular need that was felt at the time. Meiji / Taisho / Early Showa Japan was in the grip of a *yo-naoshi* fever—an epidemic, even, and there were many other leaders who responded with a similar charisma to Deguchi's. Some were even his disciples and broke away. Consequently (because of the "genuine" charismatic gift), Deguchi:

> "*gave vitality to the Omoto organization in all stages of its development. Inspired by his personality, the sect flourished. In periods when it was deprived of contact with its charismatic leader, Omoto languished."* (ibid.)

Nadolski admits that

> "*the greatness found in inspired religious leaders, and aspiring world conquerors as well, is rooted in an overwhelmingly confident self-image which is in some sense parallel to symptoms observed in schizophrenic individuals. In Deguchi, however, the*

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> *megalomania and charisma were joined to produce a personality who suited the religious needs of large numbers of people.*" (p. 134.)

(c) Thus Nadolski finally opts for the third possibility, that Deguchi was a religious leader. He adds that this possibility is not taken very seriously by many Japanese who had contact with Omoto, that Omoto doctrine is derided by "thoughtful and educated people", and, indeed, that the very term 'new religion' has connotations of being false, artificial and vulgar. He puts this down to the "high esteem" that Japanese accord to "traditional religious movements". He discounts these negative attitudes, on the grounds that Omoto "represents a repetition of the age-old process which was observable at the beginning of all the world's genuine religious movements." Nadolski explains this by means of the 'code' concept that he discussed in his introduction.

> "*From their own experiences of difficulty, religious leaders have always developed codes to answer the spiritual needs of the people around them. These codes are communicated to a wider audience and may become the foundation for a new culture if widely adopted.*" (p. 135).

He quotes Anthony Wallace on the process of religious conversion:

> "*The prolegomena to the mystic experience must be as with the shaman, a profound sense of dissatisfaction with one's secular identity, a feeling of anxiety or fear, a desperate sense of need to be saved before being damned by some final disaster. The path to salvation therefore requires the abandonment of the old self. The achievement of salvation is experienced…as a deep sense of confidence and release form fear in the certainty of divine benevolence and concern.*" (Wallace, p. 152.)

Nadolski concludes by giving three stages of conversion: (1) a period of extreme personal trial; (2) a period of personal reassessment and spiritual awakening which aids the individual in reorienting his approach to life; (3) an enduring sense of religious satisfaction and personal contact with divinity. (p. 136.)

One problem here is that the above stages of conversion are not exclusive to specifically religious leadership. With respect to aikido, Morihei Ueshiba certainly experienced all three stages and it is unfortunate that no one ever told Nadolski about him or suggested that he study Ueshiba's life, in order to broaden his research on Deguchi. According to Nadolski, Ueshiba would indeed count as a genuine 'religious leader'—except that he himself avowed that he was not: he never called himself a leader and often stated that aikido was not a religion.

This is some indication that Nadolski appears to ignore both the particular cultural circumstances in which the "established" religions operate in Japan and also the particular circumstances in which the "new religions" actually appeared—and continue to flourish nearly a century later. By "established religions", Nadolski presumably means Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity, but this primitive categorization of "established" and "new" does not really allow him to explore the extent of the complex interplay of his three 'categories' of charlatanism, madness and "genuine" charisma. These categories are not mutually exclusive, nor are they completely indicative of what they are meant to contain. I mean by this, for example, that the charlatan need not be wholly and solely a charlatan. He might be deranged and religious as well. Moreover, Wallace's threefold stages of conversion are accurate as far as they go, but need an additional stage if the conversion is to result in religious leadership. Morihei Ueshiba was indeed a leader, but he was never a 'religious' leader and this is partly an issue: he never expected anyone to do *budo* training based on his own religious beliefs and his disciples and *deshi* then had the task of separating out the non-religious elements in their own training.

It is clear that Onisaburo Deguchi's early life led him to an expression of his belief in a very complicated and eclectic mode. His contact with Nagasawa Katsutate led him to believe that he was the earthly incarnation of the deity Susa-no-o. This identification had provided him with the personal conviction that he had to aid Nao Deguchi, who believed she was the personal servant of Kuni-no-toko-tachi-no-kami, in the task of bringing about *yo-naoshi*. Deguchi believed that his calling was to speed this reformation, which would regenerate not only visible, natural life, but also the hidden life of the *kami*. As I have suggested above, the similarities between the self-conviction of Deguchi and Ueshiba, their sense of mission, the obscure way in which they chose to express this sense of mission, the conviction that they were uniting at least two realms of being, is strong evidence that Morihei Ueshiba learned from Onisaburo Deguchi how to express his own sense of certainty. In fact, the years from 1921 to 1927 were probably the time of the closest association between Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba. Ueshiba moved to Ayabe soon after his first meeting with Deguchi and stayed there until he was invited to move to Tokyo by Isamu Takeshita in 1927. This was the 'golden age' of their association and the time when the broad outlines of Ueshiba's own thinking were marked out.

The problems remain, however, in both cases. Deguchi's Mongolian adventure failed because he was unable to see out of Daikichi Irokawa's 'black box' To repeat what I stated in the previous column, because of his personal dedication, Deguchi was unable to understand that his religious doctrine, not having universal appeal, was an essentially Japanese experience and not easily exportable to other cultures. In all the formulation of his doctrine he had to deal with the restored emperor system, the center from which he thought the renovation, not only of Japan but the whole world, would flow. Deguchi's declaration before starting out for Mongolia showed that his intention was to spread the glories of the Imperial House and unite the world under the Emperor. 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 fellow countrymen, who indulged in the same cultural self-worship. This unreflective ethnocentrism postulated the cultural superiority of the Empire, its people, its institutions, and its way of life, and expressed itself in terms of sharing Japan's ancient and

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ageless spiritual treasures with the less fortunate people of the world.

In aikido Morihei Ueshiba had something that was more easily exportable than Deguchi's religion, for it could be checked for its 'genuineness' much more easily than a religious experience. However, Ueshiba expressed his art and his mission in similar ethnocentric terms to Deguchi, and I think this is one of the main areas where postwar westerners have to take a huge mental leap, in order to understand something that Ueshiba himself completely took for granted. It is not that Ueshiba consciously tied himself to the narrow vision espoused by the military and the assassins (though see the next section), rather that his own mission to bring together the three worlds embraced by Deguchi still entailed that Japan, guided by the Emperor, also had an overall mission to enlighten the rest of the world, of which his mission was a part. He was still firmly inside his 'black box'.

There is a tendency to make postwar aikido in general, and Morihei Ueshiba in particular, somehow 'trans-cultural' or 'ultra-cultural', and people sometimes talk of aikido as 'O Sensei's gift to the world'. They quarry his published discourses for evidence that this is what he 'really' thought and then argue that O Sensei MUST have thought this, because 'this is what aikido is really all about, isn't it'. I think that there is far more of a mental leap required here—to make O Sensei's discourses 'biblical', in the sense that they can be used for private aikido 'revelation', than the mental leap required in order to place the Founder's discourses in a proper contemporary cultural context.

5. Ultra-nationalistic Omoto: 1927-1934

Before discussing Nadolski's treatment of Omoto and ultra-nationalism, we should note several important developments. First, Onisaburo Deguchi had broken his bail bond by his abortive trip to Mongolia and when he returned to Japan, he also returned to prison. A new bail bond was agreed and Deguchi was released from prison on November 1, 1924. He stayed for a short time in Ayabe and then moved to Kameoka, which was the new center of Omoto propaganda—and which was also closer to the courts, which were considering the appeals against his conviction. The appeal process dragged on through the courts until 1927. During the previous year the Taisho Emperor had died and Hirohito had succeeded him. The new Emperor proclaimed a general amnesty and Deguchi was pardoned.

Reikai Monogatari

Secondly, while in prison Deguchi had come to realize that Omoto needed a new body of revelation that was more concise and relevant to the times than the thousands of scrolls that made up Nao Deguchi's *Ofudesaki*. The actual result was hardly more concise than the *Ofudesaki*, but marked an important step in Deguchi's efforts to incorporate into Omoto doctrine the problems of Kuni-no-toko-tachi-no-kami and Susa-no-o-no-mikoto. Making his early revelations on Mount Takanuma the basis of the new scriptures, Deguchi began to dictate *Reikai Monogatari* from 1921 until 1934, the year before the Second Suppression, when he had reached the eighty-first volume. *Reikai Monogatari* is highly relevant to aikido, because we know that Morihei Ueshiba possessed a copy of the work and annotated it with detailed notes. He certainly studied the work when he was in Iwama (for it was then complete), since the deshi had to read it to him. Presumably, given his close association with Deguchi, Ueshiba studied the work continuously as each new volume was published. On O Sensei's death in 1969, some of his books were left at Iwama and I have asked several people about this annotated copy of *Reikai Monogatari*. The people I asked certainly remember that it existed, but no one appears to know where it is—and, to be honest, not to care very much: the work is very much a relic of prewar days and modern aikido has, apparently, moved on from then.

It would be very difficult to summarize the contents of *Reikai Monogatari* in a column like this. (A brief summary of a few scenes from the first volume is given by Blacker, 1975, pp. 202-207.) Unlike the *Kojiki*, on which it is based, Deguchi borrows much from western religious literature, including the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. So, for example, he is able to discuss the 'Logos' (Word) sequences at the beginning of St John's Gospel in terms of *kotodama* sounds, which Morihei Ueshiba also does in his own discourses. Given Deguchi's overall mission to identify the Great Universal Deity with the Gods of other religions, to show that the restoration of the rule of Kuni-tachi-no-kami will lead to the *yo-naoshi* that the whole world sorely needed, and that focus of this *yo-naoshi* was an 'international' religion like Omoto, with Deguchi as its main instrument, it is not so surprising that he added so much of other traditions to the mix. Nor is it so surprising that Morihei Ueshiba would have seen his developing art in the same terms: of imparting universal human brotherhood, always under the benevolent rule of His Majesty the Emperor.

The publication of *Reikai Monogatari* scandalized a few intellectuals and drove more of them out of the organization, but it also served to confirm Deguchi's position as arbiter of divine revelation and as the unquestioned master of Omoto. This point is of some importance when we consider Nadolski's discussion of Omoto and ultra-nationalism.

Jinrui Aizenkai

Thirdly, along with new revelation, Omoto revamped the means of popular dissemination of its views. The *Taisho Nichinichi Shimbun* was abandoned and in its place a new newspaper, called the *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun*, began publication in Kameoka. This was in 1925 and was parallel with the creation of the *Jinrui Aizenkai* (*Human Brotherhood Association*).

Actually, this new association was the focus of Deguchi's desire to spread Omoto teachings abroad, and this is the fourth point we should briefly consider. Actually, the new association spread rapidly in Japan and by 1927 it had over one hundred regional branches. In Manchuria it was supported enthusiastically by an organization called the Red Swastika Society, which was an action group of a religious organization called Tao-Yuan. This group had encountered Omoto before, when members came to Japan in 1923, to help the victims of the Great Kanto Earthquake. Together with the Red Swastika Society, Omoto sponsored the World Conference of Religions in Peking in 1925.

Nadolski believes that this conference represented a genuine desire of Deguchi to establish Omoto within an international movement. However, the conference was also supported by at least three Japanese ultra-nationalists, who wanted to recruit future collaborators with their own Japanese Imperialist aims in East Asia. Mitsuru Toyama had been

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a leader of the *Genyosha* (Black Ocean Society), which espoused continental Japanese expansion, devotion to the Emperor and popular rights. Ryohei Uchida was a leader of the *Kokuryukai* (Amur River Society, a.k.a. Black Dragon Society), which inherited the *Genyosha* aims. Gen. Giichi Tanaka eventually became Prime Minister and strongly supported Japanese military expansion in Asia. The three had become aware of Onisaburo Deguchi as a result of the publicity surrounding the Mongolian adventure, and their common concern with popular rights and patriotism concerning the Emperor afforded a basis for future collaboration with Omoto.

Ultra-nationalism

Nadolski's treatment of Omoto and ultra-nationalism is organized around two main factors: (a) the political factionalism that existed within the military; and (b) the connection between Omoto and the radical Young Officers (who were members of the *Sakura-kai*), who used terrorism and assassination, in order to bring about a 'Showa Restoration'. He begins his discussion, however, with the decline of parliamentary moderates and the rise of ultra-nationalism from 1927 to 1931. In 1927 the artificial boom created by the inflationary government reconstruction program after the 1923 Kanto Earthquake ended and a bank panic swept through Japan. This led to the closure of several medium-sized banks and a subsequent run on the whole banking system, that led to the closure of the Bank of Taiwan, a major banking institution that handled government bonds. So the financial structure that had underwritten the Taisho 'democracy' began to break down.

Gen. Tanaka Giichi became Prime Minister and began to undermine the international security system. Tanaka was head of the *Seiyukai*, a political party that wanted to end Japan's dependence on the good will of the western powers. Tanaka was determined to 'act positively' in China and in April 1928, the Japanese army took control of the railways in Shantung. The Japanese army wanted to gain control over Chang Tao-lin, the warlord who had been the object of Onisaburo Deguchi's activities in Mongolia. The warlord did not cooperate and so was assassinated by some young officers in the Japanese army. This led to Tanaka's resignation, which, in turn, produced a sharp reaction in the Omoto press. A series of articles appeared that outlined Japan's duty to form a harmonious union of east and west that would exclude the "evil features" of American culture, such as jazz, automobiles and materialism. The conclusion was that America should study East Asian culture and especially the culture of Japan. The Omoto *Jinrui Aizen Shinbun* also published a conversation between Uchida Ryohei, Toyama Mitsuru and Onisaburo Deguchi concerning Japan's foreign policy. All agreed that Japanese policy in China had been mistaken and that Japan itself lacked a proper religious direction. In 1929, the three made a joint pilgrimage to the shrine at Izumo.

The same year, the Hamaguchi cabinet returned to Shidehara's pro-foreign diplomacy and a retrenchment of arms expenditures. The measures would have been sound at any time except the beginning of the world depression in 1929. A collapse of imports and imports led to a shrinking of the domestic market, which in turn caused mass unemployment. Small and medium-sized farms were especially hard hit by the 50% fall in rice prices. In November 1930, Hamaguchi was shot by a fanatical 'patriot', who disapproved of the terms of the Naval Treaty with Britain and the United States. The treaty set limits on the ratio of battleships to smaller craft and was unacceptable to the Imperial Navy. The assassination of Hamaguchi underlined the rise of radical groups, who were preparing to take on the government itself.

Finally, the years from1927 to 1935 mark an extremely turbulent period in Japanese political and social history, but also another 'golden age' for Morihei Ueshiba, for this was the period of his training in Tokyo and the early years of the Kobukan Dojo. Ueshiba was still Onisaburo Deguchi's disciple and his close confidant, but the relationship cannot have been as close as it was in Ayabe, in part because of their differing physical circumstances. Deguchi was the very active head of a large and growing organization and was constantly traveling. He exercised a tight personal control that had been largely absent until the first suppression. For Ueshiba, the move to Tokyo marked another step in the establishing of his own reputation as one of the most outstanding martial artists of the period—which also involved a 'separation' from Deguchi that matched his earlier separation from Takeda Sokaku. In Tokyo, Ueshiba began to move in rather different circles to those in Ayabe and in doing so established a close association with a wide spectrum of leaders of the Japanese Navy and Army, many of whom had their own, very definite, ideas about the *kokutai* and about the desirable place of Daito-ryu / Aiki-budo within the *kokutai*.

Interlude:
Some Thoughts on *Yamato-damashii* and the Culture of Military Purity

It will be remembered from the previous column that the male creation deity, Izanagi-no-kami, was polluted from his experience in Yomi-no-kuni and so performed 禊（*misogi*, ritual purification) in a river. 'Aikido is Misogi' is a constant refrain in Morihei Ueshiba's discourses and there is a classic photograph of Ueshiba and his son Kisshomaru in their underwear, performing a *misogi* ritual under the famous Nachi-o-taki waterfall, itself worshipped as a deity. When I first arrived in Japan, I was surprised to find that a *misogi* ritual was performed annually by the aikido club at Hiroshima University. Since there are no waterfalls within easy access, the male students go to Iwakuni, in January or February each year, strip off and stand in the icy river near the Kintai Bridge. There is no such tradition at the city dojo and the older members of the dojo associate the practice with "youthful innocence and purity".

I have often wondered whether the Japanese obsession with cleanliness and the passion for going off to the 温泉（*onsen*, hot springs), where repeated visits to the bath are lubricated with generous quantities of 日本酒（*Nihon-shu* = the national alcoholic drink = *sake*), are rooted in Izanagi's primordial visit to the river. Some Japanese friends deny this, but this is usually because they do not know anything about Izanagi's visit to the river.

The obsession with physical purity (argued by Motoori to be the essential purpose of Izanagi's *misogi* ritual) is closely connected to another kind of purity, namely, purity of motive. Since the main reason for the second suppression of Omoto (see below) was its close connections with young radical military officers, whose actions and motives were praised for being especially "pure", we need to study more closely the association of radicalism, *yamato-damashii* and the culture of military

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'purity'.

Essential Digression: Knowing vs. Acting
The philosopher Isaiah Berlin once wrote an essay entitled *The Hedgehog and the Fox*. Another way of making the distinction he drew in that brilliant essay is to distinguish between (a) those who struggle to know the world, in order to understand it for what it is; and (b) those who struggle to know the world, in order to change it. For the ancient Greeks (with whose philosophy I am most familiar), Aristotle was the archetype of the first way of thinking and Socrates/Plato of the second way. Aristotle was the most brilliant *deshi* of Plato, but broke away to form his own school. For Aristotle, the issue that led to the break was the impossibility of reconciling Plato's idealism with the real world and one major focus of the break was their respective treatment of the issues relating to knowing and acting on the basis of the knowledge. For Plato/Socrates, if you know something and the knowledge involves action, then the link was such that you are bound to act. Aristotle, however, thought that there was a huge gap between knowing something and acting on the basis of that knowledge.

Let is take a very practical example, which relates equally to Greek philosophers, Japanese army officers and readers of Aikiweb. If you are a young, virile, happily married male and you ***know*** that marriage involves being faithful to your wife, then, since knowledge, unlike belief, is eternal and thus never-changing, you actively refrain from chasing after other women. If you do chase after other women, then, for Plato/Socrates, this means that you are not in a state of ***knowledge*** about being faithful to your wife. Aristotle thought that this view of the situation was so implausible that it could not be true. Aristotle clearly knew the power of testosterone in a 'moral' relationship and so was able to accept that the young virile, happily married male would also have occasion to compare his happily married state with the other attractions of chasing after other beautiful women—or men. Thus Aristotle allowed that you could indeed ***know*** that marriage involves being faithful to your wife, but still entertained the possibility that the genuine ***knowledge*** could be clouded by 'emotions' and thus that you would run after someone else. The Greek term for this predicament is *akrasia* (*weakness of will*, often hilariously translated as *incontinence*—or 'moral bed-wetting').

Plato and Aristotle both stressed the 'knowledge' aspect of the problem: when knowledge and action were out of synchronization, it was the 'knowledge' aspect that was the issue: what did the demands of knowledge require? Motives were never in question. For the young Japanese military officers, however, who were about to assassinate prime ministers, knowledge was never the issue. Nor, really, was the action. What was in question was the link between the knowledge and the action, expressed in terms of 'purity' of motive. It is probable that the officers had imbibed the theories of Wang Yang-ming and believed that knowledge and action were two sides of the same coin.

> "*This school of thought, which in Tokugawa times had been the romantic undercurrent to the official Confucianism of the Chu Hsi school, emphasized the ability of the individual to reach enlightenment through an intuitive decision. It also stressed the importance of a resolute act to accompany that enlightenment. It was thus an affirmation of spontaneous action and of the power of the human will.*"

The young officers

> "*had at a certain moment of their lives reached an intuitive decision to dedicate themselves to the service of the Emperor and the nation. That inner conviction provided moral justification for political violence.*" (Shillony, 1973, pp. 61-62. I have altered his statement to make it apply to a wider group than he intended.)

Thus, for the young officers, dedicated to the realization/enhancement of *yamato-damashii*, the connection between the knowledge and the actions proceeding from it were not to be clouded by other possible moral issues, pertaining to the ethics of killing, duties to family etc. Since morality was based on the *kokutai* in any case (see below), such issues were not relevant.
[End of Essential Digression.]

The acceptance of this easy association of the 'enlightened' intuition, the act itself, and the obviously 'pure' motive, the whole combination seemingly devoid of any extraneous ethical considerations, requires another huge mental leap, especially for those western aikido practitioners who are accustomed to seeing aikido—and especially Morihei Ueshiba, in the 'postwar' terms of the moral & spiritual enhancement of individuals. Since aikido is a 'peaceful' budo, the supposition that Morihei Ueshiba associated with assassins is unacceptable and so various ways have to be found to square the circle. In his biography, Kisshomaru Ueshiba chooses one option and simply never mentions it. The Japanese term for such avoidance is黙殺（*mokusatsu*, silent killing): the matter is so obviously not worth discussing that it is unlikely to have happened

I myself believe that it has to be accepted that Morihei Ueshiba was very closely associated with the secret society known as the *Sakura-kai* (桜会， *Cherry Blossom Society*), which was a group dedicated to the enhancement of *yamato-damashii*, but by means of violence and assassination, if necessary. Ueshiba probably taught many of the officers and their colleagues and he was also a lifelong friend of Okawa Shumei (one of the leading civilian rightist thinkers behind the assassinations that were planned or actually hatched). One of the goals of these columns on Omoto is to attempt to place this association in a clearer cultural context. We will come back to this question from time to time during the wider discussion.

The Mukden Incident and Omoto's Developed Ultra-nationalism
In September 1931, an explosion occurred along the South Manchurian Railway north of Mukden. Colonel Itagaki Seishiro and Captain Ishiwara Kanji ordered their troops to expand the area of Japanese control outside the railway zone and within one week the entire Kwantung Army had moved to take control of all of southern Manchuria. Despite protestations of Genro oligarchs like Prince Saionji against the use of hoodlums and "Fascist gangsters" in Manchuria, the country

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was swiftly declared "independent", Japan withdrew from the League of Nations and the state of Manchukuo was given an Emperor, in the person of Henry Pu-yi.

It is important for what follows to understand the workings of the Kwantung Army. The army consisted of one division that was rotated from regional regiments in Japan every two years, and six independent battalions. By 1931, its commander was responsible to the Army Minister and the Imperial Army General Staff. Nadolski argues that the actions of the Kwantung Army in Manchuria were to have enormous influence on Omoto. The actions sprang from two sources. The first was the Army's right to independence from control by the civilian cabinet, which was guaranteed by the Meiji Constitution. The second was the rampant factionalism that led to the collapse of military discipline. Traditionally the Navy had been under officers from Satsuma and the Army from Choshu. After 1922, the Choshu control had begun to weaken and was being replaced by a new breed of professional officer, eager to prepare the Army and the nation for total war. Their efforts were blocked by regional factionalism among generals from the Tosa and Saga regions, who had been excluded from key positions during the period of Choshu control. These generals were led by Araki Sadao and became known as the *Kodo* Faction, from their commitment to *kodo* (the Imperial Way). The Army modernizers who opposed them and wanted to maintain Army discipline independent of factionalism, were known as the *Tosei* Faction (統制 *tosei*, control, regulation). In order to weaken the *Tosei* Faction, the *Kodo* generals established a loose coalition with young radical officers of field-grade rank, who were committed to the 'imperial cause'. These Kodo officers protected and aided the unauthorized activities of their lower-ranked associates in Manchuria. It was the close association of Omoto with these radicals and their cause that eventually led to the second suppression in 1935.

The connection between Omoto and the Army in Manchuria was extremely close. Before the Mukden Incident, the two key officers involved, Itagaki and Ishiwara, visited Onisaburo Deguchi in Kameoka to discuss the Manchurian problem, the establishment of a militarist national-defence state and the domestic reconstruction of Japan. They were particularly interested in Deguchi's ideas on Manchuria, in view of his earlier experiences there. Deguchi also had contacts with Lt. Gen. Tatekawa Yoshitsugu, the Headquarters Chief of Operations, who had been sent to Mukden by the Central Army Headquarters and the government on the very night of the Sept 18 Incident, in order to stop the young field-grade officers from taking action. However, Tatekawa had allowed himself to be detained and entertained in a geisha house, while the Incident was being arranged and set in motion. Deguchi and Tatekawa had agreed on the importance of establishing Manchuria as a monarchy and of persuading Henry Pu-yi to become Emperor. Later, Tatekawa sent a telegram to Deguchi expressing thanks for the help of the *Jinrui Aizenkai* during the military expansion that followed the Incident.

The young officers, who regarded themselves as special, pure, agents of the Emperor's "will", found their goals articulated in works such as *日本改造法案大綱*（*Nihon Kaizo Hoan Taiko*, A*n Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan*), by Kita Ikki. This work combined great reverence for the Imperial throne with a call for the creation of an imperial state. This task would begin with the destruction of entrenched cliques in industry and the military, to be achieved by means of a coup d'état, led by young officers, whom Ikki considered to be the purest, most unselfish elements in Japan. Ikki disapproved of capitalist institutions, as did Okawa Shumei, who believed that Japan "could become the center of a renaissance of Asian peoples, who would look to it for moral guidance and physical liberation from the imperialist West." (Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, p.602.) Jansen continues,

> "*They* (Okawa, Gondo Seikei, Tachibana Kazaburo, Inoue Nissho) *were intimately involved in the plots and terrorism of the early 1930s. Their instigation was particularly attractive to young navy and especially army officers, who were at once commanders of recruits who followed their orders unthinkingly and yet trapped by the bureaucratic structure of the armed forces.*"

Change of Doctrine

One of Onisaburo Deguchi's talents was his ability to adapt the Omoto organization to the changing spirit of the times. Thus, in the Taisho period, Omoto was in the vanguard of a Taisho Restoration, in which the emperor would become the agent of Kuni-no-koto-tachi-no-kami in the purification and unification of the world. Then, in the Mongolian Expedition, Deguchi claimed to be the personal agent of the Imperial House in central Asia. During this international period, however, the controlling assumption was always Japan's spiritual superiority. Later, in early Showa, the political atmosphere became nationalistic and anti-foreign, so Omoto energies were once more directed to traditional nativism and concurrence with the ideals of Uchida Ryohei and Toyama Mitsuru.

In 1931, Omoto called together a conference in Kameoka to discuss the developing situation in Manchuria. The Omoto *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun* greeted the resolutions of the conference:

> "*Mindful of the great mission Japan has received from Heaven, stand aloof from all confrontation activities, but complete the task of guiding the development of Manchuria and Mongolia! Go abroad to all the countries of the world, reform cowardly behavior; go forward and propagate the mandate of Heaven! When nations do not understand the above decree, by all means press on (with this mission) resolutely by yourselves. Even if it is necessary to occupy Manchuria and Mongolia, definitely do not occupy China. This occupation is aimed at the punishment of the tyrannical Chinese army clique and most certainly do not make the Chinese people the enemy. The occupied lands must rightly be put under the benevolent government of Japan… and the leading people must establish the primary policy of governing by their virtue.*" (Quoted by Nadolski on pp.173-174.)

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After the Mukden Incident, Omoto proclaimed that the two doctrines: (a) that all men were brothers; and (b) that Japan had a special mission to reform the world, were not really contradictory. The *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun* proclaimed that Japan's expansion was to be based on the purification of the culture of the Far East by eliminating all the dross elements. The *Zuisho Shimbun* considered that the expansion being carried out by the Imperial Army was qualitatively different from the colony grabbing of the other powers, because the Japanese Army was a "holy instrument of peace". From 1931 till 1935 the Omoto press poured out a torrent of similar justifications for the Army action in Manchuria & China, which attempted to justify these acclaimed activities with the renovation of the world traditionally advocated by Omoto.

The Mukden Incident also led to another careful change of doctrine. In 1933, the organization once again changed to *Kodo Omoto* and reaffirmed its belief that the Imperial Grandchild of Ama-terasu-o-mikami, descending from Heaven, established the foundation of world unity. The spreading of the virtuous influence of the Emperor was the vehicle for the recreation of the universe by Kuni-no-toko-tachi-no-kami. The older version of the Omoto mythology had stressed the prerogatives of Susa-no-o over Ama-terasu on the "Ocean Plain" (see ***Interlude***, in the previous column) and insisted on the preeminence of Kuni-toko-tachi as the Great Fundamental Deity of the Universe. In 1920 Omoto had declared that the emperor would be the agent of Kuni-toko-tachi and Susa-no-o in their restoration and renovation of the world. In 1933, Omoto claimed that the Imperial Grandchild and his descendants, not Susa-no-o, were the holy rulers of the "Ocean Plain" and, by extension, lords of all material creation.

> "*By his coming to the earth, it was decided that the Imperial Progenitor be the organizer of the entire universe…It goes without saying that the thing which guarantees the life of the whole globe is Japan, the divine foundation country; and furthermore, it goes without saying that the guarantee of life for Japan is the divine Emperor. When Japan will lose its Emperor it will be annihilated, and the universe will lose its sun. In other words, the time when Japan is annihilated will also be the time of the annihilation of the earth.*" (Quoted by Nadolski, p.182, from the *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun*, 1934.)

Deguchi thought that all the domestic political problems then facing Japan were due to the fact that politicians were unaware of the true nature of Japanese government and the *kokutai*. He wrote:

> "*A constitutional republican (sic) type of monarchy is completely inappropriate for the divine country of Japan. It goes contrary to the divine work of restoring heavenly government, which is government based on the* kokutai *and a monarch protected by Heaven.*"

He predicted that:

> "*At a great convention of all the people it will be decided that Ama-terasu is to become the ruler of the world…*"
> "*We will see the opening of a national convention of all the people. At this convention it will be decided that the best government is absolute monarchy.*"

Deguchi was also certain of the victory of Omoto over the "weak established religions" because his organization was directly involved in extending the benefits of imperial rule to recreate the whole world as a united family. After the collapse of the ineffectual old religions Omoto would firmly be established as the new religion of the Empire.

Morals, Membership & Family Connections

Of course, the new government-religion of the "Showa Restoration" would be based on a reformed educational system. Intellectuals failed to understand the true nature of Japanese culture and had wrongly pursued foreign educational ideals as models. Deguchi maintained that just as the peerless history of Japan was different from that of foreign countries, so also the structure and goals of education should differ from those of lesser countries. Through the study and imitation of the examples of virtuous men, young people would learn standards of morality and be purified through the study of spiritual things. The pernicious influence of western culture was the reason for the general laxity of Japanese morals, especially in the wicked cities, where the sturdy noble Japanese virtues had given way to all manner of unwholesome activities. Deguchi even condemned dancing and hand holding, as debilitating to the Nation's masculine strength, which was needed to crush the proud ambition of the white race (for the opposition to the West had been expanded to attacks on whites in general). Since cities were generally pernicious, Deguchi based the Omoto economic program on agriculture. The Empire was basically an agricultural country and a return to that foundation would result in a restoration of ancient virtues.

Deguchi's own personal role in all these reforms is left unstated and Nadolski suggests a reason. "Given his character, it is difficult to believe that this reticence issued from humility. It seems likely, then, that the reason he never discussed such affairs was careful concern about possible future difficulties with the government." (Nadolski, p. 185.)

There were several outstanding features noted by Nadolski of Omoto at this time, of which the first is the large membership. There is a big difference in the figures supplied by different groups, but Nadolski arrives at a figure of four hundred thousand active members, with more than a million supporters loosely affiliated through Omoto publications. This roughly matches the figures given by the Home Ministry and the reports of the Special (Thought) Police. The membership was concentrated in the Kyoto-Osaka and Kanto regions, but was also widely spread throughout the Inland Sea area, the *Tokaido* (the coastal strip between Tokyo and Kyoto), Hokuriku and Hokkaido. Membership had spread rapidly in farming regions, especially in depressed areas like Tohoku and Hokkaido. However, the lists of those arrested in the second suppression show that the Omoto leadership was in no way dependent on farmers.

The second feature is the large number of well-educated members:

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businessmen, newspaper managers, journalists and teachers. However, unlike the intellectual members of the Taisho period, this large group of members never grouped together in factions. Nadolski gives three reasons for this. First, the political alternatives had narrowed considerably, with far less opportunity to experiment, compared with the situation in the Taisho period. Omoto was firmly situated on the right wing and those intellectuals who were attracted to the organizations held very similar views about Omoto doctrine. Secondly, Deguchi had tailored Omoto doctrines to fit completely the tradition of myths centered on Ama-terasu-o-mikami and the Imperial Grandchild. Thirdly. Deguchi changed his own leadership style considerably. Nadolski is worth quoting at length here, since what he states is relevant for the relationship between Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba.

> "*He did not allow anyone in the organization to rise to a position of near equality with him, as Asano had done in the Taisho period. Moreover, he maintained tight control over all auxiliary bodies which were associated with the Omoto cult by making section leaders of his relatives. From that source he received direct and at times strong criticism, especially from his son-in-law, ... but family loyalty proved to be a strong binding force for the movement and checked trends towards factionalism.*" (Nadolski, pp.192-93.)

The family aspect was demonstrated by Deguchi's energetic tours throughout Japan to inspect local organizations, dedicating massive stone monuments inscribed with his poetry and calligraphy. His wife and other family members participated in these inspection pilgrimages. The organization had 1,990 local headquarters and branches when it was suppressed in 1935. Morihei Ueshiba was not, of course, at the very center of this family group. Though he became head of the *Dai Nippon Budo Senyokai*, which was established in 1932, he did so at Deguchi's request and, if Kisshomaru is to be believed, with some apprehension among his supporters in Tokyo.

The third aspect noted by Nadolski was the financial power of Omoto and its extensive mass media. At the time of the second suppression in 1935, the organization possessed property and goods worth five million yen, listed under Deguchi's name. With respect to the media, the *Jinrui Azen Shimbun* had a circulation of over one million, far more than that of the *Asahi Shimbun* (635,000) and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* (529,000). The circulation was achieved by means of sensational banner headlines that shrieked out the message, which was utter devotion to the imperial cause.

Nadolski also calls attention to the various Omoto paramilitary organizations established in this period. The members all wore paramilitary uniforms and spent much time in marching to and fro and being reviewed by Deguchi (who was sometimes mounted emperor-style on a white horse), to the accompaniment of trumpet fanfares. The *Showa Seinenkai* (*Showa Youth Association)* and the *Dai Nippon Budo Senyokai* (*Great Japan Budo Enhancement Association*), mentioned above, were just two of these paramilitary organizations set up by Omoto and the illustration on the website of *Aikido Journal* gives some indication of the nature of the latter organization. In the photograph, the only members not in uniform are Onisaburo Deguchi himself, his wife and two other persons. Everyone else, including Morihei Ueshiba, is in a paramilitary uniform, with his *deshi* Aritoshi Murashige, also clad in military style. There is a banner with the title 「全日本武道宣陽会」. The mere title of the association is evidence that Deguchi wanted to "enhance" the martial arts by including them under his Omoto imperial banner.

Domestic Disorders and Omoto Participation

Nadolski begins this section with a summary of the slide from the politics of moderation to the politics of confrontation between 1931 and 1936.

Nadolski states that the first serious coup d'état developed in October 1931, soon after the Mukden Incident. Nadolski argues that Deguchi was involved in this attempt and so gives a careful account of the plans and objectives (pp. 199 -- 203). Lt. Gen. Tatekawa Yoshitsugu has been mentioned before. (He was sent to stop the Mukden Incident, but was waylaid in a geisha house.) He and his friends Lt. Col. Kingoro Hashimoto and Hiroshi Nemoto were worried that the government would reach a negotiated settlement in Manchuria. To thwart this, Hashimoto and Nemoto proposed to take control of the Japanese government and abolish the party Cabinet system. They planned to request the surviving *genro* Prince Saionji to nominate as Prime Minister General Sadao Araki, who was the head of the Kodo Faction and much admired by young army radicals, while Tatekawa would take the Foreign Ministry and Hashimoto himself the Home Ministry. They assumed that by putting control in the hands of "pure" warriors, the "Imperial Way" would be clarified as the foundation of national life. Eventually the plot was exposed and Hashimoto was placed in protective custody for twenty days. His superiors were anxious to deny that anything unusual had taken place.

According to Marius Jansen (*The Making of Modern Japan*, p.582), the plot was even more bizarre than Nadolski states and was not the first coup attempt.:

> "*A few weeks after violence had broken out (in Manchuria), Hashimoto Kingoro and stalwarts of the Cherry Blossom Society conceived a plan to wipe out the entire government by aerial bombardment of a cabinet meeting; a crowd of rightists would then surround the War Ministry and General Staff Headquarters and demand the creation of a military government."*

As has been mentioned above, officers in the Kwantung Army were rotated every two years and the earlier March 31 Incident, which Nadolski does not discuss, occurred because of this. Jansen (pp. 580-81) gives a succinct account of this coup attempt. Prime Minister Hamaguchi had chosen General Ugaki as Army Minister and the latter had decided to strengthen control of the army by a series of personnel shifts.

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> "*As the rotation date"* (April) *"approached, a group of field-grade officers (members of a 'Cherry Blossom Society'), and General Staff figures (Koiso Kuniaki and Tatekawa Yoshitsugu), encouraged by civilian right-wing theorists (Okawa Shumei), hoped that by attacking the prime minister's office and headquarters of the political parties and organizing a crowd of thousands, they would be able to get the army to declare martial law. It was not to be. Ugaki held back, military leaders thought Manchuria more urgent, and the crowd did not materialize. The affair remained a secret; the planners were reassigned, and some to the Kwantung Army, whose turn came next.*"

It is in relation to these coup attempts that Nadolski makes one sole reference to Morihei Ueshiba, which appears on p. 201. The context is an extract from the diaries of Col. Hashimoto. (However Nadolski makes a serious mistake, which leads me to question how seriously he studied his Japanese sources. He correctly states that Hashimoto was also one of the ringleaders of the coup attempt of February 26, 1936, but then incorrectly states that he was eventually executed for his part in this. In fact, Hashimoto was tried as a Class A war criminal and sentenced to life imprisonment. He died of lung cancer in 1957.) In memoirs published in 1967 by Nakano Masao (中野雅夫『橋本大佐の手記』みすず書房、1963年, Hashimoto implicates Deguchi in the Imperial Colors Incident directly:

> *Among the leading groups which indicated support for the action were Okawa Shumei's* Koukisha *and Iwata Ainosuke's* Aikokusha*... Among those behind the plot were these supporters: Matsuo Chujiro of Kobe, Mandawara Kizo and Fujita Isamu. Moreover Deguchi Onisaburo especially sought an interview with me. He said he would mobilize his followers in Tokyo and then throughout the country, should the need arise, and he would give me Ueshiba Kenshi as a bodyguard.*

Nadolski states that confirmation that a meeting had indeed occurred between Hashimoto and Deguchi was given to Princess Tsuridono Chikako. (However, the reference, to Kyotaro Deguchi's biography of Deguchi, shows nothing of the sort. This is another example of sloppy research.) He argues that there is little reason to doubt Hashimoto's statement, since by the time he wrote his memoirs, the second suppression had already occurred and he would have no reason to lie or alter his position. In any case, he believes that Deguchi's contact with Tatekawa and the sympathetic attention given in Omoto press to the position of the radicals shows the likelihood of Deguchi's involvement. Nadolski makes two more points in support of his claim that Omoto was very closely intertwined with ultra-nationalist movements. The first point was the assistance that Omoto provided to Uchida Ryohei and Toyama Mitsuru in spreading their own message. Uchida was invited to speak at the opening of a new branch in Tokyo and the *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun* published his speech in full. Uchida and Toyama participated in Omoto events and Omoto supported the *Dai Nippon Seisanto* (Great Japan Production Party), Uchida's rightist workers' party. This close association continued right up until the second suppression.

Nadolski's second point is also indirectly related to Morihei Ueshiba. Omoto provided the young radicals with inspiration for the tasks they undertook. Consequently, when asked what kind of literature they would prefer to read, the radicals who murdered Prime Minister Inukai in the 'May 15 1932 Incident' replied that they would like to study Omoto newspapers and magazines. These radicals were also inspired by Inoue Nissho, a priest of the Nichiren sect, who had provided the *Ketsu-mei-dan* (*Blood Brotherhood*) with its ideology. Inoue preached a fiery agricultural fundamentalism, which would rid Japan of all its accumulated evils and return to its pure agricultural foundations. Inoue ran a training center called the *Go-koku-do* (*Academy for the Preservation of the Nation*), from whose ranks some of the assassins came. (Their victims were Inoue Junnosuke, who had been a finance minister, and Baron Dan Takama, the director of the Mitsui conglomerate: the assassinations occurred early in 1932.) Inoue also established an institution in Mito called the *Aikyojuku* (*Academy for the Love of the Land*). This attracted some young naval officers and after the death of Dan, they planned to effect a mass assassination, rather than the individual killings carried out by the *Go-koku-do*. They planned to attack a large number of installations in Tokyo, including the homes of ministers, party headquarters, banks, and even power plants. However, they succeeded in killing only the Prime Minister.

The *Sakurakai* Assassins and Morihei Ueshiba

Although Morihei Ueshiba had physically separated from Onisaburo Deguchi by moving to Tokyo, he nevertheless remained close links with Omoto and seems to have had no hesitation in becoming Chairman of the *Dai Nippon Budo Senyokai* in 1932. Of great interest, therefore, is the following statement by Ikkusai Iwata, who became an *uchi-deshi* of Ueshiba almost right from the time the latter moved to Tokyo. The statement can be found on the *Aikido Journal* website and also in *Aikido Masters* (pp. 85--86).

> "*In about 1931, Japan inclined toward the policy of obtaining land in foreign countries. Japanese politicians exercised their power only for themselves. I think we can still see this tendency today. But there was a movement to reform Japanese policy at that time. The group called "Sakurakai," which consisted of young military officers, gathered to discuss the reform of Japan. Among the members were Shumei Okawa, Nissho Inoue, and Kozaburo Tachibana. They said that they needed to reform Japan. I don't mean [they were planning] a revolution. Their meeting place was the Ueshiba Dojo. Few people know this. Ueshiba Sensei had the enthusiasm to create sincere techniques and to use them for Japan's sake. So it was a time when people who wanted to do good for Japan came to his dojo.*"

If this is indeed the same *Sakurakai* as the one referred to in all the

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sources, the secret society was created in the autumn of 1930 and began with about ten members, all active-duty field grade officers of the Army General Staff. The society was led by Lt. Col. Kingoro Hashimoto and Capt. Isamu Cho. Membership increased to 50 members by February 1931 and probably had many more by October 1931. One of the members was Koiso Kuniaki, who succeeded Hideki Tojo as Prime Minster after the fall of Saipan in July 1944. *The Sakurakai* was disbanded in December 1931, with the arrests of ringleaders following the Imperial Colors Incident. Some of the members migrated to the Tosei Faction of the Army. (However, it is important to note here that the *Sakurakai* was only one of a number of clandestine organizations of 'young officers'. These organizations all had a common purpose, which was to put Japan and the Japanese in the furthest corners of the 'black box'.)

Perhaps Iwata put things more clearly than he realized. The "young officers" of the Sakurakai met in Morihei Ueshiba's dojo and were advised by three notorious civilian ultra-nationalists. Okawa Shumei, who was a lifelong friend of Ueshiba, was behind the scenes in several coup attempts; Inoue advised the assassins who carried out the May 15 Incident; and Tachibana, a suspect in the same Incident, went into hiding in Manchuria. Yet here they were, holding meetings in the Kobukan dojo.

As a good *uchi-deshi* should, however, Iwata also deftly tries to let his Master off the hook. At that time, the plotters had not actually reached the stage of planning a revolution: the preparatory stages had not gone that far. On the other hand, since Iwata specifically mentions "around" 1931, preparations must have advanced somewhat. In any case, the Kobukan Dojo did not open till April 1931 and the Sakurakai had already been existence for six months before this. In addition, it is not really clear from Iwata's account whether the new Kobukan dojo was the official meeting place for the society as a whole, or merely the place where some officers met after training.

Nevertheless, since Ueshiba was enthusiastically training "for Japan's sake", he accepted those "who wanted to do good for Japan". The implication is that this general reason was sufficient and that he accepted the officers without enquiring too deeply about what they were actually up to. The following extracts appeared in 1932 and 1933, in articles in *Budo*, the magazine of the *Budo Senyokai* and seem to bear out Iwata's assessment.

> "*... the true task of Japanese martial arts is to become the leader of all the martial arts on earth as part of the continuing process of realizing an Imperial Way for the whole world. Japan is the suzerain of the globe, the model for the earth and the will of the entire world is Greater Japan. Japan is the model form for the perfect world. It is only after this spirit is completely understood that one can really understand the true meaning of Japanese martial arts.*"
>
> "*In summary, by humbly understanding the Great Foundation of the Imperial Way and letting all the people master the solemn and incomparable truth of the "Imperial National Policy", the loyal and sincere Japanese* damashii *must be nourished, fostered, and trained. When this form is manifested it is* bujutsu."

This is fairly typical ultranationalist Omoto sentiment between 1932 and 1935, which, however, could cover a wide spectrum of political activities. Clearly, Iwata Sensei had a much more generous view of Morihei Ueshiba's activities than Nadolski had of Onisaburo Deguchi's.

We should pause here and consider Morihei Ueshiba's remarks further. In one of his essays Stanley Pranin wondered why Ueshiba made these kinds of remarks in a publication of the Omoto organization, which was "anti-government". However, the purpose of this and the previous column is to show that the position of Omoto was much more complex and flexible. Up to 1935, through the *Showa Shinseikai* (see below), Omoto did indeed attack the Okada government. However, it is clear that Omoto and Morihei Ueshiba also fervently supported the 'Imperial Way' and the *kokutai*. Ueshiba, like other Japanese at this time, sometimes talked of world peace and the phrase peppers his discourses. For Ueshiba, world peace would be achieved when the three worlds were in their respective harmonies, but there was the added condition, imposed by Irokawa's 'black box' and alluded to in the *Budo* articles, namely, that the 'world peace' was actually a peace that was anchored in the suzerainty of the Japanese Emperor. Japan in the 1930s always resisted the liberal democratic framework for international relations, because this was an illegitimate imposition on the Emperor-centered system of ethical and legal values. The following excerpts set out the ethics of the 'black box' very clearly.

> "*Indeed in Japan, the whole framework of ethics was not seen as emanating from individuals or even from a collective cultural base. Instead it was seen as coming downwards from the Emperor to the people, as a framework for understanding their duties and these duties went upwards from the people to the emperor. In both cases the state acted as the conduit and effective framer of the details—the Emperor thus becoming a symbolic National Father who legitimized state power.*
>
> "*Such a framework for ethics gives rise to a conflict between the universalizing tendency of modernity, with its aim of founding morality in rationally discoverable rules for the personal conduct of any individual, and the older feudal ideal of a morality that fused with authority, which emanated from the Emperor and over which abstract demands for legitimation had no purchase.*
>
> "*Within such an authority-based system of morality, the worth of individuals was conceived in terms of their proximity to the Emperor. Despite the fact that the constitution ostensibly guaranteed equality to citizens before the Emperor, the everyday reality*

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was that those who carried out the Emperor's wishes—the state bureaucracy and the military in particular—were represented as the most worthy and valuable citizens.

"*This value system, in which human worth is anchored in proximity to the Emperor, became accepted and embedded in Japanese culture to such a degree that it did not require efforts by the state to make it hold.*

"*The authoritarian basis of Japanese morality in this period can be seen very clearly in the habitual ill-treatment of Japanese soldiers by their officers. Discipline was conducted through bentatsu ([鞭撻: 鞭 means whip or rod; 撻 means to flog or strike: the combination means to goad someone or to urge them on]: the routine bashing and striking of soldiers), which was presented as an "act of love" by the officers for the soldiers. Even the Japanese Navy—which was far more westernized in its conduct than in the Army—adopted a practice of harsh discipline known as tekken seisai (鉄拳 means a clenched fist; 制裁 means sanction or punishment: the combination means the 'law of the iron fist') in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War. It was often called the 愛の鞭 (ai-no-muchi, or 'whip/rod of love')." (Tanaka, 1996, pp. 202-203: kanji & explanations supplied by me.)*

The above quotations are taken from a remarkable book about Japanese atrocities in World War II (details below). The author, Yuki Tanaka, is a lecturer at an Australian university. This is the only book I know of written by a Japanese that seeks to make sense of the atrocities and war crimes committed by his own countrymen. The above quotations are part of an argument that grounds the discussion of what the Japanese did to their foreign POWs in World War II. I have reproduced the discussion in detail, in order to suggest (as delicately as possible) that it really makes little sense to judge the actions of O Sensei in 1931-1932 with regard to the *Sakurakai*, in the light of the postwar aikido values that Kisshomaru Ueshiba has sought to instill since 1945.

6. The Second Suppression
Nadolski argues that the seeds for the second suppression lie in Omoto's support for the young radical officers who were plotting assassinations of government figures. The Omoto organization was a casualty of the countermeasures taken, both within the Army and outside it.

Political Background
The general context here is the determination of the Army rationalizers and planners of the *Tosei* Faction, in concert with an increasingly powerful bureaucracy, to put Japan on a total war footing. With the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai in 1932, Prince Saionji turned to the more moderate Navy, with "Whole Nation Cabinets" under Admiral Saito Makoto and Okada Keisuke, in order to counterbalance the growing influence of the Army in the government. Saionji gradually lost the battle, but because of the successive crises, which endangered the continuation of the established constitutional order between 1932 and 1936, he himself and the other advisers of the Emperor were especially sensitive to threats from radical organizations like Omoto.

Within the Army, the Tosei Faction generals, such as Gen. Nagata Tetsuzan, were gradually strengthening their position against the Kodo Faction, led by Gen. Mazaki Jinzaburo. In 1934, it was revealed that a coup d'état was being planned by officers of the military academy. The young officers of the Tosei Faction, who were gradually being eliminated from the political scene, aimed to regain the initiative and destroy the Okada Cabinet, since it was impeding their plans for Manchuria. The plot led to the ouster of Mazaki, in July, 1935. However, these radicals, with whom Omoto was associated, took more direct action. In August 1935, Gen. Nagata was cut down with a sword. In the court hearing that followed, the attacker, Col. Aizawa Saburo, in his turn attacked the "wicked union" of the Tosei Faction and the Zaibatsu conglomerates. On February 26, 1936, rebellious troops took command of central Tokyo, surrounded the Imperial Palace, demanded the resignation of the Okada Cabinet and called for the reorganization of the nation according to the ideas of Kita Ikki. The rebellion actually stood a good chance of succeeding, since it was supported by some very senior military figures and also by two imperial princes. It failed largely because the Emperor himself resisted and other forces, mainly from the Navy, prepared to crush it. Many of the ringleaders, including Kita, were arrested, court-martialed and executed. As a result of the rebellion, the Tosei Faction was able to dominate the making of government policy until 1945. As Nadolski puts it, the Omoto suppression "clearly indicated the extent to which the anti-Kodo Faction groups"—the court moderates, the bureaucracy, and the Tosei Faction—"would go to consolidate their positions."

Showa Shinseikai
Around 1932, Onisaburo Deguchi had another of his major brainwaves, which on this occasion resulted in the establishment of the 昭和神聖会 (*Showa Shinseikai*, *Showa Sacred Association*). Other Omoto organizations, the *Showa Seinenkai*, the *Konseikai*, and, indeed, the *Budo Senyokai*, were all distinctively Omoto organizations, which drew their members from Omoto believers. With the *Showa Shinseikai*, which embodied Omoto ideals, but not Omoto doctrine, Deguchi hoped to appeal to a larger audience and place himself in the forefront of a national movement for the establishment of the "Showa Restoration" desired by Kita Ikki.

The inaugural meeting took place on July 22, 1934, at the Army Meeting Hall near the Imperial Palace and among the 3,000 guests were high-ranking leaders of the government, armed forces and right-wing organizations. The Vice-Director was Uchida Ryohei. The ideals were embodied in a grandiose Declaration of Purpose:

"*At the present time the international structure is extremely confused and our imperial nation at a momentous juncture for the future. Within the nation the unrest has grown deeper, and the citizens*

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> *vacillate with the trends of the times. In vain do we look forward to the end of these times of emergency. We are mindful that there are many who, forgetting the great way of divine heaven and the* Kodo*, and depending on the aggressive and imported poisonous culture have not been enlightened and continue their confused existence in dark insecurity. We, perceiving the truth in serene contemplation, cannot stand by in this heaven-sent time. Our patriotic spirit will lead us to offer up our lives for this cause, easing the imperial mind and accomplishing the imperial will. By this, the meaning of the great spirit of* kodo *issuing from the foundation of the nation will be clarified in politics, economics, foreign policy and in education. Reverently accepting the divine oracle of imperial ancestors, in participation of the imperial enterprise, we swear sincere public service for calling together the whole magnificent divine country, Japan. Thereby inaugurating the* Showa Shinseikai*, we shall press for the accomplishment of these ends. So be it declared!*"

This declaration was signed by Onisaburo Deguchi, who also added the fundamental guiding principle:

> "*The organization shall sustain and support the great way of the divine holy nation, Japan, which is based on the kodo. We will sustain the heavenly work of the divine descendants of the throne of heaven, which is coeval with eternity. We will obey the spirit of the foundation of the nation. We wait expectantly for the fulfillment of the divine destiny of the imperial country and the destiny of the people of the nation.*"

Backed up as it was by the large and financially powerful Omoto organization, with an influential press at its disposal, the expansion of the *Showa Shinseikai* was rapid. Deguchi worked diligently to spread the organization, criss-crossing Japan in his *Shinseikai* uniform. Thus a 1934 report from the Home Ministry, concerning some four hundred active right-wing organizations, listed the *Showa Shinseikai* as one of the fourteen most powerful. The report stated that it was "ruled by a dictator." By the first anniversary, Deguchi hoped to have one million members and ten million sympathizers, but a 1935 Home Ministry report gave the membership figure as 84,916.

Nevertheless, the Showa Shinseikai was a powerful right-wing movement and quickly plunged into active participation in various causes, one of which concerned a constitutional theory expounded by a professor named Minobe Tatsukichi, of Tokyo Imperial University. This scholarly political theory became known as Tenno Kikan Setsu (theory of the Emperor as an organ of state) and was the focus of a serious ideological battle between palace moderates and rightist zealots.

Tenno Kikan Setsu

Minobe produced his theory in the beginning of the Taisho period, to explain the political evolution of the emperor system at that time. The emperor was part of the constitutional structure, as was the Diet. The Cabinet handled day-to-day administration in the name of the Emperor and was responsible to the Diet for the implementation of policy. There was some debate at the time of its publication, but the theory lay dormant as one of the possible interpretations of Japanese constitutional government—until 1934, when it was attacked in the Upper House (which Minobe had entered in 1932). The government was attacked for allowing the theory to be disseminated, on the grounds that it was an attack on the "imperial dignity" and contrary to the *kokutai*. Rightist organizations then took up the cause, including Omoto. Onisaburo Deguchi stated his views in the *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun*:

> "*In Japan today, it goes without saying that because of the neglect of kodo, which is the spirit of Japan, and the infatuation with European and American thought, government, religion and education, the economy, foreign policy and art are unable to move forward… Present constitutional scholars… in their explanation of the organization of Japan, do not appreciate the meaning of* kodo*. There are scholars who, not understanding* kodo*, come out explaining monarchy in terms of the* Tenno Kikan Setsu*... In this they err greatly. Our nation, based on the everlasting presence of a divine ruler, is incomparable throughout the world… It is not an Empire (in the sense of a constitutional monarchy), it is not a monarchy (in the sense of a despotic government)… It is not a country based on the survival of the fittest. Truly, it is a unique monarchy, founded by heaven on earth.*"

Not content with mere editorials, the *Showa Shinseikai* organized public meetings in Tokyo and the *Jinrui Aizen Shimbun* issued a stream of attacks against Minobe.

The professor himself had the support of the Okada Cabinet and also of the Emperor himself. Prince Saionji was worried that if Minobe could be destroyed purely on the basis of scholarly theories, he would be the first of many and the 'liberal' influence around the Emperor would disappear. Unfortunately, the army supported the rightists. The Tosei Faction was purging the army and could not appear to be weak regarding a "patriotic" issue like opposition to Minobe's theory. Reservist associations were demanding that his theories be repudiated, his works banned and the professor himself punished. In 1934, the professor retired, bruised, from his academic post and the following year he was accused of lese-majeste and removed from the House of Peers.

Government Investigates Omoto

The conflict over the *Tenno Kikan Setsu* led Onisaburo Deguchi to attack the Okada Cabinet and the attacks became so strong that Okada began to fear assassination by Omoto agents. As the speech campaign against the *Tenno Kikan Setsu* reached its climax in the summer of 1935, Okada received word that his life was in danger. In fact, Nadolski makes clear that there was no Omoto assassination plot. After the

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second suppression, Deguchi's lawyers maintained that it was Okada's fear of such a plot that led him to suppress Omoto.

Nadolski then discusses another alleged plot, which concerned a petition to the Emperor that the *Shinseikai* was sponsoring. The petition requested the Emperor to establish an Imperial Cabinet, with a member of his family as Prime Minister. This would achieve a union of religion and government and realize the "Showa Restoration" favored by theorists like Kita Ikki. As a matter of fact, some members of the Imperial house, like Prince Higashikuni and Asaka, favoured the rightists, while Prince Chichibu, the Emperor's brother, openly admired the exploits of the young extremists. Nadolski considers that this petition, whether it really originated with Deguchi, or was foisted on Omoto by other parties, was seen as an embarrassing threat to the Emperor's advisers. He quotes a military police report relating a plan to call for the establishment of an Imperial House Cabinet and which mentions the *Showa Shinseikai*. He adds that the "petition movement seems to have been crucial in the government consideration of the Showa Shinseikai as a dangerous extremist group, and thus it seems that, in part, Omoto was judged guilty by association with this cause" (p. 242).

Nadolski devotes some space to the question whether Omoto provided financial support to radical groups. He cites one Shinmiya Takeo, who alleged that Omoto had provided funds to make the *Tenno Kikan Setsu* controversy a live issue. This allegation is denied in *Omoto nanajunen shi* (*Seventy Years of Omoto*), which maintains that Omoto funds were drying up at the time. Nadolski accepts this denial, for lack of other evidence, and cites the case of Kita Ikki, who visited Deguchi in Kameoka during the autumn of 1935, in order to borrow funds from the *Showa Shinseikai*. Nadolski states that the visit was only four months before the Feb 26 uprising and suggests that Kita was seeking funds for the coup d'état he was planning. Deguchi's response was, "There will be no money for you. It is not proper for a religious organization to aid in murder." Kyotaro Deguchi gives a different account of this visit. According to Kyotaro, Kita's visit took place in December.

> "*Kita hinted at a coup d'état and told Onisaburo that he wanted three hundred members of Omoto's Showa Youth Association to take part. When Onisaburo refused, Kita asked him for funds. Onisaburo refused again, saying, 'God says it is wrong to give money for murder.' Kita tried intimidate Onisaburo, saying, 'There are twelve assassins stationed in Kyoto. Mr Deguchi, please try to do a little better than that, since I have let you in on this secret. Otherwise I am afraid you'll have to die,' and left. Onisaburo did not seem especially perturbed, but Kita was deadly serious, and the assassins actually came. ...The assassins arrived in Kameoka on December 8, the very day that the police raided Omoto.*" (Deguchi, p. 293 (English); p. 458-459 (Japanese).

Actually, Kita's visit to Kameoka provides a clear illustration of what was causing the government's concern about Omoto. More than any other issue, the threat implied by the petition to establish an Imperial House Cabinet directly impinged on the prerogatives of the Emperor and there was panic that a Cabinet headed by one of the princes who had links with the extremists would be a direct threat to the constitutional tradition that the palace moderates were trying to uphold. Prince Saionji and Lord Matsudaira agreed with the Home Minister Goto Fumio that certain Tosei faction generals, in consort with Uchida's *Seisanto*, appeared to be using the *Showa Shinseikai* to further the petition. The Palace advisers gave their approval for the government to take whatever action they thought necessary to meet the threat posed by Omoto.

Nadolski makes two important points about the consequences of this approval. First, the Palace approval led to a decision to suppress Omoto, a decision that was actually made by so-called "new bureaucrats" in the Home Ministry. These bureaucrats had increased their power base as a result of the gradual elimination of party control from the government and of the reluctance of the military to fill the administrative vacuum created by this elimination. These bureaucrats were labeled "reactionary" by the extremist Army officers because they supported a corrupt regime, but the extremist threat actually brought them closer to those within the military who were working to restore Army discipline.

The second point relates to the question (discussed below) of why Morihei Ueshiba escaped arrest and arraignment. The disappearance of party leadership, which previously had imposed a consistent set of policies on the government ministries, created a decentralized bureaucratic system in which the bureaucrats were able to create their own oligarchies within the separate departments of the government. However (and Nadolski does not mention this), this decentralized situation also extended to the Police, the Military Police and the Special (Thought) Police, which acted as independent power centers. The order came from the Home Ministry to "research Omoto" and Special Police units in each prefecture began a close investigation of the *Showa Seinenkai* and the *Showa Shinseikai*. In order to camouflage the investigation, left-wing organizations were also investigated.

Although the investigation continued between March and October 1935, the police could not suppress Omoto simply to head off an Army coup d'état. That this was the real motive is clear from a later police report.

> "*When we looked at the activities of the* Showa Shinseikai*, there were signs that it was in one respect joining hands with the Army. There was much coming and going of officers on active duty...The initial reason why we thought we had to investigate Omoto was that if the Army and such a right-wing organization united and staged a coup d'état, there would be grave danger. If, like the February 26 1936 and May 15, 1932 incidents, an emergency arose and the patriotic societies would stand up and act in concert, the maintenance of public order would be difficult. Then, to prevent any planned Army coup d'état, we directed an investigation to see to what degree the* Shinseikai *and the Army*

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were related." (Nadolski, p. 254.)

So the suppression had to be based on reasons other than lese majeste against the *Showa Shinseikai*, though the political activity of this auxiliary organization was the real reason.

The Arrests

The arrests began on 8 December 1935. Two hundred police arrived in Ayabe and 230 in Kameoka, where they arrested 27 Omoto leaders. An additional 500 pilgrims and Omoto personnel, were questioned and allowed to leave the precincts, which were sealed off. In Matsue, where Deguchi and his wife were attending a festival, 280 police arrived around 2 am. Simultaneous police raids took place at regional headquarters around the country. In the first phase of arrests, 44 leaders were arrested and 109 local centers searched. By the end of the following year, 1936, the total of those arrested had reached 987 and over 3,000 had been interrogated. As is the case even now in Japan, as soon as the arrests had been made, the press reports appearing took it for granted that all were guilty of whatever charges pressed. One of the first people to desert Deguchi was his friend Uchida Ryohei. It was shocking, thought Uchida, that Mr Deguchi was planning to usurp the government.

The charges finally decided upon were based on Omoto doctrine of 1921 and the association (identification, really) that Deguchi claimed to have with the deity Susa-no-o-no-mikoto. In the courts the prosecutors ignored the shifts in Omoto doctrine that occurred in 1933 and declared that the emphasis on the prerogatives of Kuni-no-toko-tachi-no-kami and Susa no o denied the imperial rights of the descendants of Ama-terasu-no-mikami's Heavenly Grandchild. The *yo-naoshi* (renovation and restoration of the world) preached by Omoto was inconsistent with the "Imperial Dignity" and therefore the organization was punishable under the lese majeste ordinances and the Press Law. The interrogations of Omoto leaders were severe and torture was extensively used to secure 'confessions'. In addition, the police destroyed as many Omoto facilities as possible and attempted to eradicate all traces of the organization.

The result of the court hearings was a replay of the 1921 suppression and the aftermath. In 1926, Emperor Hirohito succeeded to the throne and declared a general amnesty, in consequence of which Onisaburo Deguchi was released from prison. In 1945, another general amnesty was declared, this time as a result of General MacArthur's SCAP directives. A SCAP directive nullified the laws on which the prosecutions of Omoto were based and the general amnesty was declared on October 17, 1945.

The Second Suppression and Morihei Ueshiba

At the time of the second suppression, Morihei Ueshiba was in Osaka. It is unclear whether he was there by coincidence, or because he had been warned of the suppression beforehand. Like all the other core leaders of Omoto, he was marked down by the Tokyo police authorities for arrest, interrogation and probably arraignment. However, he received extremely light treatment at the hands of the police and this fact was a major cause of his estrangement from his nephew.

Kisshomaru Ueshiba's view of the affair is given in his biography (pp. 221-227). He agrees with Nadolski that the government's suppression of Omoto was something of a smokescreen for their real political targets. Kisshomaru also admits that because of Ueshiba's 'new' involvement with Omoto via the *Dai Nihon Budo Senyo Kai*, it would have been natural for the police to arrest the Founder and throw him into prison. So he attempts to explain why he was treated so lightly. Kisshomaru Ueshiba suggests that the police may have "worried about the social repercussions of arresting a famous *budoka*, especially one who was teaching many titled nobles…Thus, they may have decided not to arrest the budo man as 'proof' that only religious issues were the problem. The Founder's close relationship with influential nobles, military leaders, politicians and businessmen also must have protected him." (quoted from Stanley Pranin's summary in *Aikido Journal*.) Kisshomaru's own conclusion, however, is different and is stated in three points. (1) 開祖の純真なる人柄： The Founder had a sincere personality. (2) 容疑をこじつけようのない日頃の行動： His behavior in everyday life was impeccable. (3) He enjoyed a very close relationship with two students who held very senior positions in the police: Mr. Kenji Tomita, head of the Osaka-Fu Police at that time, and Mr. Giichi Morita, Marshal of Sonezaki Police Department. Kisshomaru Ueshiba does not discuss the first two points, but I think that they should not be underestimated. As for the third point, Kisshomaru quotes Morihei Ueshiba himself:

> 「弟子の中で．．．といえばおかしいが、富田健治さんからの一貫した誠意は忘れ難いものがある。第二次大本事件がおこった時、わしに対してとられた富田さ んの処置は、終生、忘れることが出来ません。あのころわしは 、気力こそ充実しておったが、健康にはある種の不安があったこともまた事実であった。だからもしあの時、心ない担当官などにあって長期間未決にでも収容さ れるようなことになっておれば、必ずや健康を害して再起不能 になっていたであろう。とすれば、はたして合気道の今日が考えられたかどうか．．．．」(p. 224.)
>
> "*Among all my students…. Mr. Kenji Tomita's unchanging good faith is unforgettable. When the Second Omoto Incident occurred, Mr. Tomita's way of dealing with me is something impossible to forget no matter how long I may live. In those days, although my spirit was full of vigor, it was also true that I felt a little uncertain about the state of my physical health. If I had been interrogated by some heartless (police) officer ... and detained... It is quite doubtful that aikido would exist today...*"

In this summary translation Kisshomaru omits the reason for his father's doubts about aikido. The police interrogation methods were known to be extremely severe, to the extent that Morihei Ueshiba's health, which was frail at the time, would most likely never have recovered.

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The following is Stanley Pranin's view of the issue:

> "*The occurrence of the Second Omoto Incident in December 1935 where once again the military government brutally suppressed the Omoto religion led to an abrupt halt to the activities of the Budo Senyokai. Many Omoto leaders including Onisaburo and his wife Sumiko were arrested. The government had also planned to detain Morihei as a leading Omoto figure but he was spared this fate due to the intervention of one of his Osaka students, Kenji Tomita, who happened to be the Osaka Police chief. Morihei was warned of the impending clampdown ahead of time and forced into hiding for about a month until things calmed down.*
> "*This incident proved to be a major bone of contention between Morihei and Yoichiro. Inoue felt that Ueshiba had betrayed the Omoto cause and—given his high position within the religious hierarchy—should have shared the fate of other Omoto leaders who were imprisoned and tortured by the authorities. As an aside, when this writer asked a higher-up in the Omoto hierarchy why Yoichiro was not arrested, his humorous reply was, "He was not one of the "big cheeses!"*

Kenji Tomita remained a student of Ueshiba's long after the second suppression. He reappears on the scene, but on the larger political stage as chief cabinet secretary under Prince Konoe. Tomita trained regularly at the Aikikai Hombu after the war and both Tomita and Konoe became officials of the Aikikai Foundation (Konoe of the prewar Kobukai Foundation). Thus his treatment of Morihei Ueshiba in 1935 can be seen as one episode in a close Student-Master relationship.

7. Nadolski's Conclusions

In his short general conclusion, Nadolski starts by pointing out a major difference between the first and second suppressions of Omoto. The first suppression occurred towards the end of a period of severe unrest. However, after 1921 Japan entered a period of peaceful development, and within less than one year Omoto itself recovered and began to regain momentum as a 'mass' religion. The circumstances of the second suppression were quite different. It occurred during a period of resurgence of conservative power against the radicals and right-wing groups. In fact the suppression was part of this reaffirmation. For the second suppression the government combined the Peace Preservation Law of 1925 with the laws against lese majeste, used for the suppression of right-wing groups and used the precedent of Omoto after 1935 to suppress other groups. In February 1936, there was a major revolt by radical army officers and Shillony argues that it came very close to succeeding. In the same year and in 1938 and 1939, religious groups were suppressed for offences against the Peace Preservation Law. In all 540 people were arrested and 314 were indicted. In 1937 the Education Ministry issued the *Kokutai no Hongi* (*True Meaning of the National Body*), which set out the doctrine of imperial orthodoxy that was supposed to govern the life of every citizen, and in 1939 passed the Religious Bodies Law, which brought all religious organizations under complete government control.

Nadolski sets out very clearly the particular reasons that prompted government action in the two cases. In 1921, the Hara Cabinet faced a number of crises: a power struggle with the Army; pressure from the United States and Great Britain to withdraw from Siberia; rice riots, strikes and labor unrest at home—and here was an organization that was inflaming the public with predictions of disaster and defeat in war in that year. In addition, the Hara Cabinet was the first body headed by a commoner and this marked a major step towards gaining party control of the Diet and of the restored emperor system. "The action he took against Omoto was rooted in two sources: his distaste for Omoto as a bizarre religious manifestation and; his consideration that the Omoto organization was a political embarrassment because of its disruptive influence on the Japanese public." (p. 280.)

The 1935 suppression marked another transition, which also influenced the government's response to organizations that it considered a threat. This was the transition to a totalitarian state, marked by the influence of the Army in every aspect of national life. The crushing of Kita and the radicals in 1936 was followed in 1938 by the Mobilization Law and in 1940 by the establishment of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, which extended the imperial ideology right down to the local neighborhoods and "welded the physical and spiritual energies of the Empire into one totalitarian unit for war." (p. 281.)

Nadolski makes two more points. The first is that Deguchi adapted Omoto doctrine to bring it into line with the development of the restored emperor system. The original mythical system of 1900 and 1901 had been contradictory to the imperial myths which were the foundation of the restored emperor system and thus of the imperial government. However, Deguchi modified the doctrine in 1920, 1924, 1933 and 1934, in order to identify his system with imperial tradition. Of course, it was natural for Deguchi to view the imperial institution as the source from which the rebirth of Japan would arise. However, Deguchi had a Wagnerian streak and believed that he himself was destined to participate directly in the development of the restored emperor system itself. Actually, the government support of the *Showa Shinseikai* suggested that Deguchi did indeed have an opportunity to forge a unique relationship with the political power of the government. However, either by design or by manipulation, Deguchi was brought to reject that possibility and to align Omoto with radicals and right-wing critics of the government. Thus he backed the wrong horse.

The second point is that Omoto was always denied recognition by the government as an officially approved religion. Thus, in order to gain another sort of recognition, it was always forced to reflect popular attitudes and aspirations.

> "*As a consequence, the study of the Omoto movement provides an important key to the perception of problems and crises facing the Japanese people from the Meiji times to the Pacific War…Too often foreigners have been left with the impression that from 1868 to 1945 the imperial mythical system was a monolithic religious unit to which the Japanese*

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> *people gave wholehearted and uniform obedience. A close consideration of the great variety of ways in which the popular religious organizations like Omoto and imperial government reacted towards each other provides us with a more accurate sense of the rich texture of modern Japanese history.*" (pp. 285-286.)

A Last Word: Morihei Ueshiba and Onisaburo Deguchi

As a general conclusion to this column, I would like to make a number of points.

1. The only contemporary statements made by Morihei Ueshiba that are known to me are those recorded in the *Budo* magazine for the *Dai Nippon Budo Senyokai*, from 1932 onwards, or cited by Kisshomaru Ueshiba in his biography. However, it is clear from this biography that many of these statements were made much later, as Ueshiba reflected on his wartime experiences. The contributions in the *Budo* magazine give a message that is completely in keeping with the ultra-nationalist politics of Omoto, seen though the narrow lenses of Onisaburo Deguchi. From 1927, on the other hand, Morihei Ueshiba moved to Tokyo and began to move in military circles, which gradually extended as his fame increased and the Kobukan Dojo opened in 1931. It is important to note that these circles were far wider than the narrow world of the young radicals of the *Sakurakai* and their ultra-nationalist advisers, who met in the Kobukan dojo. Ben-Ami Shillony and Meirion & Susie Harries (details below) produce some weighty evidence that the activities of the young radical officers, which began in the mid-1920s and culminated in the revolt on February 25, 1936, enjoyed the support of an increasing number of highly influential figures, who appear to have condoned, or not to have 'seen' that that these activities would result in bloodshed. It is unlikely that many of these influential figures would have agreed with the extreme views of Kita Ikki, Inoue Nissho, or Tachibana Kozaburo, but they did, however, support the need for *yo-naoshi* (world renewal) and probably thought that if the radical officers were successful, well, that would not be a bad thing. However, there is no direct evidence that Ueshiba actively supported the *Sakurakai* radicals or conceived of *yamato-damashii* and the *kokutai* in such an exclusively narrow way. The last two columns have been concerned to show that these concepts were far more multi-faceted than has been commonly accepted.
2. Stanley Pranin suggests in one of his essays that the second Omoto suppression marked the end of the Kobukan. I am not sure that this is quite right. In fact, the wide military circles in which Morihei Ueshiba moved allowed him to survive the second suppression relatively unscathed and continue his activities both in the Kobukan and in the various military schools in which he taught. The 'end' of the Kobukan came with the war, as more and more deshi were called up to fight. There is some evidence, to be considered in a future column, that between 1935 and 1942 Morihei Ueshiba changed his views about the war.
3. Morihei Ueshiba had a close relationship with Sakaku Takeda, a relationship from which he gradually extricated himself. Takeda's visit to Osaka in 1936 marks that point, though there are conflicting opinions about Ueshiba's reluctance to confront Takeda on that occasion. Similarly, he had a close relationship with Onisaburo Deguchi, a relationship which evolved to the point of near extinction after the second Omoto suppression in 1935. However, this relationship was not quite like the earlier relationship with Takeda. Like Deguchi, Ueshiba had the ability, the charisma, to motivate people to do what he wanted, but the best way of characterizing Ueshiba would be that he was searching, he was driven, to be someone other than who he thought he was. Thus he warmly embraced Deguchi—who also saw in Ueshiba someone perfectly suited to help him carry out his own religious and political aims—as a guru and soul mate, but the embrace became less fervent, to the extent that his own quest remained unsatisfied. Thus, from one viewpoint Morihei Ueshiba appears as benevolently 'selfish', in the way he related to others, students, teachers, friends alike.

Reading

All the books mentioned in the previous columns are relevant here, especially *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, Vol 2. Relevant sections are Chapter 44, "The Rise of Revolutionary Nationalism," pp. 948-1002, and Ch 48, "The New Religions," pp. 1137--1146. (Wm Theodore de Barry, Carol Gluck, Arthur E Tiedmann, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 1600-200, Second Edition, 2005, Columbia U P.) Stanley Pranin has published an English translation of Kyotaro Deguchi's biography of Onisaburo (出口京太郎，*巨人出口王仁三郎*，講談社，1967; *The Great Onisaburo Deguchi*, 1998, Aiki News) and also detailed summaries of Kisshomaru Ueshiba's life of the Founder. The Japanese version of the biography is植芝吉祥丸，*合気道開祖植芝盛平伝*，1998, 出版芸術社. There is another biography, rather more selectively written, by Kanemoto Sunadomari (砂泊兼基，*合気道開祖植芝盛平伝「武の真人」*，1981, 2007, たま出版). Stanley Pranin has also published an English translation of the earlier parts of this. Nadolski's doctoral thesis has not been published (Thomas P Nadolski, *The Socio-political Background of the 1921 and 1935 Omoto Suppressions in Japan*, 1975, U of Pennsylvania PhD Dissertation, University Microfilms). There is a bibliography of works on the new religions by Peter B Clarke. (*A Bibliography of Japanese New Religious Movements*, 1999, Curzon, Japan Library.) Carmen Blacker has produced a pioneering work on shamanism in Japan. (Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, 1975, Allen & Unwin.) The *Sakurakai* is mentioned in various secondary sources, with discussion of its activities in the following works: Ben-Amy Shillony, *Revolt in Japan, The Young Officers and the February 26, 1936 Incident*, 1973, Princeton U P; Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, 1991, Random House; Stephen S Large, *Emperor Hirohito & Showa Japan: A Political Biography*, 1992, Routledge. Shillony also has an essay in a collection of papers on politics in prewar Japan: George M Wilson (Editor), *Crisis Politics in Prewar Japan: Institutional and Ideological Problems of the 1930s*, 1970, Sophia U P (Tokyo). Selections from the writings of Kita Ikki can be found in *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, cited above, and the companion volume *Sources of Chinese Tradition* gives extracts from Wang Yang-ming's New Learn-

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ing of the Mind-and-Heart (Wm Theodore de Barry & Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume One: From the Earliest Times to 1600*, Second Edition, 1999, Columbia U P). Japanese military ethics and war crimes are discussed at length by Yuki Tanaka. (Yuki Tanaka, *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II*, 1996, Westview / Perseus Books.)

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.

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