Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 14 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE
VI: The Question of *Kotodama*
Part 2: *Kotodama* becomes Japanese:
From Motoori Norinaga to World War II

The main thread of this column was explained in the first few pages of Column 13 (which is really intended as a *kotodama* 'foundation text'). Along with intensive training in 'aiki' and 'internal' skills, *kotodama* is thought by some present-day aikidoka to have been an essential part of Morihei Ueshiba's own training that has been lost to postwar aikido. There are a number of possibilities here: Morihei Ueshiba's practical beliefs in *kotodama* were actually known by some of Ueshiba's disciples, who also did the training and practiced the rituals, to the extent that they understood them. However, they were practiced comparatively rarely, shown to very few students, and are certainly not part of mainstream aikido. Alternatively, many of Ueshiba's disciples were never actually exposed to his *kotodama* theory, or *kotodama* training, and did not take any steps to learn about this for themselves. It follows that these disciples cannot, obviously, teach Ueshiba's *kotodama* (the theory or the training) to their own students and so the latter have the choice of either forgetting about *kotodama* altogether, or attempting to rediscover it for themselves. (I specify 'Ueshiba's' *kotodama*, in order to distinguish it from other types that are presumably accessible, such as the theory and training methods found in Onisaburo Deguchi's *Reikai Monogatari*, which one might assume is still practiced by members of the Omoto religion.)

The previous column discussed in detail the general phenomenon of Sanskrit 'seed' syllables, as explained by Kukai (Kobo Daishi), and the occurrence of *kotodama* in the *Man'yoshu*, the earliest collection of Japanese poetry. The two were placed side by side, as two central pillars in the understanding of *kotodama*, but any connection between them was left relatively unexplored. This column begins with the later developments of Shingon Buddhism and Shinto in medieval Japanese culture and considers the extent to which the two were fused, or borrowed from each other. As a corollary, we consider in more detail the problem, merely touched upon in the last column, which was extensively discussed by Jin'ichi Konishi in his history of Japanese literature: to what extent the Japanese language in general, and *kotodama* in particular, can be seen as 'exclusively' unique. We then consider *kotodama* as understood by the nativist (*kokugaku*) scholars, such as Motoori Norinaga.

From Motoori Norinaga and the nativists, we move on to consider Onisaburo Deguchi and the Omoto religion. Together with the ancient chronicles, such as the *Kojiki* (also used by Deguchi), Deguchi's major work, *Reikai Monogatari*, was studied extensively by Morihei Ueshiba and Ueshiba's doctrine of *kotodama* shows this provenance. Finally, we will discuss the use made of *kotodama* in the 1930s by the Japanese military government, in its efforts to create a nation of patriots willing to wage war on a global scale. The classic text here is the 1935 *Kokutai no Hongi* (*Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*). The question arises whether this document had any effect on the thinking of Kisshomaru Ueshiba and this will lead on to a discussion of Kisshomaru's views on *kotodama*.

Japan's Fifteen Years War began in 1930 with her invasion of China and ended with her defeat in 1945. This is one Japanese way of referring to the conflict that, for most Americans, began in 1941 with the invasion of Pearl Harbor. When Morihei Ueshiba moved to Tokyo in 1927, his son, Kisshomaru Ueshiba, accompanied him and lived through the war in Tokyo. Kisshomaru was nine years old in 1930, when the war with China began, and was fourteen when the *Kokutai no Hongi* tract was published. So he spent much of his boyhood and his youth in wartime Japan. When he became old enough to be called up for military service, Kisshomaru was refused entry into the armed forces on medical grounds. Nevertheless, it was Kisshomaru Ueshiba who was largely responsible for the postwar reconstruction of aikido and he was also largely responsible for the postwar information flow concerning his father. Thus, his views on *kotodama* are of major importance.

(NOTE: One important feature of these columns on *kotodama* is that I will quote original sources and secondary authorities very extensively. The reason for this is that, unlike many other writers on *kotodama* in aikido, I have no wish to present the results of my own researches as 'timeless truths'. Accordingly, *AikiWeb* readers who wish to test my arguments here and in the other columns about language will really need to do what I have done and also examine all these sources and authorities. I have given a selection of these in the Reading section, at the end of the column.)

6. The Wheat and the Chaff Coalesce:
Developments in Shinto and Buddhism

Kukai's doctrine of 'seed' syllables and Shingon Buddhism were discussed in some detail in Column 13. The reasons why they were discussed there, out of chronological order, and not here, are (1) that the tradition of 'seed' syllables is very old, certainly much older than any explicit tradition of *kotodama* in Japan, and (2) that Yoshito Hakeda, the translator and editor of Kukai's works, drew a parallel between the *mantra* of Shingon Buddhism and the *kotodama* of 'Shinto'. There is an issue about this relationship, which can be seen from the theories of Jin'ichi Konishi. Whereas Hakeda sees a 'fusion' between the two, Konishi sees *kotodama* and Shingon as developing on parallel lines, but separately, rather than as two aspects of a single whole. This is because Konishi believes that *kotodama* is a uniquely Japanese property of the Japanese language. In this section we will explore the relations between Buddhism and Shinto more deeply and then consider Konishi's views on *kotodama* in general. In Column 13 Konishi's views on *kotodama* were briefly discussed in conjunction with the *Man'yoshu*. *Kotodama* (spirit[s] residing or hidden in words) was distinguished from *kotoage* (the making of utterances) and *kotowaza* (spells and proverbs). Konishi's general views on

kotodama need to be treated in greater detail, in order to prepare for the treatment of *kotodama* by Motoori Norinaga and the *kokugaku* scholars.

Shinbutsu Shugo* and *Honji Suijaku

In the medieval period (which began with the decline of the *ritsuryo* system in the tenth and eleventh centuries) the centralization of *kami* worship more or less collapsed and at the same time Shinto 'doctrines' developed. There is a background to this: the transition from clan-based to more individual ritual practice. As Yoshito Hakeda also noted (Column 13),

> "*During the ancient period, kami ritual was a local or clan-based practice that followed a cyclical pattern. Its aim was to ensure the prosperity and peaceful existence of the community, be it clan or state. Kami worship was a communal affair and did not address the concerns of individuals.*" (Satoshi Ito, 2003, p. 63.)

It follows that whatever beliefs there were in *kotodama*, the exercise of this 'spirit residing in words' was also a strictly communal affair. This is of some importance when one considers later ideas about *kotodama*, especially the ideas of Morihei Ueshiba, which applied to the world as a whole, as well as to individuals in the world—and especially to himself. This latter aspect of his belief simply was not applicable in the ancient period. Closely related to the communal aspect of *kami* worship was the matter of status. This status determined the level of participation in the worship at the provincial shrine and, of course, it is highly unlikely that the lower strata of the population performed such rituals and so *kotodama* would have passed them by. So, if we follow the thinking of Hakeda to its logical conclusion, *kotodama*, as something to be invoked or used, would not have been available to the rank and file members of the clan.

> "*However, when kami became widely identified as manifestations of Buddhist divinities, their function, too, came to resemble that of buddhas and bodhisattvas: now individual believers addressed their hopes and wishes for this life and the next to kami as they did to Buddhist divinities.*" (Satoshi Ito, ibid.)

Shinto and Buddhism have been separated only since the shrine-temple separation edicts of 1868. Before this Buddhist and *kami* beliefs intermingled and this process was given the modern term of *shinbutsu shugo* (amalgamation of *kami* cults and Buddhism). The term *shugo* goes back to Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511), who used the term *Ryobu Shugo Shinto* to denote the 'Shinto that amalgamates the *kami* and the two mandalas' (the Womb and the Diamond Realm mandalas), ascribed to Kukai and Saicho (the founder of Tendai Buddhism). The term *Shugo Shinto*, later *Ryobu Shinto*, became established to designate the type of Buddhist Shinto rites and theories that have strong links with Esoteric Buddhism. The term *Honji Suijaku* has a longer history. It first appeared as an explanation in 937 and makes use of the theory (explained in the discussion of Kukai in Column 13) that buddhas and bodhisattvas are 'eternal', but manifest themselves to the human community, in this case as *kami*. The *kami* are thus seen as 'traces' of the eternal buddhas. The two terms therefore play somewhat different roles and emphasize different aspects of the intermingling of Buddhist and *kami* beliefs.

The main question here is the extent of the interaction between Buddhism and what can roughly be called Shinto. There are a number of separate issues here: the extent to which Buddhism was seen as 'foreign'—which is actually a persistent feature of Japanese religious history, right up to the Meiji Restoration and beyond; the extent to which Shinto made use of Buddhist sutras and the whole apparatus of '*sanmitsu*' *shugyo* of Esoteric Buddhism; the extent, if at all, to which there was movement in the opposite direction: the extent to which Buddhism made use of 'Shinto' concepts like *kotodama*. (Incidentally, a few days ago, after aikido training, I had a brief conversation with the son of a local Shinto priest. The son was being groomed to follow his father's footsteps and eventually assume headship of the shrine. He thought he was a typical example of postwar Japanese Shinto—and believed that *kotodama* was quite alien to Buddhism.)

Shugendo and Kagura

The effects of the 'importation' of Esoteric Buddhism can be seen more clearly in the cases of *shugendo* and *kagura*. *Shugendo*, especially, played an important role in the popularization of Buddhist *shugyo*, or ascetic training. As Hakeda noted in his description of Shinto (Column 13), in ancient Japan mountains were considered more sacred than plains and mountain worship existed long before the arrival of Buddhism in any form. The practice of religious austerities came with Buddhism and this expanded with the general court approval given to Shingon and Tendai Buddhism. Kukai practiced austerities on Mt Koya, a short distance from the Kumano shrines, and is alleged to have begun the practice of making pilgrimages to sacred sites. With the decline of the *ritsuryo* system and state sponsorship of temples, the temples began to advertize the magical powers of their main divinities and from the Kamakura period onwards the practice of making pilgrimages gradually spread to the lower layers of the population. Despite the gradual separation of popular *kami* worship from the distinct religious system of *shugendo*, first the *hijiri*, itinerant half monks and half laymen, and then the *yamabushi,* the practitioners of *shugendo*, played a major role in preaching and making magical rituals available to the average Japanese in the street—or in the village.

As for *kagura*, there is a close connection here with *Shugendo*. Irit Averbuch sums it up well.

> "*According to Shugendo, Kukai's doctrinal aspiration of 'becoming a buddha in this very body' (*sokushin jobutsu*) is to be achieved through ascetic practice. The* yamabushi*, who are mainly concerned with the physical pursuit of spiritual, as well as tangible, magical power, thus chose asceticism as their way. They became the sorcerers, healers, exorcists, and local priests in charge of fertility rites of rural Japan and, inspired by*

> *esoteric Buddhism, they produced the spectacular rituals for which they are famous. The* yamabushi *are often credited with having popularized Buddhism, especially the Mikkyo variety, in Japan. One of the most widespread ways in which they did this is through the performing arts. The* yamabushi *have thus deeply influenced not only the Japanese folk-religious worldview and ritual practices, but also the numerous forms of the performing arts.*" (Averbuch, in Teeuwen and Rambelli, 2003, p. 314.)

What Averbuch does not state here is that the arts also included martial arts, especially in the later medieval period. Ito Satoshi cites the example of the Shimazu *daimyo*, who employed warriors with a *yamabushi* background to lead their armies (Ito, in Inoue, 2003, p. 96). Drawing on the researches of Japanese scholars, especially Hitoshi Miyake, Averbuch goes on to explain the significance of the 験 (*gen*) in 修験道 (*shugendo*).

> "*What directed the* yamabushi *towards the performing arts was the general concept of* gen*, or magical powers gained through asceticism.* Gen *is acquired as a direct result of the austerities undergone by the* yamabushi*, and forms their professional qualification. It is his* gen *that gives the* yamabushi *the shamanic capability to communicate with and draw on the power of kami and buddhas.* Gen *also endows the* yamabushi *with magical mastery over fire, water, and swords.* Yamabushi *often conduct rites of "displaying* gen*" to demonstrate their magical abilities to their parishioners. These rites include manipulating* mudra *(hand signs) and magical steps (*henbai*), as well as drumming and reciting sutras and mantras. These techniques have given rise to acrobatic and entertaining performances, and thus to the development of what is now known as folk performances (*minzoku geino*). As early as the late Kamakura period, the* yamabushi *embraced the performing arts as one way to propagate their own world-view and enact their rites; historically, this coincides with the spread of the* honji suijaku *paradigm and, indeed, of the* Shugendo *movement itself. Their involvement in the arts was also due to their closeness to the common people and their folk traditions, which provided the demand for* yamabushi *performances as well as their subjects.*" (Averbuch, in Teeuwen and Rambelli, 2003, pp. 314-315.)

Averbuch then gives a detailed discussion of the close relationship between *shugendo* and *kagura*, which, we have already noted (and is stressed also by Konishi, below), is an established vehicle for the display of *kotodama*. Her book, *The Gods Come Dancing: A Study of the Yamabushi Kagura*, goes into much greater detail than the essay quoted here.

The use of esoteric Buddhist practices by the *yamabushi* to achieve their 'magic' (note that they were also practitioners of 'folk' Shinto) is the closest we have come so far to anything resembling the blend of the two traditions exemplified by Morihei Ueshiba. In addition, underlying these ritual practices by the *yamabushi* is the assumed existence of *kotodama*, understood as the power behind the sutras and mantras. However, it is not clear when, or even whether, the *yamabushi* incorporated into their ritual practices any **theory** of 'seed' syllables, such as was expounded by Kukai, or went so far as to identify these 'seed' syllables with the deities with whom they sought to come into contact, or whether they developed any theories about the actual working of *kotodama*, such as Jin'ichi Konishi ascribes to thoughtful Japanese in the late Ancient and the Middle Ages.

Jin'ichi Konishi:
***Kotodama* as the Touchstone of 'Japanese-ness'**

In Column 13, we already had reason to quote and discuss the views of Jin'ichi Konishi on *kotodama* and *kotoage*. We need to discuss his general views on *kotodama* more fully, for it could be argued that Konishi's theories are a rather subtle example of 日本人論 (*Nihonjinron*: theories of Japanese [{unique}ness]). One implication of this argument is that Konishi prejudged the matter of *kotodama* to begin with and that this pre-judgment lessens the value of his research.

Konishi's general thesis is that *kotodama* was a product at least of the Archaic Age of Japan, when the entire culture was indigenous (with no 'foreign' interference: or 'contamination'), and was treated with wistful nostalgia by the poets of the succeeding Ancient Age, when the *Man'yoshu* came to be written. Konishi helpfully supplies a chart:

> "*Archaic Age: Only indigenous Japanese culture exists; literature, history, politics, religion are undifferentiated.*
> *Ancient Age: Primitive elements remain while changes occur during the acceptance of Chinese culture.*
> Stage One*: Literature is not thought independent of history, politics, religion etc.*
> Stage Two*: An awareness of literary expression emerges.*
> *Middle Ages: In the main genres, literary awareness undergoes change with the acceptance of Chinese culture.*
> Stage One *(Early): Furyu ideology* (雅of elegance)
> Stage Two *(High): Michi ideology*
> Stage Three *(Late): Jori ideology*
> *Modern Age: Different changes occur with the acceptance of Western culture.*"
> (Konishi, Vol. 1, p. 57.)

One observation that needs to be made here concerns the tightness of these general categories. There is no evidence, for example, that the culture of the Archaic Age was completely indigenous. Konishi assumes that there was no

contact whatever between the Japanese islands and other islands accessible by boat.

Konishi then gives an account of the origins of Japanese literature, largely borrowed from the work of a Japanese scholar of anthropology, named Shinobu Origuchi. The account is too long to quote here, but can be summarized:

> 1. Powerful clan chieftains governed ancient village communities. They were also religious leaders and chose shamanesses or high priestesses from among their close relatives. These delivered oracles, on the basis of which the chieftains, as deputies of their clan deities, governed their communities.
> 2. The deities paid regular visits to the world of men. There they bequeathed incantations designed to improve human life and labor. These divine incantations were given in the form of direct commands to local spirits, which the latter were forced to obey. These visiting deities / spirits were called *marebito*.
> 3. The divine incantations, uttered by the shamaness or priestess while in a state of trance or possession, represented the thoughts or deeper awareness of the entire tribe. The contents varied and concerned: the god's own antecedents; the creation of the country; the growing of food; human destiny; conditions for receiving the gods (*misogi*, purification); the purging of evil spirits (*harae*, exorcism). Gradually, the incantations were collected into a single body.
> 4. Incantations later came to contain narrated and spoken sections. The narrated sections were told from the god's own standpoint, in the first person, but the narrative personae were occasionally confused. Later, narrated sections were exclusively in the third person. Since the spoken section was the god's own utterances, these were narrated in the first person. These evolved into *wazauta* ("short, lyric passages of concentrated purity"), or *kotowaza* (proverbs).
> 5. Incantations, as a means of translating past events into reality, gave way to recited narratives demonstrating how the past was related to reality. These narratives were handed down through the generations by professional storytellers, called *kataribe*. When a *kataribe* left the tribe and moved away, the style would have degenerated from the traditional to the entertaining. "With this straying from sacred rites, narrative was simultaneously liberated as art."
>
> (Summarized from Konishi, Vol. 1, pp. 95-96.)

Kataribe are alive and well in present-day Japan. In Hiroshima they are called 'A-Bomb Witnesses'. As survivors of the atomic explosion in August 1945, they are registered by the city government and recount their experiences to visiting groups. The important point at issue here is the act of recounting. I have read many accounts of their experiences in book form, but what matters in Hiroshima is the actual recounting of their experiences. It is almost like a ritual, as if the recounting itself is an essential element in the understanding of the experience. For many years the city government has been making a collection of tapes, for soon the 'A-Bomb Witnesses' will all have gone. But the experience of viewing a tape will not quite be the same as that of hearing and questioning a survivor, who was actually there at the time.

We shall encounter Shinobu Origuchi later in this column, in connection with Kisshomaru Ueshiba's account of *kotodama*. Origuchi's theory here, however, should be compared with the account of early Shinto given by Eiji Matsumae in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, and discussed in Column 13. Konishi believes Origuchi's theory to be true, on the grounds that, while severely criticized, it "continues to attract enthusiastic exponents". The main point for Konishi, however, is that the five stages summarized above, all in the Archaic Age, were characterized by the shared belief, common throughout the Yamato tribes, in the power of *kotodama*.

In the first volume of his history, Konishi devotes a major section to *kotodama*. The title of the section is, "The Ancient Age: The Age of Kotodama." Konishi himself admits that this is rather odd, since the Ancient Age was actually marked by the presence of *ga* (雅: literary elegance), rather than *zoku* (俗: popular: "belonging to a world without precedents, a world without fixed form"), which appears to be a conduit for *kotodama* in an unusually concentrated form. His explanation is that *kotodama* is actually an ideal.

> "*The kotodama flourished in the Archaic Age, whereas one notices a certain attenuation in the Ancient Age. If I nevertheless venture to grasp the essential character of the age on the basis of the ideal known as the kotodama, it is because the writers and poets of the age realized that the true nature of Yamato literature lay in the kotodama...*" (Konishi, Vol. 1, p. 203.)

For Konishi, the main evidence of this ideal is the *Man'yoshu*, especially the three poems analyzed in Column 13. As was stated in Column 13, the evidence afforded by the *Man'yoshu* is absolutely crucial for understanding the future development of Japanese theories of *kotodama*. However, the central issue is how this evidence is evaluated. Konishi argues that *kotodama* was a 'force' that existed well before the actual awareness of *kotodama* as such came into being. The occasion for the emergence of this awareness was the dispatch of envoys to the T'ang court in China, when the *kotodama* came to be seen as a distinctive characteristic of the Yamato language. Konishi's argument is gloriously circular and is worth quoting at length:

> "I*n archaic times the kotodama was alive throughout Yamato, and so people in those times never felt the need for an explicit concept called 'the kotodama'. All they knew was that the utterance of a kotoage would bring about a result, be it good or evil. It did not occur to them to reflect*

> *that this process was caused by spiritual or occult properties hidden within the language. The later, ancient, people could distinguish themselves from the spiritual or occult properties hidden within their language, and were able to observe them as objects. At least, this may be how the concept represented by the word 'kotodama' came into being. They were capable of objectifying processes entailing language because their minds functioned more subtly than those of their ancestors. And contact with the continental culture seems to have influenced indirectly the fostering of this attitude of observation. More importantly, the creation of a concept known as the kotodama led to its idealization, with the result that Yamato literature was given a new, practical-minded direction. People came to realize that the kotodama was the distinguishing feature of Yamato literature only with the passing of the period in which the integrated forces of the kotodama and the act of kotoage had enjoyed their greatest activity. Insofar as the Ancient Age represented the progressive attenuation of an absolute faith in the spiritual power displayed by the kotoage, people of the age found it necessary to stress their realization that the kotodama was a feature unique to Yamato literature.*" (Konishi, Vol, 1, pp. 204-205.)

Konishi makes some huge assumptions here and these assumptions need to be seen for what they are. The first assumption is that *kotodama* existed, even though there was no word for it and people in the Archaic Age did not even realize it. The second, which seems to go counter to the first, is that people in the Archaic Age had an awareness of the powers of *kotoage*, as a linguistic means of unleashing the effects of *kotodama*. The third is that their descendants in the Ancient Age had a greater level of mental sophistication, which yielded an ability to observe the actual effects of words used in certain ways, even though awareness of these effects in one particular case, *kotodama*, was actually diminishing. The fourth assumption is that *kotodama* was unique to the Yamato language. In one sense this is true but trivial: *kotodama* is Japanese because the Yamato language is Japanese; the implication is far less trivial: *kotodama*, as an efficacious spiritual power residing in words, works only in the Yamato language. In particular, it does not work in Chinese. One consequence of this, according to Konishi, was the creation of a tradition that dictated that *waka* poetry should be composed only in the Yamato language. The main evidence, again, the three poems from the *Man'yoshu*, was examined in Column 13.

In the second volume of his history, dealing with the Early Middle Ages, Konishi notes that,

> "zoku [俗: vulgar] *expression in the Archaic and Ancient Ages is liveliest when linked to the* kotodama*. To be sure, the* kotodama *declined after the second half of the Ancient Age, moving closer to the principle of* ga [雅: elegance]*; but this is true only in comparison with the archaic and early ancient* kotodama*. From the second half of the Ancient Age and throughout the Middle Ages the* kotodama *was transformed on certain fronts, but on the whole remained fairly vigorous.*" (Konishi, Vol, 2, p. 111.)

Konishi then considers a later *waka* poem composed in 849 by a priest of Kotofukuji, in honor of the fortieth birthday of Emperor Nimmyo. The poet uses a phrase about *kotodama* that is familiar from the *Man'yoshu*, but adds quite a lot more:

"*Omiyo o*	*That your august reign*
Yorozuyo inori	*May continue evermore,*
Hotoke ni mo	*Humbly we beseech*
Kami ni mo	*The Buddha and all the gods*
Tatematsuru	*To hear this our prayer.*
Koto no kotoba wa	*The words that form our poem*
Kono kuni no	*Are drawn wholly from*
Mototsu kotoba ni	*The language used of old*
Oiyorite	*In this our land:*
Morokoshi no	*We do not need*
Kotoba o karazu	*Chinese vocabulary,*
Fumi shirusu	*And seek no help from*
Hakase yatowazu	*Professors who write Chinese prose.*
Kono kuni no	*As generations past*
Iitsutauraku	*Have long said of this our land:*
Hinomoto no	*The land of Yamato,*
Yamato no kuni wa	*Country of the rising sun,*
Kotodama no	*Is a land of blessings*
Sakiwau kuni to zo	*Granted by the kotodama.*
Furugoto ni	*Thus have we believed*
Nagarekitareru	*Ever since the days of old;*
Kamugoto ni	*Thus it has been told*
Tsutaekitareru…	*As it was spoken by the gods.*"

(Konishi, *History*, Vol 2, p. 113.)

As we shall see in the next section, Konishi follows Motoori Norinaga in equating being 'uniquely' Japanese with not being Chinese.

> "*The priests were aware that their chokka, a virtual list of auspicious things, was recited in anticipation that the kotodama would function. The composers state, moreover, that Chinese vocabulary is to be eschewed, since the kotodama lodges only within Yamato words. I consider the latter point particularly important.*" (Konishi, Vol. 2, pp. 113-114.)

Thus there is the same nostalgia in the poem for times past, when *kotodama* granted Yamato many blessings. Konishi notes in passing that the *kotodama* functioned in *semmyo* (royal proclamations delivered in the Yamato language) and in *kagura*, which is "essentially performed to effect, through song and dance, amicable relations between gods and human beings and therefore requires a medium that both will understand" (Konishi, Vol, 2, 115).

Konishi quotes the above poem as evidence that *kotodama* still flourished in the Early Middle Ages. Note that the poet also enlists the support of the Buddha, as well as of the *kami*. However, even when Shingon Buddhism took root in Japan, Konishi holds that *kotodama* maintained its identity and integrity. The occasion for this statement is a discussion of the Noh play *Okina*. The play opens with lines that are "unintelligible".

> "*Toto tarari tararira*
> *Tarari agari rararito*
>
> *Chiriya tarari tararira*
> *Tarari agari rararito.*"

Konishi notes that the "incantatory nature" of these lines, "invoking peace on earth and abundant harvest, is immediately apparent." There is also another feature common to *kotodama* belief: the breath accompanying specially uttered words is anticipated to effect auspicious results. However, there is the problem that *kotodama* works only when intelligible Yamato language is uttered. Konishi believes that

> "*the dharani of Esoteric Buddhism are probably the origins of the perception that magical effects can be obtained from words of unknown meaning. Esoteric Buddhism also considers such meaningless monosyllables as "a", "i", "un", and "ka" to possess magical properties. My intention is not to assert that "Toto tarari…" is a dharani, but to propose that Esoteric Buddhism fostered a perception among the people that meaningless sounds might also possess magical powers. And because popular belief in kotodama—a power activated by meaningful sounds—already existed, it served as the foundation on which the new perception was built.*"
> (Konishi, Vol 2, p. 117.)

Here, Konishi shifts his ground somewhat. He has moved away from the strict position that *kotodama* operates only when the Yamato language is employed, to the position that *kotodama* operates when "intelligible" language is used in a given form. Notice also that there is no trace here of the recognition that "a", "i", "un", and "ka" are Sanskrit 'seed' syllables, possessing the awesome properties noted by Kukai (See Column 13). Here they are 'unintelligible syllables', but thought by ordinary *kotodama* believers to possess magical powers. Konishi appears to understand *kotodama* in the following senses, given in Column 13: "(3) the spirit or soul of individual sounds or words in the Japanese language, whether (4) spoken singly, or (5) spoken together in utterances, or written, (6) in *kana*. A consequence of this is (8) the more general sense, which seems to be favored in the *Man'yoshu*, of *kotodama* as 'words followed by appropriate actions': the actions have to match the words exactly."

I have spent some time considering the work of Jin'ichi Konishi because he represents a way of thinking known as *Nihonjinron*. He gives the Archaic Yamato language the unique quality of possessing the *kotodama* and believes that this sets Japan apart from its neighbors, especially China. The English translation of Konishi's history is now out of print and some volumes are rare, but his history might well be compared with another general history of Japanese literature, written by Shuichi Kato and also translated into English. Kato covers much the same ground in three volumes that Konishi does in five, but Kato does not so much as even mention the word *kotodama* in his entire work.

How good is Konishi as a guide through the 'sacred swamp' that is *kotodama*? He certainly believes he is an excellent guide, as he expertly steers his trusting charges through the shoals of misguided literary criticism. However, with respect to *kotodama* itself, he has little to offer, beyond the conviction that it must have existed and that it was confined to the Yamato language. In this respect, Konishi is riding on the coat tails of Motoori Norinaga and the nativists.

7. The Wheat and the Chaff Separate:
Motoori Norinaga and the Nativists

At some point the seed syllables were shorn of their 'foreignness' and became supposedly 'pure' Japanese sounds. This process was begun by the 'nativist' scholars. We have had occasion to discuss the nativist scholars before, in connection with the *iemoto* system (Column 10). The leading scholars were: Keichu (1640-1701), Kada no Azumamaro (1669-1736), Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801)—considered the central figure of nativism, and Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), who coined the phrase *kokugaku*. Each of these scholars explored a different segment of the general area of ancient texts. Thus, Keichu studied the *Man'yoshu*, as did Kamo no Mabuchi. Mabuchi apparently recommended to Motoori the study of the *Kojiki*. Hirata claimed to be the successor of Motoori, but made *kokugaku* much more of a populist national movement. In this respect, also, Onisaburo Deguchi followed Hirata. Of course, a belief in *kotodama* underlay the thinking of all the above scholars. On the other hand, there were other *kokugaku* scholars, who were less well known, and some of these seriously questioned the methods and conclusions of Motoori. There is no space here for a detailed account of nativism, so only those topics will be discussed which have a bearing on kotodama: (a) a Golden Age, when (b) people spoke the Yamato language, which (c) was lost by the acquisition of Chinese—the writing system and the thinking behind it, (d) which is recoverable by a close study of the *Kojiki* text. We will conclude with a few remarks on nativist semantics.

(a) People of a Golden Age…

Peter Nosco wrote a seminal book about the nativists and the title, *Remembering Paradise*, is quite apt. All these scholars, like Jin'ichi Konishi over a century later, were searching for a lost archaic 'Golden Age', which they were certain really existed and which could be discovered from the study of ancient texts, such as the *Man'yoshu* poems, the ancient chronicles: *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, and *norito* prayers. There was much discussion about the importance of some texts as compared with others, but the underlying presence of *kotodama*, both in the archaic Golden Age itself and also in

the later texts that allegedly described it, was always assumed. In this archaic Golden Age, Yamato people not only lived their lives in blissful tranquility, but they also spoke the Yamato language, which was the sole vehicle for the power of *kotodama*. Probably the best contemporary fictional metaphor would be a non-juvenile version of Hogwarts without the corrupting influence of Voldemort, or even the questionable influence of Muggles.

However, the central argument used by Motoori for this unique cultural purity was merely that the Yamato language existed before Chinese characters were adopted for its writing system. The encroachment of Chinese writing on Japan served as a corrupting influence. (The question of 'corruption' by any other 'foreign' influences, such as from Korea or Polynesia, was left unasked.) This is the origin of the general theory that *kotodama* is uniquely Japanese and also clearly underlies Konishi's supposedly modern theory, that the 'power' of *kotodama*, at its zenith in the 'Archaic Age', waned, to the extent that Yamato literature took on Chinese forms of expression. Since the Japanese language is 'uniquely' Japanese, *kotodama*, also, could hardly be anything else. One of the clearest statements of this belief in the primacy of the Japanese language is to be found in the Preface to Ann Wehmeyer's translation of Motoori Norinaga's *Kojiki-den*, written by Naoki Sakai.

> "*We cannot help noticing something extremely novel and eccentric in Motoori's insistence on a distinction between the Chinese orientation of the* Nihonshoki *and the Japaneseness inherent in the* Kojiki. *While the* Nihonshoki *and the* Kojiki *both were historiographical attempts in the eighth century to construct the histories of the Yamato dynasty and the Imperial lineage, Motoori Norinaga reconstructed the entire* Kojiki *on the assumption that Japanese national or ethnic language existed when it was originally written, and he thereby turned the* Kojiki *into a self-consciously Japanese text. Thus, from the outset, Motoori's* Kojiki-den *insists on reading the text of the* Kojiki *on the explicitly declared premise that it is written in the Japanese language.*
>
> "*What we now can find in Motoori's work ...was not merely an introduction of one or more interpretation of the ancient text, but also the creation of a new set of regimes (reading, writing, reciting, narrating, and so forth) whereby the classic text was recreated. Therefore it is impossible to understand Motoori's work simply in terms of his discovery of the ancient Japanese language, Japanese phonetics, syntax, and grammar, and so on, that is, in those terms that are believed to have existed before Motoori's and Kogaku scholars' interventions. It seems that what Motoori achieved by 'reading' the* Kojiki *was to establish conditions of possibility for the knowledge of Japanese language to emerge. As a result of these changes, the possibility of talking about the Japanese ethnic or national language emerged. In other words, Motoori and others invented Japanese language as an object of systematic study in the 18th century.*" (Wehmeyer, p. vii-ix.)

Motoori devoted thirty-five years to producing a detailed commentary on the *Kojiki*. However, the commentary was not merely a commentary. Motoori took the entire manuscript *kanbun* text of the *Kojiki* and transcribed the entire work in the *kana* syllable system, adding detailed explanations about which Chinese characters should be read for their sound and which for their meaning. Philologists in the Greek and Latin Classics usually go to great lengths to establish a manuscript tradition, which enables them to arrive at the best hypothesis as to what Homer, Plato, or Aristotle actually wrote. Motoori set himself a different task, since his initial aim was to prove to his own satisfaction that the *Kojiki* was written in the 'pure' Yamato language.

A very good picture of what Motoori was about can be seen from Ann Wehmeyer's English translation of *Kojiki-den*, *Book 1*, especially the last chapter. This is actually a separate essay, entitled *Naobi no Mitama* (*The Spirit of Rectification*), which was added to what Motoori intended to be the introductory volume to the entire 44-volume work. In this essay, Motoori starts off as he intends to proceed:

> "*The Imperial Country [Japan] is the land of the birth of the awesome goddess Ama-terasu-o-mikami, ancestor of the gods (*kamu-mi-oya*).*
> *Of the reasons why Japan is superior to all countries, this is the most salient. There is no country that does not receive the sacred blessings of this august deity.*
> *When the goddess took the heavenly symbols into her august hands,*
> *these are the three divine treasures that are transmitted from generation to generation,*
> *she mandated that this country would be ruled by her descendants for many thousands of long autumns,*
> *and it was thereby established that the throne of the heavenly successor should remain steadfast along with heaven and earth.*
> *It was established that as far as the trailing clouds, and as far as the toad wanders, this land would be ruled by her imperial descendants. There were no gods causing harm to humans, nor people who were not obedient.*" (Wehmeyer, *Kojiki-den*, pp. 213-214, formatting as in the original text.)

Motoori then gives a lengthy explanation of the term *kamunagara* (= *kannagara*), "to follow the Way of the Gods, or to possess in oneself the Way of the Gods", which he equates with the rule of the Emperors. Motoori then cites the *Man'yoshu* poem, Poem 3253 (which we discussed in Column 13):

> "*This is why it is stated in the language of antiquity that, "Our land of the Reed Plains, abundant in ears of rice, is a divine land which does not utter* kotoage." (Wehmeyer, p. 215.)

(b) …Speaking *Yamato Kotoba…*

Thus, as a result of his belief in the Age of the Gods, Motoori also believed that the purpose of the *Kojiki* was to transmit to the future the 'language of antiquity', which was spoken in 'the divine land, which does not utter *kotoage*.' This, he thinks, is clear from the preface to the work, written by O no Yasumaro. One should note that Yasumaro was commanded by the Emperor to write down the 'ancient matters' that Hieda no Are, a *kataribe* (meaning here an official court reciter) would remember and recite. What Hieda remembered and recited, of course, would be in the 'language of antiquity'. However, because there was no established writing system in antiquity, the *Kojiki* was written in the style of classical Chinese, which was the accepted way of writing for those who could do so in 712, when the *Kojiki* was produced. These texts (the *Kojiki*, *Nihonshoki*, *Man'yoshu*)

> "*were all in the words of another country, and that language was quite different from our language in its grammar and other respects. Therefore, it was quite difficult to borrow that language and write down things about Japan in the manner of our native idiom alone.*" (Wehmeyer, p. 77.)

Motoori makes an important point here and it should be emphasized that his aim was to produce an **oral** text. To see the difficulty here, imagine the above paragraph—the italicized quotation from Wehmeyer's book, **spoken** in English (since English would have no writing system), but **written** (as spoken) in the system of contemporary Chinese. It would not be a translation into contemporary Chinese: it would be the actual spoken English language, but written in contemporary Chinese, with the Chinese characters used to convey all the phonology and semantics of English. As Motoori notes for Japanese, the operation would be extremely difficult, but Motoori actually purports to perform a similar operation, but in reverse, from 'Japanese-expressed-in-or-as-Chinese' to Japanese again. He explains the difficulties:

> "*This is why we have come to record everything in the style of classical Chinese. Even into the Nara period (710-794), there is nothing to be found written purely in Japanese. One can discover this by observing that even in an anthology of poetry, such as the* Man'yoshu*, the headnotes and other matters are all written in classical Chinese. It was only in the Heian period (794-1185), after* hiragana *appeared, that people were able to write purely in Japanese, in genres such as the* monogatari." (Wehmeyer, ibid.)

An important exception, however, is *norito* (considered in Column 13), which is why they are considered of such importance for *kotodama*.

> "*The only exception to this were songs,* norito *(Shinto ritual prayers) and* senmyo *(imperial edicts), which had been transmitted from very ancient times and written down solely in the language of antiquity. These were exceptions in that the words had a design to them, they were finely tuned, and people recited them aloud, causing the gods and men as well to marvel at their beauty. Songs were read aloud, and if even one letter was wrong, it would spoil the effect. For this reason it was difficult to write them in classical Chinese.*" (Wehmeyer, ibid.)

Since, like the Greek gods living—and squabbling—on Mt Olympus, the *kami* were extremely capricious beings, the ancient Japanese could deal with them only by trial and error (the latter being extremely costly). Though Motoori does not mention the concept in the first book of *Kojiki-den*, *kotodama* underlies much of the discussion.

> "*In particular, [Motoori] was intrigued by the special words called* kotodama*, spells or incantations which Norinaga believed capable of granting wishes and regarded as "bridges" between the ordinary world of human affairs and the supernatural realm of numinous phenomena. The word* kotodama *has its locus classicus in one of the verses of the* Man'yoshu*, where it was suggested that* kotodama *were kinked to the maintenance of the national weal, and Norinaga believed that* kotodama *had the power to transport one, at least on a spiritual level, from the sullied present to the divine age.*" (Nosco, pp. 219-220.)

The last point made by Nosco is of some importance, since it gives a supposed effect of *kotodama* that was used by Onisaburo Deguchi. If *kotodama* could transport the user to a 'divine age', then Deguchi's journey through the 'spirit world' recounted in *Reikai Monogatari* was *kotodama* in senses (1) or (8) of those set out in Column 13 ('*Nine Types of Ambiguity*'): (1) manifestation of or possession by the deity as a result of uttering certain words, or (8) actions resulting from such manifestation or possession.

(c) …Ruined by Those Pesky Chinese

It is clear that Motoori has a completely different view about *kotoage* from Jin'ichi Konishi, whose views about *kotodama* and *kotoage* were also discussed in Column 13. Not content merely with quoting the *Man'yoshu*, Motoori rams his point home more sharply on the next page:

> "*Despite the fact that in the antiquity of our imperial country, there were no noisome teaching* [like the Chinese Way of the Sages]*, there was no rebellion down to the lowest subjects, the realm under the heavens was ruled peacefully, and the imperial throne was transmitted for a long time. Therefore, to speak of it in terms of that foreign country* [China]*, this is the incomparable, superior great Way. In truth, because there was the Way, there was no word for the Way; there was no concept of the Way, yet the Way existed. Think of the difference between arguing vehemently about all the details, and not doing so at all. The phrase* "kotoage sezu" *('does not utter* kotoage*') means not to make noisome assertions as is done in foreign*

> *countries* [that is, China].” (Wehmeyer, p. 219: square brackets mine.)

Note that Motoori uses a similar argument about the Way to that used by Konishi to establish *kotodama*: the Way existed, but such was the tranquility of life that there was no need even to think about it, let alone to express it as a concept. So ‘our imperial country’ was located in a veritable Garden of Eden, where there was no rebellion or fighting—by the humans, at least—and so (*pace* Konishi) no *kotoage*. The *kami*, however, were a different matter altogether. So what Motoori made of this *norito* prayer, which expands an account given in the *Kojiki*, can be gathered from his strictures on Buddhism, quoted below.

> “*The Land of the Plentiful Reed Plains and of the Fresh Rice Ears*
> *During the day seethes as with summer flies,*
> *And during the night is overrun with gods who shine as sparks of fire.*
> *The very rocks, the stumps of trees,*
> *The bubbles of water all speak, and it is truly an unruly land.*”
> (Quoted in Philipi, *Norito*, p. 73.)

So the humans were素直 (*sunao*: gentle, mild, submissive, tractable, sincere—also, coincidentally, one of the most desirable qualities in aikido training) and left it to the *kami* to resolve their differences in the way only they knew best.

The problem for Motoori was that texts such as the *Nihonshoki*, written in classical Chinese, tended to use Chinese concepts and this was anathema to him. So he had little time for yin yang theories, Buddhism or esoteric teachings. In discussing the two deities Izanagi and Izanami, Motoori states that it is mistaken to refer to them as ‘male deity’ (陽神) and ‘female deity’ (陰神), for the reason that “the principles of yin (陰) and yang (陽) did not exist in Japan.”

> “*Thus, persons who are not quite so clever will conclude, when looking at this text, that the deities called Izanagi-no-mikoto and Izanami-no-mikoto were simply given makeshift names and that in reality we can explain them in terms of ‘the creation of yin and yang’ (陰陽造化) ...From very ancient times, these principles of yin and yang have penetrated the depths of people’s minds, with everyone accepting them as natural principles of heaven and earth. Indeed, people have no doubt been of the opinion that that there was no instance of anything or event deviating from these principles, but their minds have, nonetheless, been deceived by the explanations of Chinese writings.*” (Wehmeyer, p. 39.)

After a lengthy explanation invoking Buddhist sutras of India, Motoori concludes that both yin and yang and the principle of *taiji wu ji* (‘The Supreme Ultimate is Ultimateless’) are “worthless terms of no value…” (Wehmeyer, p. 41.)

Esoteric teachings were not acceptable, either:

> “*Elaborate esoteric teachings which were transmitted secretly to a select group of people were created in later ages; all are false. It is best that all good things circulate widely in the world. To appropriate something for oneself, and hide it away not letting others know of it at all is extremely mean spirited.*”
>
> “*It is unthinkable that the lowly would try to convert the Way wherein the Emperor rules the realm below Heaven into something which is theirs alone.*” (Wehmeyer, p. 231.)

Motoori’s view of Buddhism is also starkly presented, but it is noteworthy that he readily admits the existence of evil deities. Of course, though he does not state this, Motoori’s view of the deities makes *kotodama* even more ‘awesome’ and much more potentially dangerous, as Konishi and others have noted.

> “*The Gods differ in essence from the Buddha and others. There are not only good Gods, but evil Gods as well, and their hearts and deeds are correspondingly good and evil. This is why it is common in the world that people who do evil deeds prosper, and people who do good deeds suffer. The Gods are not to be measured according to whether or not they are accordance with principles. One must simply stand in awe of their wrath and accord them the utmost respect.*”
>
> “*When worshipping the Gods, there is an appropriate mental attitude, and one should perform acts which are likely to please the Gods. First of all one should abstain from and purify everything, so there are no defilements. Then one presents the Gods an abundance of offerings which are as pleasing as possible, or, one venerates them by entertaining them with playing the* koto *or the flute, and singing and dancing. These can all be traced back to the Age of the Gods, and the Way of antiquity. The notion that worship is simply a matter of how one feels in one’s heart and has nothing to do with offerings or conduct is a mistaken notion of the Chinese spirit.*” (Wehmeyer, pp. 235-236.)

So there is not much sign of Kukai’s ‘seed’ syllables here, but there are syllables of another kind. The *kana* syllables, roughly 50 in number, were uttered by ancient people who really existed, and who believed in *kami*, who also really existed and who did all the things described in the ancient texts. This is why Motoori took such pains and used all his philological acumen to discover what the syllables were. They had to be ‘discovered’ from an ‘alien’ writing system.

(d) Back to the Text

In an effort to find these syllables and the ancient language they comprised, Motoori goes into immense and intricate

detail and this is why, for those who do not have any knowledge of Chinese or Japanese, whether modern or classical, even Wehmeyer's book, English translation though it is, would be very hard going. The reason for this is, as has been noted, that Motoori deals with a writing system that is quite different from our own. (For those *AikiWeb* members unfamiliar with Japanese writing, some idea of this can be obtained by looking at the *genbun* text of the *Man'yoshu* in Column 13, or *Essential Digression 1*, in Column 11. There are some additional points made below, in Section 8.)

The dimensions of Motoori's project should not be underestimated, especially in view of Morihei Ueshiba's later (Omoto) rendering of *kotodama*. Motoori argued unequivocally that the vehicle of the powerful workings of *kotodama* were—had to be—the sounds of the Japanese language, which could be expressed only in the *kana* syllable system and not, most definitely not, in Chinese characters. The latter had had a deleterious effect on the transmission of 'the language of antiquity' to future generations. It is remarkable that, in his theory that *kotodama* was known and accepted in the Archaic Age, but dropped out of fashion to the extent that the production of Yamato literature was influenced by Chinese, Konishi expresses much the same thought as Motoori, but in a more complex way and by making use of different evidence.

Motoori's conclusions about the existence of the archaic Yamato language have been accepted by most scholars who have produced learned editions of the *Kojiki*. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that Motoori's *Kojiki-den* is more a work of 'propaganda' (broadly understood) than a work of disinterested scholarship. Susan Burns has shown that Motoori's quest for the Yamato language was driven by ideological considerations and if these are removed, much of the point of seeking this 'language of antiquity' from a text like the *Kojiki* is lost.

> "*The construction of the* kana Kojiki *within the* Kojikiden *... relied on a complex set of interpretative strategies, operations that are presented as the objective grammatical and morphological reconstruction of "orality" latent in the text. However, as inconsistencies between the original* Kojiki *and Motoori's* kana Kojiki *reveal, Norinaga relied on a set of oppositions that were ideological in nature: the* Nihon shoki */* Kojiki*, Chinese / Japanese, orality / writing. While Norinaga was correct in his recognition that the system of inscription used in the* Nihon shoki *differed from that of the* Kojiki*, this difference does not mesh neatly with these oppositions. The textual history constructed in the* Kojikiden *in fact relied on a set of problematic conclusions. Norinaga argued that if the* Kojiki *was written in "Japanese" then it must be the older text. Therefore it escaped the Chinese mind that permeated the* Nihon shoki *and transparently recorded the ancient oral traditions. Because it was more ancient and more oral, the* Kojiki *alone, according to Norinaga, was capable of revealing modes of perception and experience that were distinctly Japanese. The* kana Kojiki *thus aimed to conceal the fact that the* Kojiki *was not pure "orality", but a different kind of writing. It was not* yamato kotoba*, but a difficult and complex piece of* kanbun*. ... The claim that an authentically "Japanese" identity was discoverable through language required him* [Motoori] *to suppress the fact that even this, arguably the earliest Japanese text, was written in Chinese.*" (Burns, *Before the Nation*, p. 80.)

Burns relies on an essay by Takashi Kamei on different types of reading (読む: *yomu*) in Japanese. Kamei distinguishes (1) *ondoku* (音読: reading aloud), (2) *kaidoku* (解読: extracting meaning from a text), and (3) *kundoku* (訓読: reading a 'Chinese' text as 'Japanese'). He rejected Motoori's argument that the purpose of the *Kojiki* was to record the ancient oral transmissions, since the use of Chinese characters as purely phonetic symbols was very limited (but would have been the obvious choice if *ondoku* 'reading as vocalization' was what the editors intended). Kamei argued that in writing the *Kojiki* in corrupt Chinese syntax, the editors aimed to produce a text that could be read in senses (2) and (3), above, not in (1). He concludes that Motoori's *Kana Kojiki* is really a new *Kojiki* and no more reveals ancient oral transmissions of *Yamato kotoba*—and the hidden power of *kotodama*—than the original *Kojiki* does with the *kanbun* text. (For readers of Japanese, the essay is entitled, 「古事記は読めるか」and can be found in Vol. 4 of Kamei's collected works—See Reading, below.)

Nativist Semantics: Back to Plato's Keys and Tokens Again

So, we are back to language once again, and need to remember Plato's preoccupation in the *Cratylus*. McNally, unwittingly, invites comparison with Plato, via Saussure, in his discussion of Kamo no Mabuchi on *kotodama*. According to McNally, Mabuchi, like Motoori after him, sought to recover the archaic spoken language of Yamato. From his studies of the *Man'yoshu*, Mabuchi observed that language was characterized by the unity of words (詞, 言葉: *kotoba*) and their meanings (心: *kokoro* or 意: *i*).

> "*Put simply, the language of the ancients was perfectly transparent to the reality that it was used to reflect. In the words of the Swiss linguist, the ancient language represented a unity of signifier and signified. This unique quality gave the language a magical power endowed by the* kami*, which Mabuchi called the* kotodama*. In contrast the Chinese language began with arbitrary sounds that the Chinese then matched to written ideographs. Thus, Chinese, like all languages, was, in Saussure's terminology "unmotivated." Ancient Japanese, however, was a "motivated" one because of its* kotodama*.*" (McNally, *Proving the Way*, p. 19.)

Another way of stating Saussure's distinction between 'motivated' and 'unmotivated' is to state that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is 'unmotivated', or

arbitrary. Thus Saussure would never agree with the statements made by Socrates in Plato's early & middle dialogues, that the Form of Justice, for example, is itself just.

However, in the *Cratylus*, Plato begins his own criticism of the Theory of Forms by applying this to language and asking questions about the relationship between names (words) and their meanings. In the *Cratylus*, a picture is sketched of a Name-giver, like Adam in the Garden of Eden (*Genesis*, Chapter 2), giving things their names. In the *Cratylus*, the name-giver does his naming in accordance with the Forms and in both cases the names are 'correct'. However, in the same dialogue Plato explores this question more deeply and shows just how implausible such a picture is. The Greeks were aware that words are composed of letters and syllables, and that these combine to create words, which themselves combine to create utterances about states of affairs. If Noam Chomsky is to be believed, children at a very early age use such words to make a potentially infinite number of utterances about the world and he believes that this is why the capacity for language is unique to humans and also innate. Do all these potentially infinitely numerous utterances —even the statements that the mass of humanity have ever made or are likely to make—all correspond to, or are they all instantiations of, Forms in another universe?

At the level of names, or words, Plato asks in the *Cratylus* whether they are keys, uniquely ordered to reveal the essence, or spirit, of the things they 'correctly' denote, or are mere tokens, neither correct nor incorrect, that are used to stand for the thing in question. Saussure, like Aristotle before him and all practitioners of linguistics and rhetoric after him, insisted that words were arbitrary and therefore 'unmotivated' tokens. The implication appears to be that *kotodama*—or the nativist understanding of the term—actually requires a language unlike all other languages, where the meanings are not arbitrary, where the signified and the signifier match each other not by convention, but intrinsically —or even mystically, like Plato's Forms and their instantiations. This holds true whether *kotodama* is understood as (1) the spirit resident in the syllables themselves, or (2) in the words themselves, considered as 'naming units', or (3) understood as the spirit resident in words as formulae, uttered in a prescribed way, in prescribed circumstances, and by prescribed speakers. The problem for Mabuchi, which he probably never realized, is that his identification of *kotoba* with *kokoro* or *i* is too general: given this identification, it has to apply to everything in the language: it cannot apply to some words or formulae and not others.

One way out of this dilemma is to accept Saussure's insistence that language is arbitrary or 'unconditioned' and to establish the connection with the deities and the spirit world in some other way. In the subdivision of linguistics known as pragmatics, a distinction is often made between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary utterances. (The discussion of Grice's theories in Column 12 is relevant here.) These are 'speech acts' and the locutionary content is defined without reference to the actual words used. Thus some speech acts are statements—and this is all they are: they have no other function. Other speech acts, however, have functions above and beyond the locutionary content: a promise, for example, made to another person, binds the one who promises to do things over and above the words stated in the promise. The promise must actually be carried out. In a wedding ceremony, the formula uttered by the priest or registrar has not only an illocutionary content, but also a perlocutionary content: it establishes a legally binding contract between two other people. However, the content is not derived from some power inherent in the words themselves, which are mere tokens in Saussure's sense, but from the social significance of the pragmatic conventions attached to language use.

I believe that the gradual 'mystification' or 'mysticization' of language, whether the Sanskrit language by Kukai, or the Japanese language by Mabuchi, Motoori, Hirata, Konishi, Ueshiba and others is crucial to the understanding of *kotodama* and also explains why serious linguists like R A Miller—and my own native Japanese colleagues at Hiroshima University, who do research in linguistics, language and literature—have no time at all for the concept.

8. Kukai's Syllable Seeds Bear Fruit:
***Kotodama* in Omoto Theology**

With Onisaburo Deguchi, we enter a rather different world from that of Motoori Norinaga. With Motoori, his view of the *Kojiki* was basically fundamentalist. Despite the fragility of his arguments for the literal truth of the *Kojiki* concerning the world of the *kami*, and his insistence on the existence of the 'language of antiquity' lying behind the original *Kojiki*, to be revealed in the *kana* syllable system, Motoori's approach was exoteric. He took the text as it stood and his methods of analysis and interpretation were primarily philological. They were the methods that are used the world over in university classics departments and, according to Wehmeyer, many of his readings and interpretations have been accepted by later scholars.

With Onisaburo Deguchi, things were somewhat different.

> "*Onisaburo's investigations of the text were not based on academic studies of the pronunciation and ancient usage of words, but rather on the magical power of* kotodama. *The* Kojiki *served not as an end but as a means for Onisaburo, who used the text as a device for legitimizing demands for radical economic and social change. Onisaburo's view of the* Kojiki *was not fundamentalist. He believed that the text contained "a myriad of truths" that required esoteric decoding to understand their significance for a given age. Using the* ***power of* kotodama**, *one could reinterpret the classics for contemporary perspectives on "history, or philosophy, religion, politics, literature, medicine, economics, astronomy, calendrical studies, anthropology, metallurgy and mineralogy, geography, physics, and science.*" (Stalker, *The Prophet Motive*, p. 54. Emphasis mine. Stalker quotes from *Omoto Nanajunenshi*, the *Seventy-year History*, published by Omoto.)

Stalker does not explain exactly what the 'power of *kotodama*' consists in, but in this instance it is clearly different from either Kukai's 'seed' syllables or the 'power residing in words matched by actions' of the *Man'yoshu*. (I state 'in this instance', because Deguchi also states that *kotodama* can be found in Japanese syllables and was also involved in the creation of the universe. In fact, his alternative account of the creation of the universe is part of the very basis for Omoto's existence.) Nancy Stalker's quotation from the *Omoto Seventy-year History* makes Deguchi rather like a magician; or an early Japanese version of Kim Il Sung, the Great Leader of North Korea, who regularly visited laboratories, factories, and mines in his country and gave impromptu advice on all the topics listed above and more, to listeners who hung on his every word and followed his advice—usually with disastrous results. As we shall see, Morihei Ueshiba did not use the *Kojiki* as a device for legitimizing demands for radical change, but he did use the text as a legitimization of his own adaptation of Omoto as a conceptual vehicle for his martial training. In addition, Ueshiba also adopted Deguchi's way of reading the text of the *Kojiki*.

Reikai Monogatari

Reikai Monogatari (*Tales of the Spirit World*) is Onisaburo Deguchi's answer to Motoori's *Kojiki-den*. The best account in English of its provenance and contents can be found in Chapter 10 of Carmen Blacker's *The Catalpa Bow*. There is also a summary in English on an early version of a website entitled, *The Moon of Onisaburo Deguchi*. (See Reading, below.) The summary is very uneven, with great detail given in the first few volumes. Exhaustion seems to set in quite quickly, however, and the summaries of the later volumes are far less detailed. This is all that there is in English. In Japanese, however, one can buy all 83 volumes, either in two print editions from different publishers, or in an electronic edition on a mini-disk. Of course, the latter is much more suitable as a research tool than the former. Like Motoori in the *Kojiki-den*, Deguchi goes into immense detail and recounts meeting a vast range of deities and other figures .

Kotodama makes many appearances in *Reikai Monogatari*. In this work, *kotodama* is tied to a cosmology involving 'seed' syllables. In fact, the account of 'seed' syllables in *Reikai Monogatari* is a good illustration of how Kukai's treatment of 'seed' syllables was adapted and developed for Japanese use. In two places Deguchi gives an account of the creation of the universe by the Great Universal Deity and the origin of the *kotodama SU*. In Deguchi's cosmology, *SU* takes over the function of the A-Syllable in Esoteric Buddhism. The account also mentions the '*logos*' text in St John's Gospel, almost exactly as Morihei Ueshiba states it in his discourses. However, *kotodama* also has other functions. For example, deities are sent to various parts of the universe to conduct *kotodama* 'duels' with other deities. Presumably they were involved in verbal sparring, rather like in some of the *Aikiweb* forums.

There is also a general treatment of *kotodama* syllables. Motoori and the Nativists considered the 50 (spoken) syllables of the *kana* system to be the vehicle for *kotodama* in the language of antiquity. These are (in the traditional order):

あ A	か KA	さ SA	た TA	な NA
お O	こ KO	そ SO	と TO	の NO
う U	く KU	す SU	つ TU	ぬ NU
え E	け KE	せ SE	て TE	ね NE
い I	き KI	し SI	ち TI	に NI
は HA	ま MA	や YA	ら RA	わ WA
ほ HO	も MO	よ YO	ろ RO	を WO
ふ HU	む MU	ゆ YU	る RU	**う WU**
へ HE	め ME	**え YE**	れ RE	ゑ WE
ひ HI	み MI	**い YI**	り RI	ゐ WI

It should be noticed that some *kana* (in **bold**) are repeated, because there are no *kana* to capture the slight, but crucial, differences in sound. This is actually a major problem for any theory of *kotodama* that is based on sounds uttered by the Yamato people speaking the pure Yamato language. Unfortunately, Motoori did not have access to native speakers of the Yamato language, so he had to rely on the written symbols [in Chinese characters]. The same problem is faced by students of Homer who would try to create a sound system of Homeric Greek which precisely mirrors how the language was actually spoken at the time the poem was written.

In *Reikai Monogatari* there are 75 syllables, compared with the 50 syllables of Kamo no Mabuchi and the nativists. Deguchi added the voiced versions of some of the above, which can be seen more clearly when written in *hiragana* (with the diacritic marks ゛ and ゜ added):

が GA	ざ ZA	だ DA	ば BA	ぱ PA
ご GO	ぞ ZO	ど DO	ぼ BO	ぽ PO
ぐ GU	ず ZU	づ DZU	ぶ BU	ぷ PU
げ GE	ぜ ZE	で DE	べ BE	ぺ PE
ぎ GI	じ ZI	ぢ DJI	び BI	ぴ PI

It is likely that Morihei Ueshiba would have learned the word order of the *kana* from the *Iroha* poem, of which a reasonable account is given in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iroha. Authorship of the *Iroha* poem has traditionally been ascribed to Kukai, but Ryuichi Abe argues that it was composed in the late Heian period.

Kototama Gaku

Kototama Gaku is *The Study of Kototama* (usually pronounced with 't' rather than 'd' in this context) or, *Kototama as a Subject of Study*. It is a vast subject, which considerably extends the area of the 'sacred swamp' of *kotodama* mud and adds pockets where the ooze is especially deep and treacherous. So this section deals only with those aspects that relate to Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba. However, some essential background needs to be supplied by further consideration of the 50-syllable *kana* system.

The nativists found *kotodama* residing primarily in the spoken word, uttered in carefully prescribed circumstances,

but the dimensions of this primacy could be explained only by means of the written word. Any Japanese dictionary of Chinese characters will have an index, usually following the order of the *kana* syllable system (or the alphabet, if the dictionary is a Japanese-English dictionary). Thus, if we go back to the *A O U E I kana* syllables and look up each letter in the dictionary, we shall find a list of characters for each syllable. For example, *A* has 17 characters listed and *a* has five, making 22 in all. For each of these characters a specific meaning is given in the dictionary.

The difference between *A* and *a* is that the former uses the *ON* reading and the latter the *kun* reading, but we have to place this difference in its essential context. When Korean immigrants in the fifth century first taught their Japanese hosts the Chinese writing system, they read the Chinese words, and therefore the syllables making up the words, in a Korean / Japanese way. The whole point of teaching the writing system was to enable some educated Japanese to use the knowledge gained and read & pronounce Chinese texts. It was not a matter of merely grafting an alien writing system of ideograph characters on to an already established sound system: the interaction was far more complex and flexible than this. What was actually done was to graft on to one living language the essential aspects of another living language, with its own words and meanings added to the first. It makes little sense to regard the 'language of antiquity' as simply a hermetically sealed system of sounds, conveying utterances that were purely indigenous (though this is what the nativists actually appeared to believe), which was then 'clothed' in a writing system, in order that the Japanese could write their own language.

Leaving the difference between *ON* and *kun* aside, we can see a 'base' level of connection between the 22 ways of associating the sound / symbol あ *A* with the meanings denoted by the sound. The entire set of 75 syllables—considered as single syllables—can be connected with meanings in a similar way. To give other random examples, there are 12 different connections for *WA*, 120 for *KA*, 21 for *TA*, and 16 for *RU*. Of course, these syllables combine to form words, and this automatically excludes some connections that might otherwise exist with single syllables. If we take a typical word, *wakaru*, for example, we shall see that it is composed of three 'base' syllables: わ (*wa*), か (*ka*), and る (*ru*). A search in a dictionary (a dictionary of words & phrases, not of characters) will yield all the meanings of the word (which is a verb), no matter whether it is spoken or written. It we change the order to か (*ka*), わ (*wa*) , る (*ru*), or substitute a different syllable, わ (*wa*), た (*ta*),る (*ru*), different connections are automatically established, since two different words result. These 'base' connections among the syllables are connections of a crucial kind and, in this case, the syllables are functioning like the letters of an alphabet.

Of course, this way of writing the three words (わかる [*wakaru*], かわる[*kawaru*], わたる [*wataru*]) in *hiragana* was not available to literate Yamato people, so when eventually they came to write the words, they used Chinese characters. Motoori Norinaga has argued that the words would have been written as 和加琉 [*wakaru*], 加和琉 [*kawaru*], and 和多琉 [*wataru*], although he was actually working in the reverse direction and trying to establish the base *kana* syllables from the 50,000-odd Chinese characters used to write the *kanbun* text of the *Kojiki*.

I think it is easy to see the 'base' connections between (1) the individual syllables and the sounds / symbols and the connections between (2) the syllables used to write meaningful words. However, Saussure argued that these connections were 'unmotivated' or arbitrary. If we see the Japanese language in Saussure's terms of signifier and signified, even at the 'base' level of individual sounds / symbols, it admits of an enormous range of possible connections. There are a myriad potential connections between the fifty sounds, whether separate or in combination, and all the various meanings, whether of individual syllables or words, or in combination as utterances. These connections, also, are constantly changing, as old words become obsolete and new ones come into circulation. If, however, we insist with the Mabuchi and the nativists that the connection between the signifier and the signified is 'motivated' and not arbitrary, there is a major problem, since all the myriad potential connections between the fifty sounds and all the various meanings will be **essential** connections, in all cases revealing the essence or spirit of what is connected. The connections can only be mysterious or mystical and not subject to scientific analysis.

The *kotodama gaku* theorists like Shido Yamaguchi (1765-1842) worked on yet another level, different from that explained in the previous paragraphs. By means of choosing homophones, or word-play, they established a vast range of connections between the 'signifier' and 'signified', thst is, between the sound and the meanings. There is a vast range of possibilities here, but they worked according to two different general methods, both deriving from the teachings of Motoori Norinaga and his self-proclaimed disciple, Hirata Atsutane (who taught that there was a hidden spiritual world in parallel to the world that we see around us, which had to be discovered by uttering pure sounds and engaging in agricultural labor). Some looked at the *Iroha* poem, which actually expounds ethical maxims, and decided that the syllables should be interpreted ethically, with the core syllables essentially connected to an ethical virtue. Others read the *Kojiki* and decided that each of the fifty syllables stood for an individual deity and / or the creative work of this deity. Actually, it is impossible to do justice to the vast range of associations made by the *kototama gaku* theorists in one paragraph and I will return to this subject in a future column. Nancy Stalker explains why the development of esoteric *kotodama* studies is difficult to trace and also supplies some essential cultural background.

The *kototama* theorists

> "*failed to achieve much of an academic following in part because of the influx of western scientific thought in the late nineteenth century. In addition proponents differed on many points, such as the number of root sounds in the Japanese language and the meanings of individual sounds. Central*

> *figures…published widely circulated texts, but the transmission of their esoteric knowledge was reportedly often oral and haphazard.*" (Stalker, *The Prophet Motive*, p. 55.)

The matter of 'western scientific thought' is quite important here, since it serves to set up a barrier between 'bad' (= Western) 'scientific' and 'good' (= Japanese) 'non-scientific' thinking (which is e.g., closer to nature etc). For some Japanese in the Meiji and post-Meiji periods, this type of thinking was a defining aspect of the 'authenticity' of the culture as 'truly' Japanese.

> "*In the popular mind* kotodama *is often associated with rhyming games and word-play, widespread phenomena deeply embedded in Japanese popular culture from at least the Edo period forward that occupy an important role in both serious and parodic literature and drama. Owing to the number of homophones in the Japanese language, the possibilities for wordplay, using a mixture of* kanji *characters and* kana *alphabet are endless*". (See above). "*Popular* kotodama*, rooted in esoteric Buddhist practice, also has a magico-religious aspect, the idea that words or sounds chanted by mouth can affect occurrences in reality. Such beliefs and wordplay are part of the standard rhetoric of new religions. Early scholars of Japan's new religions considered this a vulgar aspect of their teachings or practices, ignoring the fact that established religions had long used magical formulas and playful linguistic devices, such as parables and Zen* koans*. The followers of new religions were often attracted by the ingenious use of rhyming games and wordplay to explain teachings allowed themselves to enjoy themselves at familiar cultural activities while absorbing doctrine.*" (Stalker, ibid.)

According to Stalker, *kotodama* remained a popular aspect of grassroots nativism, a "cultic undercurrent that retained the familiar aspect of the folk Shinto worldview." Onisaburo Deguchi certainly attracted followers in this way. Deguchi, who read Shido Yamaguchi, Kodo Nakamura and especially Masuumi Oishigori, used a combination of the above general methods to attract Omoto followers (including Morihei Ueshiba). Morihei Ueshiba, who basically followed Deguchi, also utilized a combination of these general methods, in his explanations of '*kototama*-as-aikido' to his students.

9. Morihei Ueshiba on *Kotodama*

Morihei Ueshiba took over some aspects of the Omoto doctrine of *kotodama* more or less intact. The cosmological account of *kotodama* in the *Takemusu Aiki* discourses follows the account in *Reikai Monogatari* almost exactly, even including the comparison with the *logos* statements at the beginning of St John's Gospel. In fact, had Onisaburo Deguchi been a professor in a western university, anxious to maintain his reputation for originality in the academic rat race for promotion and tenure, he might have accused O Sensei of plagiarism. (Of course, Kukai could probably have mounted a similar case against Onisaburo Deguchi.)

On the other hand, one has to consider what Morihei Ueshiba needed: he needed an adequate vehicle—or a kind of container, like a pipe, for an open-ended process—to present the results of many years of personal training, but to present the results or process in such a way that a rigid distinction between the more strictly physical—the training in Daito-ryu he had received from Sakaku Takeda over the years—and the more strictly spiritual—the training he had received from Onisaburo Deguchi—was not maintained.

The most accessible source in English of Morihei Ueshiba's thinking on *kotodama* can be found in the recently published translation by John Stevens of *Aiki Shinzui*. Entitled, *The Secret Teachings of Aikido*, the translation is not without problems, as I have indicated elsewhere (usually, strict accuracy has been sacrificed to the demands of 'readability'). Nevertheless, the book still gives a broad overview of Morihei Ueshiba's thinking on *kotodama*. Following the Japanese edition, published under the name of Kisshomaru Ueshiba, the translation is organized into several chapters. *Kotodama* is prominent in all of them and is usually tied to a distinct Omoto cosmology. Because there is so much material on *kotodama* here, I will merely give some representative extracts, with occasional commentary. (For ease of reference I have numbered the paragraphs and I have always compared the English translation given by John Stevens with the Japanese text of *Aiki Shinzui*:『合気神髄』. In some cases I have given the untranslated Japanese original, in order that *AikiWeb* members who are studying Japanese can test their comprehension skills.)

Secret Teachings: I: The Whole Point

The first mention of *kotodama* comes in the opening chapter, entitled, "Aikido is the Study of the Spirit." The immediate context is a broad discussion about *aiki*. Ueshiba starts from the concept of *aiki*, as the binding force of the whole universe. This binding force he also identifies with aikido. He continues:

> 1 "*Here is some* kototama *theory.* O *is the sound of the grand design.* Su-u-yu-mu *is Honosawake Island [the place believed to be the ground of being].* Aiki *is the harmonizing principle that binds the elements of our world together. It unifies the spirit. It binds things as one. However, people do not understand these concepts, so our world is in danger. From* su*,* u *emanates as the world is brought into being. It emerges from the navel. It spirals forth from that point. One's own* kikai tanden *[physical/spiritual center of a human being] is directly linked to the universe.* (Stevens, *The Secret Teachings of Aikido*, p 24. NB. Any explanations given below within the quotations in square brackets are by Stevens.)

COMMENT: Ueshiba uses orthodox Omoto cosmology here, but adds his own observations about *aiki*. He also makes a connection between the emergence of the 'seed' syllables and the place in the body from where he believed that the

individual's own '*kotodama* sounds' originate.

> 2 "*The* kototama su u a o u e i *emerge and resound through the universe. For* ame*, heaven, we have* a *(self) and* me *(revolve). The name of the god* Ikiizanainarabu*, which means the individual self has a connection to all other things, is spiritually tied to all dimensions of the life force. Then why is it that the people of the world cannot live in harmony? It is because there are too many conflicting perspectives in this world, and we must try to bridge all the different gaps in thinking.*"
> (Stevens, ibid.)

COMMENT: We have discussed the kana seed syllables in previous sections. The Japanese term for 'resound' is *hibiki* ひびき, which denotes resonance, like an echo, or the sound of a tolling bell reverberating around the church or temple, or 'bouncing off' the walls.
Ueshiba then uses the homophone word-association method (mentioned above with reference to Shido Yamaguchi and familiar to all Japanese), of equating the constituents of the word *ame* (ame, あめ) with initially unrelated concepts. In the *kana* sound syllables, *a* is あ; *me* is め. In terms of meaning, *a* is equated with 'self' (自ら: *mizukara*, or 吾) and *me* with 'revolve' (巡る: *meguru*). Of course, a Japanese linguist will argue that this equation is pure coincidence and that the Japanese word for 'heaven' does not, also, mean 'self revolving'. However, this is *kototama* theory and so is not supported by any dictionary references.
Given the 'connection' between the individual self and 'all other things', Ueshiba poses the question why "the people of the world cannot live in harmony". He answers his question by drawing an ethical conclusion from his theories of *kotodama*: (1) the sounds do whatever they do; (2) *a-me* is composed of 'self' and 'revolving' ('selves' which 'revolve' around each other); (3) therefore, human beings should live in harmony.
(NOTE: A student of Morihei Ueshiba in Osaka, Hirokazu Kobayashi, used '*meguri*' as a central concept in his explanations of aikido. From the context here, the only reasonable explanation of *meguru* is the way the *kotodama* sounds *su u a o u e i* 'emerge and resound' throughout the universe.)

> 3 "*Within that void a point appeared. That point is the source of all things. Initially, there was steam, smoke and mist; brilliant divine energy emerged, creating beams of light that radiated circularly. That point was enveloped by cosmic energy, and the seed-syllable* su *was born. This is the origin of the universe and the spiritual realm. It is the source of nature and breath. According to ancient scriptures, this occurred billions of years ago. As pristine breath expanded, sound emerged. This sound is* kototama*. In the Christian Bible, it says 'In the beginning there was the Word.' That word is the seed-syllable* su*.* Su *is the source of all the* kototama*.*"

COMMENT: Here, Ueshiba follows *Reikai Monogatari* almost exactly, including the comments on the Gospel of John. Of course, the nature of the 'point' should be a major issue. One can imagine a 'point' of light, which expands, with all the other effects specified. However, in the text the point actually precedes the creation of beams of light. So there is a breakdown of the metaphors here. In fact, the whole passage is written in metaphors, which are assumed not to be metaphors. (See the discussion in Column 12, focusing on Lakoff's theories of metaphor.)

> 4 "*The* su *character is not found in the western world. It exists only in Japan. Su vibrated, sending out sound waves up and down, right and left, creating a huge, resonant sphere. This, in turn initiated the cosmic breath.*" (Stevens, op. cit, pp. 85-86.)

COMMENT: Here Ueshiba follows contemporary practice in believing that the seed syllables were distinctly Japanese. The Japanese text is: 「このス声は、西洋にはこれに当てる字はなく、日本のみにある声である。これが生長してス、ス、ス、すなわち上下左右のス声（＋ ）となり、丸く円形に大きく結ばれていって（⊕）呼吸を始めるのである。」
Nancy Stalker makes the following observation (in the general context of *kotodama*), which is relevant to this passage:

> "*Both scholarly and popular views were united in their fundamental beliefs that the essence of* kotodama *was to bring forth all of creation, that the root form for each sound was found in the voice, and that there was a magical correspondence between the great universe of the gods* [for Deguchi, the Great Universal Deity; later, the Divine Parent = Amaterasu-o-mikami] *and the small universe of people that was achieved via* kotodama*.* ***To those who subscribed to* kotodama *precepts, the expression of sound and voice were embodied aspects of a distinct Japanese cultural identity, seemingly unvaried over time.***" (Stalker, *The Prophet Motive*, p. 56. Emphasis and comment in square brackets mine.)

I believe that Nancy Stalker's comment is important because it places Morihei Ueshiba's comments about seed syllables in a contemporary context. Ueshiba never mentions the beginning of *Genesis*, but there is a correspondence between his / Deguchi's SU & cosmic breath and the 'Spirit of God' (*pneuma* = breath in Greek) 'brooding over the waters'. The correspondence is not exact, however, since in *Genesis* the sounds are not immanent in the creation process itself. They are utterances by God, with illocutionary and perlocutionary force.
Ueshiba constantly talks of a 'point'. Usually this refers to the 'point' in Omoto cosmology from which the SU 'seed' syllable originates. Here, it also refers to one's *tanden* or *hara*.

Ueshiba goes on to develop a point he made earlier, when he asked why people could not live in harmony. He emphasizes

that *aiki* fosters the spirit of harmony throughout the world and that Japan must take the lead in this fostering. From ancient times Japan has had the mirror, sword and jewel, which Ueshiba identifies with the virtues of bravery, wisdom and humanity. These are manifested in human beings through aikido training. Of course, his remarks would apply as much to prewar and wartime Japan, during the time he was developing his art, as to postwar Japan, after the country's defeat.

Secret Teachings: II: Seventy-five Sounds

The second chapter is entitled "Aikido is the Spirit of Love." After a lengthy discussion on *Masakatsu agatsu katsuhayabi*, Ueshiba moves on to more cosmic matters, but always seen through his own intensely personal lens.

> 5 "*The deity* Hayatakemusu *[meaning swiftness and bravery] is inside me, flowing in my veins. It inspires in me the mission to spread Aikido. The great god* Hayatakemusu *is manifest as* Ame no murakumo kuki samuhara ryu-o. Ame no murakumo *represents "universal energy" and "cosmic breath."* Kuki *stands for the "generating power of life." It includes all the elemental forces of nature [gravity, electricity, etc.]. It symbolizes the solar system and the waves of energy that form such things as color, taste and smell. From here* ***the marvelous functioning of*** **kototama** *works its magic.*" (Stevens, *Secret Teachings*, pp. 32-33.)

In fact, this is a summary, not a translation, of the Japanese text, which is given below:

> "速武産の大神と身体は、血脈あい結んでいる。ここに**合気**の使命が結ばれている。速武産の大神の御働きの現われは「天の村雲九鬼さむはら竜王大神」と呼ぶのである。天の村雲とは「宇宙の気」「淤能碁呂島の気」「森羅万象の気」を貫いて息吹くことをいうので、九鬼とは、淤能碁呂島に発生したすべての物の気、九星の気である。伊耶那岐、伊耶那実の命の島生みの気も、すべて、この九星より始まる。色も、味も、香りものの気の動きによって生じ、**言霊の妙用の根元**もここに存ずるのである。" (『合気神髄』, p. 39.)

COMMENT: This description features many of Ueshiba's favorite deities, which are not mentioned in the translation. Passages like this are, in my opinion, one of the clearest indications that Ueshiba saw himself as an avatar: a representative or even a reincarnation of one or more deities and that he believed that his mission to spread *aiki* [the Japanese text has *aiki*, in **bold**, in the first line of text, not aikido] originated at the beginning of time. The "marvelous functioning of *kotodama*" is explained in more detail a little later, in a long continuous passage (I have given the Japanese text wherever there is not a strict translation):

> 6 *Sun, earth, moon*
> *harmonized perfectly*
> *on the bridge*
> *above the vast sea*
> *the mountain echo calls me*
> 「日月は合気になりし橋の上大海原はやまびこの道」
>
> "*From the void fifty, then seventy-five* kototama *reverberate through the universe creating these techniques (the techniques of aikido). Keep in mind that all things originate in the void, and advance in your training. The great parent of creation, the great spirit of love, emanates from the seed-syllable su.*"
> "また、宇宙のひびきのなかの空に生み出していく、五十音、七十五声の音のひびきのなかに技は生まれてくる。つまりいうと、空に生み出してゆくところの考えをもって稽古に精進してもらいたい。ちょうどいうと、我々の大御親、愛の大精神は、最初「ス」声が出来たというておりますが、すなわち"
>
> "*From the exalted sun*
> *seventy-five sounds*
> *were born,*
> *teaching the*
> *way of aiki*"
> 「日の御親七十五を生み出して合気の道を教えたまり」
>
> "*This indicates that the techniques all evolved from the seventy-five* kototama*; each individual being in fact has evolved from these vibrations and one needs to develop the ability to function freely within one's body.*" (Stevens, pp. 36-38.)
> "このことは、ことごとく七十五をもて技が生み出てくることを指している。それは、自己という造化器官があるから生み出てくるのであるが、この自己の造化器官は自由に世の中の御経綸の営みに御奉公できる。" (『合気神髄』, p. 45-46.)

COMMENT: After mentioning *kotodama* in, "the marvelous functioning of *kototama*", Ueshiba does not use the term again in the above passage. Of course, this is what he means, and so Stevens has good reason to repeat the term in his paraphrase.

The *doka*, quoted above from the Japanese text, does not appear in the list made by Abe Seiseki Shihan. However, the following two *doka* do appear and mention the 75 sounds.

> 「大御神七十五声を生みなして世の経綸をさづけ給へり」
> 「大御親七十五ツの御情動に世のいとなみはいや栄えぬる」

In the lengthy explanation, above, Ueshiba uses both the 50-syllable system of Kamo no Mabuchi and the 75-syllable system of Onisaburo Deguchi. However, he establishes an essential link between (1) the 75-syllables and *aiki waza*, and (2) the 75-syllables and the creation of each individual. This is very clear evidence that Ueshiba ties *kotodama* to a cosmological theory largely based on Onisaburo Deguchi's cosmology. The only difference is that Ueshiba, of course, ties this cosmology to *aiki* and *aiki* training. However, the

two really go together: he sees *aiki* training in terms of *kotodama*, used in Senses (1) and (8) of those given in Column 13.

> 7 "*I use the image of the Floating Bridge of Heaven to symbolize the primordial act of creation. This very body of ours is a golden cauldron for the alchemy of the spirit. Our speech is the reverberation of the* kototama*.* Kototama *are the pillars of heaven.*" (Stevens, p. 40.)
> "天の浮橋……「ア」は自らに、「め」は巡り、「ゥ」は空水をなす。天もなく、地もなく……大虚空の中にはじめて生まれてくる神代までつき戻すのです。この肉体は黄金の釜であります。霊魂をつくり直すことができるのです。言葉は魂、言霊はひびきです。満天にひびき渡る天の御柱です。" (『合気神髄』, pp. 50-51.)

> "*Aikido is the double-edged sword of* ki*.* Ki *is the heart of things. The truth of the world utilizes the great technique of the spirit that transforms light and heat. The double-edged sword consists of the essence of the seventy-five* kototama*; it is the transformation of* ki *that gives birth to 10,000 forms.*" (Stevens, p. 42.)
> "合気にては両刃の剣と称し、心ともなす。 これは世界の真気を示し、光と熱 の合気運化を示す大法術の精神なり、両刃の剣はまた七十五音の言霊の精神 の奥の気をいうものなり、気の運化にて万形を生ず。" (『合気神髄』, p. 53.)

COMMENT: A closer translation of the ending of the earlier passage would be that 'Words are spirits; *kotodama* are vibrations / reverberations. They are the heavenly pillars that cross (extend through) the entire heavens.'
Ueshiba actually mixes his references to *aiki* and *aikido* quite liberally in this section (in the passage that immediately follows, he beings the sentence with *aikido*). He identifies the 75 *kotodama* sounds with 'forms' (形) and also 'waza' (技), which Stevens translates as 'techniques'. It is not clear that Ueshiba refers solely to *aiki* skills.

Secret Teachings: III: Standing on the Bridge…
The third chapter is entitled, "Takamusu Aiki". The chapter begins with a major discussion of 武 (*bu*). There are many references to *kotodama*.

> 8 "*After the act of creation, light and heat emerged, and through the tremendous power generated by the interaction of water and fire, the solar system developed. The universal spirit formed the kototama; the kototama always envelops us, inside and outside and leads us along the path of sincerity, show us how to harmonize heaven and earth.*" (Stevens, p. 44.)

COMMENT: Ueshiba repeats here what is a constant theme running through these discourses: (1) *kotodama* was a crucial element in the formation of the entire universe; (2) is a crucial element in ourselves and our surroundings; and (3) has a broadly ethical function [the term for 'leads us along the path of sincerity' is 誠の道をもって教え: *makoto no michi wo motte oshie*].

> 9 "*In the martial arts there are various shouts. For example, "*ei*," "*yaa*," "*too*," "*ha*," and so on. There are many more possible shouts than these four sounds; they are all derived from* kototama *theory. These* kototama *sounds are based on deep breathing and the rhythm between the voice and the mind. The sound "flies out" when a technique is executed; its quality expresses the extent of one's mind/body unity. When voice, body and mind are unified, excellent techniques result.*" (Stevens, p. 48.)
> "掛声には「エィ」「ャー」「トー」「ハッ」等がある。この四つに限らず、日本人が言葉出せるだけの掛け声があるはずである。天地の呼吸に合し、声と心と拍子が一致して言霊となり、一つの技となって飛び出すことが肝要で、これをさらに肉体と統一する。声と肉体と心の統一が出来てはじめて技が成り立つのである。" (『合気神髄』, p. 62.)

COMMENT: Again, this is an elegant paraphrase of the Japanese text, which has no specific reference to *kototama* theory, but which contains rather more than the English text supplies. In particular, Ueshiba ties the sounds to **Japanese** word production. The condition for *kotodama* is that the voice, spirit (*kokoro*) and rhythm / tempo (*hyoshi*) are in unison and also match the breath (*kokyu*) of heaven and earth.

> 10 "*Through the interaction of* aiki*, one becomes* Ame no manaka nushi *(This is a printing mistake: it should be* minaka nushi*) and completes the act of creation. We are in fact the universe, and it is our duty to manifest its grand design in our beings. The kingdom of heaven is within us. It is the force that animates us, the divine spark that gives us freedom.* ***Use that force to stand on the Floating Bridge of Heaven, and activate the marvelous functioning of* kototama *by disseminating the red and white blood cells within your body; that will generate light, heat and power. In extreme terms, boil your blood to produce a sound that summons light, heat and power. In* kototama *theory this is represented by the sound "u" (generating the four dimensions of air, liquid, softness, and hardness. Link yourself to u and you will be able to display great power.*** *This is the origin of all things, the verdant garden of life.*" (Stevens, p. 56.)
> "天の浮橋に立って言霊の妙用たる身内にある赤い血と白い血のたぎりによって、光と熱も力も発してきます。それで、言葉は末の末でありますが、身の内の血のたぎりによって、すべてのものが一声出しても光と熱と力と同時に出て来て、一つの声でも四元（気流柔剛ゥの働き）に結ばれて一つの力の姿を現れします。" (『合気神髄』, p. 62.)

COMMENT: The Japanese text given is of the parts in bold type. In the *Takemusu Aiki* discourses Ueshiba speaks of *kotodama* arising from the boiling of the blood in one's body (See Column 11). In the Japanese text, Ueshiba does not exactly state things in the imperative. He states that, 'standing on the Floating Bridge of Heaven, from the boiling of the red & white blood that activates the 'marvelous working' of kotodama, light, heat and strength arise. The grammatical pattern is: 'in a certain situation, from x and y happening, z also results.' Of course, the theory that the *u* syllable is the working of air, liquid, softness and hardness is indeed *kototama* theory, as expounded by Onisaburo Deguchi.

> 11 "*To repeat: The Floating Bridge of Heaven symbolizes an enlightened state of being; it represents understanding of the grand design of the cosmos. One who knows this truth is able to metaphorically boil his or her own blood to generate light, heat and power and simultaneously pronounce the* kototama *"o". The sound* o *represents a person who speaks and acts truly, one who is always standing on the Floating Bridge of Heaven. The Floating Bridge of Heaven stands for the power of love and the manifestation of truth. It emerged from* su-u*; u spiraled into spirit and matter to form this world, from the most immense sphere down to the tiniest element. It is the bridge that spans the universe and instructs us in the true nature of the world.*" (Stevens, p. 56.)
> "初めてお聞きになる方のために、天の浮橋をもう一度繰り返しおきます。天の浮橋とは幽遠微妙の理と経綸（真人を通してこの世界へ実在のこれに顕示するその機関）をいうのであります。この真人の赤い血がたぎりて光と熱と力を出してと同時に、ォの声を発するよいうことは、その真人の、言行心の上がすでに天の浮橋であります。" (『合気神髄』, pp. 71-72. I have ended the sentence at this point, but Ueshiba continues one long sentence for the rest of the paragraph.)

COMMENT: The passage follows on directly from Passage 10. I have quoted part of it in Japanese because Ueshiba concentrates attention here on the Floating Bridge of Heaven as the focus of his cosmology of *kotodama* sound generation. However, he connects the knowledge of this cosmology with enlightenment. In the following passage, Ueshiba explains the Floating Bridge of Heaven by means of the Japanese homophone method, beloved of adherents of 'new' religions (as Nancy Stalker noted, above).

> 12 The Floating Bridge of Heaven in Japanese is *A-me* (heaven) [*no*] *u-ki* (floating) *ha-shi* (bridge). In another chapter, Ueshiba explains this in kototama theory:
>
> "A = *self*
> me = *revolve*
> u = *vertical*
> ki = *energy*
> ha = *horizontal*
> shi = *integration of horizontal and vertical*
>
> *This naturally gives birth to divine techniques in both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions.*" (Stevens, p. 110.)
> "天の浮橋に立たされて「ア」は自ずから「メ」は巡る。浮橋の「ゥ」は空水にして縦となす、橋の「ハ」は横となす。水火結んで縦横となす、縦横の神業。自然に起きる神技。" (『合気神髄』, p. 151.)

COMMENT: Again, the English translation is not quite accurate, but Stevens reveals the wordplay involved. This is typical Japanese wordplay and can be done in this way only in Japanese. As I explained in a previous section, each of the above syllables can also be connected with one or more separate and arbitrary meanings and this is because Japanese is spoken—and can be written—in a variety of ways. However, the *kototama* theorists superimposed on top of these core meanings, which can be found in any dictionary, a vast number of other arbitrary 'meanings', obtainable by sound association. Of course, the *kototama* theorists claimed that these meanings were not arbitrary at all; they were 'essential', due to the presence of the 'spirit' in the words / sounds.

Secret Teachings: IV: Some *Kototama* Practice

In the remaining chapters of *The Secret Teachings of Aikido*, Morihei Ueshiba constantly returns to the themes described above. In the next sections he takes another core phrase, *Taka ama* [no] *hara* (*High Heaven Plain*) and applies a method of analysis more strictly based on sounds.

> 13 "*From the initial seed syllable* su, ta ka a ma ha ra *appeared. From these six* kototama*, the seventy-five sounds took shape and developed into the universe as an expression of the divine mind. The number of* kototama *reflects the number of essential spirits and patterns in the world.*" (Stevens, p. 57.)
> "初めにスの言霊より「タカアマハラ」六言霊を生みます。六言霊の活力は七十五声の御姿、宇宙の御生成と御親の御働きの目的に進むことであります。ゆえに心の数のあるかぎりは言語にもまた、姿があります。" (『合気神髄』, p. 72.)

COMMENT: Notice that Stevens actually translates the *kotodama* SU as 'seed syllable'. But rather than Sanskrit syllables (with Kukai), Ueshiba follows Deguchu and uses Japanese *kana*, which are identified as an expression of the Divine Parent. The translation is not quite accurate, since the 'number of essential spirits and patterns in the world' is reflected in words (*gengo*), not in *kotodama*. However, this makes the thought rather odd, and it is possible that *gengo* is a mistake or misprint.

Ueshiba then gives an example of *kotodama* 修業 (*shugyo*: ascetic training). Again, he does not use the imperative, but

simply makes factual statements. The subject could just as well be Ueshiba himself, describing one example of such training, as much as those he is addressing.

> 14 "***The practice sequence: first disseminate the blood within you to initiate the*** **ta ka a ma ha ra** ***sounds; imagine kindling a fire in your inner shrine, making your entire body an ascending*** **kototama**. *(This is akin to tuning in the messages that are constantly being broadcast on the airwaves, but can only be heard if you turn on the machine.) After the entire body congeals into a* kototama*, simultaneously pronounce the seed syllables and tap in the universal beams of energy; let the self expand into a huge sphere before actually vocalizing the sounds. As the seed syllables emerge from deep within your being, draw the universe into your body. Your spirit will be suffused with light and completely centered.*" (Stevens, p. 58.)

Here is the Japanese text (of the passage in bold type):

> "ついては、修業の順序から来る念姿に一例。体内の血はたぎり、前身がタカアマハラの六声の姿となって火の若宮に、全身、言霊となって舞い昇るのを感得します。" (『合気神髄』, p. 72.)

COMMENT: The example here is the counterpart of what Kukai would call 'A-Syllable Visualization' (See Column 13), which was so important an aspect of Shingon 修業 (*shugyo*). Thus, the translation could be much more actual than Stevens conveys for his modern readers: 'I, you, someone, boils the blood / causes the red blood to seethe in the body. The antecedent body has the form of the six sounds *ta ka a ma ha ra*, in the inner shrine of fire. I, you, someone, becomes aware of the whole body as ascending word spirit.' This process is not merely being imagined and expressed as a set of metaphors; it is actually happening.

Another explanation immediately follows, this time of the A O U E I seed-syllables.

> 15 "*Open your mouth wide and from the bottom of your throat expel the breath. This makes the sound* A.
>
> *"A emerges from the water-soul deep within space [as do* O U E *and* I*], creating something from nothing. All fifty sounds are in it, and it circulates through heaven as the three fundamentals. It is nature. No matter how much it is vocalized it remains* tokotachi. A *in Shinto cosmology is known as* Kuni no tokotachi *(or* Kuni sokonushi no kami*).* Izanami *received this* A *to form the world. As the sound emerges the mouth gradually becomes narrower and the* O *sound occurs.*
>
> *"*O *arises and gracefully circulates in an upward manner to link earth with heaven. Since the* O *sound is emitted when the lips are symmetrical, it is called* Tokokumo no kami *(or* Kuni no sazuchi no kami*). When the sound* O *is completely pronounced, the mouth closes, the sound* U *is formed.*
>
> *"*U *floats to the surface. It is motion, vitality, darkness.* U *links upper and lower. In Shinto cosmology* U *is* Ujihi no kami. *If* U *is pronounced strongly, it ultimately turns into* SU. SU *is the sister deity of* U, Suhijini no kami. *Beneath each respective* kami *there is a [ ] slash mark. These marks are accents. When* U *is fully vocalized, the tongue reaches the lowest point in the mouth. It is like a post, or the shape made when the eye is turned up. The sound* E *naturally emerges.*
>
> *"*E *is the placenta of heaven and earth. It forms the limbs and branches of things. It is heaven's mother sound. When* E *is pronounced strongly the tongue turns, making it possible to produce the RE sound. That is why the sound* E *is called* Tsunukui no kami *and* Imoikukui no kami. *When the sound* E *is completely expelled from the mouth the sound* I *naturally occurs.*
>
> *"*I*, if pronounced strongly, naturally produces the sound* GI. *This is the culmination of all sounds, the father and mother of language. In Shinto cosmology,* I *is called* Ohotonoji no kami *and* GI Otonobe no kami." (Stevens, pp. 58-59.)

COMMENT: It would make this section unacceptably long to give the Japanese text in detail, but Ueshiba follows Deguchi and especially Shido Yamaguchi, whose writings contain many pages of such analysis, accompanied by maps and diagrams.

General Comments on Morihei Ueshiba's *Kotodama*

It should be clear how much Morihei Ueshiba borrowed from other thinkers, in order to create his cosmological theories. It is clear that he borrowed extensively from Esoteric Buddhism, but via Shido Yamaguchi and Onisaburo Deguchi. He took Deguchi's popular cosmology and refashioned it as a cosmology of *aiki*, while retaining the essential structure. Thus Ueshiba retained Deguchi's central focus on *kotodama*, both as a quasi-magical force, also as an agent of cosmogony / cosmology, and also as an emanation / instantiation in the individual (especially in himself) of the Great Universal Deity / Great Divine Parent. It remains to be seen how his son Kisshomaru dealt with Ueshiba's *kotodama* in the wake of World War II.

10. R A Miller on *Kotodama*:
The Influence of the *Kokutai no Hongi*

In Column 12 we briefly considered the work of the linguist, Professor R A Miller and in her translation of Motoori's *Kojiki-den*, Ann Wehmeyer often cites Miller's research on ancient Japanese. Miller has sometimes been criticized for having a very large axe to grind about wartime and postwar Japanese culture, but it is important to divorce the polemic from his arguments and examine the latter for what they are. Miller dismissed *kotodama* for three main reasons:

(1) Japanese scholars have (wrongly) marveled at the supposedly unique features of the Japanese language, which

leads to the thesis that translations from and to Japanese are virtually impossible.
(2) This is due to *kotodama*, the spirit inherent in the Japanese language.
(3) As well as lacking any linguistic foundation, *kotodama* is a dangerous concept, for the references to *kotodama* in the *Man'yoshu* were perverted by the ultranationalists of the 1930s, in texts such as 『国体の本義』 (*Kokutai no Hongi*: *Foundations of the National Body*):

> "*The* Kokutai no Hongi*'s perverted vision of a unique, intrinsically superior Japanese state, civilization and language was nonsense, too, and hundreds of thousands of Japanese died fiery deaths in the aftermath of this vision.*" (Miller *JMM*, p. 142.)

We briefly discussed (1) in Column 12 and also touched upon (2). It remains to consider (2) and (3) in more detail, especially the treatment of *kotodama* at the hands of Japan's ultranationalists. The *Kokutai no Hongi* text is essential reading here and the matter is quite important, for Kisshomaru Ueshiba was born in 1921 and would have been sixteen when the tract was first published, in 1937. This is a very personal matter and readers will have to judge for themselves, but I myself believe that Kisshomaru was profoundly influenced by the treatment of *kotodama* at the hands of the Japanese military. Robert King Hall (who was on the staff of MacArthur's SCAP GHQ after Japan surrendered) states in his introduction to the English translation that by 1943, 1,900,000 copies had been made by the government's Cabinet Printing Bureau and 28,000 reprints had been made. My own copy of the Japanese text was printed as late as May 1945, only a few months before Japan's surrender. Clearly, even in these desperate circumstances, the *kokutai*, with its doctrine of *kotodama*, was considered important enough to warrant restatement in a reprint. Hall notes that

> "*Teaching staffs were compelled to form self-study groups to read and discuss the material contained in the* Kokutai no Hongi. *It was constantly referred to in public speeches and was quoted in the ceremonies of national holidays and school assemblies. It is perhaps not surprising, when the nature of the book is considered, that despite this impressive total of distributed copies, it was virtually impossible to locate one in Japan after the surrender.*" (Hall, *Kokutai*, pp. 10-11.)

So after 1945, when the time came for aikido training to resume in Tokyo at the Aikikai Dojo, Kisshomaru Ueshiba, who was certainly required to participate in such wartime study groups, was severely torn between his desire to give great respect to his father as a dutiful son, and his desire to rid postwar aikido of this muddy and troublesome concept.

Miller made his own translation (to be found on pp. 133-134 of *JMM*) of the *Kokutai no Hongi* text that deals with *kotodama*, because he found the translation by John Owen Gauntlett "quite baffling". So, since the Japanese original and the Gauntlett translation are very rare, and in order to allow readers of this column who can read Japanese to judge for themselves, here is the original Japanese text of pp. 61-62 of the *Kokutai no Hongi*, sentence by sentence, followed by the translations of Gauntlett (G) and Miller (M). (Note that some of the Chinese characters have had to be modernized because they are not to be found in the JIS encoding system.)

1 更にまことある行爲こそ眞の行爲である。
G: Furthermore, actions carried out with sincerity are indeed genuine actions.
M: *Furthermore, it is particularly and solely deeds that possess sincerity that are true deeds.*

2 眞言はよく行となる。
G: Genuine words, genuine actions.
M: *True words most often become true deeds.*

3 行となり得る言こそ眞の言である。
G: Words that can be turned into actions are indeed genuine words.
M: *It is particularly those words and solely those that are liable to be put into practice that are true words.*

4 和が國の言靈の思想はこゝに根據を有するのであって、行たり得ざる言は、愼んでこれを發しない。
G: Our national idea of words has its basis here; so that as for words that cannot be turned into action, one must be discreet and not utter them.
M: *Our nation's ideology of* kotodama *has its basis in this fact; words that are not liable to be put into practice are shunned and not uttered.*

5 これ、人の心のまことである。
G: This is the heart of man as it should be.
M: *This is the sincerity of the human heart.*

6 まことに滿ちた言葉は卽ち言靈であり、かゝる言葉は大になる働をもつであって、卽ち限りなく強き力をもち、極みなく廣く通ずるのである。
G: Words full of truth are in effect words [of the soul]; and such words are inherent with great deeds, that is, have infinitely strong power, and speak with endless breath.
M: Kotodama *means language that is filled with sincerity, and such language possesses mighty movement. In other words, it possesses limitless power and is comprehensible anywhere without limitation.*

7 萬葉集に、日本の國は「言靈の幸はふ國」とあるのは、これである。
G: It is this the *Manyoshu* speaks of when it says that Japan is "a Land where words [of the soul] flourish."
M: *This is what is meant in the* Man'yoshu *by 'a land to which* kotodama *brings good fortune.'*
(NOTE: This text from the *Man'yoshu* was discussed extensively in Column 13. I think it

should be possible for *AikiWeb* readers (a) to compare the original text with the *Kokutai no Hongi* gloss, and (b) to compare the above translations. I believe that Miller's is more accurate.)

8 而してまた又一方には「神ながら言擧せぬ國」といふ言葉がある。
G: Hence, one hears, too, the expression, "A Land of the deities which is free from the strife of words."
M: Gauntlett's translation of the *Man'yoshu* text is given by Miller on p. 99 of *JMM*.
(NOTE: This text from the *Man'yoshu* was also discussed in Column 13—with reference to the meaning of *kotoage* (言擧). It is clear that the *Kokutai no Hongi* tract prefers the interpretation of Motoori Norinaga [that *kotoage* had negative connotations], in preference to the later, postwar, interpretation of Jin'ichi Konishi [that *kotoage* was a verbal preparation for the power of *kotodama* to operate].)

9 これは、一見矛盾するが如く見えて、實は矛盾ではない。
G: This on the surface looks inconsistent, but really it is not so.
M: (This sentence is not translated by Miller.)

10 言に出せば必ず行ずべきものであり、従つて行ずることの出来ない言は、みだりに言はないのである。
G: Once a thing it said, one must by all means put it into practice; so one should not utter at random words that cannot be followed out by actions.
M: *Once anything is verbalized, it must necessarily be carried out; consequently, words having reference to anything that cannot be carried out are not lightly uttered.*

11 かくて一旦言擧げする以上は、必ず行ふべきである。
G: Accordingly, once a thing is stated, it must by every means be practiced.
M: *Further, once anything has been verbalized, it must necessarily be carried out;*

12 否、まことの言葉、言靈たる以上は、必然に行はるべきである。
G: Nay, if genuine words or genuine words [of the soul], they must of necessity be put into practice.
M: *nay, the word that possesses sincerity, by reason of* kotodama*, must inevitably be carried out.*

13 かく言葉が行となり得る根底にはまことが存する。
G: Thus, at the root of words that can be turned into actions, there is truth.
M: *Thus, sincerity is found in the fundamental principles of the word able to become the deed.*

14 まことには、我があつてはならない。
G: There must be no self in truth.
M: *There is no room for self in sincerity.*

15 一切の私を捨てて言い、又行ふところにこそ、まことか輝く。
G: When one speaks and acts, utterly casting oneself aside, there indeed is truth, and there indeed shines truth.
M: *All of oneself must be cast aside in speech, for it is in the deed and in the deed alone that sincerity is to be found, and there only that sincerity shines forth.*

Gauntlett adds a footnote to his translation on 'words [of the soul]':
'Kotodama*: lit. word + spirit. This is a euphonic and honorific word for "word", appearing several times in this section, and carries with it an idea of refinement and mystery*' [p. 102]. It is clear from this statement that Gauntlett appears not to have made any extensive study of the concept.

11. Kisshomaru Ueshiba on *Kotodama*
In his biography of Morihei Ueshiba, Kisshomaru Ueshiba spends several pages discussing *kotodama*. It is clear from this discussion that Kisshomaru (a) knew quite a lot about the 'intellectual history' of *kotodama*, and (b) did not practice it like his father did. Kisshomaru begins his discussion with a similar quotation from the *Man'yoshu* to the one given above, from the *Kokutai no Hongi*. The quotation, discussed at length in the previous column, is from Book 5, Poem 894:

> 「言霊の幸ふと語りつぎ言ひつがひけり」
> 「ことだまの、さきはふくにと、かたりつぎ、いひつがひけり」
> 'Ko-to-da-ma-no, sa-ki-wa-fu-ku-ni-to, ka-ta-ri-tsu-gi, i-hi-tsu-ga-hi-ke-ri'
> '*The nation that prospers in* Kotodama *has been passing down the sacred power of the words from the very beginning.*'

In fact, Kisshomaru's discussion of *kotodama* can profitably be compared with the treatment in the wartime document. It is similar, in that in both texts *kotodama* is located in the close connection between a person's character and the words spoken by the person.

> "*From ancient times in Japan* kotodama *named the essential divine spark with human beings that made them all that they could be. In other words, it was believed that the character and talent of a person corresponded with the degree to which that person could manifest their power of* kotodama*. Thus, the words spoken by someone who had perfected themselves in body and mind were imbued with a kind of spiritual energy, as the soul of such a person manifested the universal spirit. When such a person spoke with deep conviction or prayed with their whole heart, their words and actions would bear fruit accordingly. Those who had mastered* kotodama*, once they put full intention into their prayers and speech, could direct their power to*

> *achieve whatever they wanted. This quality manifested in different degrees, from the level of* shinjin *(*真人*; a person of truth*—NOTE by the present author: the *Kokutai* text uses the older眞人*) to a higher level of* shinjin *(*神人*; divine person).*" (*A Life in Aikido*, p. 140.)

Kisshomaru Ueshiba wrote his biography in 1978. In 1986 he published another book on aikido, entitled *Aikido Shinkei* (合気道真諦), which was translated into English in 2004 as *The Art of Aikido*. In this book Kisshomaru once more discusses *kotodama* and, again, he begins from the *Man'yoshu*, this time with the same quotation as that in the *Kokutai no Hongi* text. He continues:

> '*From the earliest times in Japan,* kotodama *was considered the highest and most pleasing from of speech, speech that could only be and understood by people of the highest character and who possessed total integration of body and mind. Furthermore, if mastered,* kotodama *was believed to be the secret speech of the gods, a potent source of incantation, magic and miracle-working. One who understood and uttered* kotodama *was revered as a person of truth and divinity.*' (*The Art of Aikido*, pp. 74-75.)

Kisshomaru then turns to the meaning of the phrase, "words spoken by someone who had perfected themselves in body and mind". He aims at a "logical" discussion of such words. (In view of the discussion that follows, I have numbered the following paragraphs.)

1 Kisshomaru begins with the general concept of 'words' (given in *katakana* as コトバ, but in common Japanese as *gen* 言, or *go* 語), which "first appear in primary form" as 'sound' or 'voice'. The Japanese terms used for these are: ひびき (*hibiki*, which has the very general meaning of sound, or the effects of sound, such as vibration; also used by Morihei Ueshiba in his discourses to designate the working of creation); 声 (*koe*: voice), 音 (*on*: sound); 韻 (*in*: rhyme). This is the first level of *kotoba* / コトバ. However, we are not told how this level is primary, for example, whether 'primary' here has the same sense as it had for Morihei Ueshiba in Column 11: primary as in, 'at the beginning of creation'; or whether it is primary in that human beings use sound or voice for communication before they use anything else.

2 The 'next' level is the level of 気 (*ki*) and 息 (*soku*: breath). (In the Japanese text, this level is より純粋 *yori junsui*: 'purer than before'. *Junsui* is usually translated in English as 'pure', 'genuine', 'unalloyed', 'undiluted', but the English translation of Kisshomaru's biography is misleading, since it simply lists several levels, with nothing to distinguish between them except the fact that one level comes after the other.) We are not told exactly how words at the level of *ki* and *soku* are 'purer' than words at the first level.

3 This is followed by an even 'purer' level, that of 霊 (*tama*; spirit), which is the level of "words filled with *ki*". At this level words become 霊感 (*reikan*; spiritual inspiration). The English translation adds that this is the same as the western concept of *gnosis*. This term is not in the Japanese original:

> そしてその、「気」「息」なる極点にいのいて発せられるコトバは、人智の解析を超えるがゆえに、「霊」といわざるをえない純粋直観的な悟性の対象、すなわちいわゆる霊感あるいはインスピレーションの象徴にまで止揚される。(『合気道開祖植芝盛平伝』, p. 136.)

At this third level, コトバ (*kotoba*; words) have become divine and at this level, the point of union between the human and divine, the words may be termed *kotodama*. (Note that 霊感 *reikan* is the term used by Morihei Ueshiba of the state required to deal with attacks from behind: serious training will enable one's *reikan* [or divine inspiration] to become progressively more 敏感 [*binkan*: sensitive]. This was discussed in detail in Column 11.)

4 At this point Kisshomaru Ueshiba launches into a second complex explanation of words, this time concerning 'the word *kami*, or god' and *tama* (here given in *hiragana* as たま). In Japan, *kami* was originally *tama*. The Chinese character for *tama*玉was also read as *gyoku*, with the meaning, "representing anything pure and shining in a spiritual sense" This became a general category, including 神 (*kami*), 霊 (*rei*), and 魂 (*tamashii*), in contrast to 物 (*mono*), which were physical objects. The term *mono* was taken from 物の怪 (*mononoke*; ghost, evil spirit or supernatural being). The term was understood negatively, as something that disrupted spirituality: "the force that comes between the human and the divine and prevents them from merging". In the case of words, to disrupt spirituality would mean interrupting *ki* or breathing. In this case, the *tama* would not rise to the level of spirit, but would remain merely a *mono*. The resulting speech would be mere word play and not *kotodama*. Thus, drawing on the work of Shinobu Origuchi (the scholar who was mentioned earlier, in conjunction with the work of Jin'ichi Konishi), Kisshomaru Ueshiba has established to his satisfaction the link between *koto* (words) *tama* (soul / spirit) and *kami* (translated here as *god*), which yields *kotodama*.

I think some care must be taken when considering Kisshomaru Ueshiba's discussion, for we will encounter similar problems in discussion of the views of Sanae Odano. In my opinion, it lacks the rigor of Motoori Norinaga's philological analyses, or even Jin'ichi Konishi's detailed surveys of Japanese literature. Thus it is difficult to judge whether Kisshomaru is doing historical analysis, philology, etymology, literary criticism, or word association. All have some value, but the methodology of each differs somewhat. Kisshomaru's earlier discussion (1, 2 and 3, above) concerned words used by "someone who had perfected themselves in body and mind". (The Japanese text of *Aikido Shinkei* is equally 'absolute', and yields the translation, "*a person of the* ***highest*** *character and possessed of* ***total*** *integration of body and mind.*") Thus Kisshomaru discusses 'levels' of *junsui* in *kotoba* (コトバ); the higher the level of

junsui in *kotoba* indicates the more 'perfect' or 'total' integration. However, judgments about the level of mind-body integration appear to be based solely on the meaning of the term *kotoba* (コトバ). In other words, the acquisition of 'total integration of body and mind' is not itself to be achieved by uttering words in *kotodama* practice, for the *kotodama* utterances are a by-product of the mind-body integration and merely indicate the level achieved; they are not a cause of this integration. Implicit in the discussion is the supposition that Morihei Ueshiba had reached this ultimate level of mind-body integration and thus used words at their 'purest' level, but that he, Kisshomaru, had not.

From Kisshomaru Ueshiba's explanation, above, I think that it is possible to understand both R A Miller's dismissal of the concept as sympathetic magic and also his unease that *kotodama* was a dangerous concept. This is clear from Kisshomaru's explanation of the difference between *kotodama* and *logos*. Having noted the similarities, Kisshomaru goes on:

> '*In Japan, however, the term* kotoba *(the word/ words) extends beyond "*logos*" to describe concepts or meanings, and ... is used in a spiritual sense. To be more precise, words are being considered not so much in terms of their use as vehicles for content—rather, the ring of the voice, its sound and music in speaking, come to the fore. In addition, a strong tradition urges us towards making the purest form of KI and "breathing". More than mere "*logos*", kotoba encompasses pathos, emotion, and ardor. This conceptual background supported the creation and elaboration of Kotodama,* ***an ideology*** (sic) ***rooted in the ancient and particular cultural identity of Japan.'*** (*A Life in Aikido*, pp. 141-142.)

So the contrast lies between the 'rational' character of *logos*, and the more comprehensive blend of rationality, pathos, emotion, and ardor, conveyed by the term *kotoba*. It is this combination that leads to *kotodama* and Kisshomaru calls the result an 'ideology'. In other words, *kotodama*, as explained by the *Kokutai no Hongi* and by Kisshomaru Ueshiba, sanctifies a particularly powerful association of 'words', 'truth'/'sincerity', and 'action', which association also lay at the roots of the Neo-Confucian *Oyomei* doctrine of enlightenment as 'knowledge/action'. Furthermore, since all three concepts are defined in terms of each other, they could not be subjected to any 'objective' examination or independent scrutiny. A person's sincerity is judged by the fact that his actions and words match. A person's words are true / sincere, because his actions match his words, and so indicate that he is sincere. A person's actions are praiseworthy because they are the result of words that are true / sincere. The circle is complete, but there is no intrinsic connection with the moral dimensions of the actions in question.

Thus it needs to be pointed out that the explanation of *kotodama* given here would be just as true and inspiring for a Japanese soldier, serving in the Imperial Japanese Army at Iwojima or Okimawa, or a '*kamikaze*' pilot about to take off on a bombing mission—both eager to offer respect to their deities and their families by excelling in 'fighting spirit', as it would be for Morihei Ueshiba, setting the 'three worlds' to right by practicing *misogi* and teaching Daito-ryu & Aiki-budo. In fact, the doctrine proved very attractive to the Japanese military and, as a result, when the bathwater of Japanese militarism was thrown away after 1945, the *kotodama* baby was thrown away with it. However, to judge from Miller's unease, it did not get very far down the drain before quietly creeping back into the thinking of at least two conservative scholars and the bureaucrats of the Japanese education ministry.

Some might think I being rather harsh on Kisshomaru Ueshiba here, but I do not think so. In any case, in his father's biography Kisshomaru disclaims any expertise in *kotodama*, and one has the general impression of an awestruck son, quietly scrutinizing his father's chanting rituals and supplementing this scrutiny with some private study of his own. In his later work, however, Kisshomaru goes quite a lot further and delicately restricts *kotodama* in aikido to Morihei Ueshiba's private spiritual pursuits. Here is the Japanese text of *Aikido Shinkei*, with the translation / paraphrase by John Stevens. The crucial sentences are in **bold** type.

> そこでまず「言霊学にもとづくところ、呼吸力に発する《気》」であるが、ここで前もってことわっておきたいのは、「言霊学の修得」とはあくまでも盛平自身が「呼吸力に発する《気》」の開悟を得るに要したところの契機であり、いわば盛平自身の心性上の問題に属する事柄であって、**すでにして「呼吸力に発する《気》」のありようがその後の合理体系化された合気道原理に消化されつつある現在、修行者はかならずしも古典的なる「言霊学の修得」にこだわる必要はないということである。**
> つまり以下の概説はあくまでも歴史的観点に立ちながら現代的解釈の参考に資するものであり、現在ただ今の時点で特に履修すべき課題としてうんぬんするものではない。 (『合気道真諦』, p. 82.)

> '*Morihei's interests in the study of* kotodama *... was based on his personal research into the nature of breath power and the generation of KI and his varied practical experiences of the breath-power/ generation of the KI continuum. His enlightenment in regard to that continuum led to the creation of Aikido principles and techniques.* ***Since those principles are inherent in Aikido techniques, it is not an absolute requirement for Aikido practitioners to study*** **kotodama** ***theory.*** (*The Art of Aikido*, p. 74.)

Quite so—and one can see why. Kisshomaru Ueshiba adds that '*it is a good idea to have a general idea of* kotodama *ideals,*' but these *kotodama* ideals do not in fact play any major role at all in Kisshomaru's view of aikido, as we shall see in later columns.

12. Conclusions to Part 2:
***Kotodama* in Morihei Ueshiba's Aikido**

One way of summarizing this discussion about *kotodama* is to ask the same kind of questions that have been asked about 'internal' training, and actually underlie this series of columns. There are many questions that can be asked about *kotodama*, but, initially, as a result of the present discussion, there are just two central questions:

What exactly was Morihei Ueshiba doing when he 'practiced *kotodama*', broadly understood.
Can what he was doing be systematized in such a way that we can see it as a set of training strategies with measurable results?

AikiWeb readers must find the answers to these questions themselves, but some might recall the discussion in the very first of these columns:

> "*Over the next few columns I will examine each of these three general categories* (Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation) *in turn, for, as I suggested above, I believe that they are fundamental to our core perceptions of the art as it is practiced, both here in Japan and abroad. However, I also believe that certain crucial assumptions are made, even in the way that the categories are set up. These assumptions, which are also very much controversial issues, are based on a particular paradigm (for want of a better term). This paradigm can also be expressed in a number of propositions:*
>
> *(1) Aikido is a budo that can be fully taught and fully learned (in the sense that it is possible for the deshi to acquire all of the master's skills).*
> *(2) Aikido is a budo that has to be taught and learned by means of being systematized into teaching and learning strategies.*
> *(3) Whereas the teacher is crucially important in this process, it is the mastery of the teaching and learning strategies on the part of the student that will ultimately determine whether the knowledge and skills can be or have been or are being acquired.*
> *(4) Thus, there is an important element of accountability and independent assessment of the internal efficiency of the art, but this is based on some vague standard of what the art should 'do' in a 'real' situation.*
> *(5) There is also a 'moral' aspect to the art, in the sense that (1) the art should bring about a change in any individual who practices the art, and (2) this change should be for the better, however this is conceived.*
>
> *One can argue that this is a 'western' paradigm, of limited relevance to a Japanese martial art that is strongly vertically structured and teacher based. Nevertheless, it is an undisputed fact that aikido spread rapidly overseas with the Founder's blessing (as a 'Golden Bridge', in the Founder's words—uttered in Hawaii) and it can also be argued that the art has a stronger base (in terms of knowledge and numbers) outside Japan than in this country. So the 'western' paradigm cannot be dismissed simply on the grounds that it is western… I myself believe that this is not entirely a western paradigm, but also believe that there are important cultural differences in how particular items in this paradigm are interpreted, even perceived, and that this is of critical relevance to aikido.*"

Kukai's (and Shugendo's) severe procedures for achieving *sokushin jobutsu* (becoming a Buddha in one's own lifetime) are certainly vertically structured and teacher-based. They require the advice and guidance of an expert in the kind of meditation practiced by Shingon devotees—believers, even. However, one could substitute *meditation* for *aikido* and *physico-spiritual* activity for *budo*, respectively, in *(1)* to *(5)*, above, and the result would be a reasonable description of the system that Kukai expounded with such energy. So one might counter-argue that aikido *shugyo* is just as much a vehicle for obtaining enlightenment as Shingon *shugyo*. In the next column, we shall see just how much immediate disciples like M Nakazono, and later practitioners like John Stevens and William Gleason, understood and interpreted Ueshiba's '*kotodama* practice'.

Reading

The blending of Shinto and Buddhism is covered in general histories of Japanese religion, but there is usually no mention of *kotodama*. Three important essays in the collection edited by Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli are: Bernard Scheid, "'Both parts' or 'only one'? Challenges to the *honji suijaku* paradigm in the Edo period"; Inoue Takami, "The interaction between Buddhist and Shinto traditions at Suwa Shrine"; and Irit Averbuch, "Dancing the doctrine: *honji suijaku* thought in *kagura* performances", in Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, Eds, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honkji Suijaku as a combinatory paradigm*, 2003, Routledge Curzon. Also of major importance for the connection between *shugendo* and *kagura* is: Irit Averbuch, *The Gods Come Dancing: A Study of the Yamabushi Kagura*, 1995, Cornell U P.
Jin'ichi Konishi wrote a massive history of Japanese literature in Japanese: 小西甚一, 『日本文藝史』, 1985-1992講談社. The first three volumes have been translated into English: *A History of Japanese Literature*, 1984, 1986, 1991, Columbia U P.
Much *AikiWeb* discussion about *Nihonjinron* is conducted without understanding of the precise meaning of the concept. For those with an interest in this topic, it is best approached from a classic text: Peter Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, 1986, Croom Helm. Dale should then be compared with the 'Epilogue' of another book on Japanese identity: Takie Sugiyama Lebra, *The Japanese Self in Cultural Logic*, 2004, Hawai'i U P.
Motoori Norinaga is best approached first through a biography written by Shigeru Matsumoto (though some of his opinions and conclusions about Motoori's psychological state should be treated with caution): *Motoori Norinaga 1730-1801*, 1970, Harvard U P. The flavor of Motoori's

writing can be seen from a recent translation of *Kojiki-den*: Anne Wehmeyer, Ed, Tr., *Kojiki-den*, Book I, 1997, Cornell U P. Wehmeyer's translation should be compared with a severe critique of Motoori by Susan Burns: *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan*, 2003, Duke U P. Books previously cited on *kokugaku* also briefly discuss *kotodama*: H D Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism*, 1988, Chicago U P; Peter Nosco, *Remembering Paradise: Nativism and Nostalgia in Eighteenth Century Japan*, 1990, Harvard U P; Mark McNally, *Proving the Way: Conflict and Practice in the History of Japanese Nativism*, 2005, Harvard U P.

Discussions of *kokugaku* should be compared with more contemporary ideas about nationalism: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, latest edition: 2006, Verso. Anderson would have benefitted by reading Motoori Norinaga, which he appears not to have done.

As far as I know, there is no English translation of Onisaburo Deguchi's *Reikai Monogatari*. There is a brief summary of the contents at http://www2.plala.or.jp/wani-san/home.html. Carmen Blacker gives a detailed summary of the first volume: Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, 1986, Allen & Unwin. Deguchi's view of *kotodama* is discussed in a recent book on Omoto: Nancy R Stalker, *Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburo, Oomoto, and the Rise of the New Religions in Imperial Japan*, 2008, University of Hawai'i P. There is nothing about 言霊学 (*kotodama-gaku*: *kotodama* studies) in English. In Japanese, the studies of Shido Yamaguchi have been collected and edited by Shiro Omiya as 『言霊秘書』, published by Hachiman Shoten. (Shiro Omiya is known among practitioners of Daito-ryu and aikido, as the author of *The Hidden Roots of Aikido*.)

The Japanese originals of the discourses of Morihei Ueshiba are: 合気神髄 *Aiki Shinzui*, Yahata Shoten, 2002, translated by John Stevens as, *The Secret Teachings of Aikido*, Kodansha International, 2007; 武産合気 *Takemusu Aiki*, Byakko Shinkokai Press, 1976.

The writings of R A Miller are of some importance when considering the Japanese language, especially *kotodama*. Miller wrote four books, including a seminal work on the nature of the Japanese language: Roy Andrew Miller, *The Japanese Language*, 1967, Chicago U P, 1980, Tuttle; *Japan's Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond*, 1982, Weatherhill; *Nihongo: In Defence of Japanese*, 1986, Athlone Press; *Languages and History: Japanese, Korean, Altaic*, 1996, White Orchid Press.

The Japanese text of the *Kokutai no Hongi* is difficult to find. The English translation is also difficult to find: *Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, Translated by John Owen Gauntlett and Edited with an Introduction by Robert King Hall, 1949, Harvard U P.

Apart from the discourses of Morihei Ueshiba and some of the writings of Kisshomaru Ueshiba, mentioned above or in previous columns, other Japanese works that I have consulted for this column are:

井上順孝, 孝本貢, 対馬路人, 中牧弘允, 西山茂（編集員）, 『新宗教辞典』, 1990, 弘文堂.
大宮司朗, 『言霊玄修秘伝』八幡書店.
川村湊, 『言霊と他界』, 2002, 講談社 (講談社学術分庫).
亀井孝, 『日本語のすがたとこころ　亀井孝論文集 4 』), 1984, 吉川弘文館, 1-67.
豊田国夫, 『日本人の言霊思想』, 1980, 講談社 (講談社学術分庫).
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宮家準, 『修験道思想の研究』1985,
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宮家準, 『神道と修験道　民俗宗教思想の展開』2007, 春秋社.
文部省,『國體の本義』, 1935, 文部省出版 .
山口志道, 『言霊秘書　山口志道霊学全集』, 1992, 八幡書店.

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.